

Paris Mayoral Race Arena For Fight Against Giscard's Policies

FRANCE

Somewhat unexpectedly, the current Paris mayoralty race has turned into the major battle arena of French politics. Such has been the case since Jacques Chirac, who was prime minister until last August and who now presides over the re-formed Gaullist party (RPR), suddenly announced on Jan. 19 that he was running for mayor against Industry Minister Michel d'Ornano.

D'Ornano is a member of President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing's small Independent Republican Party and a handpicked mayoral choice by Giscard which has disgruntled most of the Gaullist movement. The Gaullist form the largest component in Giscard's presidential majority.

In the week since he threw his hat into the ring, Chirac has exploited the platform of the mayoral campaign to challenge the domestic and international policies of Giscard and, with increasing directness, to lay out a policy of opposition to the dictates of the newly installed Carter presidency in the United States. Giscard, known for his loyalties to the forces behind Carter, finds himself politically isolated. Evolving a unanimity not seen since the days of Charles De Gaulle himself, Chirac has endorsed a program for economic growth independent of the U.S. dollar which has long been the rallying cry of the General's closest political heir Michel Debré and which more recently has been vigorously taken up by Chirac's successor in the premiership, Raymond Barre. In the context of the mayoral campaign, Gaullists this week torpedoed plans to fill the vacuum around Giscard by bringing in the Socialist Party of François Mitterrand to form a pro-Carter "center-left" cabinet.

Mayoral Prestige

The situation is far from devoid of irony. The tradition of electing a mayor to rule the French capital was resurrected in 1975 through a law initiated by the government then headed by Jacques Chirac. The last time Paris had a mayor of its own was during the working-class uprising of the Paris Commune of 1871. Historically — during the French Revolution of 1789, the Hundred Years' War which spanned the 14th and 15th centuries, and the Carolingian rule of the feudal period — the top official in Paris has enjoyed powers which were, *de facto*, greater than those of the first ruler of France.

The Paris mayoralty thus endows its holder with considerable political prestige — a fact which did not escape President Giscard in 1974 any more than it did then-Prime Minister Chirac, although for different reasons. The President clearly believed that the Gaullist deputies to Parliament from Paris, who form the great majority of Paris deputies, could be led to agree with his "liberal" policy generally. This course of affairs he hoped to consecrate with the election of a Giscardian figurehead as Paris mayor.

The reason Giscard's ploy has backfired is to be found in the recent strategic shift in France, which has placed the Gaullists in an increasing position of political control. Chirac's decision to run for mayor has been described generally by the European press as "a slap in the president's face." The influential *Le Monde* suggested last week that the President must "prove without delay that he is still governing."

What is really at issue is the reinstatement of the historic Gaullist leadership role in Western Europe for industrial progress and independence from NATO — a leadership which faltered after DeGaulle's death and was particularly eclipsed with the election of Atlanticist Giscard in 1974. A major step has been taken toward assuming such leadership by Prime Minister Raymond Barre, who called for a "common Eurocurrency" to be the basis for a European economic program in an interview with the Italian industrialist' paper *Il Sole 24 Ore* on Jan. 26 — thereby joining the Italian Andreotti government in the forefront of European moves for a new international monetary system.

Emergency Powers

Upping the ante, Chirac dropped a bombshell last weekend by endorsing the demand that the Prime Minister be granted full emergency powers to carry out an independent policy of economic growth based on productive investments. This demand has been repeatedly formulated by the leading Gaullist "baron," former Prime Minister Michel Debré, an advocate of a "government of public safety."

In a broadcast over radio Europe No. 1 on Jan. 23, Chirac explained that the real reasons behind his resignation last August stemmed from his appreciation that the legitimacy of President Giscard's government was seriously in question. Linking the problem of legitimacy to his perception of the country's urgent economic needs, Chirac explained that his

disagreements with President Giscard on this issue had forced his resignation.

