

France: between decadence and hope

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The doom of fallen empires and nations was always caused by what passed for the ruling, “mainstream” opinion among their ruling elites. Men and women in relevant positions of power, from head of state, to high-ranking and lowly bureaucrats, judges, and policemen, find their wills in the grip of a force of “our tradition,” even if the action taken under that influence is disgusting, even, as in the case of some former associates of President François Mitterrand, suicidal.

So, we must understand the monstrous folly of those officials of France’s Socialist government, who supervised the death of Princess Diana. In such a case, the source of the evil deed is not the actual, or non-existent enmity of the official for the victim; it is probable that there was “nothing personal” in the motives of those French officials whose willful, murderous negligence relieved the British monarchy of a former Princess whose continued existence had become a political inconvenience to the Windsors and their lackeys. The relevant French officials’ apparent motive in this case, was the most disgusting sophistry common to the bureaucrats of most na-

tions, including the U.S.A.: “Don’t you see? It was necessary; I was only doing my job.”

Will the Jospin government fall, in a chain-reaction triggered by the very crudeness of its cover-up in the case of Princess Diana’s murder? Possibly, perhaps probably. However, it was doomed in any case; it was doomed for the same reason that apparently isolated incidents have often doomed even the great fallen empires of the past. It is doomed by its lack of moral character, by that flaw in its moral character which is the legacy of the departed former President François Mitterrand.

Jacques Cheminade, a 1995 candidate for election as President of France, and an accomplished professional, and former official of France’s administrative corps, provides an insider’s view of the decadent, doomed tradition which Mitterrand’s Presidency set into place within France’s present administrative establishment today. Thus, the case of Princess Diana expresses the threatened self-doom of that Mitterrand legacy known as the Jospin government. Is there hope that France might survive the mortal defect in the character of its present “mainstream thinking”? Only if it rids itself of that decadence.

Mitterrand’s corrupt legacy against France’s Fifth Republic

by Jacques Cheminade

All governments in France, since at least 1980, have continuously and persistently betrayed the sovereignty of their nation-state and the mandate received from their electorate. It is uniquely in that context, that the Lady Diana case can be understood. The extent and reasons for that permanent betrayal are the subject-matter of the present article, written to convey a sense of contemporary French history to an American readership. That sense is not located in the reading of some history book or magazines in one’s comfortable armchair, but in the discovery of the dynamics of a social process.

Betrayal as a political habit

French ultra-liberal polemist Alain Minc, known as the pen of the Parisian nomenklatura, gives a good summary of the last 16 years of French politics: The late President François Mitterrand first betrayed the Fifth Republic from inside, and liquidated what French workers had gained over many years of social battles; current President Jacques Chirac betrayed the inheritance of Gaullism twice; and finally, Prime Minister Lionel Jospin, in less than two weeks, abandoned all pretense that he would turn the tide, and thus won, as a reward,

the approval of both the London *Financial Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*. Cynically, Minc comments that there can only be one way of thinking inside a “circle of reason,” better called a circle of treason.

The submission of all of them to the so-called “European rules of the game,” under British guidance, is the thread of such behavior. “Europe,” in that sense, is a complete fraud. What has been put under that name, is a conveyor belt to world financial deregulation, and has nothing to do with the interests of the European populations. Typical of this was, in 1988, Mitterrand’s promotion of complete capital deregulation within Europe. To his then-Prime Minister Pierre Bérégovoy, who insisted that such a thing could not be done, because either all French capital would flee to the City of London and Luxembourg, or France would have to adapt to rabidly anti-social policies (as in fact occurred), Mitterrand replied, “Of course, Bérégovoy, you are not against Europe; then, you have no other choice than to deregulate.”

Next, in September 1992, Mitterrand imposed, through a manipulated referendum, the “Europe of Maastricht,” a concoction based on monetarism, Thatcherism, and the debase-ment of the nation-state. Mitterrand was, in that enterprise—as he had been during the Malvinas War and the Gulf War—the best ally of the British. He and Margaret Thatcher wanted to tie German hands, to prevent a pro-development policy toward the East; remember that German Chancellor Helmut Kohl’s adviser, Alfred Herrhausen, who was conducting an audacious policy of capital investment in the East, was brutally murdered within days after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Pierre Bérégovoy committed suicide in 1993, and Mitterrand’s former closest friend, François de Grossouvre, shot himself to death in his Elysée Palace office, which was next to the President’s own. Indeed, a trail of blood follows the steps of betrayal.

