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**Leo Weiczen: Communist, Democratic Communist, Revolutionary Democrat**

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*Leo Weiczen followed a complex political itinerary, from his early years as an orthodox Communist, to his phase as a "Democratic Communist" (linked to the Que faire? secret faction in the French Communist Party in the mid-1930s), and finally to his shift to a position of Revolutionary Democrat, which gradually emerged during the Second World War. This outline is based on currently available research (together with some neglected material). The aim is to contextualize Valiani's choices in the history of interwar Communist, Socialist and Revolutionary Democratic movements.*

**Keywords:** Leo Valiani, Arthur Koestler, Spanish Civil War, Le Vernet, Walter Krivitsky/Krivickij, Ignace Reiss, Ruth Fischer.

This paper<sup>1</sup> addresses a series of related issues, mainly methodological, with some reference some factual issues. Ricciardi's book on the first part of Valiani's life, together with the publication of relevant parts of Valiani's correspondence and of some of his early writings provide an adequate basis for a discussion of his relationship with Communism.<sup>2</sup> The objective is to

<sup>1</sup> Paper originally presented at the conference on Leo Valiani (Rijeka, 29 September 2015), adapted for this publication and amended after the comments by the anonymous reviewers. I would like to thank also Ivan Jeličić, Alberto Masoero, Ravel Kodrič, Andrea Ricciardi, Edoardo Tortarolo, and Adriano Viarengo for their assistance.

<sup>2</sup> Andrea RICCIARDI, *Leo Valiani. Gli anni della formazione. Tra socialismo, comunismo e rivoluzione democratica*, Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2007 (the most comprehensive study on Valiani); Leo VALIANI-Franco VENTURI, *Lettere 1943-1979*, (ed.) Edoardo TORTAROLO, Firenze: La Nuova Italia, 1999, 108; *L'impegno e la ragione. Carteggio tra Aldo Garosci e Leo Valiani (1947-1983)*, (ed.) Franco FANTONI, Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2009; *Tra storia e politica. Bibliografia degli scritti di Leo Valiani (1926-1999)* (ed.) Giovanni BUSINO, Milano: Fondazione Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, 2000; Leo VALIANI, *Discorsi parlamentari*, Bologna: Il Mulino, 2005; *Leo Valiani tra politica e storia. Scritti di storia delle idee (1939-1956)*, Davide BIDUSSA (ed.), Milano: Fondazione Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, 2009 [=Fondazione Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, *Annali*, XLII (2006)]; Edoardo TORTAROLO, "Leo Valiani: Storia e Politica", *Rivista storica italiana*, 122 (2010), 158-175 (a wide-ranging discussion of the book edited by Bidussa).

provide some elements for a historical contextualization of Leo Weiczen's Communism.

Arthur Koestler once provided a sketch of what he called "the typical case-history of a Central-European member of the intelligentsia in the totalitarian age":

"It was entirely normal for a writer, an artist, a politician or teacher with a minimum of integrity to have several narrow escapes from Hitler and/or Stalin, to be chased and exiled, and to get acquainted with prisons and concentration camps. It was by no means abnormal for them, in the early 'thirties, to regard Fascism as the main threat and to be attracted, in varying degrees, by the great social experiment in Russia... Finally, it was quite normal for six million European Jews to end their lives in a gas chamber."<sup>3</sup>

So there was absolutely nothing special about Leo Weiczen. He was an absolutely typical case.<sup>4</sup>

## 1. Understanding Communism and understanding Communists

A comprehensive overview of the historiography of Communism lies beyond the scope of this paper, which focusses on the personality of Leo Weiczen/Valiani. In this context, two points must be stressed.

The first is that the first generations of Communists were first and foremost 'Internationalists' (or, to follow current bureaucratic and academic jargon, 'Transnational'). They always reasoned on a European scale, if not on a world scale. They could have operated in Russia, Poland, Germany or China, as circumstances might have dictated. These Communists included the kind of "idealistic revolutionary of 1918-28" (described by Valiani in his letter to Ignazio Silone in 1949, reproduced below), but also the Communists who went through 'Third Period' Communism (1928-1934), the Popular front (1934-1939), the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact (1939-1941).

These generations came to an end with the dissolution of the Comintern in 1943, which was explicitly intended as a signal of a crucial turning-point in the history of Communism. The emphasis shifted towards the national agenda, rather than on Internationalism; National Liberation, not World Revolution. The Cold War generations were made of those who had somehow survived the earlier periods, and who had accepted or adapted to the new reality of Communism as a global power, which established what was later

<sup>3</sup> Arthur KOESTLER, *The Invisible Writing. Being the second volume of Arrow in the Blue. An autobiography by Arthur Koestler*, London: Collins-Heinemann, 1954, 428.

<sup>4</sup> See, for a somewhat similar case, Karol SAUERLAND, "My Unburied Father" [concerning Kurt Sauerland, 1905-1938], *Cosmo. Comparative Studies in Modernism*, 7 (Fall 2015), 119-131.

labelled 'actually existing Socialism'. Weiczen belonged to the generations of the Internationalists.

The second point is: what did 'Communism' actually *mean* for its followers? The 'Party line' (which could change or even upturned at any given moment) does not explain much. As Józef Światło pointed out (after his defection to the West in 1953), "so-called rightist or leftist deviations occur when some comrades do not differentiate between party tactics and the real political line. Tactics change, depending on circumstances, political conditions at a given time, and Moscow's needs. But the real party line always remains the same".<sup>5</sup>

Even the mythical category of 'Anti-Communism' is highly misleading. The political and historical meaning of 'Anti-Communism' varied enormously over time. In 1928, when Third Period Stalinism (1928-1934) was launched, an 'Anti-Communist' could be opposed to the Class against Class line of the Communists (i.e. Social Democracy as 'Social Fascism', etc.). During the Popular Front period (1934-August 1939) when Communists argued for the broadest coalition with 'bourgeois' forces against Fascism and Nazism, an 'Anti-Communist' could be opposed (from the Right or from the Left) to this policy. For example, Simone Weil (and other leftists) opposed the Communists at the time of the Munich Agreement, when the Communists were in favour of military action against Nazi Germany. Weil stated that she would have preferred a Right-wing dictatorship, rather than having to deal with war-mongering Communists.<sup>6</sup> During the period of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact (August 1939-June 1941), anyone who objected to the Pact would have been labelled as an 'Anti-Communist'.<sup>7</sup>

Conversely, the meaning of being a Communist also varied enormously. Communists varied according to the year of their accession to the Party (much as wines do). In fact, in Communist tradition it was not unusual to refer to party members in terms of levies or cohorts. This is something more than saying that generations matter. It is an issue which determined the entire meaning of an individual's Communist experience, and which conditions our retrospective understanding of that experience. Without an understanding of these factors, the historical meaning of 'Communism' and 'Anticommunism' is misrepresented.

