

Mitterrand Anointed As Official Opposition To Giscard

FRANCE

François Mitterrand, the head of France's Socialist Party and perennial presidential candidate of the Union of the Left slate shared by the French Communist Party, has been catapulted in recent weeks into the limelight as the only viable and "legitimate" leader of the opposition to President Giscard d'Estaing's regime. Behind this campaign, of which a May 12 televised debate between Mitterrand and Giscard's Premier Raymond Barre is merely the highlight, is the New York Council on Foreign Relations, which has long been promoting Mitterrand's fortunes. Over the past two weeks the campaign has included:

**Mitterrand's warm reception in Brussels by the head of the European Economic Community Commission, Roy Jenkins, the first time that an "opposition" leader from any European country has been thus recognized;

**A statement by Baron Guy de Rothschild at a Washington D.C. press conference early last week, emphasizing that Mitterrand is one social-democrat the Rockefeller and Rothschilds can deal with;

**Mitterrand's meeting last week with André Bergeron, the "apolitical" head of the anti-communist trade union Force Ouvrière; Mitterrand affirmed afterwards that FO is "my kind of union";

**The statement by Jacques Chirac, the president of the Gaullist party (RPR), that he deems "legitimate" an arrangement in which Giscard would remain President while Mitterrand would become Prime Minister following a Union of the Left victory in legislative elections; the statement was a 180-degree about-face for Chirac, who praised Mitterrand's "intelligence and talent."

Entrapped Gaullists

The campaign to legitimize Mitterrand has been possible only because of the political paralysis of France's Gaullists, who, shackled by their own political

shortcomings and cowed by political threats from Giscard, have failed to mobilize around a clear alternative.

In a national television address April 29, Giscard declared that parliamentary bills "whose passage the government considers of particular importance" will be adopted as law with a rubber-stamp vote by the Parliament. Should the Assembly want to oppose such a bill, it would have to take up a censure motion which, if passed, would bring down the Barre government. Giscard based this maneuver on a special provision in Article 49 of the Constitution, originally drafted by Charles de Gaulle for his post-war fight against Atlantism.

Typical of "particularly important" bills that Giscard has in mind is the reform of the International Monetary Fund's statutes to conform with the Jamaica accords, which give the IMF greater coercive power against its debtors and to raise money from its members. This reform, opposed by both the Gaullists and most of the left, is scheduled for debate in parliament before this summer.

Giscard's threat to the Gaullists, who form the largest component of the ruling majority, could not be clearer: "Toe the line or there will be early legislative elections" — an event which, given the Gaullists' present state of vacillation, would virtually guarantee a victory for the Mitterrand-led Union of the Left.

Chirac has been careful to focus Gaullist attention against the "threat of collectivism" represented by the French Communist Party, a ruse to sever the Gaullists from potential working-class allies. French media are replete with reports of a raging battle between Giscard and Chirac over whether Chirac or Barre should lead the majority against the left in the elections.

In an editorial on May 7, French Communist daily *L'Humanité* denounced Chirac for spitting on real Gaullism, the Gaullism of the Liberation period, when de Gaulle brought the Communists into the government. This was a time, the editorial noted, when some of France's most important social and economic reforms were enacted.

'Steps Toward Financial Health'

The following are excerpts of an article by Jacques Rueff printed in the May 10 issue of Le Monde. Mr. Rueff was formerly President de Gaulle's special advisor on economic and monetary matters and Vice-President of the 1960s "French Committee for the Suppression of Obstacles to Economic Expansion." He was the author of de Gaulle's plan for a gold-based monetary system.

Contrary to a very widespread idea, inflation is the cause, not the effect of all the disorders from which the West suffers...If one wants to efficiently fight inflation, it

is indispensable to bring out its cause or causes; and to make a diagnosis so solid that it will be capable of rallying a broad national and international consensus...One is certain to be mistaken if one seeks in national or in local situations the cause of universal inflation. This cause, if it is generalized, can only be of a monetary nature. It is the mechanism of Euro-currencies and singularly the Eurodollar, which is presently the generator everywhere in the world, of "inflationary surpluses." Unfortunately, this mechanism is hardly known, even among specialists.