

was run entirely on the basis of the “big lie” that immigrant workers, heavily concentrated in that district, take away French jobs. This xenophobia, and the irrationalist anti-technology belief structure fostered by the greens, are the stuff of which fascism is made.

The overall results for the city of Paris, however, should give Mitterrand something else to think about. In 18 out of the 20 districts (*arrondissements*) of the city, the Socialist Party-led slate was swept aside as though by a tidal wave by the supporters of the incumbent Jacques Chirac, leader of the Gaullist Party. Chirac garnered an average of 55 to 75 percent of the vote per district, compared with the 15 to 30 percent of the Socialists, who were led by Paul Quiles. Quiles, an avowed opponent of nuclear energy and technological advance, came in second even in his own district.

The second or third most powerful figure in the Socialist Party in terms of official status, Quiles exemplifies the problem that surrounds Mitterrand. Whether they are considered “leftist,” as in the case of Quiles, or “moderate,” as in the case of Finance Minister Jacques Delors and Planning Minister Michel Rocard, the Malthusians have too much power. During the final weeks before the elections, Delors and Rocard—aided on the outside by the head of France’s second largest trade union, the CFDT’s social-fascist Edmond Maire—deliberately sabotaged the government’s standing in the eyes of the electorate by stating that the solution to France’s economic woes is austerity and “rigor.”

Cabinet shake-up

The pressure is now intensifying for Mitterrand to reshuffle his cabinet, and possibly oust Prime Minister Pierre Mauroy—whose position is not helped by the fact that he did not win his seat as mayor of Lille in the first round, and will have to face the test of the runoffs. Political mouthpieces as seemingly diverse as the *Financial Times* of London and the “radical” French daily *Libération* are calling for a cabinet shake-up to eliminate the old boys, such as Prime Minister Mauroy and Interior Minister Gaston Defferre.

The case of *Libération* is worth examining in more detail for what it indicates about what is really going on behind the scenes in French politics. Some months ago, a consortium headed by Jean Riboud, chairman of Schlumberger, Ltd., took financial control over the newspaper. A longstanding adviser to François Mitterrand, Jean Riboud has so far rejected every official post that has been offered him, including that of France’s ambassador to Washington, on the grounds that none would give him anywhere near the power and influence that he now wields as head of a giant financial and political empire. The editorials in *Libération* in the two days following the elections all called for Mauroy’s head to roll, and on March 9 specified that the cabinet should be streamlined and headed by a “super minister.” Jean Riboud, who was the first of Mitterrand’s associates to sound the trumpet

for economic austerity, has frequently been named as a possible candidate to succeed Mauroy.

Le Matin de Paris, which is pro-socialist, has called for the constitution of a “third-force” cabinet, with Edmond Maire taking over the position of minister of labor. This “third force” began taking shape when Mitterrand fired Minister of Cooperation Jean-Pierre Cot, a factional ally of Planning Minister Rocard. Cot’s links to Amnesty International, the terrorist support group, and his rejection of high-technology transfers to the developing sector countries made him the chief wrecker of Mitterrand’s Africa policies. Cot, Maire, Delors, and Rocard, with Jean Riboud behind the scenes, have declared war on Mitterrand—and now demand to get promoted.

Together the Malthusians, whether considered moderates or radicals, threaten to bring into being mass movements of the environmentalist left and extreme right. For the moment, President Mitterrand has all the cards in his hand, but he will have to move quickly and ruthlessly to drive out his enemies, and he may not be given a second chance once the international monetary and financial dam breaks.

The tug of war for Mitterrand’s mind

by Laurent Murawiec in Paris

Addressing the House of Parliament of India some weeks ago, French President François Mitterrand left a lasting, positive impression upon his audience as he underscored “the necessity of creating a new international monetary system” and “inaugurating a new world economic order.” Staffers at the presidential headquarters in Paris, the Elysée Palace, however, will explain to visitors that “we know that the International Monetary Fund policies inflicted on developing countries just aggravate their plight and further contract the world economy—but since France does not rule the world, we’re just trying to strengthen the IMF and alleviate its conditionality.”

In the gaping difference between these two opposite viewpoints rages a violent and world-historical struggle in Paris, with massive foreign interference and implications for the rest of the world. The fight is for control of the French president’s policy and his very mind.

The Malthusian parasites

Ensnared in the powerful presidential staff and the even more powerful finance ministry, an alliance of monetarist practitioners and Malthusian ideologues is pressing the pres-

ident to play the game proposed by U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz. Finance Minister Jacques Delors, a left-Christian creature of Jesuit masterminds, explains that “for most of the Third World, it’s the IMF or nothing. I am therefore proud to lead the battle for the strengthening of the IMF while fighting for an alleviation of its conditionalities.”