With near-simultaneity, Debré himself escalated the Gaullist offensive on another front by announcing the formation of the "Committee for the Independence and Unity of France" in a press conference on Jan. 20. A battalion of Gaullist heavyweights was in attendance to declare their membership in the committee — an organization viewed as crucial in commanding international support for the Gaullist opposition to financial and military policies emanating from lower Manhattan.

Debré's campaign was immediately joined across the Channel by a faction of British parliamentarians, the leftist Tribune Group in the Labour Party. The Nov. 22 *London Times* reported that this faction has "launched a campaign in concert with Mr. Debré" to defeat a bill coming up in the House of Commons on the project for a directly-elected European Parliament. The European Parliament, which Giscard advocates, is viewed by the Gaullists and their allies as an attempt by NATO to impose a supranational government on Europe and overrule national sovereignty.

At his press conference, Michel Debré stated that he was vehemently against the election of the European Parliament precisely because of the war threats emanating from NATO circles. Debré counterposed the progressive cooperation of France with all European countries, in particular with Eastern Europe.

Among those announcing membership in Mr. Debré's "shadow cabinet" were former Minister Alexandre Sanguinetti, a proponent of West European disengagement from NATO; General Gallois, a staunch enemy of the "limited tactical nuclear warfare" theory associated with Carter advisor James Schlesinger; Louis Terrenoire, chairman of the Franco-Arab Solidarity Association; and Michel Habib-Deloncle, chairman of the Franco-Arab Chamber of Commerce. The Gaullist leader's initiative received favorable coverage in the Soviet Communist Party paper *Pravda* on Jan. 23.

The Mitterrand Gambit

With such momentum against the announced Carter policies of deindustrialization and war provocation against the Soviets threatening to propel the last "reliable" regime in Western Europe — Giscardian

Chirac Explains His Decision To Run

The following are excerpts from a declaration former Prime Minister Jacques Chirac, the president of the Gaullist Party (RPR), made on radio Europe No. 1 on Jan. 23 concerning the conditions which led him to run for the Paris mayoralty:

Referring to the "flow of nonsensical declarations emanating essentially from Independent Republican circles (President Giscard's party - ed.)" against his candidacy, Jacques Chirac warned: "I would like to tell these gentlemen to pull themselves together and stop their excesses... These elections are undoubtedly capital for the majority, and it is the reason why I am running... I would like to give them a piece of advice and tell them that if they are as respectful of our institutions as they claim to be, they should stop bringing the president on the forefront all the time under the pretext of protecting him," (a reference to Interior Minister Michel Poniatowski, known to be a long-time "protector" of the President's political career).

Asked about the reasons for his resignation from the post of Prime Minister in August 1976, Mr. Chirac explained:

"I first considered that, little by little, the idea was gaining credit in the nation that the (governmental) majority did not represent the majority of the country's electorate... Now, I consider that it is not possible for political men to assume a responsibility or to rule if they are not fully

legitimate. For me legitimacy is above legality... I clearly told the President that I would not remain at the head of a government which, some would think, was not legitimate. It was a fundamental question...

"The second reason was that I considered that, in the necessary effort for an economic recovery, there was a very important given which was the wait-and-see attitude of a number of economic agents, notably investors, and that the best way to unblock the situation and... permit initiatives able to relaunch investment was to lift the political uncertainty and call for early elections..."

"... Since the beginning of 1975, and notably at the end of 1975, I had demanded insistently that a plan of economic recovery be put into gear, verbally and in written form, and I had even demanded... that it be implemented in a very rapid fashion, I would even say in a muscled fashion, by decree — which is a constitutional and perfectly regular procedure in our country — which, in my mind, would have made it possible to create a shock of a nature to restore trust.

"In July and August, when I knew perfectly well that I intended to put an end to my functions, I had engaged in an important effort of reflection, notably with the leaders of a number of socio-professional circles, an effort which resulted in a note which I left on Aug. 10 to my successor's cabinet and which included a number of measures which, in their spirit and even in their details, were very close to what became later Mr. Raymond Barré's plan. Which explains the fact that today I have no difficulty in supporting it."

