

## CRISIS IN EUROCOMMUNISM: THE FRENCH CASE

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In the old days the *Parti Communiste Francais* (PCF) was a model of Third International propriety. It was devoted to the Russians, convinced that the Soviet Union was the socialist model to be emulated, enthusiastically accepted the International's theoretical vision, and was internally run along lines very similar to those of the CP-USSR.<sup>1</sup> Of late it has adopted "Eurocommunism." It has become decisively French, abandoned the Soviet model of socialism as a goal, committed itself to democratic norms and adopted a radical reformist United Front strategy for change.<sup>2</sup> Recent events have made it clear, however, that "Eurocommunism" is not a *thing* whose qualities can be listed once and for all, but a complex *process* leading once quite predictable political formations into uncharted waters. What prompts such reflections specifically about the French variant of Eurocommunism is, of course, the French Left's failure in the general elections of 1978. These elections were to be the culmination of more than a decade of PCF devotion to a Eurocommunist United Front strategy.<sup>3</sup> Up to the last minute everything indicated that in March, 1978, a French Left dedicated to serious change would come to power for the first time since Liberation. Hopes, which were very high, were smashed by the results. With the failure of the *Union de la Gauche* a period of reflection, debate and party crisis unprecedented in the entire history of French Communism has begun, a period in which one thing has become obvious. The Eurocommunization of French Communism to the extent which it has occurred, has created new and complex contradictions for the French party. The situation is dramatic and the stakes, not only for the PCF but for the entire European Left, are high.

### I. *The Contradictions of PCF Strategy*

At the core of emerging French Eurocommunism lay the PCF's shift towards a new United Front strategy in the 1960's. United Frontism was not an innovation for the PCF, the party having tried it out in both the Popular Front and Resistance-Liberation period. In its earlier manifestations, however, the PCF had always given pride of place to Soviet diplomatic objectives over French domestic goals and this, together with the party's exaggerated reverence for Soviet society and Soviet ways of doing things, made earlier United Front success hard to achieve. Changes in the

international communist movement (the effects of "Peaceful Coexistence" and the decline of Soviet leadership) plus changes in the structures of French domestic politics in the Fifth Republic after 1958 (Left-Right polarization which forced the French Socialists to overcome Cold War objections and contemplate collaboration with the PCF) led the PCF back to United Frontism in recent times, but with a new face. Gone was the reverence for the Soviet model and subordination to Soviet diplomacy. In their place were new PCF commitments to the primacy of change in France and a desire to achieve a "socialisme aux couleurs de la France."

The projected dynamics of the PCF's new United Front strategy are easy to describe in the abstract. Initial tactics involved promoting a formal alliance of Left political forces around a programme of structural reform—a step achieved in the present United Front drive with the signature of the Common Programme of June, 1972.<sup>4</sup> The next stage involved promoting the electoral success of this Left alliance. Step three would follow this, consisting of the implementation of the Programme's reforms by a Left government in those ways which the PCF desired.' The PCF's strategic hope was that the entire process—mobilization for unity, electoral success and the implementation of a reform programme—would strengthen the Left as a bloc in France while strengthening the PCF within the Left.

In its own mind, the PCF knew that, to achieve the goals, it would have to work simultaneously on two levels of alliance-building. The most obvious level was political. The party had to construct and animate an alliance of the French political Left based on collaboration between Socialists and Communists. The PCF hoped that Socialist-Communist unity would work to rejuvenate French Socialism, pulling the socialist centre of gravity back towards a genuine class struggle orientation away from what the PCF viewed as a bankrupt social democracy primarily interested in unscrupulous coalition-mongering to get political power. The more subtle level of PCF United Frontism was social. The PCF, by virtue of its own historical activity and that of its labour mass organization, the *Confédération Générale du Travail* (CGT) had a strong base of support in the French working class. While this base was constant and substantial, it was not sufficient either in terms of electoral support or to mobilize potential to ensure that the PCF would automatically become hegemonic over a French Left which became a majority in France. As the PCF became aware of this, it began to commit itself to expanding its base outwards towards the "new middle classes", whose rapid growth has been such a notable feature of recent French social change. Here the PCF's Eurocommunist theoretical changes, embodied in the party's official writings on "state monopoly capitalism", provided support. In this perspective, the workings of advanced monopoly capitalism, by squeezing intermediary strata ever more, would make them progressively more willing to join a multi-class, anti-monopoly alliance for change led by the PCF, provided the PCF

played its cards **properly**.<sup>6</sup> Building a cross-class social base for its own positions within a broader United Front with other political forces was, then, the PCF's social alliance goal.

The electoral period of 1977-78 revealed that the PCF had failed in implementing much of this strategic vision. On the political level, the unfolding of the 1970's United Front strayed further and further from the PCF's desired scenario. *Union de la Gauche* was a general success, electorally, after the signature of the Common Programme in 1972. By the Municipal Elections of 1977, it looked very much as if the Left did have the majority which it would need to win governmental power in the 1978 general elections. However, as the *Union's* strength grew, new Left electoral support went disproportionately towards the Socialists. This, in turn, gave the Socialists an ever greater share of political resources relative to the Communists in the alliance. Moreover, as this occurred, the Socialists showed decreasing enthusiasm for moving to the Left in the ways hoped for by the PCF. Rather than shifting away from Social Democracy, the Socialist Party became increasingly dominated by Social Democratic elements around François Mitterrand.

Things turned out even worse for the PCF on the social alliance level. Here, in effect, the PCF was at a loss to find appropriate ways to carry out its desire to broaden its base into "new middle class" areas, despite the fact that, by the mid-1970's, intermediary strata in France were being severely hit by economic crisis. The party attempted a number of publicity-type operations stressing PCF devotion to democracy and liberties (issues which the party knew to be particularly salient to new middle groups) and made all manner of public statements proclaiming Communist support for the difficulties of such **groups**.<sup>7</sup> Basically, however, none of this successfully translated the PCF's social alliance goals into real politics. A major part of the problem was that the party's own history created reservations in such strata—images of Stalinism and its manichean perspectives on society which gave short shrift to the needs of the middle classes died hard. While things *were* changing in the PCF, the party was unable to convince intermediary social groups that they had changed enough. Beyond this the PCF demonstrated an almost perverse reluctance to broach issues which were obviously salient to new middle class groups in ways which would be favourably received. In the 1970's *autogestion*, feminism and ecology (including the nuclear power issue) all caused great concern in new middle groups. On all of these issues the PCF scorned the arguments which were put forward by the protest groups which raised these **issues**.<sup>8</sup> The general problem here was not simply that the PCF failed to develop positions which would allow it to build some mass base among new middle strata. Worse still, partly because of this PCF failure, the Socialist Party **was** able to gather such support into its fold.

