

The French Resistance: A Dialogue With Jacques Cheminade

by Tony Papert

April 21—Jacques Cheminade, born 1941, is a long-time political leader of France, and was twice a candidate for the French Presidency. Jacques is the chairman of Solidarity and Progress, the French sister-organization of the Lyndon LaRouche-allied organizations of the United States and other countries. *EIR*'s Tony Papert interviewed him for 40 minutes on April 17. The transcript has been extensively edited.

EIR: Jacques, last week, Lyndon LaRouche called on Americans to fight a Nazi takeover by the likes of California Governor Jerry Brown. This has forced many of us to look back at the French Resistance of the World War II years, because the Resistance had to fight not only the German occupiers, but also a native French fascist government and its supporters. Can you tell us about your family's relations, and your own over the years, to the wartime Resistance?

Cheminade: Well, my family,—it is saying too much, to say that it was involved in the Resistance. My family was involved in this historical moment when things were extremely ambiguous—and you had to locate in yourself what it really meant to be human, in this period. And my family tried to be human.

The only thing I can mention, which I think is significant for an American audience—I had a cousin of mine, a farmer, a simple farmer, who was arrested and held in a stadium in central France, when the French soldiers were captured. And he told the other prisoners: "Look, this stadium is not very well guarded; it's not closely watched, so we should simply escape!" But only two others agreed to escape with him,—to follow him. Even though, in his own words, it was not so difficult.

EIR: I fear to think what happened to the others.

Cheminade: So, at this point, the issue is that of willful submission, what a French writer, La Boétie, called willful submission: Either you submit, or you decide to fight. And then, if you don't decide to fight, the freedom of the inner self is destroyed. And I think



Julien Lemaître

Jacques Cheminade in Paris, November 2013

that this is the issue of the Resistance, and that we have been carrying this conception in our family,—that there *is* a future, and that it can only be outside the rule of the oligarchy.

EIR: Yes! And Lyndon LaRouche, as you know, has said in the past week, that none of us knows what proportion, what percentage of Americans will fight a Nazi takeover by the likes of Jerry Brown and most of the Republicans; no one knows what proportion will actually fight and what proportion will concede, temporize, negotiate, and ultimately compromise,—and themselves become compromised and destroyed. To me, this reflects the same ambiguity, the same uncertainty in the Resistance.

Cheminade: Well, you never know what other people will do, and you should not care about their opinion. You should never act on the basis of public opinion. If you act on the basis of public opinion, your inner soul is doomed. Enthusiasm for the truth, enthusiasm for the future of humanity, should be what moves

you, and that is what is called in the Greek tradition, “the inner god.”

EIR: “Enthusiasm,” the inner god. Yes.

Cheminade: Inner god—and you should decide there are things you would never do, but much more than that: you should decide there are things that you have to do, and you do these things, and then you see what happens: You inspire people. At the beginning, there are not too many, but at some moment, you have behaved like a human being, and others see your example, and follow your example. And I think that humanity is more contagious than evil is.

EIR: Exactly.

The Inner Source of Resistance

Cheminade: After the fall of France, the population, the majority of the population was not fascist: they were lost,—they were at a loss,—because the people who were in power positions, went over to the wrong side. The population knew that there was something wrong with the elite’s going over to the wrong side, but they didn’t know what to do, because they had no leaders. And it was then that the voice of Charles de Gaulle was heard. But it was heard only incrementally,—it took many repetitions. You have to understand how most people were shell-shocked by the collapse of the Republic and its Army.

Marie-Madeleine Fourcade, my late friend from the Resistance, told me that before the Nazi invasion of southern France, on Nov. 11, 1942, there were probably no more than 2,000 people in the whole Resistance. It was a very small body of people who were actually fighting for France.

In the population, some of the French,—or a lot of the French,—behaved, let’s say, morally, and saved a lot of children,—Jewish children, or adults,—from their own government, and this is what Serge Klarsfeld had to recognize. He said this happened.

