

Profiles: the other eight candidates

by Emmanuel Grenier

Most unusual for a French presidential election, there are two candidates from the same party, the Rally for the Republic (RPR)—the party which purports to be in the tradition of Gen. Charles de Gaulle. Jacques Chirac has been the head of the party since 1976. It is he who pushed Edouard Balladur to become prime minister in 1993, after the RPR victory in the parliamentary elections. Chirac has the support of the political machine of the RPR, but Balladur has the support of the other right-wing party, the French Democratic Union (UDF), which favors the British free-trade system, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), and the Maastricht Treaty of European Union. Balladur also has the support of Interior Minister Charles Pasqua, who belongs to the organized crime-linked networks of alcohol producer Paul Ricard. Pasqua, supposedly Chirac's best supporter, shifted his support to Balladur last year, giving as an explanation that Chirac was a loser.

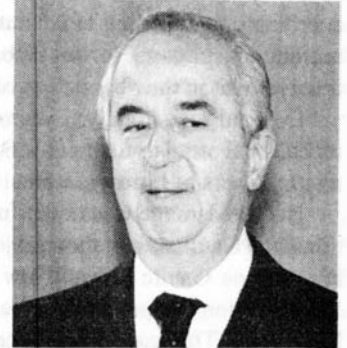
Jacques Chirac (RPR): Twice prime minister (in 1974, with Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, and in 1986 with François Mitterrand), Chirac has never maintained a clear policy line. After being called a "social Gaullist" in the 1970s, and Thatcherite in the 1980s, he now vows to push again for "social policies." He claims



that he is out to defend the "real economy" from the "virtual economy" and to "put man back at the center of economic and social choices." But he will not commit himself to break with the international financial institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund, that are destroying the economy of France and other nations. In 1986, his agriculture minister, François Guillaume, proposed an interesting "Marshall Plan for Africa," but Chirac wanted to keep that project in the framework of the World Bank and of the International Monetary Fund. His record as a mayor of Paris reveals his real nature. His policy of giving a free hand to real estate speculators, to make Paris a second City of London, has resulted in the destruction of beautiful buildings dating back to the 19th century, and in a situation where Paris has now 3 million square meters of empty offices and more than 50,000 persons living in the

streets. Alain Madelain, a member of the Mont Pelerin Society, is the minister for enterprises in the current government and functions as Chirac's economic adviser. He is the main supporter of Chirac outside the RPR.

Edouard Balladur (RPR): This former adviser to President Georges Pompidou (President 1969-74) was also economics and finance minister from 1986 to 1988 in the government led by Chirac. His father was the president of the Ottoman Bank. A thoroughgoing anglophile, Balladur was responsible for bringing



England into the European Community, during his years in the Pompidou administration. Today, as the acting prime minister, his monetarist policy of a "strong franc" has led to disastrous results for the French industrial sector. Because he calls that recession a "recovery," he vows today not to change that policy, but on the contrary to continue it. Balladur tries to give himself an image as the "realist," explaining that there is no solution other than harsh measures, as opposed to Chirac, whom he accuses of demagoguery.

Lionel Jospin (Socialist Party): Although he is generally considered an honest man, among the successive scandal-ridden Mitterrand administrations, Jospin has had a very weak point: He refuses to address the fact that Socialist policies have made France a paradise for speculators, while destroying



the physical economy. The policies of Pierre Bérégovoy—Mitterrand's last Socialist prime minister, who committed suicide in May 1993—were strictly monetarist and pro-free trade. Nevertheless, Jospin has acknowledged the danger of the financial derivatives markets and has spoken in favor of a proposal for taxing them. His official program includes a 0.1% tax on these markets. But the aim is *not* to destroy these speculative instruments. Rather, it is oriented toward the idea, circulated at the U.N.'s Social Summit in Copenhagen earlier this year, of using the proceeds from the tax to finance the U.N.'s world government operations.

Philippe de Villiers (Combat for Values): De Villiers is the operative of Anglo-French billionaire Sir Jimmy Goldsmith, with whom he took part in the last elections to the European Parliament. Along with Lord William Rees-Mogg, the foreign editor of the London *Times*, he proposes to create a European free-trade zone, letting the Third World die.

He has adopted an anti-GATT and anti-Maastricht stance to capitalize on populist rage against the austerity policies enforced by these institutions. He vows "to bring the Brussels [European Union] technocrats to heel," just as the populists in the United States are "fighting Washington." Like his mentor and money-bag Goldsmith, Villiers is a rabid opponent of nuclear energy and of state intervention in the economy. He supports the privatization of EDF, the French state-run electricity utility. He claims that the solution lies in a decentralized program of "regional economies."

Arlette Laguiller (Lutte Ouvrière—Workers' Struggle—Fourth International): A life-long employee of the bank Crédit Lyonnais, this Trotskyite is campaigning for the fourth time, with a program which has not changed much. This is the first time, however, that she has been promoted by the news media. Nobody has attacked the functioning of her party, which is a clandestine operation without an address. Given the decline of the Socialist Party and the relative stability of the Communist Party, Laguiller is expected to garner a higher vote than usual: She is given 5% in the polls, while she received only 1-2% of the vote in the last three elections.

Jean-Marie Le Pen (National Front): An avowed admirer of the fascist economic policies of Friedrich von Hayek, Le Pen is in the race to try to focus the anger of the French population against immigrants. Unemployment, drug smuggling, crime-ridden cities, lack of decent homes—everything is attributed to the immigrant population. France has 5 million immigrants, mainly of African origin, out of a population of 65 million, and 5 million French citizens are of foreign origin. Le Pen promises to "send 3 million people back home in seven years." He also wants to change the Constitution

written by his arch-enemy General de Gaulle in 1958, and to go "toward a Sixth Republic." He is also the proponent of radical free-trade measures, like "tax-free zones," and massive deregulation of public services. He never attacks the international financial institutions, and supported most of the policies of George Bush. Promoted by Mitterrand during the 1980s to steal some votes from the right-wing parties, Le Pen's star is now on the wane.

Robert Hue (Communist Party): Despite the collapse of communism in the Soviet Union and eastern Europe, the Communist Party machine is still very strong in France. They managed—barely—to maintain a parliamentary group in the National Assembly and the Senate. But they are losing, little by little, their strongholds in the cities and regions. After the death of the Soviet Union, the Communists changed their Stalinist program. Their vote is essentially a protest vote, as they propose nothing to solve the injustice they so vociferously denounce.

Dominique Voynet (Greens): The Green movement, which reached a high vote of 14% during the last regional elections in 1992, was then torn apart by warfare which erupted among its leaders. Divided into three groups, they are disappearing from the French political scene. Among the three, only Voynet managed to get enough signatures to run for the Presidency. Brice Lalonde, former environment minister in the Mitterrand administration, and Antoine Waechter, former presidential candidate for the Greens, had to drop out of the race. Voynet is presenting a program mixing radical Green environmentalist measures with extreme-left programs. She is promoting the standard litany of one-worldist themes and is very favorable to the United Nations.



Farmers demonstrate against the free-trade policies of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) in Strasbourg, France, in December 1992. Some of the candidates in this election are trying to capitalize on ferment against GATT, while Edouard Balladur is a staunch supporter of the British system.