
Interview: Jacques Cheminade

LaRouche allies field candidates amid growing discontent in France

Jacques Cheminade, president of the French Schiller Institute, is heading up the Nouvelle Solidarité slate of candidates in the National Assembly elections which take place on March 21. He spoke with us on March 1.

EIR: The Socialist Party of François Mitterrand is expected to be heavily defeated in the upcoming elections. Will an opposition government mean any real change in French policy?

Cheminade: These elections mean the end of a regime, the end of 12 years of social monetarism enforced by the French Socialist Party which caved in to the orders of the international financial forces who run the bond and derivative markets. This compromise regime is going out with a record number of 3 million unemployed in France, with generalized corruption and mismanagement of the state. Another important element is the vote in favor of non-governmental or protest parties. A third element is that for the first time, there is a very strong anti-media, anti-television movement, which is hardly surprising, given that French TV is one of the worst in the world. . . .

As for François Mitterrand, he is tremendously unpopular in the country. Only 26% of the voters are satisfied with him personally and over 60% are dissatisfied, and less than 20% think that the country is correctly ruled.

According to the polls, the Socialist Party will probably end up with no more than 20%, and the right-wing opposition of the UPF (Union for France, which regroups the nominally Gaullist RPR of Jacques Chirac and the liberal UDF of Valéry Giscard d'Estaing) is now at 40% of the votes and 60-70% of the seats in the National Assembly. The disproportion is due to the fact that so many votes will be scattered among the non-governmental parties which won't make it to the parliament. The Communists are expected to get 10-12% and the ecologists somewhere between 14% and 18%, and the extreme left 2%. So altogether, these protest parties represent more than one-third of the vote.

Even an ecologist-Socialist alliance could probably not stop the right-wing parties from winning. The conservative vote will give them a huge majority in the Assembly but it will not be a popular groundswell. In fact, they will be mainly gaining from the anti-Socialist sentiment. The opposition will win because people are fed up and want to see new faces

in power.

Normally, one would expect important changes to take place when the government goes from the left to the right-wing parties. But the platform of the opposition has really no substance. It has even been dubbed the "platform." They want to immediately make the Bank of France independent from the government, giving it a status similar to that of the U.S. Federal Reserve or the Bundesbank in Germany. That means putting an end to the state monopoly over currency, and control of credit and banking. As soon as they come to power, they will cut off one of their arms. They will be weak from the very beginning.

There will also be a fight between the President—François Mitterrand's term ends in 1995—and the prime minister and his government. The government will do everything to encourage Mitterrand to leave, and a poll has recently shown that 51% of the French population would favor his resigning early. But Mitterrand, of course, has no intention of giving up power, so he will be constantly laying minefields beneath the feet of the government.

It will therefore be difficult for the opposition to make any significant changes in policy. Moreover, Edouard Balladur, who is generally considered the most likely candidate for the next prime minister, has said he would not change the present economic policy of Pierre Bérégovoy.

So, we shouldn't have too much hope in what the new government will do. In one year, this government may be as unpopular if not more so than the present one, because the crisis will only become worse.

EIR: Do you expect the new government to take a harder stance on the GATT negotiations or in defense of the French farmers?

Cheminade: Yes, in principle, but this would be more demagogic than anything else, because the only way to solve the problem of food production in the world is to give the people who need it, the means to buy it and to consume it. The incoming government has no policy for giving the Third World those means. So I don't see how, without creating a demand for the food, they can defend the food producers. It is also a fact that Charles Pasqua has extensive links to some African leaders, for example to Eyedema in Togo. Remember that Eyedema ordered his personal army to fire on a

crowd and created a massacre. Also the networks of Jacques Foccard, historically the adviser to the right-wing on Africa, are linked to the present rulers and it is well known that most of these leaders do not care about their populations. So I don't see how in these circumstances, a policy to feed the African populations could be organized, although that would be the only real way to help the French farmers. The government will certainly support them formally but there will be no substance to it.