The shortfall between the PCF's United Front desires and reality was even greater than the facts of renewed Socialist strength and Social Democracy plus the failure of the PCF to broaden its own base indicated. As the Socialists began to feel their new strength, they began to make extravagant public predictions about cutting into the PCF's traditional working class base. François Mitterrand's remark to his Second International colleagues in Vienna in 1972 about the PS reducing the PCF's electorate to 15% was only the first in a long series of such statements by Socialist spokesmen. More important, the party's day-to-day constituency work showed that the Socialist threat was not simply bravado. *Union de la Gauche* legitimated the Socialist Party to the Communist electorate, as Communists themselves ceased attacking the Socialists as class traitors and began to speak of them as loyal comrades. Such legitimation, while absolutely essential for the success of the *Union de la Gauche*, had the effect of opening up parts of the PCF electorate to Socialist raids, as PCF electoral canvassers quickly learned. The PCF's traditional base of support had always included an important group of Left protest voters whose allegiance was less to the PCF *per se* than to Left opposition to the *status quo*, which the PCF had, for decades, represented. With *Union* consecrating the PS as a genuine force of the Left, many such voters began to look to the PS rather than to the PCF. How many such protest voters in the PCF's base there actually were was unclear, perhaps only a few percent. But the loss of even a few percent from the PCF's long-stagnating voter base would have been a major defeat for the party.

That United Frontism was not working the way the PCF wanted it to work was an unpleasant reality for the party, to be sure, but a potentially reversible one as long as there existed no immediate prospect of the Left coming to power. "Union is struggle", as the PCF was wont to observe rather repetitively, and struggle for position between the two major parties in the new United Front was a natural thing.<sup>9</sup> Already, for several months after the PCF's XX1st Congress in 1974, and in response to a series of bye-elections in which the PS gained in relation to the PCF (making serious inroads into the PCF's electorate) the PCF had accentuated the "struggle" side of its *Union* approach, moving with alacrity to strident attacks on the Socialists as "social democrats" uninterested in "real change." The attacks were designed to warn the PS against a "drift to the Right" and against raids on the PCF electorate. Yet the 1974-75 PCF anti-Socialist offensive ended abruptly when the time came to prepare the 1976 cantonal elections (in turn, stepping stones to the all-important 1977 Municipal Elections). From this point until Springtime 1977, comity and entente between the two parties prevailed, even while both jockeyed for position. After the 1977 Municipal Elections, however, a new calculus became inevitable. When events made clear that, other things being equal, the *Union de la Gauche* would win the 1978 general

elections, the prospect of power existed. Once the Left formed a government, the relative balance between its major components became a question of political life-or-death involving which party's policies would be legislated and how they would be carried out. It was at this point that the contradictory unfolding of the PCF's United Front strategy became critical. Once countdown towards the 1978 elections began, the PCF had to face the fact that its "strengthen the Left, strengthen the PCF within the Left" strategy had failed. The Left had been strengthened by *Union*, but the Socialists had benefited primarily from this. This meant that, with the Left in power, the Socialists stood to have the clear advantage in resources. And, as the Socialists' advances had become more obvious, the Socialist leadership had moved further to the Right towards more traditional Social Democratic positions. Thus in a Left government, as things stood, the PCF would be faced with the untenable choice between being midwife to a process of social democratic reform or of breaking up the first Left government in France since the 1930's.

By summer 1977 the PCF faced a situation in which it had only unpleasant tactical options from which to choose. It responded by taking the offensive. If increased Socialist electoral strength and PCF strategic failures prompted the Socialist leadership to want to *use* the Communists as a support group for Socialist policies, then what was necessary was to tie down the Socialists *in advance* of the 1978 elections to policies which would be acceptable to the Communists. The opportunity to do this arose when the parties of the Left met to bring the 1972 Common Programme up to date for the electoral campaign. What the PCF leadership decided to do at this point was to use these "actualization" negotiations to *force* the Socialists to espouse the kind of programme which the Communists wanted. To make such tactics credible the PCF had one large threat at its disposal, its ability to break the unity of the Left in the pre-electoral period. This, the Communists reasoned, would be sobering to the PS indeed. Unified, the Left was likely to win in 1978; divided it was likely to lose.

The summer 1977 programme negotiations between the PCF and PS became a session of political Russian roulette. The Socialists refused to update the 1972 Programme in ways which the PCF desired (by adding, for example, the nationalization of the crisis-ridden steel industry to the list of industries to be taken into the public sector). Beyond this, they clearly wanted to water down the existing programme in a number of areas (nationalizations, wealth redistribution.)<sup>10</sup> Socialist responses to PCF programme initiatives confirmed PCF fears that the Socialists wanted to come to power not to work change in France, but to "manage the capitalist crisis." Public statements by many Socialist leaders, in particular by the younger "technocrats" such as Michel Rocard and Jacques Attali (both likely to be in important economic policy-making roles in a Left

government) indicated that this was indeed the case. Several weeks of hard bargaining ended in impasse on September 22, when the talks were suspended. Left disunity followed.

### *II. Left Disunity: The Campaign*

The PCF's electoral campaign after September 22 was a response to the contradictory unfolding of its United Front strategy. The party had reasoned that the Socialists would react to the threat of Left disunity by conceding key points in the programme talks. The Socialists did not do so, thus the PCF had to act on the disunity threat, in the hope that the Socialists would, in time, change their positions, as the election drew closer and the electoral costs of Left disunity became more evident. To hasten this end, the PCF launched a brutal and strident campaign against the Socialists, reminiscent of the rhetoric of "class against class" and Cold War attacks on "Right Wing Social Democrats." Communist spokesmen made the Socialists totally responsible for the failure of the programme negotiations and connected this responsibility to a Socialist "turn to the Right" (often, in turn, tied to an alleged rapprochement between the PS and the German Social Democrats). The ultimate logic of such attacks was, of course, to undermine the prospects for Left electoral victory. Although the PCF hoped that this logic would not be followed to its conclusion—perhaps the Socialists would give in—it was obviously prepared to carry it out if need be. Thus it is technically correct to claim—as many observers have done—that the PCF was willing to lose the **1978** elections if one includes the important *caveat* that this will for defeat held true for only *one* of the PCF's tactical scenarios, the one in which the Socialists refused to concede what the Communists wanted.

