

Report from Paris by Jacques Cheminade

Toward a Swiss 'recentering'

Swiss banks are betting on the popular backlash against right and left extremes in the March 10 elections.

The recent *cantonales* (county) elections confirmed not only a collapse of the Socialist Party, but a strong rejection of the "extremes," the Communist Party (PCF) (fallen to 12.5% of the votes) and Jean-Marie Le Pen's extreme right-wing National Front. The French electorate—disgusted by both the Socialist "rigor" and right-wing "liberal" austerity programs—declared its will to be "governed by the center." With the scare around Le Pen and the PCF over, President François Mitterrand and the Swiss interests which control large chunks of the opposition are now both trying to bet on this *recenterage*.

There is nothing wrong per se with such a centrist "democratic pact" or a "republican majority gathering," this scheme is variously labeled, but behind these nice words, other things are meant: the Swiss banks' economic policy of industrial dismantling, financial austerity and counterculture—a policy of destruction of the nation-state.

Beyond the statements of various political headquarters, let us examine the analysis of two "experts" reflecting the views of Mitterrand's advisers and the financial forces which inspire them. Alain Touraine, the sociologist of a new "Democratic Party" and an ex-leader of the Communist Youth, and Messrs. Jean Riboud, François Dalle, and André Bettencourt, the extremely wealthy financial junta which controls the Paris leftist daily *Libération*.

On March 12, Alain Touraine wrote in *Le Matin de Paris*, "From now on, the Socialist party is certain of a heavy

defeat, unless it adopts a realist centrist policy." Touraine, a leader of the Saint-Simon Foundation, a Swiss and Anglo-American joint venture, supports Prime Minister Laurent Fabius's "modernization program" and calls on the Socialists to rally a "pragmatic and realist center." On March 7, Premier Fabius in Toulouse and new-left Agriculture Minister Michel Rocard both called for an "anti-racist majority republican gathering." More and more mentioned is an allegedly "deep wish" of the French to see together, in the same government, the "prima donnas" of the opinion polls: Simone Veil and Raymond Barre for the right wing, Michel Rocard, Laurent Fabius, and Education Minister Jean-Pierre Chevènement for the Socialists.

Serge July, in *Libération*, considered the election to be "a cocktail of rejections," and concluded: "Both left-wing and right-wing majorities seem to be condemned. Not because of the President's machiavellianism, but because it is a deeper movement of our society." So again, the myth of recentering. In that sense, if Le Pen's operation (and, more, the operations around the bogeyman Le Pen) has failed to be effective directly, it has been used as a foil to mobilize the French population around this new "center."

Now, what is this new "center"? Behind his "democratic pact," Michel Rocard emphasizes the necessity of returning to the "great economic equilibriums," i.e., of imposing the Swiss banks' austerity. And such is the content of the new "common pro-

gram" of Messrs. Barre, Rocard, Delors, Fabius, and Chevènement: the Swiss banks' financial policy.

The top man of the Soviets in France, the "red billionaire" Jean-Baptiste Doumeng, announced recently that Mitterrand's next premier, after the 1986 general elections, will be André Bettencourt. True, Mitterrand, Doumeng, and Bettencourt have the same Vichyite past. But Doumeng, a personal friend of Gorbachov, is also the ally of the Swiss banks and of the grain cartels; he is the number one grain contractor with the Soviet Union, and a kind of bridge between Russian and Swiss circles. As for Bettencourt, his wife Liliane-Schueller, one of the richest women in Europe, owns 25% of the Swiss agro-food giant Nestlé's. Mrs. Bettencourt's father, Eugène Schueller, was the founder of the "Cagoule," ("Hood"), an extreme right-wing terrorist organization before World War II. After the war, Mitterrand worked for the same interests, his boss none other than Bettencourt.

François Dalle, the boss of another Franco-Swiss company, L'Oréal, just authored a destruction plan for the French auto industry. And linked to the same crowd are Jean Riboud, the filthy-rich chairman of Schlumberger, the world's largest oil technologies company, and his brother Antoine Riboud, head of the BSN-Gervais-Danone agro-food complex.

Things are similar on the right-wing side of the coin, as Raymond Barre's case shows: A representative of Swiss insurance, Barre advocates the same austerity policies, wholeheartedly supports the International Monetary Fund and Bank for International Settlements, and touts an entente with Moscow. Barre is just another bridge between Geneva or Zurich and Moscow.