<sup>5</sup> Zbigniew BŁAZYŃSKI, *Mówi Józef Światło: za kulisami bezpieki i partii 1940-1955*, Londyn: Polska Fundacja Kulturalna, 1985, quoted in Leo W. GLUCHOWSKI, "The defection of Jozef Swiatlo and the Search for Jewish Scapegoats in the Polish United Workers' Party, 1953-1954", *InterMarium*, 3/2 (1999), 7.

<sup>6</sup> Weil saw the possibility of "an antidemocratic coup d'état, supported by Daladier and the army, accompanied by an explosion of violent anti-semitism (the signs are apparent everywhere) and brutal measures against parties and organisations of the Left. I would prefer the latter as less murderous for the whole youth of France" (letter to Jean Posternak, spring 1938) quoted in David MCLELLAN, *Simone Weil: utopian pessimist*, London: Macmillan, 1989, 135. Weil expressed similar sentiments in another letter of the same period (letter to Gaston Bergery, quoted in Conor CRUISE O'BRIEN, "The Anti-Politics of Simone Weil", *New York Review of Books*, 24/8 (May 12, 1977), 23-28; here 26. See also Simone WEIL, *Écrits historiques et politiques*, Paris: Gallimard, 1960.

<sup>7</sup> I owe this point to Walter Kendall (personal communication, 1975 circa). On Kendall, see Ian BULLOCK, "Walter Kendall (1926-2003)", *History Workshop Journal*, 57 (2004), 299-302.

Leo Weiczen was well aware of the relevance of these aspects. As he pointed out many years later, he had become a Communist because in 1928 he had been sent to forced residence in the Southern Italian island of Ponza, where he befriended other Communist detainees, and in particular Giuseppe Berti. Had he been sent to Lipari (where Carlo Rosselli was interned) he would have become a Left-wing Liberal (a member of 'Giustizia e Libertà', and later of the Action Party) as he eventually did.<sup>8</sup>

Having been arrested in 1928, he also experienced the turmoil which the Communist Party of Italy (PCdI)<sup>9</sup> with the shift to the Class against Class party line (which he wholeheartedly supported). He began to have doubts only after the Nazi seizure of power, and even then, he changed his views very gradually.<sup>10</sup> Weiczen finally obtained in 1936 early release through various amnesties, and took advantage of his Hungarian passport. He was therefore expelled from Italy and taken to the Swiss border.<sup>11</sup> At that point he moved to France, where he remained based until the outbreak of the Second World War.

Two key aspects stand out: the *timing* of his entry into the PCdI, and the importance of the *German Communist* experience, and in particular German Leftist dissidents.<sup>12</sup> In short, he was jailed at the height of Third Period Stalinism. Released 1929, he was re-arrested in 1931. He was released again at the height of the Popular Front policy. This gave him a certain freedom of mind (and, subsequently, of action) throughout his Communist experience in 1936-1940. He was actually less tainted by the political infighting connected with the two phases. It is significant that Italian police did not seem to even have at hand a photograph of Weiczen.<sup>13</sup>

In this context, it is essential to remember that Communist dissent was always exclusively of a *Leftist* variety. No dissident could ever really dissent from a 'right wing' position (i.e. Social Democratic or worse), although he (or

she) would invariably be accused of being 'right wing'.<sup>14</sup> He (or she) might *subsequently* shift to a more 'right wing' position (even to a radical right wing position, as happened with some dissidents in the PCF).<sup>15</sup> But a Communist dissident would always have to start from a Leftist position. A 'Rightist' dissident would have been a contradiction terms: how could a Communist dissident aspire to a *less* revolutionary party line? If he had inclinations of that kind, he would not have joined the party in the first place.

The Party (no qualification was ever necessary for this noun) promised Revolution, indeed World Revolution (which included fraternity, freedom and welfare or 'equality' for all). *This* was why men (and women) were willing to face hardship, prison, torture and possibly death. But if they ever got the impression that something was amiss in this promise and in this project, then the whole basis of their Communist loyalty would start to crack, and ultimately it would crumble. This is what happened in innumerable cases in the history of Communist parties throughout Europe (even after they came to power, in the post-war era). As Milovan Đilas pointed out in 1957, the morals of a Communist Party (at least in its revolutionary phase) are those of a sect.<sup>16</sup>

## 2. Weiczen as a 'Democratic Communist'

Weiczen is often portrayed as a disillusioned Communist who left the party in the wake of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact. This was not the case. As Valiani repeatedly explained, he left the Party only at the French detention camp at Le Vernet in 1940. When the war broke out, instead of escaping, he had in effect waited to be arrested as a foreign Communist (and therefore as a supporter of the Soviet Union, a country allied to an enemy power, Nazi Germany). In fact, right up to July 1939 Weiczen (or 'Leo Giuliani', as he

8 Leo VALIANI, *Sessant'anni di avventure e battaglie. Riflessioni e ricordi raccolti da Massimo Pini*. Milano: Rizzoli, 1983, 28. For Giuseppe Berti's role in the Communist Party of Italy, see S. BERTELLI, *Il gruppo: la formazione del gruppo dirigente del PCI, 1936-1948*, Milano: Rizzoli, 1980; Francesco M. BISCIONE, "Berti, Giuseppe", *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 34 (1988), 382-385.

9 The Italian Communist Party, in common with many other Communist parties, was actually called '*Partito Comunista d'Italia*', to stress that it was merely the Italian section of the Communist International. It adopted the name '*Partito Comunista Italiano*' (which stressed its national credentials) only after Palmiro Togliatti returned from the Soviet Union in 1944.

10 See RICCIARDI, *Leo Valiani. Gli anni della formazione*, 154-164.

11 RICCIARDI, *Leo Valiani*, 165-166.

12 For an overview of the early years of German Communism, see Pierre BROUÉ, *Révolution en Allemagne, 1917-1923*, Paris Éditions de Minuit, 1971 (and subsequent editions, including the English translation, *The German Revolution, 1917-1923*, Leiden: Brill, 2005); and Rüdiger ZIMMERMANN, *Der Leninbund. Linke Kommunisten in der Weimarer Republik*, Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1978 (a study which was able to make use of interviews with former members of the Leftist factions).

13 In 1936 the Italian Ministry of the Interior produced a booklet for internal use, listing the Communist functionaries operating from Paris, it was able to attach a photograph of almost all of them, but not one of Leo Weiczen. The booklet is reproduced in full in BERTELLI, *Il gruppo*, 93-115.

14 It is significant, in this respect, to note that the title of Lenin's *Detskaya Bolezn' "Levizny" v Kommunizme* (1920), was accurately translated in the main European languages as *The Infantile Sickness of "Leftism" in Communism*; *Der linke Radikalismus, die Kinderkrankheit im Kommunismus*; *La maladie infantile du communisme (le "gauchisme")*. In Italian, however, it was rendered as *L'estremismo "malattia d'infanzia del comunismo"*. This was the form chosen in 1921 by the first Italian edition, translated by "Quidam", and printed in Milan by the official Italian Socialist Party publisher, Società editrice Avanti!. This form (which crucially omits the term "Leftism") was adopted by all subsequent Italian editions, published by the Italian Communist party. For the Turkish translation of Lenin's text, see Zaur GASIMOV and Hasan AKSAKAL, "Not quite in, but via Europe. Reading Lenin in Turkey", *Comparativ. Zeitschrift für Globalgeschichte und vergleichende Gesellschaftsforschung*, 25/2 (2015), 45-58.

