

Cheminade Presidential Campaign Shakes Up the Establishment

by Christine Schier

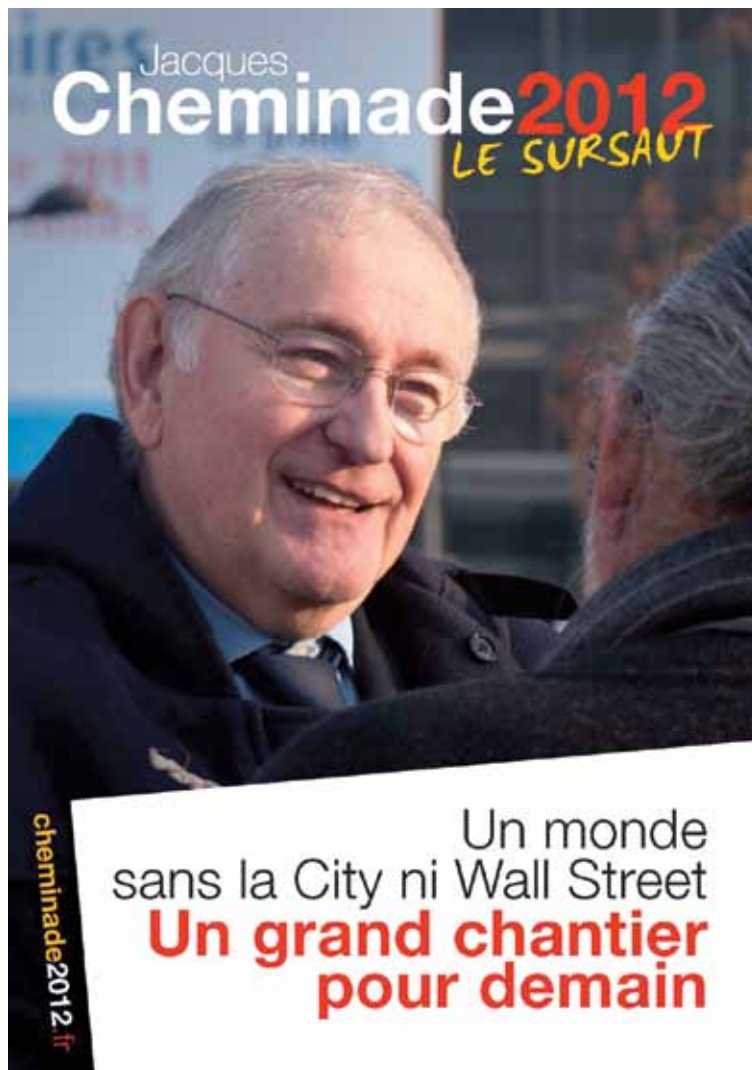
PARIS, April 3—When Jacques Cheminade formally launched his Presidential campaign in early March, he vowed to break through the “collective anesthesia” in France, represented by the failure of the “major” candidates to discuss the truly vital issues confronting the population, beginning with the financial crisis, the insane austerity policy in the European Union, and the danger of world war.

Four weeks later, he has largely accomplished just that, by catapulting those realities onto center-stage in his many interventions in the media. And he manages to do so in spite of the journalists who would rather harp on trivial anecdotes or worn-out and long-discredited slanders.

In those parts of the population able to think outside of the proverbial “box,” this is stirring tremendous excitement. “Oh, great, Cheminade is the candidate of science,” is an increasingly common reaction, when people meet his activists in the streets. “Hey, he’s the one who wants to industrialize the Moon,” or even more often, “He really has something original to say; it demands a lot of concentration.”

By stating the obvious—the trans-Atlantic financial system is hopelessly bankrupt, the euro system has already self-destructed, the social triage policy in the U.S. and Europe will awaken the worst monsters imaginable, France needs a vision for the future—Cheminade has the effect of saying “the emperor has no clothes.”

That is also true of other issues which the establishment is intent on covering up, such as the dangers of violent video games, drug-money laundering, the truth behind the Sept. 11 attacks, or Presi-



Jacques Cheminade's campaign poster: “Take the leap” . . . “A world without the City [of London] or Wall Street: A great project for the future”

dent Obama’s health-care policy. The initial reaction in the media and among their groupies is to portray Cheminade as a madman, but little by little, these

themes are sinking in, and the wall of silence is slowly falling.