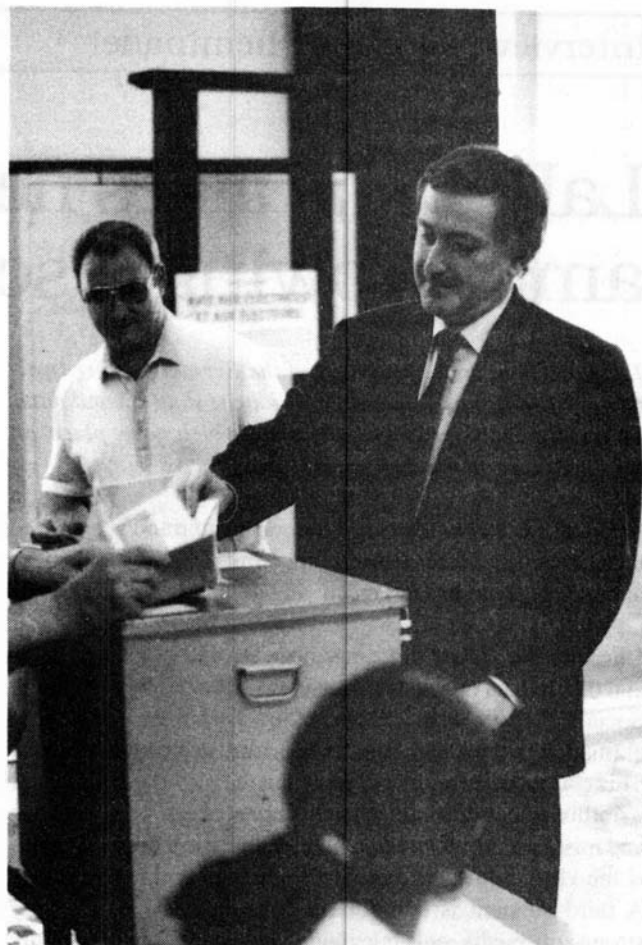
EIR: In foreign policy, do you see any major policy shifts?

Cheminade: Well, everybody in France now claims they favor the Franco-German alliance. Pierre Lellouche, a key adviser to Jacques Chirac, just published an interesting article in *Le Monde*, where he noted that the commemoration of the Franco-German treaty was a disgrace, they drank champagne but they did not mobilize the population (see *EIR*, Feb. 19). Lellouche says we should be as inventive as de Gaulle and Adenauer were in 1963, to meet the challenges of our times. I fully agree with that, but his proposals are very weak. He supports the Maastricht Treaty, although it is a dead end. And instead of proposing an active intervention into the former East bloc countries to help their economies take off, he says France and Germany should study the problems, in other words, remain passive. This is not a Gaullist option; it is weak and meaningless and has no perspective. In fact, everybody speaks of the Franco-German alliance, but nobody gives it a sense of mission or of *dessein*.

Our candidates for Nouvelle Solidarité are the only ones doing that. A leaflet will be sent to 700,000 voters saying that the Franco-German alliance should be based on a daring plan to develop the East and the South, and that the money, instead of going into speculation, should go into long-term projects. Therefore, we call upon the voters to oppose the denationalization of the Bank of France and demand that all government resources be used for this kind of broad approach, in the same way the United States mobilized for the Marshall Plan. Without this perspective, it will not be possible to solve the problems of Europe and the relations of Europe to Africa.

There is also a dangerous idea among the right wing, expressed by former head of the UDF, François Léotard, who says that France, together with Germany, should make Algeria the Mexico of Europe. He means a sort of North American Free Trade Agreement approach toward North Africa, which is exactly opposite to an approach of common and mutual development.

This government will have no real foreign policy, because they do not wish to confront the dangerous problems coming from Russia or those of the Anglo-American establishment. The inner strength which characterized de Gaulle and his governments is what is lacking in the political forces today. The Nouvelle Solidarité candidates are really the only ones who can honestly call themselves Gaullists today.



Jacques Cheminade, who heads the Nouvelle Solidarité electoral slate for French National Assembly elections on March 21, shown here voting in the 1989 polling in Paris.

EIR: The recent political corruption and fraud scandals, and especially the contaminated blood scandal, have greatly discredited the political elite. Are the projected spectacular returns for the ecologists an element of the voters' abreaction?

Cheminade: Yes, it is the case that the ecologist vote reflects in part a concern for moral issues mainly because the media present the ecologist movement very favorably, as the defenders of moral issues. What they plan to do would, of course, be worse than the present policy.

The discrediting of the establishment politicians does open the way for a new party to emerge, and we see this as a great opportunity for Nouvelle Solidarité.

But let me add that at the same time, the danger exists that anti-Parliament, anti-government, anti-everything forces will come to the fore, and if these forces, motivated only by rage and hate, become organized, it could lead to a kind of fascist movement. There are also active ex-Comintern networks in France who are not counting on the weakened Communist Party but rather on the disintegration of the country to gain power. . . .