15 The classic case is that of Jacques Doriot, an early propounder of the Popular Front. See Philippe BURRIN, *La dérive fasciste: Doriot, Déat, Bergery 1933-1945*, Paris: Seuil, 2003 (or. ed. 1986). The 'neo-socialists' (some of which later collaborated with Vichy and the Nazis) were often individuals who had been early (but premature) advocates of the Popular Front strategy.

16 Milovan ĐILAS [ĐILAS], *The New Class*, London: Thames & Hudson, 1957, 153, as quoted in Eric J. HOBBSBAM, *Primitive Rebels. Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movement in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1959 (third edition, 1971), 61, n. 1. Hobsbawm's comments on Đilas were otherwise quite disparaging. In *Interesting Times. A Twentieth Century Life*, London: Allen Lane, 2002, ch. 9, Hobsbawm conceded that Đilas "has written wonderfully well of the psychology of revolutionaries". The entire chapter of *Interesting Times* (entitled 'Being a Communist') deserves a similar commendation.

sometimes signed his articles) was publishing in Comintern publications.<sup>17</sup> The list of detainees at Le Vernet reads, quite literally, like a *Who's Who* of interwar European Communism. This shared experience (if not of actual comradeship) had a lasting effect on Valiani throughout the post-war era.<sup>18</sup>

By 1937 Weiczen was already a Communist dissident. He was associated with an underground dissident Communist faction, which provocatively presented itself as 'Democratic Communist': the group which published the journal *Que faire?*, edited by André Ferrat and George Kagan.<sup>19</sup>

The key aspect of *Que faire?* is that it was not intent on breaking away from the PCF (at least not in the short term). It was not Trotskyist (indeed, Trotsky was quite hostile to it). In 1933 the Stalinist leadership had infiltrated into the group Jean Jérôme (alias Michel Feintuch, one of the many Galician émigrés present in the party).<sup>20</sup> This meant that the PCF leadership (and the Comintern in Moscow) was regularly informed on all the activities in the group. Guillaume Bourgeois has argued that since *Que faire?* had a connection with members of the Politbureau of the Polish Communist Party (KPP), Jérôme's infiltration may have contributed to the subsequent liquidation of the Central Committee of the KPP.<sup>21</sup> In any case, Jérôme unmasked Kagan as a member of the *Que faire?* group. Weiczen would not have been affected by this denunciation, since he was released from prison only later, when Jérôme had

17 See BUSINO, *Tra storia e politica. Bibliografia*, 3-10.

18 There is a relative abundance of studies on Le Vernet camp. For a general overview of French camps, see Denis PESCHANSKI, *La France des camps. L'internement 1938-1946* (Paris: Gallimard, 2002). Some useful information on the camp may also be gleaned from Sibylle HINZE, *Antifaschisten im Camp Le Vernet: Abriss der Geschichte des Konzentrationslagers Le Vernet 1939 bis 1944*, Berlin: Militärverlag der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, 1988. See also SHARP, *Stalin's American Spy*, ch. 10, 89-98.

19 Leo VALIANI, "Una testimonianza", *Rivista storica italiana*, 108 (1996), 507-549, here 514-515. On Ferrat, see *Dictionnaire biographique du mouvement ouvrier movement social*, t. 5: *Période 1940-1968. De la Seconde guerre mondiale à mai 1968*, (eds.) Jean MAITRON et al., Paris: Éditions de l'Atelier, 2009 (and CD-ROM, vol. 5), s.v.; and VALIANI, "Una testimonianza", esp. 514-515. On Kagan, see the biographical note by Celina BUDZYŃSKA, *Słownik biograficzny działaczy polskiego ruchu robotniczego*, Warszawa: Muzeum Niepodległości w Warszawie, 1992, III, s.v. On *Que faire?*, see André THIRION, *Révolutionnaires sans Révolution*, Paris: Robert Laffont, 1972; Guillaume BOURGEOIS, "Le groupe 'Que faire?'. Aspects d'une opposition", *Communisme*, n. 5, 1984, 105-117; and especially Annie KRIEGEL and Stéphane COURTOIS, *Eugen Fried. Le grand secret du PCF*, Paris: Seuil, 1997, which provides a wide-ranging picture of internal politics of the French Communist Party based on previously unavailable material from the Russian archives.

20 In the post-war era, Jean Jérôme played a key role on the financial side of the PCF apparatus. On Jérôme see *Dictionnaire biographique du mouvement ouvrier movement social*, t. 5 (online version), (eds.) MAITRON et al.; and KRIEGEL and COURTOIS, *Eugen Fried*, passim. On the use of Polish Jews in Soviet intelligence, see Tony SHARP, *Stalin's American Spy. Noel Field, Allen Dulles and the East European Show Trials*, London: Tauris, 44. Ruth Fischer pointed out that in the 1920s KPD members were also targeted by Soviet intelligence as potential recruits. (R. Fischer, quoted in "Herr Sorge sass mit zu Tisch", *Der Spiegel*, 13 Juni 1951, 29-34, here 33). See also Walter G. KRIVITSKY, *In Stalin's secret service*, New York: Enigma Books, 2000 [or.ed. 1939], ch. I, 34-35; and Francis W. DEAKIN and G. Richard STORRY, *The Case of Richard Sorge*, London: Chatto & Windus, 1966, ch. I.

21 Guillaume BOURGEOIS, "French communism and the Communist International", in Tim REES and Andrew THORPE (eds.), *International Communism and the Communist International, 1919-43*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998, 95-102; see also KRIEGEL AND COURTOIS, *Eugen Fried*, 289. Karol Modzelewski has argued that the liquidation of the KPP leadership was due to the negative reactions of the Polish Communist leaders to the Moscow trials of the Old Bolsheviks (K. Modzelewski, personal communication, Warsaw, May 2015).

already revealed his true position.<sup>22</sup>

What is most significant in Weiczen's connection with *Que faire?* is the fact they were part of the *Leftist* critique of the Popular Front in France.<sup>23</sup> This sort of position may well have brought Weiczen closer to Carlo Rosselli's Left Liberal group in France, 'Giustizia e Libertà' (which ultimately became his ideological home). Rosselli was actually adopting an increasingly radicalized position, to the left of the Communist Party at the time.<sup>24</sup>

Weiczen's connection with *Que faire?* and his direct knowledge of the Spanish Civil War, could lead him to share a general dissatisfaction and unease with Communist policies, from a Leftist dissident point of view.<sup>25</sup> But this sort of critique could also have remained within the confines of an internal dissidence within the PCdI, which could be labelled as "Leftist Stalinism" (as opposed to Trotskyist dissidence, or even presumed "Luxemburgist" tendencies).<sup>26</sup> What can be said with some certainty is that Weiczen was ambivalent about his attitude towards his PCdI and Comintern affiliation; there was no clear or sudden break.

