

The French Establishment Is Self-Destructing

by Mark Burdman

As the political season begins in earnest for the March 2002 Presidential election campaign in France, the leading figures and institutions of the French political establishment are losing face. A wide range of scandals and legal actions has exposed a massive level of corruption within the French elites, in reaction to which the French population is becoming increasingly more enraged, by the day. That rage, under effective political leadership in the tradition of the late great President Charles de Gaulle, could be mobilized positively, but there is, at the same time, the growing danger of all sorts of fascistoid eruptions, of a type not unknown in French history.

The immediate focus of national attention, is the appearance in court, beginning on Jan. 22, of Roland Dumas. Dumas was the French former Foreign Minister, under the late French President François Mitterrand, after having served, for years, as Mitterrand's lawyer and closest confidant. In 1995, only months before his death in January 1996, Mitterrand appointed Dumas to head the immensely powerful French Constitutional Council. In that position, Dumas was formally responsible for nasty Council decisions taken against the 1995 Presidential campaign of Lyndon LaRouche associate Jacques Cheminade.

What Dumas is now formally charged with, is having made vast, illegal lucrative commissions, while he was Foreign Minister, from the sale of French frigates to Taiwan. As leading French sources stress, Dumas is the kind of sly operator, who could transform this "business affair" into an "affair of state," and implicate some of the highest figures in the former Mitterrand government and ruling French Socialist Party (PS), and possibly others, in shady activities. This, in itself, could explode certain "norms" of French political arrangements.

Angola-Gate . . . And 'Dubya'

Simultaneously, magistrates' investigations are continually expanding, into the activities of a certain Pierre Falcone, who previously headed the official French government arms-sales agency, an agency that is under the formal control of the Interior Ministry. Falcone is accused of having illegally arranged to sell Russian weapons to Angola. Known as "Angola-gate," this case is bringing some "big fish" into the net.

For some weeks, Mitterrand's son, Jean-Christophe, who ran all sorts of special operations into Africa for the last couple

of decades, was in jail, because of his links to the Falcone dirty dealings. The son of Mitterrand has, in recent days, violently attacked the French magistrate investigating the affair, Philippe Courroye. But, on Jan. 31, he had to appear for new hearings, with Courroye presiding.

Further investigations into Angola-gate are snaring the very powerful former French Interior Minister, Charles Pasqua, and his personal henchman, Jean-Charles Marchiani, widely known as "France's Oliver North," because of his murky maneuverings on behalf of Pasqua, over a period of at least two decades.

Meanwhile, Pasqua's closest collaborator in founding and leading the RPF political party, right-wing ideologue Philippe de Villiers, has publicly broken with Pasqua, and is testifying before Courroye, claiming that RPF financing has gained, in significant part, through the illicit activities centered around Falcone. De Villiers himself is none too clean, having for years benefitted from the financial largesse and political collaboration of the late Anglo-French multibillionaire scam artist, Sir James Goldsmith. The latter's ecologist-fanatic brother, who operates with vast sums from Sir James' inheritance, is now attempting to create an ecologist insurrection in France, Brazil, the United States, and elsewhere.

Leading French and British publications have also reported on the close relations of Falcone, to the new American President, George W. Bush. The Dec. 28, 2000 issue of the French weekly *Le Nouvel Observateur* reported that Falcone has a big house in Scottsdale, Arizona, at which he received "George W. Bush, whose campaign he financed, and whose wife is a friend of Falcone's wife." Furthermore, the weekly alleged that, Falcone flew the Bush couple, in his private jet, not only to Paris, but also from Scottsdale to Las Vegas, "to win—or lose—several million dollars." According to *Le Nouvel Observateur*, one of the participants in these excursions was Jean-Christophe Mitterrand.

An Expanding Mass Ferment

Apparently, French President Jacques Chirac and Prime Minister Lionel Jospin are calculating that focussing on the Pasqua and Mitterrand crowds, will have the effect of "throwing out the political filth," as one Paris-based intelligence source characterized it to *EIR*. This would, they calculate, satisfy the public desire to see some of the culprits in the

French establishment pay for the sleaze that is so widespread in the reigning establishment. They also hope that this would divert attention away from the scandal that erupted late last year, implicating Chirac, Jospin, and others, in illicit party-financing operations, centered around the city of Paris. Once this is accomplished, they hope that they can run a “sanitized” and effectively issue-less Presidential campaign, on the model of the substanceless Bush-Gore race in the U.S. last year.

But this calculation flies in the face of the fact, that growing numbers of Frenchmen are disgusted by the shenanigans around party-financing, and by the economic and moral destruction of the country, under the current leadership.

The second half of January has seen the beginnings of the vast ferment that can be expected to erupt in France in the period ahead. On Jan. 25, some 300,000 Frenchmen took to the streets across the country, to protest against brutal “pension reform” and “pension privatization” schemes that have been cooked up by the MEDEF employers’ federation. The demonstrations were supported by all France’s five trade union confederations, which is rare in a country where these confederations spend a great deal of time feuding with each other. Also noteworthy, was the significant participation in the demonstrations, of French professional layers, including engineers, who are feeling the heat of the economic downturn

in France. Some 100,000 of the demonstrators were in Paris, but all the other big cities saw demonstrations, as did towns that are normally relatively free of political ferment.

In truth, these demonstrations were of a defensive, rear-guard nature, given the intensity of the austerity onslaught. The unions were trying to arrange a “less bad” constriction of the pension system. Nonetheless, the mass actions were a sign of things to come.

True enough, only five days later, on Jan. 30, tens of thousands of school teachers and health and postal workers, representing France’s 5.4 million public sector workers and 4 million pensioners, took to the streets. The actions were backed by the “centrist” CFDT national union confederation, together with the Communist-backed CGT and the leftist Force Ouvrière; usually, these three confederations are at loggerheads.

It can be anticipated, that the coming weeks will witness ever-more-visible expressions of disgust at the degeneracy and economic-policy insanity of the currently prevailing French elites. It can also be anticipated, that there will be growing support, throughout significant layers of the population, for Cheminade, and for LaRouche’s program for a “New Bretton Woods” reorganization of the global economic and financial system. Cheminade has declared his candidacy for the March 2002 Presidential election.

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