Special presidential adviser Jacques Attali, an intellectual of the style known in Washington as the “cocaine set,” whose eulogies of euthanasia and suicide have a real aura of perversity, has been put in charge of North-South affairs as well as of preparing the crucial Williamsburg “summit” next May, by the president himself. Attali has prepared a wildly utopian “20 proposals for the Third World” as a special French contribution to that summit—a document that focuses on “telematique” [cybernetics + telecommunications] in utter disregard of the reality of financial ruin and economic devastation of these nations.

The advocacy of austerity without, even if painted with Delors’s Jesuit brushes or Attali’s futurist fantasies, is complemented by advocacy of austerity within. “There is no miracle solution; there is no magical remedy. We must choose between the present and the future. In the next few years, the sacrifices and the efforts we may be called upon to accept *might be terrible*,” Delors drones in speech after speech.

After close to two years of policy-control by the Malthusian-monetarist alliance, the French economy is straining. In spite of months of price-and-wage controls, January inflation figures hit close to 10 percent in annual rate. While Delors and Attali collaborators were saying a few months ago that “we induce a recession in order to reduce the trade deficit,” recession is here but the January foreign trade figures were in deficit by a stunning 9.6 billion francs—close to \$17 billion.

“I will not hesitate to tighten another notch if need be,” Delors has kept on repeating. Rumors of a new, third devaluation of the currency are rife. It is widely expected that the post-election days will spark a wave of speculation, especially if the CDU-CSU-FDP coalition strengthens the German currency as a result of winning the March 6 election.

“All the top French banks have tightened their belts and buckled their helmets in expectation of the shock of the repayment and rollover date at the end of March,” a well-informed broker reported. “This is not only for international loans but also the very heavy domestic maturities. At present, the *petites et moyennes entreprises* [small and medium enterprises] are not getting one centime. They’re getting nothing and many are going to crash in the weeks ahead.”

Ironically, even the Socialists appointed in the last two years to head the big, nationalized industrial corporations are in a state of permanent rage at the Socialist government for having loaded them with huge companies being choked or starved by present policies.

France, in short, under such policies, is rapidly approaching the breaking point at which domestic weakness and dis-

order forbids any bold, active foreign policy—which was the aim of the monetarist-Malthusian alliance in the first place. So, where’s the president’s design? What is the meaning of his good words on Third World development.

The contradiction so glaring between words and deeds reflects the tug of war for Mitterrand’s mind. When King Hassan of Morocco and President Bongo of Gabon recently asked Mitterrand in public that France provide their nations with nuclear energy, they expressed not only the Third World’s drive for development but were also encouraging the French forces that are trying to tip the balance of policy against the Malthusians.

Twenty-five years of General de Gaulle’s Fifth Republic have immensely strengthened the *Colbertiste*, or “productivist” strain in especially the higher spheres of the all-powerful civil service—the layer that makes the country tick. The recent ouster of “ideologue” Socialist Jean-Pierre Cot as Cooperation Minister and his replacement by a personal associate of Mitterrand bore witness to their reassertion of strength.

The traditional forces of the “French Empire,” colonial interests and assimilated merchant and financier forces, which helped Mitterrand ascend to power and thought they had struck a deal with the British Empire for global spheres-of-influence power-sharing, have by now recognized there is no room for a “French Empire,” nor for a sovereign French military nuclear deterrent in the “New Yalta” envisaged by the British and their friends in Moscow.

As a result, they are groping to recreate the kind of alliance and policy typified by General de Gaulle and, to some extent, his successors.

The damage of two years of “socialism,” however, is such that anti-Malthusian forces are rather acting by means of the press and the media, books and opinion-making, and attempted forays to capture President Mitterrand’s attention, than by straightforward political means. The political campaign around the local elections exhibited the most revoltingly hollow posturing and rhetoric-mongering in memory—even declared anti-Malthusian political leaders such as neo-Gaullist leader Jacques Chirac are only concerned with petty, immediate electoral gain.

In the weeks ahead, the accelerated deterioration of the economic situation is bound to provoke growing social tension. The Jesuit fascist head of the CFDT labor union, the country’s second largest, Edmond Maire, announced recently that new, severe austerity medicines had to be administered to the body economic, and “tough sacrifices” to be accepted by workers. His accomplice, Planning Minister Michel Rocard, also a creature of religious orders, demanded the waning away and death of “the obsolete vertical apparatuses such as the state, the political parties, the unions and the church” (!) and the inauguration of “horizontal democracy” where sacrifices are accepted in the name of “*autogestion* (self-management)].”