Weiczen had begun to have contacts with Rosselli's 'Giustizia e Libertà' in 1937.<sup>27</sup> In this very last phase of his life Rosselli was actually taking a very radical turn, in fact too radical for Weiczen. On the other hand, Rosselli's direct experience of Stalinism in action in Barcelona in 1937 had made him wary of joint action with the PCdI. In fact he suspected that Stalin wanted to make some kind of compromise peace in Spain, so he decided to stop a plan to publish jointly with the PCdI in Paris *La voce degli italiani*.<sup>28</sup> Rosselli was

22 KRIEGEL and COURTOIS, *Eugen Fried*, 294-295.

23 On this aspect see Pierre BROUË and Nicole DOREY, "Critique de gauche et opposition au Front Populaire (1936-1938)", *Le Mouvement social*, 54 (1966), 91-133; and Leo VALIANI, "Fronti popolari e politica sovietica", *Problemi di storia dell'Internazionale Comunista (1919-1939). Relazioni tenute al Seminario di studi organizzato dalla Fondazione Luigi Einaudi (Torino, aprile 1972)*, Aldo AGOSTI (ed.), Torino: Fondazione Luigi Einaudi, 1974, 193-214.

24 In the 1980s Valiani mentioned on several occasions Rosselli's radicalization (with which he had disagreed, even publicly). See, e.g., Leo VALIANI, "Israele nella mia vita", *Nuova Antologia*, n. 2157 (1986), 58. Valiani referred in particular to Rosselli's remarks at the commemoration of the anarchist Amilcare Cipriani (which can probably be dated to 20 May 1937). See also Aldo GAROSCI, "Fernando Schiavetti, come l'ho conosciuto", in Elisa SIGNORI and Marina Tesoro, *Il verde e il rosso. Fernando Schiavetti e gli antifascisti nell'esilio fra repubblicanesimo e socialismo*, Firenze: Le Monnier, 1987, xiv.

25 The position adopted by Franz Borkenau is a typical case of Leftist critique of Communist policies during the Spanish Civil War (i.e. Communist Party policies were too moderate in social terms). See Franz BORKENAU, *The Spanish Cockpit*, London: Phoenix Press, 2000 (or. ed. 1937); John E. TASHJEAN, "The Rediscovery of a Thinker", *Partisan Review*, Spring 1984, 289-300; and Mario KESSLER, "Between Communism and Anti-Communism: Franz Borkenau", *German Scholars in Exile. New Studies in Intellectual History*, (ed.) Axel FAIR-SCHULZ and Mario KESSLER, Lanham: Lexington Books, 2011, 93-120. Orwell was very closely connected to Borkenau. See Bernard CRICK, *George Orwell. A Life*, London: Secker & Warburg, 1980; *Orwell in Spain*, (ed.) Peter DAVISON, Harmondsworth: Penguin 2001; and Danae KARYDAKI, "National Socialism and the English Genius: Revisiting George Orwell's Views on Nazi Germany", *Dapim: Studies on the Holocaust*, 30/ 1 (2016), 53-73.

26 Ludwik Hass (a prominent Polish Trotskyist historian) argued that there were never any 'Luxemburgist' factions in Communist parties (personal communication, Warsaw, 1995). On Hass, see the various articles under the heading "Trotskyism in Poland", *Revolutionary History*, 6/1 (1995-96).

27 See VALIANI, "Una testimonianza".

28 See VALIANI, "Una testimonianza", 512-513.

assassinated a few weeks later, so there is no way of knowing in which direction he would have taken 'Giustizia e Libertà'. Weiczen had mixed feelings towards Rosselli's movement; he made this clear on various occasions in later years.<sup>29</sup>

On the eve of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact and the outbreak of war, Weiczen was a semi-dissident Communist, who still retained some degree of loyalty to Stalinism, and certainly towards many of his Stalinist comrades.<sup>30</sup> What went wrong? Why should a still basically loyal Stalinist abandon a path which many other were able to continue, despite all the oscillations of Stalinist policies in the 1930s? Luigi Longo, despite the misgivings on party policy (which led him to volunteer for the Foreign Legion once the war broke out), stayed the course.<sup>31</sup>

The answer is simple: Weiczen met Arthur Koestler. Koestler was not just a "typical case-history of a central-European member of the educated middle classes, born in the first years of our century".<sup>32</sup> He had travelled widely throughout Soviet Russia; he had worked in Germany and in France. He had met many Communist leaders, and even Old Bolsheviks. Most of all, he was the author of *Darkness at Noon*, which Weiczen read (in German) at the internment camp.<sup>33</sup>

### 3. Weiczen and Arthur Koestler

In a tribute to Koestler (written in 1983), Valiani described his encounter with him in the following terms:

"His exit from the Communist Party had come about publicly, before the War, but his letter of resignation (he showed me a copy of it at Roland Garros) ended with the ritual phrase for a Communist at the time: *"Es lebe die Sowjetunion!"* (Long live the Soviet Union!). This peroration was completely in the style of Bukharin. Bukharin once came to Paris for a conference (in the spring of 1936) and was sought out by Rosa Luxemburg's former secretary, the

29 Despite his condemnation of the methods used by Spanish Communists against Left-wing opponents, in later years Valiani argued that the actual policies of the Communists in Spain had been more realistic than those of their Leftist critics (VALIANI, "Fronti popolari politica sovietica"). He is likely to have thought so also at the time.

30 It is highly probable that Giuseppe Berti shielded Valiani from action by the NKVD. See RICCIARDI, *Leo Valiani*, 211-212. In the late 1930s Emilio Sereni (a quite senior figure in the PCdI) was put through an investigation in Moscow. See BERTELLI, *Il gruppo*, ch. 2, 66-81.

31 Leo VALIANI, "Luigi Longo nella lotta antifascista", *Luigi Longo. La politica e l'azione*, Roma: Editori Riuniti, 1992, 49-58, here 55-56. Aldo Garosci stated that Longo was at one point part of the *Que faire?* group. GAROSCI, "Fernando Schiavetti", xiv. Valiani stated instead: "Unlike me, Longo adhered faithfully to the general line of the Communist International, which included unconditional approval of the Hitler-Stalin pact", Leo VALIANI, "Koestler the Militant", *Encounter*, 63/2 (July-August 1984), 68-72, here 69; see also the Italian version of the article, "Io, Koestler nel campo di concentramento", *Nuova Antologia*, n. 2148 (ottobre-dicembre 1983), 87-96, here 89. Longo may well have had contacts with members of the *Que faire?* group, but that did not necessarily mean he was a member.

32 KOESTLER, *The Invisible Writing*, 423.

33 The original version of Koestler's *Darkness at Noon* has recently been discovered. See Michael SCAMMELL, "A Different 'Darkness at Noon'", *New York Review of Books*, 63/5 (7 April 2016).