Later, when Mitterrand’s Socialist Party lost the elections of 1993, and as Mitterrand’s Vichyite past—the story of his 1941-45 life as a part-time Pétain agent, collaborating with the Nazis in occupied France—began to be known, some Socialists began to take their distance from him, among them Lionel Jospin. Prime Minister Edouard Balladur, a neo-liberal traitor to the Gaullist ideal, took over, and continued the pro-Maastricht policy. Then Chirac, parading as a true-blue Gaullist, won the Presidential elections of April-June 1995, and betrayed his mandate in October of the same year, to arrange, with his pro-liberal Finance Minister Jean Arthuis, the acceptance of the Dublin agreement, a European stability (austerity) pact known as Super-Maastricht. Because of that, and because Jospin pledged to break the Super-Maastricht arrangement, he won the legislative elections of June 1997, to immediately accept, after his victory, the stability pact (with a social veneer), becoming a turncoat like all the others—but even sooner.

In sum, all French governments have followed in the foot-

steps of Mitterrand’s betrayal, which therefore provides a matrix for judging their behavior.

An agent of British influence

The ugly truth is that the French people elected as their President, for two seven-year terms (1981-95), an agent of British influence. This is the submerged part of the iceberg concerning Mitterrand’s adventurous life during World War II. In 1993-95, before dying, he let some of his secrets be known, except that major one, or, better said, to hide that major one. Nonetheless, if one reads his various “literary” works carefully, one can have a glimpse of his true identity. In a perverse way, this lover of Venice, who once called the City of the Doges the “Mother of Europe,” says in *Here and Now*: “I was born next to the Charente River, on its left bank, the bank of common law.” In terms of French history, this is a key message. The left bank of the Charente was the British-influenced or -occupied side, which had followed the proto-feudal common law, instead of natural or Roman law, as other parts of France did. During World War II, it was Mitterrand’s British protectors who whitewashed him, to get rid of his too pungent Vichyite smell.

He paid them back, by becoming the most talented and vicious enemy of Charles de Gaulle and the Fifth Republic, during the 1960s and ’70s, promoting a parliamentary model à la the United Kingdom, against the Gaullist Presidential system, opposing the French nuclear force, and becoming a “left-wing” pro-NATO spokesman. As soon as he won the Presidential election of 1981, he shifted his attitude. Understanding that he could not destroy the Gaullist heritage frontally, because nationalism in France was then too strong, he decided to do it from within. So, the “perfect parliamentary democrat” of the ’60s and ’70s became the autocratic President of the ’80s and ’90s. Not to build anything—he was not interested in building—but to stay in power and drown the French state in a malicious mixture of submission to the British side of NATO, and distortion or deviation of the nation-state from an idea, into what he himself once called a “smell,” the blood and soil chauvinistic smell. He thus eroded the institutions of the Fifth Republic until they became meaningless, spreading his poison in the administration, the military, and, above all, in the secret services and the police, where he was a master in spreading internecine warfare. De Gaulle had once called him an *arsouille* (a rascal), and, for sure, he was one.

Mitterrand teamed up with his old friend Roland Dumas, probably an even worse character than he, who had been, if possible, even closer to the British. Dumas, an architect of the British-run Serbian war of aggression against Bosnia, and, along with the British, a supporter of the Serbs against the “Germano-Vatican Europe,” was a manipulator of all networks, above and beyond all party rules. He intersected the networks of Communist and British agents, notably in the

Mideast, whereas he was the lover of the daughter of Syria's Defense Minister Gen. Mustafa Tlas, the protector of the Nazi Alois Bruner. Dumas's involvement in the Mideast casino business was notorious, in particular the networks in black Africa, managed by the Corsican mafia. This graduate of the London School of Economics had learned his lesson so well, that he is now ending his life as head of the French Constitutional Council, the equivalent of the U.S. Supreme Court.

Of course, the Dumas-Mitterrand dirty money businesses intersected those of George Bush, and, from the beginning of Mitterrand's Presidency, the three of them got along very well. At the end of Mitterrand's life, he made an effort to accept the invitation of Bush to come to visit at his Texas ranch, together with Dumas, to celebrate how, with Thatcher and Gorbachov, they had managed to control Europe after the fall of the Berlin Wall, to keep it in the hands of the British and their Anglo-American allies, and to avoid an implementation of the conceptions espoused by the likes of Lyndon LaRouche and Alfred Herrhausen.

