

The insurrection against Mitterrand: how long will the government last?

by Garance Upham Phau

On July 18, the entire French government resigned and President François Mitterrand named Laurent Fabius the new prime minister. The noteworthy characteristic of the new cabinet is the absence of representatives of the French Communist Party (PCF); the Communists, on Moscow's orders, have gone into the opposition.

On July 21, *Pravda* wrote that the previous prime minister, Pierre Mauroy, the architect of the Union of the Left alliance with the PCF, had brought about the country's economic crisis, and that the Communists were therefore right in denouncing the government's "austerity." The Kremlin minced no words in ordering the PCF to mobilize its trade unions to agitate against the government, and possibly bring it down; the right opposition parties are already staging mass agitation against Mitterrand in the streets.

The new government, assuming office after Mitterrand's Socialists garnered only 20% of the vote in the June 17 European Parliament elections, was put together hastily by the President, who is futilely trying to regain control in the worst crisis the Fifth Republic has experienced since the Generals' Putsch, the 1961 attempted coup d'état against General de Gaulle.

The referendums

Everyone in France today is betting on the short life expectancy of the Socialist regime: Will it fall in a matter of weeks, or months? The caretaker-type cabinet came into existence barely two days after Mitterrand had supposedly pulled off a "master coup" against his right-wing opposition. Stymied by legislative opposition to an extremely unpopular bill introduced by former Education Minister Savary to have the state take over religious and private schools, Mitterrand called for a national referendum in September to reform Paragraph 11 of the Constitution limiting recourse to referendums. This opened the way for a second referendum on the school bill, by which Mitterrand could by-pass the parliamentary opposition to the measure.

The right opposition and the Church had used the attempted takeover of private and church schools to bring millions of people into the streets, the events of "May 1968 in reverse." On June 24, one week after the European elections, which were so disastrous for Socialists and Communists alike,

no fewer than 1.5 million people demonstrated in Paris against the bill. It was the biggest demonstration since the 1944 Liberation.

Faced with the threat of insurrection, Mitterrand thought the constitutional referendum-reform bill a good "Catch 22." The opposition had to agree to his first referendum, in order to subsequently get rid of the hated school bill in a second referendum, thus giving him at least a plebiscite reinforcing presidential powers.

But the opposition leaders can be as tricky as Mitterrand. Only two days after the masterful "referendum coup," the Mauroy government resigned.

The 'opposition'

RPR Gaullist party leader Jacques Chirac and former President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing met at length and emerged to call for a "No" on the referendum bill. They demanded that Mitterrand dissolve the National Assembly and call new legislative elections. Since the referendum bill must go through the National Assembly and the Senate, the opposition, with under-the-table help from the PCF, could torpedo the project in legislative haggling, notably, said Chirac, by proposing that the referendum pledge Mitterrand to "restore all liberties"—the free-enterprise system, for example, by reversing the nationalization of industry.

What this politicking means in practice is that France can be expected to hop from crisis to crisis in the weeks and months ahead. Were new legislative elections to be called, the opposition would command a majority and therefore be able to block any government nominated by the President, until Mitterrand himself were forced to resign and call for new presidential elections. Former Prime Minister Raymond Barre, always presenting himself as "above party quarrels," established his distance from both sides and loftily declared he would vote "Yes" to the first referendum, *provided* Mitterrand would behave as grandly as de Gaulle in 1969, and put his presidency in the balance in the second, school bill referendum. Barre is at present a leading contender for the next presidency.

A well informed French banker characterized the situation as France "exploding inwards"; each and every party competing over the best ways to make the country ungovern-

able and impotent to deal with the ominous economic and strategic crisis.

Fifth Republic at stake

The woes of France's Fifth Republic have a simple cause: The Kremlin and the Anglo-American Establishment agree that the country must be savagely destroyed as the European nation-state most crucial to the Atlantic Alliance and U.S. world power. That is the fundamental reason Henry A. Kissinger has been spending so much time in France since the beginning of the year; he met with Mitterrand on three separate occasions, the last on June 28; he met with opposition leaders; he has mobilized his network of acquaintances and agents in a project to demolish the Fifth Republic, which, weak and misgoverned as it is, stands in the way of Russia's imperial dreams.