Polish ex-Communist Fanny Jezierska. She had been expelled from the Party in 1929 because she and other companions had opposed the Stalinist theory and practice; she now wanted to advise Bukharin (himself formerly one of the opponents of Stalin) not to return to Russia. Bukharin answered that he felt himself destined to die for the Soviet revolution, and he should, rather, be exhorting her to return to the Party.

The story was told to me by Jezierska herself, and I repeated it to Koestler. At that time Koestler, in any case, would no longer have written that loyal endorsement. In the year since he left the party he had read much, had reflected and come to the conclusion that the Soviet power had by then become a reactionary, tyrannical, detestable regime, not only because of the macabre show trial of Bukharin and others of the Leninists old guard; but also because of its whole dictatorial and totalitarian structure. As for myself, I had not yet reached this conclusion – my divergences concerned the persecution of non-Stalinist Communists and the Hitler-Stalin Pact, and because of this I wanted to leave the Party and did so; but it took some time to convince me completely.

Koestler had with him, already three-quarters written, the German manuscript of *Darkness at Noon*. I was the first person to read it. He later revised it and even recast it but he had essentially finished it at the Vernet. He made use of the few sources he had at the time, in particular the articles which one of the GPU leaders, General Walther Krivitsky, who fled to the West in 1937 or '38, had published in a little paper issued by émigré Russians. (I don't remember whether it was the Mensheviks or the Trotskyists.) Krivitsky later published his memoirs, and was found mysteriously hanged in a room in New York.

He then added a footnote on Krivitsky:

"Krivitsky figures in a moving book, *Our Own People*, by Elisabeth Poretzky, the widow of his friend and companion in the GPU, Ignaz Reiss. Reiss had also broken with the Stalinist organisation in 1937 following the first Moscow show trials, and wanted to join Trotsky's Fourth International but was killed by Stalin's hired assassins in Switzerland: *"Habent sua fata libelli"*.<sup>34</sup>

This passage referred to well-known facts, but it is also quite revealing. Valiani was certainly correct in remembering Krivitsky's articles (in both

34 VALIANI, "Koestler the Militant: A Last Tribute", 69. On Fanny Jezierska, see Hermann WEBER and Andreas HERBST, *Deutsche Kommunisten. Biographisches Handbuch 1918 bis 1945*, Berlin: Dietz, 2008 (or. ed. 2004); Ottokar LUBAN, "Fanny Thomas Jezierska (1887-1945) - Von Rosa Luxemburg zu Gramsci, Stalin und August Thalheimer - Stationen einer internationalen Sozialistin" (2003) (in Ottokar LUBAN, *Rosa Luxemburgs Demokratiekonzept, ihre Kritik an Lenin und ihr politische Wirken 1913 - 1919*, Leipzig-Berlin: Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung Sachsen-GNN Verlag Sachsen, 2008). Jezierska was quite familiar with the Italian Communist network (including Giuseppe Berti), through her activities during her period in the Comintern in the 1920s.

Menshevik and Trotskyist publications). Koestler would have been able to refer to articles both in *Sotsialistichesky vestnik* (Paris), and the Trotskyist *Byulleten' oppositsii* (Paris).<sup>35</sup> It confirms that both Koestler and Weiczen had a very graduated process of detachment from Communism. It also reveals the importance of the assassination of Ignac Reiss and Walter Krivitsky's defection (both in 1937). In articles and interviews in the 1980s, Valiani repeatedly referred to the memoir published by the widow of Ignacy Reiss, Elisabeth Poretsky, *Our Own People*.<sup>36</sup> The title of the book is eloquent, since it refers to the fact that "either the enemy will hang us or our own people will shoot us". It also refers to six friends who came from "a small town in Galicia" (Podwołoczyska, on the border with Russia), all involved in the Soviet intelligence apparatus.

#### 4. Weiczen and Communism

Why should Krivitsky's revelations have assumed such importance for Koestler and, later, Weiczen? After all, these were not the first victims of Stalin's terror, or the last. It is essential to keep in mind that the effect of Krivitsky's writing was *retrospective*. Even Koestler needed a year to fully digest the implications of his own break with Comintern. Weiczen took even longer. For some time his views of Krivitsky would have been ambivalent, if not hostile. Only retrospectively, through a process which had begun with the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact (which Krivitsky had predicted), the meeting with Koestler, and the reading of the first draft of *Darkness at Noon*, did Weiczen finally break with Communism.

There may even have been a more intimate connection with Reiss. Weiczen was present in Spain during the Civil War (as his writing in the international Communist press attest). It is unlikely that he would have been unaware of the activities of the GPU in Spain.<sup>37</sup> His attachment to Poretsky's book may have been an indirect way of recognising his own responsibilities in that period.

35 See, e.g., Walter G. KRIVITSKY, "Begstvo ot Stalina. Pis'mo v redaktsiyu" [dated 5 December 1937], *Sotsialistichesky vestnik* (Paris), no. 23-24 (403-404) 24 December 1937; and "Pis'mo v rabochuyu pechat", *Byulleten' oppositsii* (Paris), no. 60-61, December, 9-10. An extensive list of Krivitsky's writings and interviews appears in Gary KERN, *A Death in Washington. Walter G. Krivitsky and the Stalin Terror* New York: Enigma Books, 2003, 400-402, and items 3, 8, 9 of Kern's list. There is also the new edition of Krivitsky's book, *In Stalin's secret service* (see above, no. 20).

36 Elisabeth K. PORETSKY, *Our Own People: A Memoir of "Ignace Reiss" and His Friends*, London: Oxford University Press, 1969. For Valiani's views on Reiss and Krivitsky, see PALA, "Dal comunismo all'azionismo", 236-240

37 For an exhaustive examination of the activities Alexander Orlov, see Boris VOLODARSKY, *Stalin's Agent. The Life and Death of Alexander Orlov*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. Valiani refers to Orlov in PALA, "Dal comunismo all'azionismo", 239. Orlov's role is also discussed in Кирилл Викторович ХЕНКИН, *Охотник вверх ногами (О Рудольфе Абеле и Вилли Фишере)*, Frankfurt am Main: Possev-Verlag, 1980 [Italian translation by Gigliola Venturi, Kirill CHENKIN, *Il cacciatore capovolto. Il caso Abel*, Milano: Adelphi, 1982], and Mary-Kay WILMER, *The Eitigons. A Twentieth-Century Story*, London: Faber, 2009.

Koestler and Weiczen spoke the same languages (including Hungarian). But, even more importantly, they spoke the language of Central European Communism; the language which had belonged to Franz Borkenau, Ruth Fischer,<sup>38</sup> Julian Gumperz and Karl Volk.<sup>39</sup> Valiani wrote in the following terms to Silone in 1949:

Reading *Emergency Exit*<sup>40</sup> would not have been enough as a reason to talk to you about it, were it not for the fact that today I came across a book which is the first politically profound and truly well documented book I have known, on the history of the Third International *Pattern of World Revolution* – by Ypsilon [the pseudonym of Gumperz and Volk], that is to say comrades we have known, from afar, and which have deposited their memoirs at the former Institute of Amsterdam [the International Institute of Social History]. In this book you are described as the model of the idealistic revolutionary of 1918-28. Yet even in this book there is no explanation of the passage from your generation to my generation and then of the passage from the near victory of my generation, to its physical elimination, in Russia, in 1938-39 (in the shadow of Bukharin, who had nothing to do with it, and perhaps without anyone in the West knowing of the simultaneous silent elimination of the Left-wing Stalinists of the First Five-Year plan) – and today, in Central Europe, with the same methods where the target of the GPU is now represented by the cadres of Communist parties, which are being purged.