It was on the social alliance level that the PCF had to face the most unpleasant realities. It had failed to make any real progress towards a cross-class electoral base of its own since **1972**. Beyond this, however, Socialist success had actually begun to threaten parts of the PCF's traditional electoral base. The PCF devised an electoral tactic to confront these failures worthy of a Hollywood western film. It decided to draw all of its wagons in a circle around its working class supporters to protect them for the Socialist Indians. This involved pitching the party's electoral appeals to issues felt most strongly by workers and the poor—long discourses on "poverty", the need to "soak the rich", the urgency of raising the minimum wage, preventing evictions, erasing unemployment, and so on. This approach, when coupled with the attacks on the Socialists, was designed to deprive the Socialists of any Left legitimacy which they might have acquired with the PCF's usual electorate in the *Union* period. It had the virtue of making it nearly impossible for the Socialists to touch much of the working PCF vote, given the Socialists' need, at the same time, to concentrate their primary fire on centrist, new middle class segments of the

population. It had the fault, however, of rendering the Communist appeal difficult to understand by anyone but workers.

The campaign, like the earlier negotiations to update the Common Programme, wound down to a halt. The PCF never stopped brandishing the "Left disunity-electoral failure" club over the Socialists' head. Indeed, as the first round of the elections approached the PCF leadership even hinted that unless PCF electoral support counter-balanced that of the Socialists (the famous "21% is not enough, 25% would be good" remark of Georges Marchais to the January, 1978, PCF National Convention) and/or the Socialists gave in on programme, the Communists might refuse to lend support to Socialist candidates who remained in the second round, a threat which promised total electoral disaster for the Left.<sup>11</sup> The Socialists still refused to budge.<sup>12</sup> Most astonishingly all of this occurred against the background of opinion polls which consistently pointed towards a Left victory, disunity or not. The polls had the effect of removing most of the teeth from the PCF's anti-socialist tactic, for if it seemed that the Left might win despite its internal divisions, there existed no compelling reason for the Socialists to accede to Communist demands. Two contradictory gambles were thus played out to the end. The Communists were banking on the fact that the anticipated electoral effects of Left disunity would force the Socialists to give in on programme. The Socialists believed, in contrast, that Left disunity would not prevent Left success.

When the results of the first round of the election on March 12 were known, it was clear that both Left parties had lost their gambles.<sup>13</sup> The Left had not done badly, if one included the votes of the extreme Left and the Ecologists, in fact it won a plurality of the votes cast. But the parties of the existing Centre-Right majority had done much better than anyone had expected. When projected ahead to the March 19 runoff, the results indicated that the Left's advances were not enough to create a Left majority in parliament. Communist efforts to punish the Socialists for their "turn to the Right" were, however, mildly rewarded. The Socialist vote, which the polls and the Socialists themselves had expected to be 26-27% of the total, stuck at 22.5%. The Socialists had anticipated breakthroughs both on their Right in new middle class groups, and on their Left, in the traditional Communist electorate. Neither breakthrough occurred. The critical 3-4% of new middle class electors in whose hands lay both Socialist success and the election outcome had stayed with the parties of the existing majority, most likely because they had decided, at the last moment, that a divided Left would be unable to govern decisively at a critical juncture of economic crisis. On the Left, the Communists had been quite successful at protecting their own base.

Communist cells and sections talked a great deal about the party's "victory over social democracy" in the week between the two election

rounds, by this meaning the party's ability to conserve its usual electoral strength (20.5% of the first round vote) during a difficult period. The talk had an hysterical edge to it, however. Party militants knew from first hand investigation that the party's "soak the rich" campaign had made Communist candidates unpalatable to non-working class voters, a fact which hurt PCF candidates a great deal in constituencies where only a combination of working class and other votes could have led to success (the case in most urban settings, especially Paris). Defeating social democracy seemed even more hollow because the party had clearly failed at its larger gamble, forcing the Socialists to give in on programme by dividing the Left. This failure put the party in a very delicate situation with regard to the second round. Were it to carry out its threats to refuse support to Socialist candidates second round, electoral disaster for the Left and irreparable damage to any future United Front hopes would follow. Yet none of the issues of principle which had led the party to make such threats had been resolved. In this case, principle gave way to shorter-run concerns. On the day following the first round the PCF and PS signed an accord to exchange support without negotiating any new agreements on programme. Party militants were puzzled by this—if the Communist-Socialist rift had not been based on profound disagreements, then why the rift at all, if the split had been based on principle, then why the last minute accord? Such puzzlement did not help in an already difficult situation. Bad blood between Socialists and Communists ran too deep to allow the parties to mount a joint campaign for one week with any enthusiasm. And the outgoing majority, with its positive first round results in hand, was well prepared to move in for the kill. The result was an intense propaganda barrage from the Right in which the crudest kinds of anti-communism had pride of place. By the evening of the second round, March 19, only the size of the majority's victory was a surprise. It turned out much larger than expected in terms of parliamentary seats, even though the real division of votes between the Left and the majority was quite close (only 1%).

### *III. Contradictions With the Party: Democracy to the Limit. . . For Whom?*

Most thoughtful Communists were well aware that the Centre-Right had not won the 1978 elections, rather that the divided Left had lost them. This, in itself, enjoined self-criticism for the PCF. Moreover, the end of the electoral campaign marked the end of nearly a decade of United Front mobilization. Springs which had been tight for years could finally relax. The post-election period would inevitably be a time for reflection, for the analysis of things past. Beyond this, one could sense during the last days of the election period that the PCF rank-and-file needed much debate and discussion in order to put the Left's self-destruction into sensible perspective. The PCF has never been particularly gifted at internal debate

and discussion, however. Thus the PCF *Bureau Politique's* post-election version of what had happened was not surprising, on the one hand, but extremely provocative on the other. The party leadership's statement fell into a long and, alas, traditional, line of self-justificatory pronouncements which swept all outstanding issues under the rug. According to the BP the split on the Left which caused the Left's defeat was completely due to the Socialists. The corollary to this was that the PCF had been consistently correct throughout.<sup>14</sup> From this "business as usual" approach, it was clear that the PCF leadership had no idea at all what was going on in its own ranks. By using tired *formulae* whose success depended, in the best of circumstances, on an atmosphere of mobilization, the leadership's remarks were to, as the French so eloquently phrase it, *faire dkborder la vase*. An explosion of rank-and-file discontent unprecedented in French Communist history was about to begin.

