

## INTERNATIONAL MARKETS NEWSLETTER

### **Profile of French Opposition:**

# **Gaullists In Revolt Against Giscard Gov't, U. S.**

Only drastic policy changes can save the government of Atlanticist French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and Prime Minister Jacques Chirac. In less than a month, the Gaullist "barons" led by Michel Debré, Alexandre Sanguinetti and others have taken over much of their industrialist, banker and higher functionary base, derailed their drives for European militarization under NATO's "Tindemans Plan," and are now pushing to force through the repudiation of key elements of the government's Atlanticist austerity policy — and break with the dollar empire.

The extent of the government's disarray was underlined in the March 10 *Le Monde* by former minister Albin Chalandon, a titular member of the UDR Gaullist party, but in fact a spokesman for the policies of Giscard. Begging the U.S. government to let West Europeans create a gold-backed monetary zone to offset the pressures against the French franc and other currencies engineered by New York banks, Chalandon wrote: "It is in the long run extremely dangerous for the US to continue to make of the dollar the instrument of domination which, henceforth, cannot be backed by sufficient political and military means. Like any excess, this one will bring about a reaction — voices are already calling for one in France, and they are not all Communist — and this reaction can only mean a growing autarchy which will destroy what was remaining of unity in Europe, and draw each European nation closer to the autarchic East bloc."

Chalandon's fears are well founded. In an interview with the magazine *Le Nouvel Observateur* March 8, former UDR general secretary Alexandre Sanguinetti said that "the future of France is to be non-aligned" and confirmed the "esteem" the Gaullists have for the French Communist Party (PCF). Two days later, Giraut de Coursac, head of the Gaullist Institute for Foreign Affairs, charged that "NATO is a U.S. political office directed against member countries" and that "France's sovereignty is threatened by a minority paid by imperialism." Finally, General Binoche, former Commander of the French sector in Berlin, yesterday invited the French electorate to "oppose those who serve the German-American interests and betray the memory of General De Gaulle, though they boldly use his name," and to elect, at the second round of the nationwide county elections March 14, "the candidates who place the necessities of national independence above all other considerations."

This open call for the consolidation of a de facto Gaullist-Communist "national independence" axis is at the center of the barons' strategy to isolate and eventually discard Giscard in favor of an authentic Gaullist alternative. The result has so far been the dislocation of the unholy "presidential majority," and the beginning of an open rebellion by the Communist Party (PCF) rank and file against NATO agents like General Secretary Georges Marchais who comprise their leadership.

### **Breakdown of Coalition**

Following the dismal performance of the government coalition at the first round of the county elections March 7, the coldness which heretofore characterized the mutual relations of the majority parties — the Independent Republicans (IR), the Reformateurs and the UDR — degenerated into open warfare.

After Giscard's intimate, Interior Minister Michel Poniatowski, misrepresented the results and talked of the "prodigious growth" of the IR and the NATO-run opposition Socialist Party (SP), the UDR's official spokesman Lucien Neuwirth stated that his party would conduct its own poll to determine the extent to which the Interior Ministry had deflated the UDR's tally. This sharp rebuke has since been picked up by Sanguinetti and UDR General secretary André Bord, forcing the Gaullist Prime Minister Chirac to appoint two new "political controllers" to the UDR leadership — whose members he handpicked a year ago — to prevent it from openly attacking the government.

In various regions, county election candidates for each of the majority parties are violating national directives for "unity" and opposing each other in the March 14 run-off, at the risk of facilitating a victory by their SP-PCF "united left" opponents.

### **Division In PCF**

However, similar divisions are occurring *within* the PCF, despite national orders to the membership to systematically support and campaign for the first round's leading left contender, even if he happens to be a SP Atlanticist. In Lorraine and Normandy, two candidates who had refused to withdraw from the running had to be expelled from the party, while in the Haute-Loire department, the entire PCF federation is backing its candidate's decision to oppose the local socialist. The repeated breaches of party discipline are uniformly characterized by the press as "unprecedented."

The workers' growing rage at the continuing economic collapse as well as their lukewarm reception of PCF General Secretary Georges Marchais' drive for "democratic liberties" in the Soviet Union and for uncritical PCF support of the coporatist policies put forward by the Socialists, is the immediate cause of the party rank and file's restiveness.

### **Working Class Revolt**

Throughout France this week, a rash of rotating strikes protesting the government's refusal to negotiate new wage contracts for civil servants and nationalized industry employees broke out, involving between two and four million workers. On March 8, a nationwide teachers' work stoppage closed all primary and secondary schools, while strike participation in the postal and railroad sectors reached

unusual highs. In Paris, a 100,000 strong demonstration for higher wages and cost-of-living increases closed traffic down for several hours in the wealthy Louvre district. Forty thousand metal workers will reportedly stage a 24-hour strike near the city of Saint-Etienne next week — the largest figure ever in this area.

#### **Union of the Left**

While the government has promised to “seriously negotiate” with the civil servants’ unions, its real intentions were revealed in a statement issued today by Finance Minister Jean-Pierre Fourcade, who claims that four of the emergency employment and production programs featured in the nation’s VIIth quinquennial economic plan will have to be scrapped for lack of the necessary funds. The CGT trade-union confederation now predicts that there will be 1,000,000 unemployed under 25 years of age next fall.

In view of these perspectives and the government’s complete impotence, certain Atlanticist layers are openly admitting that a “union of the left (PCF-PSF)” government would be a lesser evil than the collapse of the Giscard-Chirac team or the alternative Communist-supported Gaullist “revival” which the barons are now preparing. Yesterday, the financial daily *Les Echos* called for early legislative elections — which would result in the left’s victory — and wrote in its editorial that “the Socialist Party and its leader Francois Mitterrand feel surely strong enough (...) to dictate their conditions to the Elysee (Giscard’s residence) and the PCF.” *Les Echos*’ motivation is simple: “There is an area where the situation would very quickly worsen, that of maintenance of order. Some hesitations are costly...”

Such a left alternative is precisely what Giscard requires to prevent his early demise under the conjugated blows of the Gaullists and the mass strike.