For a while, I had thought that the logic of that passage consisted in the greater technical efficiency of my generation in comparison with the previous one. We had learned to prepare insurrection more effectively than the Spartacists, and we had really created mass parties, while Zinov'ev merely expressed his wish through propaganda. But already in Russia it was doubtful whether Right-wing Stalinists were more efficient than the Left-wing Stalinists, who had taken their place in 1939; in the Resistance to the Germans they had to appeal again to the latter, but keeping them in

38 In the post-war era Valiani established and maintained a connection with Ruth Fischer (who had belonged to the Left of the KPD). Her most important work was *Stalin and German Communism* (1948). On Ruth Fischer, see the comprehensive study by Mario KESSLER, *Ruth Fischer: ein Leben mit und gegen Kommunisten (1895-1961)* Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 2013. See also the remarks on Ruth Fischer in Hans M. ENZENSBERGER, *Hammerstein oder der Eigensinn. Eine deutsche Geschichte*, Frankfurt a.M: Surkamp, 2008, 139-141. Fischer was often portrayed in unfavourable terms during the Cold War because of her testimony against of her brothers Hanns Eisler and Gerhart Eisler. Ruth considered Gerhardt responsible for the assassination of her partner, Arkadij Maslow, in Havana in 1941 (see KESSLER, *Ruth Fischer*, 372-391. According to Herman Weber and Andreas Herbst, Gerhardt Eisler was, in fact, *resident* of Soviet military espionage (GRU) in New York (WEBER and HERBST, *Deutsche Kommunisten*, s.v. Eisler, Gerhardt).

39 YIPSILO [Julian GUMPERZ and Karl VOLK], *Pattern for World Revolution*, Chicago-New York: ZiffDavis, 1947; on this point see Mario KESSLER, *Ossip K. Flechtheim: politischer Wissenschaftler und Zukunftsdenker (1909-1998)*, Köln: Böhlau, 2007, 83, n. 163. On Gumperz see also Martin JAY, *The Dialectical Imagination. A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research, 1923-1950*, Boston: Little, Brown, 1973, *passim*. On Volk (*alias* Robert Rindl), see Weber and A. Herbst, *Deutsche Kommunisten*, s.v. Volk, Karl.

40 Silone's essay "Emergency Exit" was written for R. H. Crossman (ed.), *The God that Failed* London: Hamish Hamilton, 1949. It had also been published in Italian under the title "Un'uscita di sicurezza", *Comunità*, 3/5, settembre- ottobre 1949, 44-55.

a subordinate position. In Central Europe, people which have been purged is even substituted by unqualified people, such as workers shifted from the lathe, because only workers who have remained naïve in these years can still believe that the interests of Russia and Romania/Hungary/Czechoslovakia coincide. Technical efficiency has nothing to do with it, if not in a reverse sense. Is this the beginning of the end of Stalinism? Maybe. But the succession candidates are locally populist Nazi left-wing parties, which would turn up as Iron Guards<sup>41</sup> of the Left, destined to receive wide popular support. Only here in the West we might still be –maybe– succession candidates<sup>42</sup>.

A few years later, Valiani wrote to Franco Venturi: “What survives of [Russian] Populism in present-day Communism? Through personal experience I would say that the ideological and missionary aspect experienced a revival in ‘War Communism’ [1919-1921] and especially in ‘Left-wing Stalinism (Komsomol spirit of self-sacrifice during the First Five-Year Plan) which ensured Stalin’s victory’<sup>43</sup>.”

This was not the language of Carlo Rosselli, of Aldo Garosci or even

41 The Iron Guard was a Radical Right-wing movement in Romania in 1927-1941.

42 “Non sarebbe forse bastata la lettura di *Uscita di sicurezza* per parlarne, se non mi fosse capitato tra le mani oggi, per caso, un libro che è il primo politicamente profondo e veramente ben documentato che io conosca, sulla storia della 3a Int. – *Pattern of World Revolution* – di Ypsilon [i.e. Gumperz and Volk], cioè di compagni che abbiamo conosciuto, da lontano, o da vicino e che hanno consegnato i loro ricordi all’ex Istituto di Amsterdam. In questo libro si parla di te come del tipo di rivoluzionario idealista del 1918-28. E tuttavia anche in questo libro manca la spiegazione del passaggio dalla tua generazione alla mia generazione e poi del passaggio dalla quasi vittoria della mia generazione, alla sua eliminazione fisica, in Russia, nel 1938-39 (all’ombra di Boukharine, che non c’entrava, e senza che forse nessuno in Occidente sapesse della contemporanea silenziosa eliminazione degli stalinisti di sinistra del 1° piano quinquennale) – e oggi, con gli stessi metodi, nella Europa centrale, nella quale il bersaglio della GPU è ora costituito da quadri dei partiti comunisti, sottoposti ad epurazione.

Per qualche tempo, io pensavo che la logica del passaggio consistesse nella maggior efficienza tecnica della mia generazione rispetto a quella ci ha preceduti. Noi le insurrezioni avevamo imparato a prepararle meglio che non gli spartachisti e i partiti di massa disciplinati li abbiamo costituiti sul serio, mentre Zinoviev si limitava ad auspicarli con la propaganda. Ma già in Russia era dubbio se gli stalinisti di destra fossero più efficienti degli stalinisti di sinistra, ai quali si sostituirono nel 1939; nella Resistenza ai tedeschi dovettero nuovamente fare appello a questi ultimi, pur tenendoli in subordine. In Europa centrale, la gente oggi epurata è addirittura sostituita con degli inesperti, con degli operai portati via da davanti al tornio, perché solo degli operai rimasti ingenui in questi anni possono ancora credere alla coincidenza di interessi tra la Russia e la Romania/Ungheria/Cecoslovacchia. L’efficienza tecnica non c’entra più o c’entra a rovescio. È l’inizio della crisi dello stalinismo? Forse. Ma i candidati alla successione sono localmente di partiti nazisti popolareschi di sinistra, che sorgerebbero spontaneamente come guardie di ferro di sinistra, tra gli applausi delle popolazioni. Solo qui in Occidente potremmo essere ancora noi – forse – i candidati alla successione”. L. Valiani to I. Silone, 12 December 1949, published in TORTAROLO, “Leo Valiani: Storia e Politica”, 173.