But what was really the most revealing thing, was this collapse of the elite, because the elites were already rotten from the inside, and some of them, as Marc Bloch said,—writing during the war,—had preferred treason. The collapse of France in 1940, was a mixture of treason and incompetence. People in the Army, the old

nobles in the Army, and people in political power, except for a few,—were all ready to submit to fascism, because in their hearts, culturally, they were on that side already. And that’s the consequence of the fact that the very ideology of fascism itself, originated in France. These rotten elites hated the Republic, and they hated their own people. For them, as Charles Maurras said, the Nazi invasion was a “divine surprise.”

EIR: Now, Lyndon LaRouche has said there must be no compromise, and no negotiation with Nazis. For me, this brings to mind the great Resistance heroes, like the Marc Bloch whom you named, and who was shot by the Nazis; and Marie-Madeleine Fourcade, whom you had the privilege to know personally. And even more so, Charles de Gaulle.

Cheminade: It comes from the heart. You see, in Munich, for example, these people of the White Rose, these youth were in the belly of the beast, and in the very belly of the beast they had the courage to stand up. In France, you had the Missak Manouchian group, called the Immigrant Workforce Movement (MOI),—immigrants who understood the idea of France better than most native Frenchmen.

So, this is a moment which absolutely changes life, and changes

other people’s lives. And why do you do it? Why do you do it? This is the key thing to ask yourself. You do it because you start to do it, I think, in a way . . . and then, you cannot go back. Because if you go back, you appear in your own eyes as a swine,—so you are in the fight.

And I think this is what’s very interesting in some people I knew, like Lucie and Raymond Aubrac, who were on the extreme left of the Resistance; and Charles Paperon, who is a friend of ours, a very close friend of ours. He’s in his late eighties, and he’s one of the prominent persons who was in the Resistance. Others as well.

EIR: The other thing I wanted to raise with you, is the French origin of fascism. We’ve actually been discussing that here already, and you’ve just raised it again yourself. Could you talk about that?

Cheminade: Yes. I wrote a preface to Jean Jaurès’ book *De la Réalité du Monde Sensible* [“On the Reality of the World of the Senses”], on this issue. Because if



Resistance fighter Marie-Madeleine Fourcade

you look at the two people who stood up against these fascist roots, there was Jaurès in 1914, when fascism did not exist as a name—but it existed as a concept, as an ideology; and de Gaulle, of course, in 1940, and the people around them. I have long fought to understand exactly how and at what moment, they decided to break completely with that environment, because they had a higher idea of man.

You deserve a very, very long answer on this issue.

EIR: If you would agree to give it, I'd be very happy to hear it.

Fascism's Origins in France

Cheminade: French fascism stems from the French oligarchy. It's obviously not from the French people, and it's not France,—but it's the French oligarchy. Therefore, to understand it, you have to look at it historically,—and the best thing I know of, except for what we ourselves have written on it, is the writing of Simone Weil. I don't know if you're familiar with her. She was a Jew who converted to Christianity, who was a Platonist, and who was in London with de Gaulle during the war. In 1940-1941, she wrote a book, *Some Reflections on the Origin of Hitlerism*, where she reviewed the Roman roots of Hitlerism, and how these Roman roots were principally embodied or assumed in France, through the oligarchy. First it was in Spain, with the tyrannies of Charles V and Philip II—Philip II of the Schiller play *Don Carlos*.

Then it came to France as the absolute monarchy, with Richelieu first, and then Louis XIV. And she mentioned the looting and the murder of the Palatine Wars and the Dutch Wars, which Lyn also discusses. So, we have Louis XIV, and then Napoleon I. And Napoleon I is the key: Napoleon III is the nephew of Napoleon I, but Napoleon I is the key. Because, you have first the reaction to the French Revolution,—because the Revolution was miscarried around the issue of how you eliminate the enemy. It was a kind of Carl Schmitt-syndrome inside the French Revolution: friend versus enemy: you eliminate the enemy, but there is no way to *change* the enemy or the adversary. You have to kill him. So, this inspired Napoleon, who in turn terrorized the whole world. And, again in turn, this Caesarism of Napoleon I justified the restoration of the *ancien*



Jean Jaurès

régime of oligarchical control.

