

Report from Paris by Laurent Rosenfeld

Is the Communist faction fight real?

Or is the Kremlin pursuing a two-track policy as it has several times in the past?

For the first time in the history of the French Communist Party (PCF), several departmental federations, the largest local bodies of the party, more or less equivalent to state organizations in U.S. parties, have rejected a motion prepared by the Central Committee in preparation for the party's 25th Convention on Feb. 6-10. So far, three federations have rejected the motion outright, and several others have "amended" it.

It is the typical issue over which communists fight, whether to be isolated sectarians or opportunists swimming in a sea of alliances.

Is there a *fronde* in the PCF? Is there going to be a schism in the party, similar to what happened recently in Spain, where there are now two parties, one entirely obedient to Moscow while the other has ostensibly gone free-lance?

Well, three federations (out of 95) is not yet very much. However, for the first time in the party's history, some form of organized opposition to the central leadership will express itself at a party convention. Furthermore, the opposition will be led by several of the party's top figures, including one member of the Politbureau, party spokesman Pierre Juquin, and at least one of the four former Communist ministers in the Mitterrand government, Marcel Rigout; it might include a second former minister, Anicet Le Pors.

The leadership still controls the party machine quite well; the opposition will certainly fail to gather a ma-

majority for any proposal contrary to the Central Committee's. However, it is not likely that the leadership will be able to just sweep aside and expel these opponents as "typical petty bourgeois intellectuals" or "class traitors," as was sometimes done in the past. Marcel Rigout is very popular with "the grass-roots membership." Any hard-line approach might produce a major schism in the party, something that the party leaders will apparently try to avoid.

The origin of the fight in the PCF lies in the series of electoral fiascos it has suffered in recent years, falling at the polls from the 22-25% average of the late 1970s to an historic low of 11% in the European Parliament elections of June 1984. This led the Communists to walk out of their cabinet coalition with the Socialist Party in July 1984—strangely enough, precisely when Mitterrand's Socialist government was going through a pro-Soviet shift.

Sources in Paris think that this party opposition may have been boosted by Socialist Party operations, perhaps even by some byzantine maneuvers directed by the Elysée. The Elysée's hand was clearly in evidence in the recent publication of a book under the pen-name "Fabien" containing the "secret diaries" of the late pro-Soviet *apparatchnik* Jean Kanapa—a "forgery" said the PCF.

Some observers think that Mitterrand, whose situation at the polls is, if not as disastrous as the PCF's, at least very bad, might be trying to create a "second PCF," which would join a

government coalition and save the Socialists in the 1986 general elections.

But there is another possible explanation, not necessarily in contradiction with the first one: Moscow might well be willing to split the Communist Party, pursuing a two-track strategy: one hard-line neo-Stalinist Party, strictly obedient to the Kremlin's orders, and a broader-based peace movement modeled on the German Greenies and fostering general destabilization. This, at least, was recently hinted at by "red billionaire" Jean-Baptiste Doumeng, a kind of French Armand Hammer (although not quite as rich). An unofficial representative of the Soviet government in France, Doumeng said that the future belonged to an anarcho-socialist, neutralist environmentalist movement, rather than to a pure communist party.

This scenario would explain Pierre Juquin's recent critical "contribution" to the party newspaper, *L'Humanité*—and the fact that it was not censored. In his article, he rejected the PCF's hard line, proposing to "search for the necessary alliances [with] other communist parties, socialist parties, greens, pacifists, Third Worldists, some religious forces in the Third World . . . in order to oppose Americanization in France [and] in Europe."

In short, his program is not very different from that of Roger Garaudy, a party Politbureau member kicked out in 1969 and recycled into support of the environmental-peace movements then being launched by the Kremlin, as well as the Islamic fundamentalists of the Nazi International's Ahmed Ben Bella, also supported by Moscow.

The creation of a French peace movement would fit perfectly with Moscow's goals, as would, in that case, a split in the Communist Party, only re-enforcing Soviet influence in French politics.