43 “Che cosa del populismo sopravvive nel comunismo odierno? Per esperienza personale direi che l’elemento ideologico e missionario ebbe un ritorno di fiamma nel ‘comunismo di guerra’ e soprattutto nello ‘stalinismo di sinistra’ (spirito di sacrificio del Komsomol nel 1° piano quinquennale) che assicurò la vittoria a Stalin” (Valiani to F.Venturi, 1 February 1953, in VALIANI-VENTURI, *Lettere 1943-1979*, 108, as quoted in Alberto MASOERO, *Il partigiano e il cosacco. Franco Venturi, Herzen e l’Unione sovietica*, in *Franco Venturi e la Russia. Con documenti inediti*, (ed.) Antonello VENTURI, Milano Feltrinelli, 2006 [=Fondazione Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, *Annali*, 40 (2004)], 476, n. 36. See also the Garosci’s subsequent recollection of Weiczen in the 1930s: “Inside ‘Que faire?, you were in any case not a Trotskyist, but rather a ‘Left-wing Stalinist’, a playful self-definition which someone on the journal had chosen and which had alarmed the orthodox” (“A ‘Que faire?’ non eri del resto trozkista, ma piuttosto ‘stalinista di sinistra’ autodefinizione giocosa che qualcuno della rivista s’era dato e che aveva messo in allarme gli ortodossi”). Garosci to Valiani, June 1979, in FANTONI, *L’impegno e la ragione*, 199.

Franco Venturi (perhaps Valiani’s closest friend). The encounter with Koestler was the epiphany which, ultimately, emancipated Weiczen from Stalinism, which is what Communism, was intended to be. The rest is history: the history of another person, who in 1944 started signing his articles as Leo Valiani.<sup>44</sup>

## 5. Valiani after Communism

In 1941 Weiczen managed to reach Mexico.<sup>45</sup> His experience in Mexico City had included violent clashes with the local Communists and émigré Communists, such as his former colleague in Spain, Vittorio Vidali.<sup>46</sup> He subsequently managed to reach Italy again, and to take part in the Italian Resistance movement as one of the key leaders of the Action Party and the Committee of National Liberation. In so doing, he also re-established contact and personal friendship with his old Italian Communist comrades. This wartime experience certainly renewed his connections with Communists, as distinct from his attitude to Communism as an ideology.

After the war, he had a brief political career, which he had to abandon, following the demise of the Action Party which he had joined during the war. At the end of 1946, Valiani was actually able to travel throughout the East-Central Europe.<sup>47</sup> He still had relatives and friends in some of these countries.<sup>48</sup> But precisely for this reason he was all the more affected by the turn of events in 1947-48. When the show trials began, the ‘traitors’ arrested were individuals whose names were quite familiar to him, people he had known personally.

44 According to BUSINO, *Bibliografia*, 5, there is an item (item 46) in 1937 which is already signed ‘Leo Valiani’ (this is clearly a mistake). The regular use of ‘Leo Valiani’ begins only in February 1944 (item 160), following his return to Italy.

45 Various members of ‘Giustizia e Libertà’ had been able to go to the USA (starting with Aldo Garosci). The fact that Weiczen had to go to Mexico shows that at the time he would have still been seen as a Communist of some sort. For a broad depiction of the network enabling anti-Fascist and anti-Nazi refugees (including Victor Serge) to escape from Vichy France to the United States and to Mexico, see Rosemary SULLIVAN, *Villa Air-Bel. World War Two: Escape, and a house in Marseilles*, New York: HarperCollins, 2006.

46 On 1 April 1943 the Iberian-American Cultural Centre of Spanish refugees organised a meeting to commemorate Wiktor Alter and Henryk Ehrlich (the two Bundist leaders assassinated by the Soviets). The Centre was attacked violently by a large group of Mexican Communists (approximately one hundred people), probably organised by Vittorio Vidali. Victor SERGE, *Carnets (1936-1947)* (ed.) Claudio ALBERTANI and Claude RIOUX, Marseille: Agone, 2012, 293-295. On this period see Susan WEISSMAN, *Victor Serge. The course is set on hope*, London: Verso, 2001, ch. 8, 264-280. For a different perspective, see Luís MERCADER and Germán SÁNCHEZ, *Ramón Mercader mi hermano. Cincuenta años después* Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1990. On Wiktor Alter, see the biographical entry by Jerzy MINKOWSKI, *Słownik biograficzny działaczy polskiego ruchu robotniczego* (Warszawa: Muzeum historii polskiego ruchu rewolucyjnego, 1986), I, s.v. “Adler, Wiktor”. On both Alter and Ehrlich, see also the respective biographical entries (by Daniel BLATMAN), in *The YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*, available on www.yivoencyclopedia.org. On Vidali, see Patrick KARLSEN, “Vittorio Vidali: per una biografia del Novecento. Stato delle conoscenze e problemi metodologici”, *Annali dell’Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Storici*, 25 (2010), 479-512.

47 Valiani visited Hungary and other countries in the region in December 1947. He published a series of reports on this trip in February 1947: “Il sipario di ferro non esiste: qui comincia l’Oriente”, *Italia Libera*, 2 February 1947; “Viaggio nell’Ungheria del dopoguerra: il paese contadino cerca la sua strada”, *Italia Libera* 4 February 1947; “Zone di influenza e lotta per la supremazia”, *Italia Libera*, 6 February 1947.

48 See Venturi to Valiani (Moscow, 25 February 1949), in VALIANI-VENTURI, *Lettere 1943-1979*, 33-34.

The Eastern European veterans from the Spanish Civil War were repeatedly targeted. Detainees of Le Vernet camp were closely involved (as victims) in the Noel Field affair.<sup>49</sup> Unlike those who had remained loyal Communists, such as Jorge Semprún,<sup>50</sup> Valiani could not ignore this turn of events.

Curiously enough, Valiani (who proved quite a prolific writer) never wrote or published much about Communism. His historical publications never covered the period beyond 1918. There was only one post-World War I topic on which he once dwelt, and that was the Spanish Civil War.<sup>51</sup>

If we want to follow current historiographical fashions, we could pigeonhole the post-war Valiani as a ‘Cold Warrior’, at best a ‘Cold War Liberal’. As a matter of fact, throughout the entire Cold War period he never chose to label himself as an ‘Anti-communist’.<sup>52</sup> But this did not make an ‘Anti-anti-Communist’, either.<sup>53</sup> Some of his best friends were ‘Anti-Communists’: Arthur Koestler, for a start. So was François Bondy, highly active in the Congress of Cultural Freedom (as it happens, a former member of the *Que faire?* group, and a former detainee at Le Vernet).<sup>54</sup> So were many of the authors whom he respected most, which included Franz Borkenau and Ruth Fischer. He did not have any qualms about writing for journals which were obviously subsidized by Western governments. If he had been queried on this point, he might have given the answer to a similar question, which Trotsky gave in 1933, with reference to the choice of publishing articles in the *Corriere della Sera* (i.e. in Fascist Italy): “When I take a tram I do not ask myself if it belongs to a municipal corporation or to a capitalist corporation. For me, it is just a vehicle.”<sup>55</sup>

In 1948 Valiani was writing to Ruth Fischer, who has usually been

49 See SHARP, *Stalin's American Spy*, 93 and n. 18, 341.

50 Jorge SEMPRÚN, *Autobiografía de Federico Sanchez: novela*, Barcelona: Planeta, 1977; Jorge SEMPRÚN “The Weakest Link”, *Salmagundi*, No. 57 (Summer 1982), 3-41.