The destruction of France is part of the larger aim of destroying the United States as a world power. While Foreign Minister Cheysson may denounce the "militarization of space," the fact is, France has the largest beam-weapon development program in the West after the United States. More generally, France is militarily the strongest nation in Europe and has always been the United States' leading partner.

French military circles privately say that they expect a Soviet attack on Western Europe, particularly West Germany, over the course of the next two years. They fear that the Kissinger-controlled U.S. State Department's policy ("flexible response") would mean that the United States would not immediately intervene in the event of a Soviet invasion. They know that only the mass production of neutron bombs—by France—for deployment on the West German frontier could protect Western Europe from the vast Soviet armies. The Soviet Union, and Kissinger, also know this.

The Le Pen phenomenon

As part of the project to ruin France, an ugly monster is being recreated there. In the 1930s, this monster bore the name of the *Action Française* movement of Charles Maurras, a blood-and-soil, fascist cult-movement. The revival is occurring under the leadership of a small-time torturer from the Algerian war, one Jean Marie Le Pen, an old field-hand of the French-Algerian OAS, the terrorist Organisation Armée Secrète that sought to topple de Gaulle in the 1960s on behalf of the "French Empire." And with millions of dollars, a few sociologists and anthropologists to profile the population—the likes of Jacques Soustelle, Edgar Morin, and so forth—the Jesuit network of the Catholic Church, Le Pen's Front National was built from a tiny sect into a major political party winning more than 11% of the vote in the June 18 European Parliament elections.

The "success" of Le Pen has in turn been used to play on the opportunism of the Gaullist RPR party, whose leadership has been convinced that only by adapting to Le Pen's Maurrassian rhetoric can they "make it" with a population enraged by a terrible economic crisis which will see over 2.5 million

officially unemployed by December.

What is Le Pen's program? Basically, all the problems of the French stem from the influx of foreign, mostly Muslim workers, taking French jobs, bringing in crime, etc. To restore the values of the West, says Le Pen, to curb drugs and such disgusting "liberal" things as the gay movement, the French must protect themselves by kicking out all foreigners. According to Le Pen, the only "French" are those whose ancestral blood has irrigated the soil of the motherland over several generations. The "cemeteries" are the true "Temples of the Fatherland."

These French must turn inward to protect their families and "liberties" by demolishing the power of the omnipotent state. Economic decay and cultural decadence are blamed on the founders of the French nation-state: Louis XI, the greatest king in the history of mankind, who created of the first nation, France, in 1463 to rebuild Europe from the Hundred Years War of the feudal oligarchies, and Jean-Baptiste Colbert, the great minister of Louis XIV. Louis XI and Colbert were the founders of the modern system of capitalist economy which, developed by the great German genius, Leibniz, came to American shores through Lafayette and became known as the "American system of political economy."

The New Right publication, *Figaro Magazine*, in its July 13-20 issue, carried a most remarkable piece of propaganda. Father Bruckberger, in a review of a new book on the life of Charles Maurras, declared that Maurras had seen how all problems stemmed from that "centralizing unity" of the nation brought about by the alliance between the monarchy and the bourgeoisie under Louis XI. The article proposes that France go back to the system of regional fiefdoms of the pre-Louis XI era. It even makes the outrageous claim that de Gaulle always stood for the restoration of this type of feudal oligarchical regime in France. Bruckberger concludes: "I am convinced that Gaullist political doctrine is only perfectly intelligible from a Maurrassian standpoint."

This past spring, anthropologist Jacques Soustelle, the political mastermind of the OAS, was enthroned as an "immortal" in the Academy Française. The welcoming speech was given by an old Gaullist, all praise. The feudal manipulator whose networks attempted to murder de Gaulle at least 30 times, was welcomed into the Gaullist fold—a signal that the Maurrassian revamping of Gaullism is well advanced. Today, Barre, Chirac, Giscard all mouth foolish things on the "evil of Colbertism" and the need to free the poor oppressed individual from the state.

What Le Pen and his mentors at *Figaro Magazine* propose is to do away with the nation-state and with heavy industry. Le Pen, in his book, *Les Français d'Abord*, calls the steel industry, and heavy industry generally, "obsolete"; they also propose to end the *force de frappe*, the independent French nuclear force, and thus the possibility of beam-weapon and neutron-bomb development. They propose nothing less than a feudal revolution against the "bourgeois Renaissance." Moscow is happy with its newfound friends in France.