So it's very interesting if you look at Joseph de Maistre. Joseph de Maistre was not really French. He was from Savoy; he was the ambassador of Savoy to Moscow,—but he inspired, of course, the French ideology. He's what we have elaborated: the executioner and the victim. He says that it is necessary, and indeed good, to have an executioner to spread fear. In that sense, the British used and manipulated Napoleon, who was allegedly their enemy, to instill fear and destroy the Continent,—destroying the potential opposition to London, which took over after Napoleon's fall.

The idea of terror and Caesarism, is actually to decompose, to rot the soul of your adversary, so that he loses all energy and submits.

EIR: Exactly!

Cheminade: That's the ideology of fascism, and there were many, many elaborations of that in France. The first was Joseph Arthur de Gobineau, who, in 1855 under Napoleon III, wrote an essay on the inequality of human races. Then Georges Vacher de Lapouge, also in the 19th Century, wrote *The Aryan: His Social Role* [*L'Aryen: Son Rôle Social*]. He says that “there is no such thing as human rights, any more than there are rights for the three-striped armadillo or the syndactile gibbon. ... The very idea of law is a fiction. ... There are only forces,—might; life only maintains itself through death. To live you have to eat, to kill—to kill to be able to eat.”

Then, worse, there was Maurice Barrès. He was inspired by Johann Gottfried von Herder, the German forefather of the romantic oligarchical movement. For him, biological determinism is what determines the fate of humanity, and he has a concept of an organicist State. He says that what has to be eliminated is the republicans, the democrats, and the Semites, because they are foreign organs. He promotes “the soil and the dead,” which is the same thing as the German *Blut und Boden*. He said, for example, during the Dreyfus Affair, “I know from his racial origins that he is doomed to be a traitor.”

In a sense, these fascists define what happened in World War I, with the brutalization, the barbarization of the trenches.

More important, you have Georges Sorel, who



EIRNS/Julien Lemaître

Cheminade and Charles Papon, co-chair of the Association of Resistance Veterans, at a November 2013 conference of Solidarité & Progrès.

wrote about regenerative violence. So if you put all of that together, you have the famous quote of Charles Maurras from 1931-1933, which is not so well known; he says, in his *Political and Critical Dictionary*: “Socialism, if purged of the cosmopolitan and democratic element, can fit nicely with nationalism, as a well-made glove would fit a beautiful hand.” There you have it: national socialism. And this is ’31-’33. So you have all of this bad smell, coming from these people who represent a basis for what has happened in the 20th Century.

Another aspect of what I see now in Europe, even in France and Germany, is the smell of Drieu La Rochelle, who committed suicide in 1944 because he had gone with the Nazis. He wrote, “There is the elating, exciting night, where there are no more ideas or opinions, but only feelings.”

To that, Charles de Gaulle counterposed that France is an idea,—not so much a territory or a people, but an idea. And de Gaulle also had a sense of who the enemy was. But he said the nation is an idea, and that it only has a true meaning if it serves the cause of humanity, and the commitment to progress,—this he said in his speech at the University of Mexico in 1964. So you have this opposition in France, and you have this clash. On one side, the Synarchists. The basis for the Synarchy, is that you put together a group of people who represent this ideology, and these people can be trusted more than a tyrant, because the tyrant can be either killed or changed. But in an oligarchical

Synarchy, if one man dies, he is replaced by another member of the Synarchy. And on the other side, you have the Republic: freedom, equality, and fraternity—the love for humanity as a power to improve the universe, to make the world better.

EIR: Synarchy: yes—that’s exactly what the word means, actually. It’s like the Board of Ephors of ancient Sparta.

Cheminade: That was a relatively long answer, but I think it has to be understood. Because if it’s not understood, people here tend to say, “Oh, the French fascists,—oh no, I am not a fascist,” and so on. In France, people

say, “Oh, no, no. Pétain was not exactly a fascist—he was a Franquist. He was more on the side of Franco.” So what I say is, “Well, ahem: A Franquist is a fascist more or less stained by the Catholic Church, a Catholic Church soiled by Rome and Aristotle.”

EIR: Yes, exactly.

