

Cheminade campaign has shaped a vital French election

by Jeffrey Steinberg

Three days before the first round of the French Presidential elections, the April 20, 1995 issue of the left-liberal French daily *Libération* delivered an implicit assessment of the impact of the Presidential campaign of Jacques Cheminade, the French colleague of American political economist Lyndon LaRouche who shocked the European political establishment by qualifying as one of nine candidates for the race for President. The article didn't mention Cheminade by name, but focused on front-runner Jacques Chirac, the former prime minister and mayor of Paris, whom the paper characterized as "worrying the City [of London]" by his surprising turn toward populist attacks against the Bank of France and the country's financial oligarchy.

Libération, a leading voice of France's Anglophiles, delivered an unambiguous threat that the City of London would declare war on the French franc in the event of a Chirac victory. Such a heavy-handed intervention into the French Presidential race on the part of the British indicates that the Windsor-Club of the Isles crowd has become extremely worried that the strategic partnership with Paris that blossomed during the Presidency of François Mitterrand, is in serious jeopardy.

The British Crown is attempting to orchestrate a replay of the pre-World War I Triple Entente between England, France, and Russia. This time, however, such a geopolitical pact is aimed not merely against Germany, but against the United States as well. While the consolidation of an Anglo-Russian entente is far from complete, France, under the team of President Mitterrand and Prime Minister Edouard Balladur, has been squarely in the London camp for some time, and a loss of that "special relationship" would be a devastating blow to the Club of the Isles.

The Cheminade factor

There is no way to comprehend the transformation of the campaign rhetoric of all three of the so-called front-runners—candidates Chirac, Socialist Lionel Jospin, and even Chirac's Anglophile Gaullist rival Balladur—without factoring in the tremendous impact of the Cheminade campaign. In every one of the hundreds of TV, radio, and newspaper interviews that he has done since his April 7 certification, Cheminade has pilloried the revival of the Anglo-French Entente Cordiale, targeted the financial speculators for bringing the world to the brink of the worst financial collapse in 600 years, spelled out a detailed global economic reconstruction plan ("a new Marshall Plan" for both the East and the South), and spoken eloquently of a new "mission" for France based on a revival of the tradition of Louis XI, Colbert, Hanotaux, and de Gaulle.

During the week leading into the April 23 first-round vote, 43 million French citizens received copies of the "Principles of Faith" of all nine certified candidates—including Cheminade (see last week's *EIR* for excerpts). Almost immediately, calls began pouring into Cheminade's campaign headquarters from voters all across France.

As a result of the massive media attention afforded the certified candidates, including the government's mailing of the "Principles," the impact of Cheminade's campaign has been enormous—despite the best efforts of London's French "junior partners," including Interior Minister Charles Pasqua and leading figures in the French media establishment, who are engaged in a slander campaign against both Cheminade and LaRouche.

The bottom line is that France's political institutions are in disarray, and the French public is up in arms over Mitter-

rand-Balladur peddling deindustrialization, speculation, and privatization. One of the clearest indications of this crisis is the wave of protest strikes that swept France during the final weeks of the electoral campaign. A nationwide strike of transportation workers, a strike of government workers in the insurance and banking sectors, a strike of postal workers in the south of France, and the threat of strikes in several key industrial sectors, have drawn attention to the underlying economic crisis. And the multibillion-dollar government bailout of Crédit Lyonnais, France's largest bank and the largest in Europe, at the beginning of the year, continues to play out, with other large French financial institutions also believed to be on the verge of collapse.

The volatility of this year's French Presidential election is accentuated by the fact that both of the major political parties, the Gaullist RPR and the Socialist Party, are internally deeply divided, and therefore incapable of controlling the turnout of their traditional voter bases. In the case of the Gaullists, the party is split between its two candidates, Chirac and Balladur. In the case of the Socialists, President Mitterrand, on behalf of the Club of the Isles, after blocking the candidacy of Jacques Delors, worked behind the scenes for London's "favorite son" candidate, the ersatz Gaullist Balladur. Delors has been a major influence on Jospin, who, among other things, has joined Cheminade in calling for shutting down the French Interior Ministry's notorious political police, the Renseignements Generaux (RG).