It was immediately clear at cell and section levels that the PCF's official version of what had happened was not being taken seriously by party activists. Instead a vast amount of questioning began. Had the electoral accord of March 13 been wise? What of the "soak the rich" campaign and its implicit recognition of the PCF's failure to build any cross-class social alliance in the 1970's? The fact that the anti-Socialist campaign of 1977-78 closely resembled that of 1974-75 led some to scrutinize four years of party activity more closely. Would the party be forever stuck in a working class ghetto politically? If this was a danger—and the events of 1977-78 indicated that it was—then how would the party ever accumulate enough political resources to be the vanguard of a peaceful transition to socialism? A small minority in the party who actually opposed the split with the Socialists in September 1977 began to speak out (in fact most of the party believed that the split itself had been unavoidable). Another minority in the party, this one even smaller, ventured to suggest that the whole United Front venture had been a mistake. Those who had opposed abandoning the dictatorship of the proletariat at the XXII<sup>nd</sup> party Congress spoke out. Here there were two schools of thought. One still believed in the dictatorship of the proletariat. The other pointed out that the notion of proletarian dictatorship had been the PCF's theory of the state for the transition to socialism. And, while this theory was indeed unfortunate and out-of-date, its abandonment had left the party without any theory of the state at all. Many in the party who were close to the trade union movement also expressed unhappiness with the ways in which the CGT had been used during the campaign to further PCF goals, at whatever cost to its viability as a labour mass organization.

Rank-and-file discussion was voluminous and many of the issues raised clearly cross-cut one another. At the start questioning was mainly about strategy. What had happened in the course of the recent period to

paint the party into the strategic corner of 1977-78, in which it faced nothing but bad options? Focussing on mistakes which had been made led very quickly to focus upon those who had been responsible for such mistakes. And when *militants* looked closely at decision-making in the PCF the first thing which they saw was that something was strange about the internal life of the PCF. Why had the *Bureau Politique* made all of the critical decisions of the electoral campaign without any broad party discussion, a practice which had consistently left the rank-and-file in a position where its only choice was to ratify choices in whose making it had played no role? Why had the party leadership made a one hundred and eighty degree shift on defence policy (towards supporting the *force de frappe* after long years of opposing it) in 1977 without conducting a full debate beforehand?" Why had Georges Marchais announced that the XXII<sup>nd</sup> Congress would abandon the dictatorship of the proletariat on television before any debate had occurred in the party? Why had the leadership decided to make public the minutes of the summer 1972 Central Committee meeting (in which Marchais and others expressed considerable scepticism about the ability of the Socialists to carry out their end of the Common Programme bargain) only in 1975?<sup>16</sup> On quite another plane, why did the Central Committee always act like a rubber stamp for the *Bureau Politique*? Why were major party occasions, Congresses and Conferences, still "grandes messes" in which the proceedings were ritual rather than discussion?<sup>17</sup> And why were delegates to such occasions elected by cooptation from above?

It did not take long for the PCF rank-and-file debate on strategy and inner-party life to rage out of control. Ordinary Communists began to do unheard-of things, such as publishing criticisms in *le Monde* and *Politique-Hebdo* (both rather low on the party leadership's list of favourite reading). The leadership's initial responses to the explosion were like pouring gasoline on an open fire. *Humanité*, the PCF's official paper, refused even to acknowledge that any serious controversy, existed an attitude which involved steadfast refusal to print any but the most orthodox contributions to discussion (all of which, of course, literally forced rank-and-file critics to publish in *le Monde*, despite the fact that doing so violated party rules), or to comment on criticisms when they appeared elsewhere. When the leadership was finally obliged to recognize that something unusual might be going on, it resorted to hackneyed cliches which everyone involved knew to be false. According to the leadership, out of over 600,000 Communists only a handful of malcontents were protesting, and they were the same ones who had protested at the dictatorship of the proletariat affair at the 1976 Congress (an attempt to equate the entire agitation with Louis Althusser and the ever-troublesome Sorbonne section of the party). Moreover, the critics were all "intellectuals" (an attempt to invoke the PCF's tried-and-true "workerist" reflexes).

Such attempts to isolate and repress debate proved inadequate to the task, and tended instead to make the situation worse. While the first round of inner-party discussion was mainly at rank-and-file level, what happened next was the entry of several well-known Communists into the lists. Jacques Frémontier, a Communist writer and editor of Action (a party journal) resigned his editorial post in protest over a scandalous and expensive censorship operation carried out by the leadership on an election pamphlet for whose preparation he had been responsible. The pamphlet dealt with the question of civil liberties, and had originally been covered with photographs illustrating political oppression in the USSR and West Germany (the *Berufsverbot*), and had been printed up in more than a million copies before Gaston Plissonier (and old-line member of the BP) and other members of the party Secretariat had ordered it scrapped. A second edition was likewise thrown out before the leadership was finally willing to release a third edition which restricted its pictorial purview to France.<sup>18</sup> At about the same time, Francis Cohen, an astute older militant not known for his risk-taking, published a strongly critical piece on the party's election strategy in one of the party's most prestigious journals (of which he was editor) *In Nouvelle Critique*.<sup>19</sup> Next the PCF's best-known heretics let loose, from Right and Left, in *le Monde*. Jean Elleinstein, the party's most notable "liberal" deviant, were first, three days running, to express some very obvious thoughts: the party's alliance strategy had failed, perhaps the split with the Socialists had been unwise, or at least unnecessary, basic changes towards greater democracy in the party's internal life were long overdue.<sup>20</sup> His predictions for the party's future, should the necessary changes not be made, was gloomy indeed. Next, from the Left, came the thunder of Althusser himself, who, in four very long pieces in *le Monde* (obviously written as a book) left no stones unturned. Everything was wrong with the PCF, its strategy, its organizational life, its ideological stance, its relationship with the masses.<sup>21</sup> Althusser presented his arguments, few of which were new, in an angular and polemical way which angered a good many party activists, even when they agreed with him. Still, the very fact that the PCF's leading Marxist theoretician was willing to put himself completely on the line in this way signalled to everyone, inside and outside the PCF, that the party's crisis was no ordinary one. And at about the same moment two unofficial and highly critical books appeared about life in the PCF written both by respected Communists who clearly had every intention of remaining in the party and fighting the issues they raised through to the end.<sup>22</sup>

The most important rank-and-file rebellion in the history of the PCF was well under way by mid-April, 1978. Discussion was chaotic and uneven, both in its conceptual focus and in its location. Certain party Federations (Federations, the next party level above the sections, are the most important party organizations outside the central apparatus), such

as Paris, were totally consumed in controversy, while others (those in the Red Belt around Paris where the party leadership had its local bases) were relatively quiet. Moreover, the debate was carried on almost exclusively in local, as opposed to factory, cells. This was partly because local cells had little to do except be reflective in the aftermath of the elections while factory cells had their daily shop-floor activities to carry on as usual, and partly because factory cell members traditionally protest not in words, but "with their feet", by ceasing to attend meetings and do party work (numbers of factory cells virtually ceased to exist as vital bodies in these weeks). Whatever the reasons for the local vs. factory cell differences, they did provide some ammunition for the leadership in its determined campaign to pin the protest on intellectuals (a word whose vagueness in ordinary PCF usage makes it ideal for pejorative purposes). Leadership attempts to play upon class differences between workers and "intellectuals" did not achieve their objectives, however. Whoever was involved in the debate, and however uneven its geographical incidence, it clearly was very broadly-based. And, no doubt, contributions to the controversy were encouraged by Georges Marchais' declaration—the only one possible given the PCF's bad press after the election—that there would be no expulsions from the party, no matter what happened.

