

# Mitterrand's choice could deal mortal blow to de Gaulle's France

by Jean Baptiste Blondel

When François Mitterrand, in the wake of his reelection May 8 to a second seven-year term as President of France, named Michel Rocard to head a new government as prime minister, he was delivering the first blow in what may very well be the end of the France that was built by national liberator Gen. Charles de Gaulle.

The late General de Gaulle conceived a Grand Design for his country in a "Europe of the Fatherlands": an industrial France propelled forward by its ambitious civilian and military nuclear programs, with a prodigious surge in plant and infrastructure; a prosperous France animated by a true industrial capitalism, controlling the financial instruments taken out of the hands of those whom the general called the "Anglo-Americans"; a France which would be the loyal and solid partner of the Federal Republic of Germany; a France generously engaged in the development of the Third World.

Instead, the "Mitterrand Generation" will inherit a pitiful supranational, post-industrial, and technetronic Europe, prey to the Venetian and other vultures of finance capital, and Finlandized under a New Yalta arrangement between Western appeasers and Russia—a Europe by which Germany will be betrayed and Africa abandoned.

Not only is this what Mitterrand's naming of Michel Rocard as prime minister means, but it is also what the composition of the government Rocard chose tends to confirm. This government is, of course, transitional; the National Assembly has been rapidly dissolved and legislative elections will take place on June 5-12, but the government that emerges from them will keep the basic profile represented by Michel Rocard.

## The 'New Left'

Rocard owes his political career to two influential clubs: the Jean Moulin Club and the Saint Simon Foundation.

The first brings together several hundred generally leftist figures, from Catholic to Protestant, trade unionists to bankers, journalists, from business managers to civil servants, all working on the "New Left" project. The most eminent members have been: the Protestant banker close to President Mitterrand, Antoine Riboud; the vice president of Midland Bank

in France, Claude Alphantery, who is close to onetime premier and recent presidential candidate Raymond Barre; and Michel Albert, a member of the Trilateral Commission.

Since 1972, these pioneers of the New Left have designated Rocard as a "man of the future."

The second club was set up in 1982 at the instigation of Roger Fauroux, then president of the Saint Gobain industrial group and protector of Rocard; this club was in charge of introducing the "New Left" conception into the more "conservative" circles. The group included Mssrs. Riboud, Alphantery, and Albert, and additionally, Alain Minc, the current right-hand man of Italian "assault" financier Carlo De Benedetti; Jean-Claude Casanova and Albert Costa de Beauregard, who were aides to Raymond Barre during his premiership; Serge July, the editor of the daily newspaper *Libération*, and two leaders of the Catholic trade union, the CFDT.

## 'Vive la Crise'

This Saint Simon Foundation cooked up, in 1984, an important television program to promote the post-industrial society. The program, produced by Michel Albert and movie star Yves Montand, was entitled "Vive la Crise," (Long Live the Crisis) and tried to convince the audience that the industrial era should come to a long-overdue end, to be replaced by an economy based, not on the production of industrial goods such as steel, machine tools, and shipyards, but on the management of human and material resources (information management, poverty management, management of working hours, management of human relations, leisure management, and so forth).

Another subtle aspect of this broadcast consisted in the assertion that World Wars I and II were really a "recipe" used to destroy obsolete plant and equipment and replace them, so as to assure "industrial renewal."

The existence of the atomic bomb now prohibits the reuse of this "recipe" for ensuring reconversion, they said. Thus, a member of the Saint Simon Foundation recommended that European governments "bomb their own factories and declare war on their own workers. And what is asked of the

workers, is for them to internalize this war. It is a question of an unprecedented cultural shift." Naturally, the show conveyed that the industrial mobilization of U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt to win World War II, was the model to be avoided at all costs.

In 1984, the government named CFDT trade union leader Jacques Chereque as the Prefect in charge of Industrial Re-deployment in the Lorraine, saying that French versions of Disneyland and Silicon Valley are sensible ways to reabsorb the jobs lost in steel. But unemployment kept rising.

In the circles of this Foundation, numerous figures started denigrating the French economic traditions of dirigism, Colbertism, and the conception of the State, which had inspired General de Gaulle as the means of ensuring France's revival.

