

PCF'S SEGUY COWED TO SURRENDER
BY CHIRAC'S TOUGH LINE

Nov. 8 (IPS)--The deliberate demoralization of the leadership and hence the working class base of the French Communist Party (PCF) has proceeded another step. Two weeks after French Interior Minister Poniatowski's sabre-rattling attack against the French Communist Party, Prime Minister Chirac delivered a scathing speech Nov. 4 from the Senate's lectern. Chirac spoke in the anti-communist vein made famous by Marshall Petain's Vichy government in the 1940s.

The object of Chirac's contrived anger was the alleged "politicization" of the CGT-led strike wave presently developing in the public service sector, primarily among postal workers. The CGT, the largest trade union confederation in France, is politically controlled by the PCF.

Chirac tried to dramatize what he portrayed as a fundamental conflict between the "selfish" aspirations of the strikers and the superior interest of the deified French state:

"We are not going to let the nation be dislocated....We shall never tolerate that anyone calls to question the institutions and the state through which national sovereignty is expressed....

"Private interests, group solidarities, corporate coalitions cannot prevail over the national interest, i.e., over what is due to the republican state....To speak against the state, to act against the state, to escape through fraud or through violations of obligations due by the citizens to the state is to act against the French people" (Emphasis added).

These are precisely the words Petain would use to condemn De Gaulle's "anti-French" liberation movement!

Chirac's speech quickly cowed the CGT's general secretary and PCF politburo member Georges Seguy into social-democratic humility. In an open letter addressed to President Giscard, Chirac and the employers' association chairman Ceyrac, Seguy openly confessed his fear of the Prime Minister's tough language:

"You do not seriously think that our objective is 'to dislocate the nation' by precipitating the country into disorder and upheavals.

"If our first intention were to bring down the government, we would not insist so much on your accepting sitting down at the negotiating table so we can, together, responsibly look for the best possible solutions to the most burning social problems."

And Seguy concludes: "We persist in believing that this constructive and responsible spirit will not remain the sole prerogative of the trade unionists."

Just a few days before, Seguy had raised a vigorous defense of the "Communists-are-the-revolutionary-vanguard-of-the-working-class" line retailed by the PCF at its Vitry congress. Similarly, it is Seguy himself who, last week, rallied public service workers by proclaiming loud and clear that "only the Common Program [of the united Socialist and Communist Parties--Ed.] can satisfy the legitimate demands of the strikers."

Seguy has surrendered. The CGT is now preparing to end the job action rather than give it the political mass strike dimension which would guarantee victory.