Much of the fracas occurring in the first month after the election was really directed to the party leadership in the hope that it would provide a sensible and comprehensive answer to the issues which were being raised. The leadership had, in fact, an ideal occasion at hand to end the party crisis by making some concessions: the first Central Committee meeting after the elections at the end of April. Here, in a long, magisterial and rather boring report, Georges Marchais gave nothing to protestors, adding insult to injury by labelling the party's critics as potential liquidators of democratic centralism, eliminators of the distinction between the masses and the vanguard party and destroyers of the working class character of party leadership. Beyond this, Marchais' report essentially reiterated the *Bureau Politique's* post-election statement, asserting that the Socialists had been the exclusive villains of the piece and that the PCF had been correct every step of the way.<sup>23</sup> No unusual situation prevailed, Marchais claimed, and no special changes were in order. What Marchais and the leadership wanted was crystal clear. The General Secretary's report was aimed at caricaturing and thereby isolating inner-party protestors, in the hope that, in time, the protest would wither away. Central to this tactic was to get the Central Committee to approve the report unanimously, which it did.

The eagerness with which Central committee approval was sought tended to undermine this purpose. The CC met for three days, the first of which was used up by Marchais' report, which was adopted on the afternoon of the second day. *After* this, a day of discussion followed.

Few observers failed to note that discussion of Marchais' report occurred only after the report had been adopted, and that therefore the discussion could have had absolutely no effect on the outcome of the Central Committee meeting.

The Central Committee failed to dampen the crisis. Not only did criticism of the party's path not disappear, it intensified. From the exemplary action of several PCF "big guns" (Althusser, Elleinstein *et. al.*), revolt shifted towards long petitions and letters, often in *le Monde*, signed by large numbers of rank-and-file Communists. On 17 May *le Monde* published an open letter from 100 activists demanding a serious and detailed party discussion of the elections, while noting that the Central Committee's deliberations did not fit this description. On May 20 came a similar petition from Aix-en-Provence signed by 300 *militants* (indicating clearly that the revolt was not simply Parisian). Then on May 25 came a petition asking for the party to rethink its relationships to intellectuals, signed by a number of eminent scientists and researchers. The Central Committee's response to the party crisis had turned individual protest into collective action, in overt defiance of the party's rules. In order to counteract the leadership's attempt to label the protestors as isolated individuals, critics were willing to engage in horizontal communication outside of their cells, in violation of the basic tenets of democratic centralism. Beyond this, the leadership's response had the decisive effect of clarifying one major thrust of the rebellion, anger at the insufficiently responsive and democratic relationships existing between the PCF's leadership and rank-and-file.

By the end of springtime 1978 it was evident that the PCF crisis might take months, perhaps years, to resolve itself. By this point as well the basic issues in the crisis had been clarified. Besides the strategic contradictions discussed above, which formed the core of crisis discussions about the party's relationships to the outside world, the other major focus was the profound contradiction between the logic of the PCF's new Eurocommunist strategic stance and the arrested state of the party's own internal development. In the last decade the PCF had changed its perspective to recognize that basic social change can come only *democratically* while its own party life had not been sufficiently adapted to reflect this. From a distance, the PCF crisis of 1978 had a certain inevitability about it. In the realm of theory the PCF had come to believe that the expansion of democracy in France was contradictory to the further development of state monopoly capitalism, or, in other words, that French capitalist accumulation could only go on at the expense of democracy. In such a context, the party reasoned, a resolute struggle to defend and expand democracy in France would be profoundly anti-capitalist. Ultimately such a struggle would create the conditions for a transition to socialism which would primarily involve building a newly democratized society in France. The XXII<sup>nd</sup> Congress of 1976, whose watch-

word was *la démocratie jusqu'au bout* (democracy to the utmost), was a genuine milestone for the PCF in this respect, fully consecrating, as it did, the "crisis of democracy" logic. However, to the degree to which the PCF clarified its commitment to democratic change it foreordained serious difficulties in its own internal life. The profound strategic changes to a new United Frontism based on struggle for democratic transformations in France had occurred largely in response to exogenous factors (as we have noted, change in the international communist movement and change in the structure of French domestic politics). The party's internal structures, burdened, as they were, by the profound Stalinist legacy of the Maurice Thorez years, changed much more slowly and, even then, only to the degree to which the leadership was willing to allow.<sup>24</sup> And as opportunities for United Front success opened wide in the 1970's, the gap between the party's external commitments and its internal procedures grew steadily. The 1978 crisis was the final outcome of this growing contradiction.

Perhaps the most obvious underlying factor in the explosion of the democratic strategy/internal life contradiction has been the effect of PCF doctrinal changes in the recent period. During the 1960's and early 1970's the party came to accept many of the tenets of parliamentarism. This involved the acceptance of party pluralism in the transition period and in socialism as well, willingness to contemplate a graceful and legal departure from power if the electorate voted out a Left government, and, finally, the momentous abandonment of the party's traditional theory of the state during the transition to socialism (the dictatorship of the proletariat) in 1976. Beginning in the mid-1970's the party also realized the need to affirm its commitment to the spread of liberties—civil, economic and social.<sup>25</sup> Accompanying this realization came a new willingness to denounce the lack of such liberties in the Soviet Union.<sup>26</sup> In general, as the PCF refined its analysis that France had entered a "crisis of democracy" it abandoned the scorn with which it traditionally treated "bourgeois" democratic forms (contrasted, as they usually were in PCF discussions, with the "proletarian democracy" which prevailed in the Socialist bloc) to adopt a perspective which saw the expansion and deepening of just these forms as the road to change. To the degree to which party activists took all of these doctrinal changes seriously they could not help but, in the longer run, subject their own party to the hard democratic critiques which they were being taught, by this very same party, to direct at the rest of French life.