EIR: Can you tell us more about the slate of Nouvelle Solidarité candidates.

Cheminade: Because of limited financial and logistical means, we had to restrict the number of campaigns, but we did try to have candidates in different parts of the country in order to ensure a broad coverage for our ideas and our programs. We have one in Paris, three in the Paris suburbs, two in Lyon, one in Valence, one in Nice, and one in Strasbourg. What we notice is that many people are more interested in ideas than ever before. The endless questions over left-wing or right-wing labels have been dropped, they are recognized as totally meaningless. That is also because the so-called left-wing Socialist Party followed a policy of monetarism, which used to be considered right-wing.

Our problem, our big problem, is getting our voices heard by the population.

EIR: On a personal note, why did you decide to run in the 5th and 6th arrondissements [districts] of Paris, known to most Americans as the Latin Quarter?

Cheminade: I am running in the district that covers the 5th and part of the 6th arrondissements, the Latin Quarter, partly because of the intellectual tradition that is still to be found there and partly because, contrary to what Americans might think, there is a Christian tradition there, as well as an old socialist tradition. The RPR candidate has been the deputy since 1968, which means for 25 years, and he is considered no longer fit for the job.

He is also involved in a scandal, since he was the boss of the subsidized low-rent housing program (HLM) for the Paris administration, and he was giving these HLM to wealthy people who are the political clientele of the RPR.

This arrondissement is also interesting because there is an interesting combination of rather old and quite young populations. The older ones themselves remember what the Marshall Plan was all about, and they of course knew de Gaulle. So our campaign echoes the best periods they experienced in the past. Let me add that they also tend to be well educated.

Among the young people, there is a lot of enthusiasm but they are ill-informed. They find our poster very funny: it shows a Goya ink drawing of a donkey who is teaching from a book showing a generation of donkeys. The poster says, "If you don't want them for eternity, why not vote for Nouvelle Solidarité." So this is seen as a good polemic against the established figures.

I would just add one concluding remark. Jacques Delors, the President of the European Commission, said in a recent declaration that the West lacks vision and he fears that rising unemployment will lead to social exclusion, poverty, violence and racism. He is right in that, but he unfortunately has no policy for confronting such problems. We, from Nouvelle Solidarité and the LaRouche movement, are the ones who have that vision.

North Korea set up for Iraq-style showdown

by Mark Burdman

Will North Korea become the flashpoint for a major international strategic crisis by April-May? This possibility is signalled by a sensationalist propaganda campaign, labeling North Korea "the new Iraq," by the same institutions and media outlets which promoted both the Gulf war against Iraq in 1990-91 and the ensuing dismantling of Iraq's industrial capabilities by the "inspection teams" of the United Nations.

In late February, the London *Economist* warned that "North Korea is next in line for nuclear prevention" and "should expect a bloody nose." In testimony to the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee on Feb. 24, new CIA chief James Woolsey stated that "North Korea, as recent headlines suggest, is probably our most grave current concern," as it is producing and selling "weapons of mass destruction," and possibly has enough fissile material for "at least one nuclear weapon." U.S.-based "non-proliferation" loudmouth Gary Mulhollin told the Feb. 27 London *Guardian* that the situation is "far more serious than in Iraq. North Korea has already produced enough plutonium and spare fuel for several bombs. . . . North Korea could already have the bomb."

Under the title "West Rushes to Stop Korean Atom Bomb," the *Guardian* noted that the Russians are throwing fuel on the fire, with an "unusual" report by the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service (the successor to the KGB) to the U.S. Senate, claiming that North Korea is involved in building and testing biological weapons. In mid-February, the Russian intelligence services had "suddenly" made public that back in October 1992, senior Russian scientists were intercepted at an airport, as they were attempting to leave for North Korea to help the latter's military programs.

March 25 is now the date which the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna has set for North Korea to accede to IAEA demands for rights of "special inspection" of two secret reactor storage sites at Yongbyon, 60 miles northwest of Pyongyang. So far, North Korea has rejected that deadline as a violation of sovereignty. If Pyongyang does not comply, the IAEA will likely refer the matter to the U.N. Security Council, and an eventual military strike is not excluded. The IAEA's tone vis-à-vis North Korea has been uncharacteristically confrontational. In his testimony, Woolsey praised the IAEA's new "aggressive" posture.