

# Behind the Boulin 'suicide': An effort to topple France's Giscard

A major political battle, involving the government of Giscard d'Estaing, his ruling coalition, the opposition parties, the press, and different factions in the French intelligence community, has been sparked by the Oct. 30 "suicide" of Minister of Labor Robert Boulin. The stakes in this battle are questions of international strategic importance. Will France continue to press ahead with Phase Two of the European Monetary System?

Behind the "suicide," which occurred in the midst of an escalating press campaign of leaks and scandals thrown at Giscard and his cabinet, lies an attempt to "make Giscard docile to the Anglo-Americans," according to a source very close to the deceased Boulin. Moreover, "we are 99 percent sure it wasn't suicide," the friend added. Rather, the allegations of embezzlement, real estate fraud and accepting illegal gifts that have been levelled against Boulin, Prime Minister Barre and Giscard himself, are part of "the most massive European-wide campaign against Giscard ever."

But the British and their allies who launched this attack must be reeling with astonishment over the unprecedented cross-party alliance that has suddenly taken shape in defense of the government. Government ministers, members of the ruling coalition Gaullist Party (RPR) which Boulin belonged to, and the opposition French Communist Party (PCF), have all slammed the French press, particularly the Rothschild-controlled press, which has played the most prominent role in the scandal. The counterattack has isolated the scandal-mongers in François Mitterrand's French Socialist Party, and threatened to bring out some very unsavory connections of their own.

## **The direction of French policy**

What the City of London and its cothinkers in New York and Washington are thinking about is the direction taken in French policy. Giscard has engineered a series of strategic agreements with other European continental powers, including Helmut Schmidt's West Germany, the Soviet Union, and the Third World in

preparation for "Phase Two" of the EMS. This is evidenced by Giscard's cooperation with Cuba's Fidel Castro, in supporting the Havana declaration of the Nonaligned movement calling for an end to IMF austerity and the beginning of a new era of industrial and technological expansion. It is also evidenced in France's agreement with the Soviet Union on the need to guarantee detente in the military field by pursuing extended economic and political agreements; and by France's decision to abstain from seating the Chinese-backed Pol Pot clique of Kampuchea at the United Nations, France has also taken initiatives to send aid to the new government of Kampuchea. Giscard organized an even-handed, but tough reception for Chinese Premier Hua Guofeng, who recently toured Europe's capitals seeking to promote a political-military alliance against the Soviet Union.

To understand London's flights of fancy when faced with the prospect of Giscard's almost certain electoral victory in 1981, giving him another seven years in office, one need only consider the determination of the French President to shortcircuit London and Washington's constant crisis-mongering with the Soviet Union and its allies. State Secretary for Foreign Affairs Olivier Stirn brought the point home to both during his recent tour of former French colonies in the Caribbean.

In an address on the occasion of the independence of St. Vincent, Stirn declared: "We do not believe that Cuba foments revolutions, because that would not be in her interest ... It is not in the interests of the Soviets to create a new point of conflict in the Caribbean, nor of the U.S. to aggravate tensions with Cuba. We will try to play a moderating role in the region, carrying out dialogue with everyone, including the Cubans," according to the Mexican press.

During the first visit by a French head of state to West Berlin in 30 years, Giscard and Brezhnev chose to make public extremely warm telegrams they sent each other on the occasion of the 55th anniversary of the establishment of Franco-Soviet relations.

### Battle for European Community

Another crucial element is the current fight taking place within the European Community (EC). While the ostensible reason for quarrels between France and Britain is mutton, butter and milk prices, Giscard has proposed to reorganize the EC's structures to give "more power to the European Council"—heads of government—and reduce the power of the traditionally British-controlled European Commission of technocrats. According to *The Guardian* Oct. 30, other aspects of the proposed reform "might allow France, for instance, to take charge of the sensitive negotiations with the Arab Gulf oil states on behalf of the Nine semi-permanently." French efforts in this area have consistently been sabotaged by the intervention of Energy Commissioner Guido Brunner. The Energy Commission is one institution whose power Giscard hopes to curtail.

### British love a scandal

*The following are a selection from the British press last week:*

**The Guardian**, Oct. 31: "Boulin's suicide could not have occurred at a worse time for the government of President Giscard d'Estaing ... (it) deepens a crisis of confidence that was already beginning to destroy the government."

**Financial Times**, Nov. 3: "The suicide of Boulin ... has dealt a damaging blow to President Giscard's regime at a crucial moment in the government's life and the electoral calendar. The affair ... has raised political, legal, and moral issues which will no doubt be fully exploited by the left-wing opposition during the campaign leading up to the 1981 presidential elections."

**Daily Telegraph**, Nov. 3: "Scandal is endemic in French politics ... (But) the true French scandal is the extent to which nearly all channels of communication are under the control or influence of the Government, more particularly of President Giscard ... *Le Canard Enchaîné*, almost alone, thinks that the business of a free press is disclosure."

**The Guardian**, Nov. 6: "President Giscard could now be planning to replace Mr. Barre, the Prime Minister, or even resign as President to clear the air after recent political scandals. ..."

### The truth about Boulin

Abundant evidence indicates that Giscard was planning to appoint Boulin prime minister within a matter of weeks, and have Boulin lead the government into the 1981 presidential elections. As Labor Minister, Boulin had developed an entente with the French Communist Party which exerts control over France's largest union, the CGT, on the basis of stepping up the industrial-technological growth of the country to generate more employment. An austerity policy has characterized the administration of Prime Minister Raymond Barre.

