

## Report from Paris by Yves Messer

### Drug legalizers speak out

*French President François Mitterrand is giving his backing to a drug lobby asset.*

An open ideological war is being waged over drug policy in France, between the supporters of legalization and the Chirac government.

The way this war has broken out is itself a victory for the government. After the March 1986 elections, the government announced a war on drugs, to be conducted by both the Justice Ministry of Albin Chalandon and the Interior Ministry of Charles Pasqua. The "Chalandon Plan" shifted to a less liberal policy toward drug addicts and traffickers—meaning jail for those who refuse to be cured. This simple change of behavior against one of the weapons of the counterculture is creating the conditions for a foreseeable cultural paradigm shift in France, especially since concern over the AIDS epidemic is also mounting.

The revolt against the Chirac government's anti-drug measures has come from pro-drug, counterculture supporters, in particular in the Socialist Party. The first salvo came when the Socialist Party-linked Dr. Claude Olievenstein, who "cures" addicts by giving them palliative drugs, complained to *Le Monde* last Nov. 15 that he should "have gotten himself more involved on behalf of the decriminalization of marijuana use." Then on Feb. 5, the pro-drug daily *Libération* escalated, printing statements by proponents of drug legalization in France on the Netherlands model. Speaking for this policy were Leon Schwartzberg, a member of the peacenik International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, and Socialist at-

torney Georges Apap, the prosecutor of the city of Valence, who declared that the way to defeat drug pushers is to replace the narco-mafia by the state!

Professor Schwartzberg suggested: "We could imagine a special entity attached for instance to the Health Ministry, and managed by responsible individuals under professional secrecy, where all the addicts could come to be registered but in an anonymous way, before they go into withdrawal." Mr. Apap went further: "Without saying that the increasing severity of the law is favoring the scourge, at least may we set forth as an evident truth that it [the repressive law] is of no help in curbing it and that prohibition is useless. Worse, it has the perverse effects of all bans and, for instance, favors trafficking. . . ." He concludes: "Since this phenomenon is out of our control, why don't we organize it?"

These interviews were published the same day Justice Minister Chalandon was invited to a conference at the French Senate, organized by the "National Federation of Defense Associations Against Drugs" which brought together some 500 doctors and anti-drug experts to endorse the government's new measures. This popular support for Chalandon was made possible after a petition drive to collect hundreds of signatures of famous scientists' and professors' names. The list was published in late January in the national press.

This idea goes back to the French branch of the Anti-Drug Coalitions

founded by Lyndon LaRouche, which held a rally in Paris on Nov. 22, 1986, and gave the Justice Ministry a petition of thousands of names supporting its initiatives. At that time, the Socialist media were arguing that Chalandon's measures were unpopular. Proving the contrary, the Jan. 20 *Figaro* daily printed an opinion poll revealing that 63% of parents (against 27%) and 50% of citizens generally (against 35%), support the strong anti-drug policy.

At this conference, a member of the "National Committee," Dr. Leon Hovnanian, declared: "Contrary to what has been said, the medical profession is now proving it is ready to take up its responsibilities. The movement is starting to spread to all other sectors of the French population. Support is coming from everywhere, even from companies. . . . We must reach 100,000 signatures within six months. This mobilization must not be disappointing. We hope the whole government will show solidarity with it. Parents and families, for too long bewildered and disarmed, have the right to the legal means to save their children from drugs and have intake centers in sufficient numbers to treat them. If we need to make demonstrations of 100,000 people in the streets to get them, we are ready to do it!" he concluded.

He added that an information campaign to France's 150,000 doctors will be carried out. After this event, Justice Minister Chalandon decided to demote the pro-drug Prosecutor Georges Apap from Valence to the lesser city of Bobigny. But President Mitterrand opposed this decision on Feb. 10, "thus backing Apap's statements," commented Chalandon. In fact, this is the first time a French President has protected an asset of the drug lobby, which Chalandon once labeled "intellectual terrorists."