

Cheminade Counters Arrogance of French Elites; Promotes Space Program

by Christine Schier

April 10—The final ten days of the Presidential campaign in France, leading to the first round of the election on April 22, have seen a whirlwind of media coverage for Jacques Cheminade: eight to ten interviews per day, in addition to the strict amount of equal time slots granted to all candidates as of April 9, and to the official TV spots which will run every day from April 9-20.

While the 2012 Presidential campaign in France, as it now stands, will likely be remembered in history as one in which the dire strategic and economic realities were ignored overall, Cheminade stands out as a fortunate exception to that.

He has hammered on the need to to jump-start the real economy, and warned of the “monsters” which are arising, just as in the 1930s, to bring financial fascism and war upon the world. Time and again, in his interventions, Cheminade insists that the first steps he will take, if elected President, will be to establish a Pecora Commission, to investigate exactly what led to the financial crisis, and what the banks now hold on their books, followed by a sorting out of the valid assets from the toxic waste, which must be written off, and a policy of public credit to finance growth of the physical economy and job creation.

While other candidates pay lip service to the financial crisis as the most pressing problem, they refuse to consider the consequences of remaining within the current financial system and within a euro system which is imploding.

Ironically, the British Em-

pire’s *Economist* magazine put the issue squarely on the table in its March 31 issue. Reflecting the standpoint of the financial oligarchy, its cover story, headlined “France in denial: The West’s most frivolous election,” laments that none of the candidates are telling the French what to expect after the elections, whoever wins: a brutal drop in living standards and the end of social protection. The cover parodies a painting by Edouard Manet, “Luncheon on the Grass,” showing Nicolas Sarkozy and François Hollande nonchalantly lying in the grass and chatting, together with a naked woman.

Indicative of other financial networks, the business TV channel BFM gave Cheminade a chance to present his program at some length, and boursier.com, dedicated to stock exchange and investors, ran an interview with the candidate April 6 as the lead item, under the headline: “By putting an end to

continuous quotations, and returning to a daily setting of values, the markets could again play a useful and honorable role.” In the interview, Cheminade calls for banning high-risk derivatives on the stock exchange as well.

Lifting Decades of Silence

From the field, activists for the Cheminade campaign report that the major problem continues to be a lack of recognition of their candidate’s program, due to the long-standing press blackout. Over the past weeks, that is beginning to change, thanks to the system of Presidential elections set up by Charles de Gaulle to break the stranglehold of the political establishment, and allow individual



The City of London’s flagship magazine, *The Economist*, ridicules the “leading” French Presidential candidates, Sarkozy (right) and Hollande.

citizens with popular support to be heard.

So the message is going out, as Cheminade continues giving many interviews per day on the national level, and campaign spokesmen are covered in the regional media. The heavy artillery slanders of the Parisian media have somewhat died down, because as one contact put it: Once his candidacy was validated, the “atomic bomb” was taken out to counteract him—but he survived it. And not only that, he came out fighting!

Now, the main line of attack is to present the Cheminade candidacy as “useless,” because he won’t get enough votes to tip the scales, and to present the candidate himself as an eccentric. He might have some good ideas, it is said, but they’re unrealistic.

Outside of the time the media are obliged by law to give Cheminade, he is virtually never mentioned in discussions of the election. Thus, the fear instilled in the oligarchy is sometimes more reflected in what is *not* said, than what is said.

This strategy has been carried to a laughable extreme by *Le Monde*, which prides itself on being an “intellectual newspaper.” Its April 10 edition publishes answers to a questionnaire on environmental matters submitted to all candidates . . . except Cheminade. In a footnote, one can read: “We did not question Jacques Cheminade, as per the position of *Le Monde* since his candidacy was made official.” A very strange sense of journalism.

In any case, the arrogance of the French political class toward the citizens and their needs is one reason why many voters are expected to stay home on April 22, with some polls putting it at 24%. New voter registrations have also been particularly low in a Presidential election year.

It is notable that Cheminade’s space program is what most intrigues the thinking population, and infuriates the high priests of a fixed order, since it does not fit into their preconceived world of cost-counting and limited resources. This underscores the underlying effect of the Cheminade campaign, which is nonlinear and



French Presidential candidate Jacques Cheminade campaigns in Nancy March 30. His program to revive space exploration has struck a chord with voters.

impossible to measure in terms of votes alone. It goes to the very heart of the cultural paradigm that has led to the current existential crisis.