The world we have today is the legacy of this vampires' ball.

Permanent bureaucracy and the generational conflict

We have now to explain how Mitterrand could take over a once-Gaullist France, and why none of his successors broke the grip of his ghost.

The first thing to understand, is that France is ruled, from above, by a permanent bureaucracy, built according to the Napoleonic model. It is often also called a mandarinat; it consists of people trained to play by the rules of the game, and rewarded by being allowed to serve as the managerial elite of the public sector. Under de Gaulle, this bureaucracy was maintained and even promoted, but "tamed"; Mitterrand understood that he could turn it to his will.

Before Mitterrand, a good career could be made inside France; but once he came to power, bringing with him capital deregulation, the best of all possible careers were made if you had served some years in New York, Washington, or London, around or inside the International Monetary Fund, as financial attaché, or in the UN or European Union-related institutions. Mitterrand thus corrupted the elite, using the Napoleonic model to promote financial liberalism. Hence, his legacy today: a corporatist administration in submission to one-worldist institutions and "naturally" tuned, because it serves one's career, to the British ideology and rules of the game.

At the same time, a relatively open system became a more and more closed shop: In 1951-55, the sons of the lower-income classes constituted about 29% of the total enrollment at the four French Grandes Ecoles, where the best and the brightest are trained, while today they make up less than 9%, under Socialist governments.

The next point is, in France as everywhere else, the gener-

ational conflict. But, this was aggravated in France for two reasons. First, the country had been stifled, from 1939 until 1962, by World War II, the Nazi occupation, and a series of colonial wars, culminating with the Algerian War. Under de Gaulle, after 1962, a sense of progress, freedom, and economic development, unprecedented since 1914, could be felt. The youth, the Baby-Boomers, surged through the country, calling for a purpose in life, a design, and a creative education. None of this was provided by the old bureaucracy, despite de Gaulle; therefore, the youth fell prey to the 1968 counterculture, the British model of American life. The clash between the old and the new created a big conflict, with more haste to consume and Baby-Boomerism than in other countries, because the "relief" had come later.

President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing first endorsed that ferment, allowing "a new way of life," based on free sex, unbridled selling of pornography, speculation in antiques and modern painting, *chiqueria*, and so on; it was the soft-porn age of *Emmanuelle*.

Old Mitterrand understood that he had to go further, if he wanted to be President and keep his position, and so he did. His promoters pushed his nickname, Tonton (uncle), that of a tolerant and slightly perverse uncle letting his "nephews" live a "free" life. In a famous TV program with commentator Moroussi, President Mitterrand arranged for his interviewer to sit on his table, and they spoke for a few minutes about the youth in *verlan*, a French slang.

This staged production of a decadent Roman emperor, dressed, of course, in bourgeois clothes, soon destroyed all respect for the state. The French admired Tonton's smartness, and he got them accustomed to a relationship based on lying and double-talk, as if in an advertisement. Virtual society started to rule over reality, promoted by an incredible expansion of television. The French, who were way behind in watching images, became addicts in just a few years: The average French TV today is turned on more than four and a half hours per day!

In the meantime, "Culture" Minister Jack Lang pushed a conception of culture based on pure impressions and images, reaching the instincts and not the mind. He once declared in a famous commentary in *Le Monde*, the semi-official daily of the nomenclatura: "My goal is to contaminate our country with a culture of freedom and disrespect." Hard-porn then followed soft-porn.

Deconstructionism

This leads us to the worst aspect of Mitterrand's legacy: deconstructionism, the loss of all illusions and the perverse pleasure of destroying. This was prepared by the promotion of the Frankfurt School in France, not directly by German authors translated into French, but by French authors who had plagiarized the German.

Jean-Paul Sartre played a key role in it. The aging, existen-

tialist philosopher had become a pro-Maoist, an *enragé*, against each and all.

Such authors, read by the young *soixantehuitards* (sixty-eighters, as the Baby Boomers are called in French), played on the old French Jacobin *sans culottes* profile, hatred of thy neighbor. Sartre's autobiography, *Les Mots*, proves the case. It is the story of a young kid who feels thrown into an hostile world, like a Heideggerian figure, and is only loved and defended by his mother, or, better said, his mother image. The books of such authors created, in turn, a new brand of socialists with a not-so-human face, ready to enjoy their newly acquired "positions" as a protection against a hostile environment.