All of these factors have combined to introduce an unprecedented element of volatility—regardless of the outcome of the vote. In effect, the election has been turned into a referendum on whether France will continue in its Entente Cordiale relationship with London or turn toward a new alliance, based on strong ties with Germany and the United States.

Criminal campaign against Cheminade

The electoral race also produced new, chilling evidence of the filthy role played by French Interior Minister and America-hater Charles Pasqua. On the eve of the electoral campaign, Pasqua became embroiled in two major scandals, one involving an attempt to frame up regional political figures opposing the Balladur campaign, and a second involving the expulsion of five Americans accused of industrial spying. The latter scandal brought to the surface Pasqua's pro-British, anti-American biases.

Then, as the campaign heated up, Pasqua's ministry, which controls the RG, was caught interfering against the Cheminade campaign. In 1992, during the attempted frame-up of Cheminade and three other associates of the French branch of the Schiller Institute, founded by Helga Zepp-LaRouche, the RG had served as a conduit for slanders originally fabricated by a U.S.-based "Get LaRouche" task force led by Club of the Isles agent Henry Kissinger, Wall Street Anglophile (and Sir Jimmy Goldsmith crony) John Train, and the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith (ADL).

Early in Cheminade's campaign, French news organs aired wild slanders against Cheminade and LaRouche that were attributed to "judicial sources," a key and code for the RG. Subsequently, a number of mayors who had signed Cheminade's nominating petition, revealed that they had been contacted by the RG and interrogated about their links to Cheminade. These are all flagrant violations of France's strict electoral codes.

The Pasqua Interior Ministry has not been alone in its criminal misconduct toward the Cheminade campaign. On April 14, France 2, a government-owned nationwide TV network, aired a slanderous news story on the Cheminade campaign and on the candidate's links to Lyndon LaRouche. Several days before the TV show aired, France 2 reporters had conducted a 40-minute taped interview with LaRouche in Virginia. Yet, the TV spot not only ignored LaRouche's on-the-record comments, but the interviewer lied that LaRouche is "a virulent populist, [who] says that the enemy today are the Jews." The formulation never came from the mouth of LaRouche, but instead was taken from the files of the ADL and the RG!

Several days later, during a live April 17 interview with PF 1 TV, Cheminade was similarly falsely charged with being anti-Semitic, at which point the candidate, whose father was an active figure in the anti-Nazi, anti-Vichy wartime resistance, pilloried the reporter, noting that under other circumstances, he would have slapped him in the face for such a scurrilous remark.

That incident, one of many sharp confrontations between the candidate and the press during the course of the campaign, provoked a wild reaction several days later in the pages of *Libération*, which complained bitterly that Cheminade "doesn't care what others think," and shows total disregard and disrespect for the press. In return, *Libération* admitted, most French reporters detest Cheminade.

However, beyond the smears and misrepresentations that have characterized much of the French liberal media's coverage of the Cheminade campaign, a much deeper issue is at stake. This was reflected in the comments of a French official of the Mont Pelerin Society, the super-secret Conservative Revolution think-tank, who told *EIR* on the eve of the first round of the election: "Cheminade is disturbing the usual political game here in France, with what he says about the role of the City of London. . . . People like the sort of things he says about financial markets and the City of London. There is this constant theme about the dichotomy between the financial sphere and the real economic sphere, with the financial sphere being 'illusory.' This is a very common view in France. It's not just Cheminade these days, you also hear the candidates on the left talking about a tax on speculative financial movements."

The Mont Pelerin official admitted that Cheminade's campaign has transformed this crucial French election, and, for once, the society has it right.