Sociological changes in the PCF reinforced such ideological processes. In the decade between 1968 and 1978, as the party shifted its strategy, and as political prospects for the Left began to look up, the PCF attracted large numbers of new members. Beyond this, as part of the new strategy, beginning in the 1970's, the party leadership decided to transform the party from its earlier hardened *vanguard* nature towards a more Italian-

style *mass* party. This change involved more aggressive membership recruitment and a general relaxation in the **PCF's** once quite stringent recruitment standards. By **1978** the vast majority of PCF members had no political memories other than those of the party's modern United Front thrust. The necessity of Left Union in a "crisis of democracy" to promote a peaceful, democratic transition to a "socialisme aux couleurs de la France" was their political catechism. **They** knew little of the party's past identifications with Stalinism and had no attachment to the organizational legacies of **this** past. Moreover, if what few statistics we have on this new membership are reliable, it was relatively less drawn from the traditional working class than the party had once been, reflecting as it did the growth of new middle strata in urban *settings*.<sup>27</sup> There was an influx of people from the generation and social base of the student movement of May-June **1968**, who were likely both to be more involved with traditional democratic forms and the student movement's radical redefinition of them. Newer working class recruits to the party tended to come less and less from the isolated working class sub-society from which the party had traditionally drawn its working class *militants* and more from the modernized, anonymous, consumer culture of France's new working class suburbs. In all this, the generation of older, pro-Soviet, "workerist" party faithful who had long been the backbone of French Communism became a minority. In general, then, the changing structure of generations in the party plus the changing sociology of party membership tended to favour the new stress on democracy.

The ways in which the internal structures of the PCF *had* actually changed paradoxically contributed to the **strategy/organization** contradiction. Internal de-Stalinization in the PCF started very late (relative to other **CP's** in Western Europe) and proceeded haltingly. Maurice Thorez, the **PCF's** long-time General Secretary and its "legislator" of doctrine and structures, only departed the scene in **1963**. Until this late date, the party successfully resisted any pressure for change away from its rigid neo-Stalinist internal life. Under **Thorez**, decision-making was concentrated in the hands of "Maurice" and his immediate coterie, decisions were automatically ratified by obedient Congresses and Central Committees, and then implemented by a core of permanent *apparatchiks* whose primary loyalty was to the Secretary-General *himself*.<sup>28</sup> After Thorez died, his successors (Waldeck Rochet and Georges Marchais) recognized the need for change away from such a rigid and inefficient party structure; Marchais, in particular, has been a consistent advocate of change. Although not negligible, what has happened has been limited. Collective leadership has come to replace one-man leadership at the top of the party. Very real debate goes on, at the top, between members of the *Bureau Politique*, while Georges Marchais, as General Secretary, is, at best, *primus inter pares*. However, the *Bureau Politique* still decides everything

of importance, with little input from below, while the Central Committee and Congress are still rubber stamps for the leadership. Party *permanents* remain the producers of rank-and-file ratification for policies in whose definition they have had no real part (in his series in *le Monde* Althusser called such *permanents* the "prefects" of the PCF). Upper level party leaders, Central Committee members and Congress delegates are still "elected" from lists prepared at the top, limited to the exact number of nominees needed to fill the posts in question, and passed on to the rank-and-file, Soviet style. Yet at the other end of the organizational spectrum considerable care has been lavished to promote open and lively debate on the cell level (and in certain Federations, the section level), a change which the leadership actively encouraged. Thus the Eurocommunization of the PCF has *partially* opened up the party's structures, in ways which, in certain circumstances, could make it extremely difficult for the leadership to control rank-and-file life. As long as the party was totally mobilized in its United Front drive, with cells in constant activity to promote the party's strategic and tactical goals, open discussion at the base tended to focus on the adaptation of the party's line, handed down from the top, to specific local situations. Once the tension of mobilization was released, however, in the Spring of 1978, this new openness on the base level ensured that questioning, then systematic reflection, and, finally, open rebellion had a place inside the party.

In essence, then, Eurocommunist strategic change in the PCF, by stressing democratization as the process whereby socialism would be built, provided the ideological basis for the present **strategy/organization** contradiction in the PCF. New membership recruitment, on different grounds from the past, created the personnel basis for the contradiction. And the paradoxes of internal Eurocommunist changes in the party made the explosion of the contradiction possible. To the degree to which change has occurred, it has provided inner party space for rebellion in the PCF. Indeed, the major reason why the PCF has never had a crisis of this kind and magnitude before was that there was no space within its Thorezian organization to allow it to emerge, as inner party contradictions were resolved by expulsions, purges and voluntary departures. That this new inner space has contributed to crisis is due to the incompleteness of change on other levels of the **PCF's** organization. The present leadership has wanted only those changes which it deemed necessary, only on its terms, and only through existing top-down procedures. Little wonder, then, that the PCF runs the risk of an explosion.

### *Conclusions*

How will the PCF resolve its present problems? What will become of French Communism? Logic clearly dictates a return to the United Front strategy pursued by the party in recent years, motivated by

a basic concern to "strengthen the Left and strengthen the PCF within the Left." First of all, this would have to involve a renewal of party-to-party alliance with the Socialists, although such a renewal would have to be on other grounds than the 1972 Common Programme, which is now consigned to the archives of the Left's past (a new programme, some kind of tacit general agreement?) Then, for such a party-to-party alliance to work for the PCF's purposes, the party would have to renew its commitment to a social alliance strategy for promoting a broader, **cross-class**, base for PCF politics. On both strategic levels, however, the electoral months of 1977-78 have made progress immeasurably more difficult. Understandably, the Socialists are considerably more wary of the PCF than they were. Moreover, the PCF's role in the split of Left Union, plus the party's subsequent "**workerist**" "soak the rich" electoral campaign, not to speak of fallout from the party **leadership's** actions in the present crisis, have rekindled a substantial amount of anti-communism among the new middle strata to whom the PCF must appeal in order to succeed.

The import of the present party crisis is hard to evaluate. On the one hand, it does involve public display of a good deal of Communist dirty linen, e.g. the contradictions of its strategy and the **strategy/organization** conflicts. On the other hand, the crisis also proves that the party is still vital, and that processes of **Eurocommunist** change which the leadership hoped to measure and contain have taken on a powerful life of their own. In this sense, the PCF *needed* a crisis to show how much it had already changed and how deeply its commitment to its new paths was felt. Had things gone on, business as usual, after the 1978 elections, the PCF's credibility would have been damaged for the foreseeable future as a result. All of this said, however, the critical question is how the crisis will be resolved. We know already what the PCF leadership wants to do. And we already know, to a great extent, what the party *contestataires* desire to see. But what the interaction between these two sets of goals will create is unclear.