The Executioners of Culture

Cheminade: But there’s another point: people don’t usually understand how that fits with the British Empire. And you have a very good example of how that fits: It’s Raymond Aron. Raymond Aron pretended to be a liberal anti-Communist, but also anti-fascist. And people say that Raymond Aron was right against Jean-Paul Sartre. Well, the truth is that they were both very, very wrong! But Raymond Aron was the head of the Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF). And he promoted his good friend Bertrand de Jouvenel, who before the war had interviewed Hitler and spread his venom into

France! So there you have the link between pre-war fascists and postwar Anglo-American Atlanticists.

EIR: Yes,—the CCF had an unlimited budget, from the CIA, and the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations, to destroy Classical culture, whether in music, painting, or literature,—in favor of modernist crap. This is exactly what you said earlier about rotting-out the mind of the adversary. Of course, it begs the question: who exactly is the adversary here?



Raymond Aron, head of the Congress of Cultural Freedom



*“Jaurès and de Gaulle . . . with their friends and followers, are what saved our honor as a nation and as a Republic.”—
Cheminade. De Gaulle is shown here in Britain, 1943.*

Cheminade: Exactly. Exactly. There is the book *Who Paid the Piper? The CIA and the Cultural Cold War* by Frances Stonor Saunders, which is also very interesting if you think about France.

In fact, there was a book written in France before that, on the Congress for Cultural Freedom,—denouncing the Congress for Cultural Freedom,—but the oligarchy managed to put this message under the rug, and it was never discussed. So you see the connection between the Congress for Cultural Freedom, and the former Hitler apologists who came back and said, “well, we’re innocent: we didn’t know where it was all heading.” But, they promoted just the same thing after the war, under the cover of anti-communist liberalism,—the same oligarchical ideology under a new mask.

EIR: Typical of what the CCF promoted, is the Stravinsky-Diaghilev ballet *The Rite of Spring*—even if it was first performed decades earlier.

But tell me,—just exactly what *is* the “Rite of Spring?” Why, it’s a human sacrifice! Precisely what the looniest of the French Synarchists dabbled in!

Cheminade: Yes,—human sacrifice is interesting in terms of “art,” so-called. Because you had all these people, who became absolutely demoralized—because in the 20th Century, they had nothing more to say,—because they were not able to have a sense of the creative, as the most immediate, creative process in the human mind. So, because they had nothing to say, they decided to enjoy destruction—the destruction of art. And finally, the destruction of themselves:

That’s why so many committed suicide.

I was reading an author, once very famous in France, who is becoming very famous again: Stefan Zweig,—but he’s terrible! It’s just awful,—and he also committed suicide in 1942. So if you look at the context of the death of Hitler, it’s all a suicidal thrust. Zweig was an anti-Nazi, but yet, still trapped in the same pessimistic, self-destructive obsession.

EIR: And also Obama, to mention a contemporary figure.

Cheminade: He doesn’t know it, but he’s his own worst enemy! [laughter] He could have been a human being, probably.

EIR: Perhaps,—if he had only made a wiser choice of a mother! Back in Roman times, the Emperor Nero made exactly the same mistake.

Do you have anything more to say to Americans who are confronted by the rise of Nazism within their own country, and don’t know much about it?

Cheminade: The other thing, before I close up: If in moments of history like our moment,—or that moment of the Resistance,—if you stay in the gray zone, you become a collaborator, what we called a “*collabo*” in the French Resistance. And then you become a fascist.

EIR: Exactly, that’s the point.

Cheminade: Because you see your oppression as a destiny, and you turn against the others, and then against yourself in the end. You become your own Executioner, the Executioner of your humanity.

EIR: Yes, you’re absolutely right. And this goes to what Lyndon LaRouche has been referencing exactly in this connection. Namely: those who compromise and, as a result, are themselves compromised by their compromise, and also corrupted and destroyed by that slogan of: “Be practical!”

Cheminade: Yes. If you were practical in 1940, you made a lot of money in the stock market, because the French stock market went up tremendously, in 1940 and ’41. Because there were these connections to German military production, and then, also, there was the Atlantic Wall. French firms made a lot of money with the Atlantic Wall. [laughs]

EIR: That’s fascinating.

Cheminade: The last thing I would say is: “Never stay in the gray zone. Think about your capacity to become a human, as Jaurès, de Gaulle and others did.” I mention Jaurès and de Gaulle in France, because they are, with their friends and followers, what saved our honor as a nation and as a Republic.