The game has, of course, been ridiculous, so great is the contrast between the socialist "credo" and the financially and politically enjoyable social situation of the Socialist elite. Betrayal is more than obvious to anybody in France, but the French population is paralyzed against such a hoax, because it sees nothing else: The so-called Gaullists are only a right-wing version of the same thing, and the Communists are presently selling their souls to the new neo-liberal devil, to replace the red one. The rage is therefore impotent, and translates into electoral abstention, or is capitalized on by the national-Bonapartist, blood-and-soil National Front, promoted in the first place by Mitterrand, to divide and rule over his right-wing opponents.

France's future

Is that all there is to France today? Is this world of evil impms the substance of the country? Fortunately, not at all.

It is nothing but the Paris nomenclatura, the regime of the Court, adopted and adapted by the bourgeoisie, in the form of a bureaucracy that always bends to the side of the stronger. Such scum is in total opposition to the historical concept of the French nation-state, and the French population is a victim of it. The legacy of Mitterrand, in that sense, is a "culture" of dissimulation and double-talk, of submission hidden under "good" speeches and manners. It is the degenerated "culture" of Vichy France.

The irony is, that those attacking the historical Vichy France today, are often the same who are reliving it, with respect to the British oligarchy.

Contrary and opposed to it, there is the political life inside France, the France of the "small mayors," the local elected officials and all the victims of what Chirac once called the "social fracture"—without doing anything to cure it.

This is the France that has kept, through various mediations, a sense of the Republic, the nation-state created by Louis XI in the middle of the 15th century, revived by Henry IV at the end of the 16th and beginning of the 17th century. Around this, is a drive toward a truly republican party, beyond the boundaries of all established parties, which, like dead fish, rot first at the head. This republican impulse emerges in periods of extreme tension, as it did during the

Resistance against the Nazis inside France, and the Free French outside.

How, then, can Mitterrand's legacy be broken? Well, it could be quite soon. Because France has always been the country where the confrontation of oligarchism and republicanism has been the most frontal in Europe, for two reasons.

First, because the republican tradition is alive in the minds of a majority, not like in England or in most other European countries. With all his imperfections, General de Gaulle is a figure who, in the recent past, provided, in his words, a true sense of "a certain idea of France," the nation-state, not as a thing-in-itself, but as an idea, a point of improvement and transformation. This is the tradition of Louis XI, Henry IV, Colbert's Academy of Sciences, the Ecole Polytechnique, Gaspard Monge, Lazare Carnot, Louis Pasteur, and the national party in the working class movement—national, of course, in the sense I have just defined, not chauvinistic. And, at the same time, the oligarchical tradition is also very strong: Venice in Louis XIV's court; Napoleon; the British party, now, and in the Third and Fourth Republics. Therefore, the dynamics of the social processes tend, in periods of extreme tension like the present, to go toward a situation of civil strife.

The second reason for this frontal shock, is that France was not only the first nation-state in Western Europe, but also the key country with borders, on one side, with the Catholic and Muslim Mediterranean—Spain, Italy, Algeria—and on the other side, on the north, with Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, and the Protestant world. This unique position makes of it a target and a springboard at the same time.

The problem is that the republicans, for many centuries, and notably since Napoleon and the Holy Alliance of 1815, have grown too weak. They have tried to win by abiding by the rules of the game, and have lost miserably.

The advantage of Mitterrand's legacy and the degeneration of the permanent bureaucracy is that it makes things clear: We, republicans, can only win if we break from the rules of the game, Maastricht, the markets and one-worldism, the British Empire, and its metastasis in the United States.

But this, in turn, demands from us that we rise firmly, as all French humanists did, beyond France-in-itself, and through our nation-state, to a universal identity, bringing the impulse of the Pacific to the Atlantic, Europe out of its impotence, the ugly smile of François Mitterrand into the laughter of François Rabelais.

Jacques Cheminade is a frequent contributor to EIR. See, for example, "Time to Destroy the Mythology of Bonapartism," Oct. 18, 1996. For coverage of his 1995 Presidential campaign, see Christine Bierre, "Jacques Cheminade Campaigns for French Nationhood," April 21, 1995. Single issues are available for \$10, postpaid.