The **Marchais** leadership (although far from united on such issues) seemed to have set its course towards some "Italianization" of French communism. It wanted to create a *mass*, as opposed to a *cadre*, party with a degree of openness at rank-and-file level (the **PCI's** sections are remarkably open), which would be able to appeal to new urban middle strata (the **PCI's** greatest success). However the leadership did not start with a *tabula rasa*, the PCF had existed for five decades before this "Italianization" project saw the light of day. Thus "Italianization" was designed to proceed without changing the time-honoured and highly-centralized authority structure of the party—the leadership was still to have a complete monopoly of decision-making, things would continue to be run in a **top-down** way, and a corps of permanent party officials would see that events happened properly. If the leadership had its way, "Eurocommunization"

was to have its limits in the PCF.

The leadership has clearly had the upper hand thus far, as the crisis has unfolded, as could be expected in a party in which the leadership has *always* had the upper hand. As conflict moves towards its natural conclusion in the 1979 Party Congress, the leadership will undoubtedly continue to deploy all available tactics against its critics—playing off "intellectuals" vs. workers, local cells vs. factory cells (local cells being where the "intellectuals" live), loyal Leninists vs. "fractionalists" (especially after the response of the leadership to loyal questioning has forced critics to begin breaking party rules), all the while using its control over the apparatus to bring things back into line. The critics, in contrast, are discouraged and confused, with few resources to use except persistence, a willingness to take risks, and the likelihood that discontent within the party runs very deep. For the critics, however, their continuing ability to express themselves and be listened to within the party, which may well last through the next Congress, is a considerable victory. Formal change within the party would be hollow indeed if the habits of controversy and debate among Communists had not had a chance to develop. Thus the continuation of controversy and debate in the party is, in the longer run, much more important than actual organizational change, although one will most likely follow the other. And it is quite likely that the PCF leadership, if faced with continuing opposition to its behaviour, will propose further Eurocommunist organizational change, if only to calm a revolt which nothing else can calm. The leadership will undoubtedly be unwilling to concede many of its present powers, although it may have to concede some. Thus the crisis will probably end—if the leadership's efforts to talk it out of existence and isolate it fail—by trade-offs between the leadership and its critics in which each gets a piece of what it wants. Eurocommunism is a *process*, not a *thing*. The present PCF crisis will certainly establish a precedent for internal controversy among French communists. It is unlikely that in the future things will *ever* be as quiet within the PCF as they have been in most of the party's past. This, plus the likelihood of some actual change in the party's internal structures allowing greater space for open debate, guarantees that the internal Eurocommunization of the PCF will stretch far into the future.

The PCF does not have the leisure, however, to solve its problems at any pace it chooses. Politics waits on no party's pleasure, not even that of the PCF. As we have earlier asserted, the Centre-Right majority did not win the 1978 French elections; a divided Left lost them. The forces confirmed in power in March, 1978 are deeply divided themselves and lack ideological and political *formulae* to mobilize a majority of the French people behind the regime's solutions. Moreover, the regime is condemned to face an intractable economic crisis (for which it is partially responsible) stretching for years to come. Its remedies to France's economic

problems, austerity and a "new liberalism" designed to release market mechanisms to the advantage of the monopoly sector, are likely to mobilize strong opposition. Thus despite the Left's 1978 failures, the situation remains propitious for a Left alternative in France. A Presidential election is scheduled for 1981, in which a United Left candidate might well succeed. And if a Left President were elected, he would have the power immediately to dissolve the legislature and call new elections, which a United Left might well win. The opportunity lost by the Left in 1978 is not gone forever, then. It still exists, waiting to be seized, at least through the next round of French elections.

Whether the Left will be able to use its continuing advantage depends directly upon its ability to regroup. And it is here that the present crisis of the PCF looms large. Much depends, of course, on how the Socialist Party ultimately reacts to 1978. But a good deal more depends on the PCF. If the PCF is able to resolve its present troubles by reconstructing a plausible alliance with the Socialists around a platform which can create an electoral majority, if the PCF can develop a successful cross-class base of its own, in short, if it can resolve its major contradictions in the direction of further "Eurocommunization", then future victories may compensate for the defeat of 1978. If the PCF fails, and further opportunities are squandered, then French Communism will deserve the fate which may await it.

## NOTES

1. The PCF's history in these years is best found in Jacques Fauvet's *Histoire du PCF* (Paris, Fayard, 1977. 3rd edition). The party's official history, *Histoire du PCF* (Manuel), (Paris, PCF, 1964), gives the party's own version of its positions. Ronald Tiersky, *French Communism, 1922-1972* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1975) is a good English language point of departure.
2. Here see George Ross, "French Communism and the End of the Bolshevik Dream", in David Plotke and Carl Boggs, eds. *Eurocommunism* (Berkeley, University of California Press, forthcoming, 1979).
3. For a more detailed survey of the process leading to the PCF's new United Frontism, see George Ross, "The New French Popular Front" in the *Socialist Register*, 1977, eds. Miliband and Saville (London, Merlin Press, 1977).
4. See *Programme commun pour un gouvernement d'union de gauche*. (Paris, Editions Sociales, 1972).
5. For a less simplified description of all this, see George Ross, in *Socialist Register*, 1977, op. cit.
6. For the official statement of the theory, see PCF, *Traité d'économie Marxiste (le capitalisme monopoliste d'état)*, (Paris, Editions Sociales, 1971, 2 volumes). See also George Ross, "The New Middle Classes: French Marxist Critique", in *Theory and Society*, March 1978.
7. The main substantial PCF and CGT effort to approach these groups in a new way was the foundation and encouragement of UGICT (CFT), a very "modernist" technical and administrative workers' union led by René le Guen,

a PCF Central Committee member. UGICT's magazine *Options*, was for a long time, a model of intelligent and lucid new middle class organizing. The PCF also tried very hard to penetrate intellectuals' unions (teachers', professors', researchers') with some trade union, but less ideological, success.

Here there is an interesting paradox. The party's recruitment to membership reflected an important influx of people from new middle class backgrounds. Recruitment to membership and the creation of a mass base are, alas, not the same things. The party has begun to do the former with new middle strata, but failed at doing the latter.