51 VALIANI, “Fronti Popolari e politica sovietica”, 193-213. This essay referred to the themes of Ferdinando CLAUDÍN's book, *La crisis del movimiento comunista. 1: De la Komintern al Kominform*, Paris: Ruedo Ibérico, 1970. See also Leo VALIANI, “La Terza Internazionale”, *L'Est*, no. 3 (30 dicembre 1965), 285-311.

52 There appears to be only one such usage, in the post-Cold War era, in an interview with a Hungarian scholar: “As a democratic anticommunist I was closer to La Malfa” (“Come *anticomunista democratico* ero più vicino a La Malfa”) (Ilona FRIED, *Fiume città della memoria, 1868-1945* [Udine: Del Bianco, 2005], 364, italics added; translation of FRIED, *Emlékek városa. Fiume*, Budapest: Ponte Alapítvány, 2001). But Valiani uses it in an un-ideological way, as a synonym for ‘non-Communist’; he also felt the need to stress the adjective ‘democratic’. Presumably, for him an ‘Anti-Communist’ was not necessarily a ‘democrat’.

53 The term ‘Anti-Anti-Communist’ came into usage in the US in the 1950s, usually as a negative label. At a later stage the terms was used in a positive sense by Leftist authors. See Christopher LASCH, “The Cultural Cold War: A short History of the Congress for Cultural Freedom” (1968), in Christopher LASCH, *The Agony of the American Left*, New York: Knopf, 1969. For a different perspective on the Congress, see Walter LAQUEUR, *Best of Times, Worst of Times. Memoirs of a Political Education*, Hanover: University Press of New England for Brandeis University Press, 2009, ch. 4, esp. 94-95.

54 François BONDY, *Rapport sur le Camp du Vernet (Ariège) et sur les conditions de l'arrestation et de l'internement de nombreux étrangers en France de F. B., interné en juin et juillet (1940)* in: Hanna SCHRAMM, *Menschen in Gurs. Erinnerungen an ein französisches Internierungslager (1940-1941). Mit einem Dokumentenanhang (und Interpretation dazu) zur französischen Emigrantentpolitik (1933-1944) von Barbara Vormeier*, Worms: Georg Heintz, 1977, 321-328.

55 Lev Trotsky in response to Carlo Rosselli, Paris, 1933. Valiani mentioned this episode on various occasions (e.g., PALA, “Dal comunismo all'azionismo”, 226).

dismissed as a ‘Cold Warrior’, in the following terms:

“The Italian Socialist parties are still in the bewildering crisis You have certainly noticed in Rome. Together with Romita we are about making a fresh effort to bring the rightists back to marxism and the leftists to democracy, which means anti-Stalinism, of course. I don't think it will be an easy task; it will take many months and perhaps a few years before being successful.”<sup>56</sup>

In other words, at the height of the Cold War, Leo Valiani was still attached to Marxism, and certainly considered himself a Leftist, albeit not of the Stalinist variety. In the same year, writing to his close friend Aldo Garosci, Valiani was still stressing that “conflict with Communists must have its limits. This is because the element of passion, the personal one, comes in. I do not come from Left-wing Liberalism, although I value it, nor from [Socialist] Reformism, although I recognize its function; I come from Marxism.”<sup>57</sup>

Finally, how consistent was Valiani? Once again, Valiani himself provides the answer, in another letter to Garosci:

“I am terribly inconsistent when it comes to action...In my view action is terribly inconsistent, in a revolutionary period, as Lenin, Stalin, Hitler, Roosevelt and hundreds of minor individuals, always accused of inconsistency. The less one is a man of action, the less one is inconsistent.”<sup>58</sup>

This may serve as a suitable epitaph for a man who was first a Communist, then a Democratic Communist, and finally a Revolutionary Democrat.

56 Leo Valiani to Ruth Fischer, 31 October 1948 (Ruth Fischer Papers, Houghton Library, Cambridge, Mass.). I thank Edoardo Tortarolo for providing a copy of this letter. See also Valiani to Garosci, 30 November 1946: “If tomorrow we found ourselves with Saragat and maybe Iniziativa (it seems that Saragat considers the split in the Italian Socialist party inevitable), we would strive to stop them from being predominantly anticommunists. We must argue against the Communists, and especially on issues of economic policy... possibly on the international situation. This is all. If Communists call us anticommunists, that is their business; we let them talk and we carry on along our path” (“Se domani ci trovassimo con Saragat e magari Iniziativa (pare che Saragat ritenga inevitabile la scissione [del PSIUP], cercheremmo di impedire loro di essere soprattutto anticomunisti. Occorre fare la polemica coi comunisti, e soprattutto su questioni di politica economica...eventualmente sulla situazione internazionale. Questo è tutto. Che poi i comunisti ci chiamino anticomunisti, è affar loro; noi li lasciamo dire e andiamo per la nostra strada”). Valiani to Garosci, in FANTONI, *L'impegno e la ragione*, 72.

57 “Il conflitto con i comunisti deve avere i suoi limiti...Perché qui entra l'elemento passionale, personale. Io non vengo dal liberalismo di sinistra, pur apprezzandolo, né dal riformismo, pur riconoscendone la funzione, ma dal marxismo”. Valiani to Garosci, 12 June 1948, in FANTONI, *L'impegno e la ragione*, 84.

58 “Io sono terribilmente incoerente quando si tratta di agire...A mio giudizio l'azione è terribilmente incoerente, in periodo rivoluzionario, come dimostrano Lenin, Stalin, Hitler, Roosevelt e centinaia di persone minori, sempre accusate di terribile incoerenza. Meno si è uomini di azione, meno si è incoerenti”(Valiani to Garosci, 5 September 1947. In FANTONI, *L'impegno e la ragione*, 77.



## Sažetak

### **LEO WEICZEN: KOMUNIST, DEMOKRATSKI KOMUNIST, REVOLUCIONARNI DEMOKRAT**

Guido FRANZINETTI

Leo Weiczen imao je kompleksan politički itinerar, od svojih ranih dana kao ortodoksni komunist, do faze “demokratskog komunista” (povezanog s *Que faire?*, tajnom frakcijom francuske komunističke partije iz sredine 1930.-ih), te naposljetku do promjene u revolucionarnog demokrata, koji je postepeno iznicao tijekom Drugog svjetskog rata. Ovaj je rad temeljen na trenutno dostupnim istraživanjima (uz poneke dodatne materijale). Cilj jest kontekstualizacija Valianijevih odabira unutar povijesti međuratnih komunističkih, socijalističkih i revolucionarno demokratskih pokreta.