

A Hard Head Makes A Soft Behind

by Samuel Dixon, LYM

One should learn from one's mistakes. From the "No" vote in the referendum on the European Constitution last May, to the rioting in immigrant neighborhoods last Autumn, and the recent protest movement against an unpopular youth employment plan, France's leadership has been running from one crisis to another for a year, deaf to the music, while positioning France for "competition on the global market," contrary to every poll which screams that the majority of Frenchmen consider globalization a threat rather than an opportunity.

The French people voted "*Non*" one year ago to the EU Constitution of social barbarity. They voted "*Non*" against 35 years of growing unemployment, and ultra-liberal policies, destructive of productive labor. They voted "*Non*" to the deregulated financial and monetary system. They voted "*Non*" to financial serfdom. French President Jacques Chirac responded, "*mais Oui!*" ("but Yes!"). Such folly shows that we are in a collapse of a system and a regime in France.

Internal political warfare has broken out between the rivals Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin and Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy. It has now been revealed that in 2003-04, de Villepin ordered a secret investigation of Sarkozy, to determine whether he had been involved in a dirty-money operation in Luxembourg called Clearstream. The ferocity of the clash is such that the president of the French Parliament, Jean-Louis Debré, told *Le Parisien*: "Sarkozy has put a bullet in the head of de Villepin. He wants to put a second one there right now to secure that his opponent is really dead. As for de Villepin, he thinks he is far from being finished, and wants to put two bullets in Sarkozy's heart." Unusual for France, this mafioso language shows just how far things have gone.

Now, with a year to go before the Presidential election, and a menacing economic collapse in progress, this situation cannot continue. Both Chirac and de Villepin have seen their popularity ratings plummet to the lowest in the history of the Fifth Republic, since 1958, and the political elites—from both the left and the right—are posturing before the media, without offering any real solutions.

Jacques Cheminade, the chairman of the Solidarity and Progress party, and a candidate for the Presidency, warned in an address to an *EIR*-sponsored seminar in Berlin, Germany on June 28, 2005: "The French elections are only in 2007. But reality will strike well before that—in the next weeks. At

the latest in France, it will take the form of social unrest in September. And it's very clear, that with Sarkozy's provocations, it will happen. . . . Now, we are at the end of the system—economic, cultural, monetary, and financial—which is . . . antagonistic to truth and justice."

The Fight Over Youth Employment

De Villepin, at the start of the year, antagonized the youth of France by ramming through a new employment law, known as the First Employment Contract (*Contrat Première Embauche*, or CPE). Under the CPE, any company could fire any employee aged 26 and below, at any point during the first two years of their contracts, and with no justification. The law, the centerpiece of the Prime Minister's youth job creation program, despite the word "first" in its name, did not only apply to a young person's initial job contract. Employers are allowed to give several successive such contracts to the same person, and are thus allowed to contribute less to a young worker's unemployment insurance.

The current president of the European Central Bank (ECB), and former alternate governor of the International Monetary Fund (until 2003), Jean-Claude Trichet, called for more flexibility in the French labor code, and commented about the CPE that "it is clear that moving toward greater flexibility is moving in the right direction." And it was the former managing director of the International Monetary Fund, Michel Camdessus, who in an infamous 2004 report, called for "new forms of flexible labor contracts."

Nationwide protests erupted throughout March and April by university and high school students, joined by trade unionists; with more than 2 million demonstrators, classes ceased at 20 universities over a two-month period. They pointed out correctly what the result of the CPE law would be: a further decrease in job security for young people, who already face enormous obstacles in France in finding a job, with or without a secondary-school diploma. The LaRouche Youth Movement (LYM) distributed 150,000 leaflets across France and focussed on the root of the problem, the international economic collapse and the role of the ECB, which has usurped the economic sovereignty of the European nations.

It is of major significance that those who demonstrated were not merely from the group affected by the new labor law. Students from high schools and even middle schools protested; many who were far older, including the parents of demonstrators, stood in solidarity with the younger generation.

Press coverage in the United States focussed on the violence that sometimes occurred. Still others in the press claimed that the French youth wanted to be guaranteed a job for life. Too often, the youth were told, "We live with *précarité* [precariousness] all our life; in fact life is precariousness. Who are you to ask for more?"

The protests, growing by the week, paralyzing most major universities, cities, and transport, forced President Chirac to

announce on April 10 that the CPE would be taken off the books. A hard head surely makes a soft behind. In doing so, he handed a victory to the student groups and labor unions that had deployed millions in the streets of France.

What Next?

The question is now: What to do with this victory?

The opposition to the government does not know what to do, because they are systemically blind to the relationship between national and international policy. The financial oligarchy likes to pretend that the French population has no interest in international affairs, even though more than 80% were against the Iraq War and the majority of the population voted “No” to the European Constitution, set up by the synarchists, showing that the people have more passion and insight than the political elites and labor leaders.

Indeed, the cowardly political parties are submitting to the Anglo-Americans. Not only Sarkozy on the right, but also the Socialist Ségolène Royal blows kisses to the economic model of Tony Blair. Only Cheminade, the associate of Lyndon LaRouche, calls for France to join a U.S.A. reborn in the FDR tradition, in a reorganization of the world monetary and financial system, against the dictatorship of the trans-Atlantic oligarchy. Even if his means are limited and the establishment opposes him, his courageous resistance through ideas, and that of the LYM, are resounding more and more loudly in the ears of the French population.