France — out of the U.S. orbit, certain pro-Carter circles in lower Manhattan and Washington have been tempted to revive the old idea of an alliance between the forces around François Mitterrand, the leader of the French Socialist Party, and the Centrists and Independent Republicans supporting the President and his sidekick Interior Minister Michel Poniatowski. This scheme, known to be a favorite of (for example) the new U.S. National Security Advisor Z. Brzezinski, would be to outflank the Gaullists and their allies on the "left." The conservative *Le Figaro* expressed a widely held view last week in speaking of "objective connivance" between the Independent Republicans and Mitterrand to oppose the threat of the Chirac candidacy.

Gaullist spokesmen have already taken steps to discredit such schemes and to force the hapless Mitterrand into the embarrassing position of running against Chirac — if he dares — in the Gaullist stronghold of Paris. Following Poniatowski's attacks on Chirac's decision to run for mayor as favoring an opposition victory, RPR vice-president Yves Guéna accused the Interior Minister of having "unavowable motivations," — i.e., of conspiring with the Socialist Party against the Gaullists. Chirac said on radio that should the Union of the Left (Communist and Socialist Parties) win the 1978 legislative elections, President Giscard should resign rather than adopt the "unconstitutional" course of appointing a Socialist Prime Minister.

Italian Metalworkers Contract Demands Conversion to Tractor Production

ITALY

On Jan. 21 in Turin the National Coordinating Committee of FIAT — 450 delegated representatives for more than 800,000 metalworkers (FLM) — overwhelmingly approved a negotiating platform for contract negotiations with FIAT. The series of negotiations which will begin at the first week of February is the first important private sector negotiations of the year. The FIAT negotiations form the precedent for all other private employees negotiations.

The platform — which has been unusually under-reported by the Italian press — calls for partial conversion of auto production to produce tractors for Third World export; emphasizes the importance of nuclear power development, and stresses the primacy of overall

technological development in the context of an expanding industrial economy.

The most complete reportage to date of the platform comes from the FIAT-controlled press the Turinese daily, *La Stampa*. On Jan. 27 *La Stampa* "synthesizes" the Investment and Policy statement, neglecting to report the key issues in the platform. *La Stampa* reported: "FLM asks to be advised of the lines and programs of FIAT investments in Italy and abroad, with particular regard to the division of labor between Italian plants and foreign plants. In reference to December's FIAT-Libya deal, the platform calls for "the examination and use of the increased capital acquired to be used wherever possible for Mezzogiorno investments."

La Stampa then reports briefly on plans for reconversion of car to autobus production and "hypotheses for development of IVECO (the industrial vehicle consortium of FIAT and France)."

PSI Bid to Enter Govt. Blocked

Italian Socialist Party leader Giacomo Mancini's initiative for the PSI to immediately enter the government of pro-development Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti, has been sabotaged by the ex-Action Party network, centered around Giorgio Amendola of the Italian Communist Party (PCI) and the Republican Party's Ugo LaMalfa, and the PSI's Riccardo Lombardi.

On Jan. 22 Mancini factional ally, PSI spokesman Cassola floated the proposal for the immediate entrance of the PSI into the government, specifically as the bulwark against the Trilateral Commission's assault on Italian democratic institutions. Writing in the official PSI daily, *Avanti*, Cassola stated: "The Trilateral

Commission has threatened that the present economic crisis may necessitate the reduction of democracy in Europe. The Italian left, confronted with this prospect, must act now to maintain democracy. This can be done only by a Christian Democratic-PSI coalition with the outside support of the Italian Communist Party."

Cassola's statements were made one day after Jimmy Carter's inauguration. The government formula proposed by Cassola, as part of the Mancini strategy, would strengthen the present government by institutionalizing its broad-based popular support.

To prepare the PSI for its governmental responsibilities, Mancini had operated "underground" for at