
France

Mitterrand government announces a reign of terror at home and abroad

by Dana Sloan

If you are an American businessman trying to export to the Middle East, if you are a Mexican or Latin American political leader committed to pulling your nation out of underdevelopment, if you are a Saudi or Middle Eastern ruler who does not wish to see Islamic fundamentalism take over, the French government of François Mitterrand is now your sworn enemy.

As the Cancún summit approached, the Mitterrand government and its ruling Socialist Party (SP) declared war on anyone and everyone, at home and abroad, who stands in the way of their policies. While President Mitterrand issued a call to arms to Latin American terrorists, in a speech in Mexico that was boycotted by President José López Portillo, in Paris the opening of the Socialist Party national congress was the scene for an outbreak of calls for purges, witch-hunts, and the guillotine in France.

"We must not say 'heads will roll' like Robespierre told the convention, but say *which* heads and say so rapidly," Socialist Party Energy Commissioner Paul Quilès told the party congress, which opened in Valence on Oct. 23. Louis Mermaz, number-three in the party's leadership added: "If we succeed, there will be no turning back to the past. Certain forms of opposition will have been destroyed."

The national congress, in short, saw the top leaders of the Socialist Party declare a reign of terror, while a list was being drawn up of the enemies to be eliminated. Quilès told the party congress, which opened in Valence mob against France's ambitious nuclear energy program—still the largest program in Europe—declared that "university deans, prefects, directors of national businesses, and high functionaries" were among those that had to be swept from centers of power.

The Socialists now control not only the presidency, but also hold a single-party majority in the National Assembly, which guarantees passage of any bill or law presented by the government; and they are rapidly con-

solidating all forms of political and economic power through state takeovers of major banks and strategic sectors of industry.

Against the backdrop of the debate in Parliament on the economic nationalization program, where the opposition put up a fruitless fight against the proposal, the Socialists indicated that even verbal opposition, however impotent it may be, was unacceptable under certain circumstances.

Jean Poperen, number-two in the SP, railed that "the parliamentary opposition is playing for time, while the capitalists organize the flight of capital. . . . Those who won in [the] May and June [elections] will not allow themselves to be tricked by the bourgeoisie." He was joined by Louis Mermaz, who demanded that the government "strike hard and fast at the heads of groups which are playing with moneyed interests against the national interest. All the elements of an economic counter-revolution are in place. The class struggle is now upon us."

The Constitution: a dead letter

Every SP leader we quote above is a close collaborator of President François Mitterrand, belying the many assertions that this was just the party blowing off steam. When the party leaders speak, it is with the full knowledge and blessing of their President.

One of the features of the new French Revolution is precisely that the distinctions between party and government have been abolished, in violation of the intent of the 1962 Fifth Republic Constitution. Lionel Jospin, General Secretary of the Socialist Party, attends at least twice-weekly meetings with President Mitterrand and his ministers to set policy and ensure that it is carried out.

Lionel Jospin has otherwise proclaimed his intention to trample on the Constitution. During the chaotic debate in the National Assembly that preceded the SP

congress, Jospin threatened that were the Constitutional Council (France's Supreme Court) to rule the nationalizations of banks and companies illegal, that ruling would be overridden.

Jospin warned that "never in history have the great currents of reform been stopped by supreme courts. . . . There is a left and a right. . . . The opposition has the right to express itself, but the will of the people must be respected."

The National Assembly debate was the scene of wild accusations thrown against some of France's most respected national leaders, men like Gaullist leader Michel Debré, who co-authored the Constitution of the Fifth Republic with General de Gaulle. Debré was accused of opposing the nationalization of large parts of industry on the basis of his family ties to some steel-industry interests. Also high on the list of those targeted were members of former President Giscard d'Estaing's family who are prominent board members of several of the companies slated for state takeovers.

The debate became particularly venomous after it was reported that Pierre Moussa, Chairman of the Banque de Paris et de Pays-Bas (known as Paribas) had succeeded in selling off the bank's Swiss assets to a foreign firm, thus preventing those assets from coming under the state's control. The Socialists' charge: "Nationalization is the class struggle being expressed. . . . Before the French Revolution, the ruling class was proud of its origins. Then they entered the democratic political system. Today, they don't like being told that they hold illegitimate power, financial power."

International dark ages

What was said at the SP congress was simply the most explicit announcement to date of a policy that began immediately after François Mitterrand's inauguration as President in May: that terror is to be an instrument of state policy. Hundreds of terrorists were freed from jail, including many members of Action Directe, France's equivalent of the Italian Red Brigades or the West German Baader-Meinhof Gang. The Interior Ministry at the same time focused its attacks against various branches of the police force (see *EIR*, Nov. 3) accused of being racists and anti-Semites. Terrorists set off several bombs at various "bourgeois" establishments in Paris, such as restaurants and merchants that cater to the wealthy.

This policy of terror is also intended for export to Latin America, the Middle East, and Africa. Just as Ayatollah Khomeini would call on the Islamic masses to overthrow those regimes based on "Westernized" culture and industrial development, so did Mitterrand address a call to the populations of Latin America in a speech made in Mexico before the opening of the Cancún summit.

Going against the entire thrust of President José López Portillo's policies—use of Mexico's oil revenues as the basis for in-depth industrial and agricultural development of the nation—Mitterrand declared that "there is not and there cannot be political stability without social justice. . . . There is no real economic development without the preservation of . . . original culture." Although the speech was delivered to a crowd of only 6,000 people (compared with 1 million who came to hear General de Gaulle many years ago) it was clearly a call to López Portillo's internal enemies to rise up against him.

Adding to the flames

Mitterrand continued: "Hail to those who are gagged, persecuted and tortured, who want to live and live free. Hail to those who are being held, who have disappeared, who have been assassinated, who only wanted to live and live free. Hail to the brutalized priests, to the peasants without land, to the jailed trade unionists, to the unemployed who sell their blood to survive, to the Indians chased from their land, to the workers without rights, to the resistance fighters without arms, who want to live and live free. To all of you, France says: courage, liberty will conquer!"

The speech, conspicuously boycotted by López Portillo, demonstrates the import of Régis Debray's presence as foreign policy adviser to the French President: promoting guerrilla warfare is now state policy.

Mitterrand has similar plans for the Middle East, plans he has wrapped in Islamic garb. He and his Foreign Minister Claude Cheysson made an approving appearance at a Paris conference of Islam and the West Oct. 14-16, an organization actively seeking to spread Khomeini's dark ages throughout the rest of the Middle East and Africa. It was Cheysson who after the assassination of Egypt's President by the Muslim Brotherhood announced that Sadat's death removes an "obstacle to peace."

The U.S.-based arm of this Dark Ages terror policy has been revealed to be centered around the recent conference in Houston of the Muslim Brotherhood, held at the Rothko Chapel. The Rothko Chapel conference, which brought in leading Islamic fundamentalists from all over the world to explicitly target the Saudi Arabian regime, was sponsored by Countess Dominique de Menil, née Schlumberger. The Countess, who is a member of a family-held industrial grouping that is extremely close to the Socialists, was among the guests at the state dinner in Yorktown, Virginia given in Mitterrand's honor.

No wonder the old Comintern hack and long-time liaison with British intelligence, Boris Ponomarev of the Soviet Politburo, left the Socialist Party congress feeling quite pleased with himself.