9. See Etienne Fajon, *l'union est un combat*, (Paris, Editions Sociales, 1975).
10. See Pierre Juquin. *l'actualisation à dossiers ouverts*, (Paris. Editions Sociales, 1977).
11. The legislative election procedures in Fifth Republic France involve a two round system. In the first round, which is essentially a primary, all parties—from the largest to the smallest—present candidates. In the second round runoff, which occurs a week later, only those candidates who received over a certain percentage of the votes cast in the first round are allowed to remain. In the second round it has become customary for the less successful candidates of both the Left and majority coalitions to withdraw—even if they might stay technically—and to shift their voting support to the best place candidates. The runoff therefore becomes a Left-Right confrontation. Exceptions to this occur when a single candidate receives a majority of the votes cast in the first round, in which case he is declared elected, and there is no runoff in his constituency.
12. Socialist intentions in all this were less obvious than those of the Communists. The Socialist leaders, impressed with the depth of France's economic problems, were much less willing to confront the task of bold structural reforming than were the Communists. The Socialists were committed to a substantial amount of "welfarist" type change. But their primary goal seemed to be the promotion of a mild degree of new public ownership in France to promote new economic growth, capitalist growth. In any case, the Socialists did not agree with the Communists, and were determined not to give in to Communist pressure. Undoubtedly, Socialist leaders felt that the Communists' posture was a bluff, that the CP really wanted to come to power and would eventually have nowhere to go but back towards unity with the Socialists, a basic misunderstanding of the Communist position. Beyond this calculation, however, lay very real questions about Socialist ideological orientation. The hegemonic leadership group in the Socialist Party were social democrats and did not want to be caught up in the logic of change proposed by the Communists. Their position was reinforced by pressure from the powerhouse parties of European Social Democracy (the German SPD, British Labour, the Austrian Social Democrats) against collaboration with the Communists. Socialist electoral projections, which may have been dead wrong, worked in the same directions. It was thought that if the Socialists took their campaign distance from the Communists they would be in a better posture to woo the critical 3-4% of floating "new middle class" voters allegedly intimidated by fear of change and communism. In all this the Socialists replied to Communist attacks in ways which also led them away from concentrating on ousting the Centre-Right majority. Left disunity became a larger campaign issue for the Socialists than attacking the parties in power.
13. For election statistics, see *le Monde*. "les élections legislatives de Mars 1978", *Dossiers et documents du Monde*, March, 1978.
14. *le Monde, Humanité*, March 22, 1978.
15. Almost out of the blue, in May 1978, Jean Kanapa, the PCF's foreign affairs specialist, announced that the party, which had opposed France's nuclear

deterrent from its inception, henceforth supported it, under certain conditions (the main one being that nuclear weapons be targetted *tous azimuts*, against all possible aggressors, and not simply **against** the USSR). The reasons for this change are still difficult to fathom. Certainly one reason is the desire of the PCF to head the Socialists off at the pass—the Socialists were about to shift on the *force de frappe* themselves, towards a solution which the PCF dreaded, a European nuclear force (along the lines of the dreaded European Defence Community). In order to block this, the PCF decided that an appeal to nationalism, which would unite the party, at least on this issue, with the Gaullists, was the best route. But there may well have been deeper reasons for the change. Since the party engaged in little or no discussion either of the change or of its own reasons for changing, one can only speculate **about** its motives.

16. See **Fajon**, *l'union est un combat*, op. cit.
17. The "grande messe" rituals are not difficult to describe. Major party occasions are organized around a "**projet de résolution**" which the leadership sends out to party members before the occasion is convened. What is prepared in advance, however, is not conflictual discussion about the *projet*, but ritual speeches in support of it to be made from the floor. Then at the Congress (or Central Committee, or Convention) the leadership's spokesman reads a long report which contains or proposes the *projet*. The rest of the time is spent in "discussion" from the floor, which consists essentially in prepared speeches from delegates giving their reasons for believing the leadership's *projet* is correct (... "the workers in Renault agree with the report of Georges **Marchais** for the following reasons" "... we have talked long and hard with the municipal employees of **Ivry-sur-Seine** and it is remarkable how well the lines of action set out in Comrade Marchais' report speak to their needs.. ." and so on). There are, of course, exceptions to this. But the habits of ritual are so deep in the party that the exceptions have to be encoded in the rituals, such that only insiders can understand them.
18. *le Monde*, 21 April, 1978.
19. *la Nouvelle Critique*, April 1978.
20. *le Monde*, 13, 14, 15, April 1978. Elleinstein is, of course, the prolific author of revisionist works on Stalinism and the history of the Soviet Union. He is also vice-director of the PCF's *Centre d'études et recherches marxistes* in Paris.
21. *le Monde*, 25, 26, 27, 28 April 1978. The Althusser pieces were rapidly published in book form, see Louis Althusser, *ce qui ne peut plus durer au PCF*, (Paris. Maspero, 1978).
22. See Gerard **Molina** and **Yves Vargas**, *Dialogue à l'intérieur du parti Communiste* (Paris, Maspero, 1978), Jean Rony, *trente ans du parti* (Paris, Christian Bourgois, 1978).
23. *Humanité*, 28 April, 1978.
24. The best places to seek understanding of the party under Maurice Thorez are the works of Philippe Robrieux, first his biography of Thorez, which is good on the post-World War II period in particular, *Maurice Thorez*, (Paris. **Fayard**, 1975), then his own memoirs as a PCF student leader in the critical Algerian War years of the late 1950's up through the *affaire Servin-Casanova* in 1960-61, *notre génération communiste* (Paris, **Fayard**, 1977).
25. See the party's pamphlet, *Vive libres*, (Paris, Editions Sociales, 1975).
26. The party shift on civil liberties in the USSR dates from 1975 (immediately prior to this it engaged itself quite fully in an extraordinarily ill-advised campaign to defend the Russians' handling of Solzhenitsyn). Since then it has recognized and condemned the existence of forced labour camps for political

dissidents, moved retrospectively to deplore what happened in the anti-Titoist show trials in Eastern Europe in the early 1950's (and, by implication, to deplore the behaviour of the PCF in this period), and actively criticized the the Russians on a number of issues of civil liberties.

27. Here see François Platone and Françoise Sublieau, "les militants communistes a Paris", in *Revue Francaise de Science Politique*, October, 1975, Jacques Derville, "les communistes dans l'Isère", *Revue Francaise du Science Politique*, February 1975, and Jean-Paul Molinari, "contribution a la sociologie du PCF", in *Cahiers du Communisme*, January 1976. *Cahiers du Communisme* also regularly publishes a statistical breakdown of delegates to PCF Congresses which is revealing about the social composition at least of the delegates. See, for example, *Cahiers*, February-March 1976 for the XXII<sup>nd</sup> Congress.
28. Again, here see Robrieux, *Maurice Thorez*, op. cit.