

STRIKE WAVE WORRIES BOTH FRENCH CP AND GISCARD

NEW YORK, N.Y., Nov. 21 (IPS)--A four-week strike of French postal workers and sporadic strikes and walk-outs in other sectors culminated two days ago in a 24-hour general strike and massive, union-organized demonstrations in Paris and other major cities. The turnout prompted Georges Seguy, the General Secretary of the Communist union, the CGT, to say that such militancy hasn't been seen since the general strike days of May 1968. The actions are a clear statement on the part of workers that they are ready to counterattack against the Rockefeller-dictated austerity and destruction of the economy which is now being implemented by President Giscard d'Estaing.

Ferment around the strike has been generated by French President Giscard's rapid implementation of Rockefeller policy. Entire portions of French industry are being picked up and relocated, primarily to projects in Iran, Iraq, and Algeria. Inflation is running at 17 per cent and official unemployment has reached 600,000 and increasing every day with the massive bankruptcy of small and medium-sized firms unable to get credit.

The general strike two days ago pulled out large numbers of workers in the metallurgical and chemical industries, teachers, postal workers, miners, and electrical workers. An estimated 300,000 demonstrated around wage demands in Paris alone, with 60,000 in Marseilles (where 100 per cent of the longshoremen went on strike). Tens of thousands demonstrated in Grenoble, Lyon, and other cities. Ferment and pressure on the unions were so great that even the teachers' union (FEN), which had originally refused to associate itself with the strike, was forced to join the call out of fear of widespread discontent among its ranks.

CP Worried

The militancy of the French working class has not only worried the Giscard government. Seguy, Communist head of the CGT (France's largest union), has been begging the government to negotiate, pleading that he is ready to make concessions. Similarly, the Communist Party (PCF) did not lend political leadership to the strike (hoping that 24 hours of strikes would be enough to bring things "back to normal") out of fear that this would encourage workers to do something drastic--like demand that the PCF lead them in internationalizing the fight!

Giscard's confrontation with workers--which included using the military to scab on a sanitation strike and police to evacuate postal centers--having failed to produce the expected result, Rockefeller may in the coming period begin to activate an option which has been on his drawing board for some time. This would consist of an attempt to bring Francois Mitterand, the CIA's man

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in the French Socialist Party (SP), into the government to provide a "left" cover for implementing the outright Nazi looting policies which Rockefeller has on the agenda internationally.

This, too, may encounter some resistance. The SP, which has only a very small percentage of its members in the working class, would be incapable of pulling this off unless it was actively supported by the mass-based PCF. So far, the only thing which has prevented this fascism "with a democratic face" solution from coming about has been workers' determination to fight and the resulting pressure they have applied to the PCF leadership, keeping it one step away from such outright capitulations.

UAW COVERS UP FOR CHRYSLER

Nov. 21 (IPS)--The United Auto Workers (UAW) bureaucracy, who have been meeting with Chrysler for the last several months to coordinate the flow of laid-off workers into slave-labor public works jobs, are doing their best to conceal the real story of the Chrysler collapse from its members.

UAW Chrysler division Vice President Doug Fraser yesterday accused Chrysler of "sloppy management." Fraser, who met with Chrysler board chairman Lynn Townsend yesterday, told the press that the layoffs were "manipulated" to avoid payment of holiday pay to the furloughed workers. Under a contract loophole, Chrysler will not have to pay its workers their normal holiday week vacation pay. The company has announced its intention to take \$6 million from its Supplemental Unemployment Benefits (SUB) fund to pay workers an as yet undisclosed holiday bonus.

After months of denying IPS charges that SUB funds will run out, Fraser stated that unless there is "drastic turnaround" SUB funds will go broke within a "few months."

The corporativist Fraser demanded the removal of the current "irresponsible" Chrysler management. "Maybe we can get Ed Cole [the former president of General Motors] to come out of retirement," Fraser stated indignantly.

The UAW, prime organizers for Senator Walter Mondale's (D-Minn.) fascist relocation legislation, the so-called NERA bill, has yet to make public what provisions it is making to ship UAW members to Iran, where Chrysler plants are slated to be redeployed.