‘Cleaning Out the Augean Stables’

Otherwise, the “major” candidates are making a “balanced budget” the priority of their economic and financial policy, which means a firm commitment to austerity, while Cheminade has a completely different approach. He proposes to use massive amounts of productive public credit to build the real economy, once a Glass-Steagall-type banking reform has been put through (which he calls “cleaning out the Augean stables”). While socialist François Hollande has called for a separation of banking activities, he then turned around to reassure the City of London that it had nothing to fear from him. However, after years of interventions by Solidarité et Progrès (the LaRouche organization in France) activists, Glass-Steagall is a widely discussed issue in the Socialist Party itself (see

box, “A Roosevelt 2012 Collective Founded in France”).

Unfortunately, strategic and foreign policy is very little discussed in the campaign, and even Cheminade has had trouble putting it on the table. The Sarkozy government, taken in tow by London, continues to be gung-ho on an interventionist, regime-change policy towards Iran and Syria, and Hollande is not really much different.

Cheminade’s defense platform, however, is circulating in the relevant circles, where he calls for an end to all out-of-area military deployments.

Another major plank of his campaign is agricultural policy, which he presented at the 66th Congress of the National Federation of Farmers’ Union (FNSEA) in Montpellier on March 29. He was one of the seven Presidential candidates who accepted the invitation to speak, with each one having 15 minutes for the presentation, plus one or two questions; since

Today’s Dangers from the Standpoint of the 1930s

Jacques Cheminade has stressed in his recent statements the need to consider the events of today through the eyes of those leaders in the early 1930s, who were not able to anticipate the dangers to come. At that time, the financiers of Wall Street and the City of London found it expedient to put Hitler into power in Germany, to impose the type of financial fascism necessary to save their system; and fascist regimes were set up in other European countries for the same reason.

At that time, the policy of social triage was just beginning, and a certain elite in France thought it would be better to deal with a Chancellor Hitler than to allow the left-wing Popular Front to come to power in 1936.

Journalists and many in the population react with shock and incredulity to the LaRouchePAC poster of President Obama with a Hitler moustache, and Cheminade is constantly asked to explain what it

means. In one interview, he stressed that the parallels cannot be understood “from the standpoint of 1946 and the abominations and the horrors of the Shoah [Holocaust], but from the standpoint of 1934-35. What did the Nazis begin to do? They began to massacre the mentally handicapped, and the weak. That was the beginning. And today, the policy of social destruction in the United States is starting to go in that direction, slowly.”

With the IPAB (Independent Payment Advisory Board) set up under Obama’s health-care reform, Cheminade said, “we begin to put a price on human life, and that is very, very serious. . . . It can lead to all kinds of excesses. For the moment, we have not gone that far, but the potential is created, under a policy which does not ensure mutual development in the United States, or in England, or in Europe. Look at what’s happening in Greece. We put the country in a stranglehold and then say: Now pay back the money! It’s impossible.”

On April 2, Cheminade’s campaign put out a statement again clarifying his position on this issue, which is often brought up as a way of avoiding the solutions he proposes, and saying that the candidate wants to be interviewed on the latter from now on.

'Roosevelt 2012 Collective' Founded in France

A group of 39 economists, politicians, artists, and others in France have issued a manifesto calling for a Franklin Roosevelt-type solution to the crisis. Among the main founders are ex-Prime Minister Michel Rocard and two economists close to him, Pierre Larroustou and Stephane Hassel, as well as a mixed bag of others. However, they all fear, as the manifesto says, that after five years of financial crisis, society is reaching a point of no return, where it is urgent to act to prevent an economic collapse, which will lead to chaos.

Such an FDR approach is exactly what Jacques Cheminade and Solidarité et Progrès have organized for for years: a Glass-Steagall law, a Pecora Commission, etc. So, it is very useful that others are taking it up.

While the manifesto was apparently written in February, with the aim of "biting the legs" of the Presidential candidates, it was in the news in mid-March because FDR's grandson, Curtis Roosevelt, who lives in southern France, joined the movement. Now, a series of public meetings with Curtis is being planned.

The manifesto states: "When Roosevelt came to power, he took over from Hoover who was nicknamed 'Do Nothing.' The Americans were in great despair. 14 million unemployed, industrial production down by 45% in 3 years. . . . Roosevelt takes immediate action, with a determination that rekindles confidence. Legislative action is amazing. In three months, Roosevelt has more reforms passed than Hoover in four years. The process is extraordinarily swift: Some laws are introduced, discussed, voted,

and promulgated in the same day.