To pursue a dialogue directly with the citizens, Cheminade will hold a webcast on April 15 at 7 p.m. Paris time at cheminade2012.fr.

Cheminade Election Spots Begin To Air

On April 9, France Television showed the first series of official spots produced by the respective campaigns. From April 9 to 20, except for Sunday the 15th, nine out of the ten candidates are shown, in an order drawn by lot. Overall, each candidate is entitled to 43 minutes altogether, comprised of 10 spots of 1 minute 30 seconds, and 8 spots of 3 minutes 30 seconds. They are considered more important than the various interviews given, because voters have an unbiased view of the candidate.

Cheminade’s April 9 spot began with a clip from his now-famous video of 1995, in which he warns that a dangerous financial crisis is about to hit, and that he would be remembered as the one who had forecast it. Then the camera switches to Cheminade today, stating forcefully:

“The financial and monetary crisis, which I alone announced in the 1995 Presidential election, has happened.

“My forecast does not give me cause for conceit, but I do measure the consequences of the blindness of the others.

“That is why I am running again as a candidate. To relaunch employment, purchasing power, and social justice. But in the current system, that is impossible. The money is put elsewhere. We are bailing out, to the tune of billions, those who have destroyed the economy and imposed social breakdown. Labor has become mere merchandise.

“Therefore, we have to change systems. To do so, we first have to prevent the financial predators from doing more harm. By dividing the banks in two in order to protect deposits, credit, and savings, and putting into bankruptcy the banks that speculate, if they are unable to pay their gambling debts. Then, we will be able to create a system of public credit, with a national bank, to finance great projects which create skilled jobs in France, in Europe, and in the world.

“We must give back to our youth this hope. Let us fight for it! Anything else amounts to chatting on the deck of the *Titanic* which is headed straight toward the iceberg.”

Mayors Fight Back!

On March 31, the French Constitutional Council published the names of 500 elected officials chosen by lot who sponsored the different Presidential candidates. Many of those who sponsored Cheminade were later contacted by the media to ask them to explain their choice—in an obvious ploy to get them to say they had been deceived. But it didn’t work!

One mayor of a village in the southwest said: “I share his view on denouncing the financial system. He speaks of virtue, and I find his approach courageous. That’s why I decided to sponsor him.”

As the weekly *L’Express* noted, some mayors said they wanted to support a “minor candidate,” but that was rarely the only reason. The mayor of a town of 1,677 in Brittany said he had met Cheminade twice, and was mainly attracted by his refusal to let the State be controlled by financial interests, and by his foreign policy against Atlanticism. This mayor says he was also convinced by the “space program of the candidate,” which used to be everyone’s dream.

The mayor of a village of 368 says he was convinced by the economic proposals of Cheminade. Another praises the campaign activists, who were “sincere and explicit,” in addition to being the first to come

and ask him to be a sponsor.

From Bourgogne, a mayor said he had also sponsored in Cheminade in 2007, in particular, because of one issue which no one else seems interested in: “the drying out of Lake Chad.” And also because Cheminade is fighting for the survival of the rural areas in France. *L’Express* notes that defense of the farming/rural areas is an important part of Cheminade’s program—which convinced other mayors to support him.

From the erstwhile industrialized North, a mayor who happens to be a driver of high-speed trains (TGV), says that he was influenced by Cheminade’s project to integrate Europe through high-speed rail projects.

Although the Parisian media would have loved to find some elected officials who would say they had been deliberately misled by Cheminade and his activists, they could not. All they found was one one mayor who said that if Cheminade really has links to American right-wing extremists, as some media claim, then he regretted his decision. But of course, those links are non-existent.

Cheminade Webcast

The following invitation is being sent out to the entire network of Solidarité et Progrès (the La-Rouche co-thinker organization in France):

It is crucial today to understand the tragic moment of history at which we have arrived. It is in this context that Presidential candidate Jacques Cheminade puts forward his solutions, while the other candidates propose austerity and a balanced budget, which means the bailout of investment banks’ gambling debts, and even worse social ravages, or they recite worn-out formulas and try to keep up illusions.

That is why Jacques Cheminade will present to his fellow Frenchmen his program, and the importance of his fight, during a webcast on April 15 at 17:00 CET (Paris time).

We invite you to follow the program live on www.cheminade2012.fr and to email your questions to question@cheminade2012.fr.

Don’t miss the opportunity!