### The General's uniform

Nevertheless, in the country where General de Gaulle's prestige remains great, one cannot clash head-on with his legacy. The New Left has carefully guarded an apparent respect for the institutions. Mitterrand and Rocard never tire of praising the "Fifth Republic" and the "Force de Frappe," de Gaulle's creations, of which they keep the shell, but radically change the content. The latter subtlety is what must be kept in mind when one observes the following elements:

- The Force de Frappe, France's nuclear deterrent, will be maintained and supported, but without giving it the modifications needed for the strategic situation coming out of the INF accords. The Hades project is to be abandoned, for "budgetary reasons." The Hades mobile missile, with its 500 kilometer range, could protect the Federal Republic of Germany, partially making up for the pullout of American missiles. Mr. Rocard and his defense minister, Jean-Pierre Chevènement, the first two Socialists to have accepted the Force de Frappe, will thus respect its "form."

- President Mitterrand has often reiterated his refusal to join the U.S. Strategic Defense Initiative: Space should be kept for civilian uses. In this regard, it is noteworthy that Minister of the Post and Telecommunications Paul Quilès is also Minister of Space.

- To the SDI, Mitterrand counterposes a "vast European technological plan," the Eureka project, which he recently suggested opening up to the Soviets.

- Hubert Curien, the Minister of Research, gets his reputation from his role in the European Space Union, the Ariane program, and in the reinforcement of cooperation with the Soviets during a previous ministry.

- On European monetary issues, the idea of a supranational European central bank is making headway. The new Economics, Finance, and Budget Minister Pierre Berégovoy, is appreciated in the business world for his "liberalism," and is a member of the Committee for the Monetary Union of Europe, chaired by former President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and Helmut Schmidt. Relations with Eastern Europe may be oriented toward the idea of a "Marshall Plan for the East,"

such as the raider Carlo De Benedetti has suggested. Mitterrand favors this, along with Giscard d'Estaing and Barre. Barre recently appealed for votes on the basis of "the economic space which goes from Western Europe to Eastern Europe."

- The Minister of Industry, Foreign Trade, and Management of Territories is none other than the aforementioned Roger Fauroux, creator of the Saint Simon Foundation. His deputy ministers are Jacques Chereque and François Doubin. The latter was a candidate in the "ecologist" slate, ERE, for the 1984 European Parliament elections, together with Olivier Stirn and Brice Lalonde, who are also in the Rocard government, Stirn as Minister of Overseas Territories, and LaLonde as Secretary of State for Ecology.

### Ideological truce

The foregoing profile shows that the cabinet's broad orientations are not specific to the Socialist Party and actually draw upon the support of liberal circles. And it is around the relative hegemony of these ideas—New Yalta, post-industrial society—that François Mitterrand is trying to rearrange the French political landscape. The alliance being outlined, whatever the particular form it takes, is between the Socialist Party, and a party of centrist conservatives and liberals from the French Democratic Union (UDF), which ran Raymond Barre for President in the first round of this spring's elections. That presumes certain "lacerations," since the UDF is officially allied to the Gaullist RPR party, but numerous statements in recent days confirm that this is the trend.

Lionel Jospin, formerly the general secretary of the Socialist Party and now education minister, affirmed: "I could conceive that there could be a certain number of electoral districts where the Socialists would be wise enough to say, 'Well, maybe we won't put up any candidates.'" side, Mr. Barre, in approving the immediate dissolving of the National Assembly, said: "We are under the Fifth Republic. . . . What matters is that there be a coherent majority to support the action of the government and the President of the Republic." Such is the "ideological truce" which many figures in the left (Socialist Party) and the right (UDF and Center Democrats) are hoping for.

If there are stumbling blocks to this "grand coalition," they are not found in the RPR Gaullist party, itself contaminated by liberal concepts, nor in the extreme left or right-wing parties, but rather in the very simple reality that the terrorist threat has not slackened, but is escalating; austerity has continued; AIDS is still spreading; social security has been proclaimed to be going bankrupt; drugs are still a scourge. The growing ranks of the poor, the malcontent, the restless, and the enraged are going to swell the National Front and other extreme parties, which will only feed the country's destabilization a little more, unless prospects other than a New Yalta and a post-industrial society are offered to this great country.