"Roosevelt's purpose was not to reassure the markets, but to bring them to heel. The shareholders were furious and fought with all their might the law separating deposit banks and investment banks, just

as they fought taxes on the highest incomes or the creation of a federal tax on profits, but Roosevelt remained firm and had 15 fundamental reforms voted up in three months. The catastrophes predicted by the financiers did not happen. And the U.S. economy got along very well under these rules for half a century.

"Since 1993, the world has of course changed a lot. But the principles applied by Roosevelt remain completely modern: Tell the truth, appeal to the intelligence of the citizens, and ACT forcefully."

Denouncing the control of the financial world over governments, under the pretext that democracy takes too long compared to the everyday decisions of the "market," the collective attacks the austerity policy of the EU, as in Greece and Italy, which can only prepare the way for "authoritarian regimes."

And then: "We cannot accept that the oligarchy, which led us into the crisis, should now take advantage of it to increase its own power, by claiming that there is no alternative to austerity."

As Roosevelt did in his day, the Roosevelt 2012 Collective proposes 15 reforms, to be taken immediately, including a Glass-Steagall banking reform, reduction of the state debt to the banks, boycott of fiscal havens, a tax on financial transactions, preventing outsourcing, etc. There is also a dose of environmentalism in there.

The manifesto ends with an appeal to the citizens, noting that in 1989, the Berlin Wall fell, not because of diplomatic wheeling and dealing, but because citizens rose up to topple "a regime which denied the dignity of man."



Franklin Delano Roosevelt

they were taken in alphabetical order, Cheminade was number two. As noted by the press, his intervention was interrupted by applause several times, and warmly applauded at the end.

He denounced the obvious—for farmers but not for financiers—that it is perverse to consider food as a commodity to gamble on; therefore, speculation on food prices must be banned. He also hit at those who pit large producers against smaller ones, and insisted that they must all contribute to meeting the challenge of decently feeding a world population of some 9 billion people by 2050.

For that, he said, France needs a capital-intensive and energy-intensive approach to farming, all the more so, as France is a major agricultural exporter. If elected President, he said he would put research and innovation at the heart of his agricultural policy. He also went into the benefits that a space exploration program would have for agriculture here on Earth.

Rather than short-term management of food supplies, at the mercy of the markets and speculation, Cheminade proposed that all countries constitute sufficient public stockpiles, and that the EU adopt an intelligent policy of biotechnologies. Otherwise, he concluded, the Malthusian outlook of limited resources to be shared among a growing population can only lead to the law of the jungle and thus war.

The national president of the Crédit Agricole bank asked the first question, about the debt of different EU countries, and how Cheminade would protect the interests of France. The second question had to do with the “precautionary principle,” on forcing farmers to take measures to prevent environmental damage.

Nuclear Energy Is Key to the Future

Cheminade today visited the nuclear power plant in Fessenheim, in Alsace near the German border. There has been a huge controversy over this plant, built in 1977, and the oldest in France, because the Nuclear Security Agency concluded at the end of 2011 that it was safe enough and modernized enough to run for 60 years altogether, rather than the 30-year lifespan originally scheduled. The greenies are enraged.

Cheminade first met with the director of the plant for about one hour, and then held an exchange with trade unionists for another hour, before visiting the non-nuclear part of the site. One trade unionist who attended said it was “the first time he ever heard a

candidate speak about fourth-generation nuclear energy.”

At the press conference following his visit, Cheminade said he thought the plant should not be shut down, provided that, at the same time, the needed research and development is carried out on the future forms of nuclear energy, such as the fourth-generation reactors, which are safer and better performing.

He was quoted by AFP and many newspapers, saying that “nuclear energy and space seem to be unrealistic for some people. But for me, they are reality. It means exploring places that man has been able to understand, and to master natural phenomena.”

This is indeed the key to Cheminade’s policy, of constantly pursuing conceptual breakthroughs. And it is perfectly legitimate that his space policy, presented as the best way of ensuring development and peace on Earth, is what most intrigues the population, and enrages the oligarchy and the “de-growth” lobby. Young people in particular, are electrified by it, and by Cheminade’s insistence on thinking about the future.

Lyndon LaRouche On Glass-Steagall and NAWAPA:

The North American Water and
Power Alliance



“The greatest project that mankind has ever undertaken on this planet, as an economic project, now stands before us, as the opportunity which can be set into motion by the United States now launching the NAWAPA project, with the preliminary step of reorganizing the banking system through Glass-Steagall, and then moving on from there.”

“Put Glass-Steagall through now, and I know how to deliver a victory to you.”

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