There is also evidence that the PCF has agreed not to reestablish the Union of the Left alliance with the Socialist Party for the 1981 elections, which would thus, albeit indirectly, assist Giscard's reelection to a second seven-year term.

The PCF was among those who reacted most vehemently to the announcement of Boulin's suicide. General Secretary Georges Marchais attacked the press for digging up scandals or inventing them, using "methods which degrade the political life of our country and threaten democracy." Marchais had met with Boulin only days before. The press, which is now under attack, includes the Rothschild-financed and Socialist Party-linked daily *Le Matin de Paris* and weekly *Le Nouvel Observateur*, the very Anglophile *Le Monde*, and the satirical weekly *Le Canard Enchaîné* which, along with *Le Monde*, has been singled out for high praise by the British press.

Now the leadership of the Gaullist Party (RPR) has jumped into the battle, announcing that it intends to sue radio journalist Philippe Alexandre who has alleged that the RPR and its leader Jacques Chirac, in particular, leaked information that contributed to the "suicide" of Boulin. His allegations, which were aimed in part at isolating the Gaullists within Giscard's coalition, were answered by a well-respected RPR member, not known for his particular loyalty to the person of Chirac, Jean de Lipkowski, who affirmed that three days before his death, Boulin told him that "neither Chirac, nor the general staff of the RPR, nor the President of the Republic and his entourage" were responsible. De Lipkowski promised that if the allegations continued, he would release the names of those responsible, given to him by Boulin.

### The organized crime connections

Two events, which might appear unrelated, give additional clues as to the networks in organized crime that took part in this affair.

### Surface Perminex

One longtime enemy of the Fifth Republic, Jacques Soustelle (see box) appeared on a radio program, ap-

# What is Jacques Soustelle?

During World War II, Jacques Soustelle operated as a British intelligence agent. He was deployed into Charles De Gaulle's Free French apparatus in London, rising in its intelligence bureau (BCRA). Soustelle played a key role in the arrangements which gave Irgun terrorists from Palestine—including Menachem Begin—refuge in France after the war.

In the immediate post-war period, Soustelle stayed inside De Gaulle's political machine, and was elected to parliament; he focused his parliamentary activity on bringing De Gaulle's followers into alliance with right-wing socialists, exemplified by Francois Mitterrand, current head of the French Socialist Party. De Gaulle repeatedly vetoed these proposals.

In 1955, Soustelle was sent to Algeria as Governor General by Prime Minister Pierre Mendes-France; he developed a network of "colonialist" supporters independent of his government position, networks that were to become a leading part of the Algerian Secret Army Organization. His provocative behavior led to his removal from office. Returning to France, Soustelle was re-elected to parliament, and became President of the France-Israel Alliance caucus—on the eve of the French government's collaboration with Great Britain and Israel in the Suez invasion.

It was only after De Gaulle's return to power that Soustelle openly discarded his "Gaullist" clothing, and went into exile, taking leadership of the

OAS Algerian terrorists, and other parallel groups. Soustelle's terrorists had the active support of David Ben Gurion and Israeli intelligence. Financing for the OAS and other bands came from the Permindex Corporation. This assassination bureau was established by British Canadian Major-General Louis Mortimer Bloomfield, who channeled monies through the U.S. FBI-Division Five (which Bloomfield set up during World War II). Permindex engaged in over 30 attempts to assassinate President De Gaulle, notable among them the 1971 Petit Clamart incident to which Soustelle was directly linked.

Seeking refuge in Switzerland, Israel, Madrid and Rome, Soustelle in the following period obtained aid from sources in the United States associated with William F. Buckley and his National Review circle.

During the 1965 presidential elections, Soustelle, still abroad and a wanted man, called upon his supporters to vote for socialist Mitterrand in the second round of balloting against De Gaulle. Earlier, during the 1962 trial of OAS General Raoul Salan, a Soustelle associate, Mitterrand had testified as a defense witness.

Soustelle did not return to France to pursue his fascist politics openly until 1968, when a general amnesty was declared, largely due to political pressures exerted by Mitterrand.

parently out of a compelling need to explain why he broke with de Gaulle over the General's development policy for the Third World and the Algerian independence issue. *Le Figaro's* Alfred Fabre-Luce was quick to support Soustelle's reminiscing, insisting that France must deal with the Third World purely on the basis of anti-Sovietism. But Soustelle's sudden attempt to settle 20-year-old scores may turn out badly for him, since he is part of the very Permindex network Giscard is now pushing a crackdown against.

On Nov. 2, police ended their year and a half search for Jacques Mesrine, France's most wanted criminal, a former OAS member with active ties to the "anti-establishment" left: he was ambushed by Paris police

and his life ended in a hail of bullets. The closing in on Mesrine was coordinated by Inspector Maurice Bouvier, given the assignment only about a month ago. Bouvier is otherwise best known for leading the successful investigations into the assassination attempt against de Gaulle at Petit Clamart in 1962, leading to the arrest of the would-be assassins whose payoff has been traced to Major Louis Mortimer Bloomfield's Division Five of the FBI and the Permindex assassination bureau.

The successful closing of the Mesrine case, and what that may portend for Jacques Soustelle, is part of the necessary response to the Boulin affair.

—Dana Sloan and Garance Phau