
Interview: Jacques Cheminade

French 'Elites' Lack Courage To Face Crash

Jacques Cheminade is campaigning to become President of France in the elections scheduled for 2002, with the backing of the Solidarity and Progress political group, of which he is president. He has been a decades-long collaborator of U.S. Democratic pre-candidate Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr., whose policies he made nationally known in 1995, when he first ran for French President. Cheminade holds a law degree from France's Higher School for Business and a diploma from the elite National School of Administration (ENA).



*Last year, setting the tone for his Presidential campaign, Cheminade published his third book, *Roosevelt, de Gaulle, Monnet: Taking Up Their Fight*. (On June 16, 2000, EIR published his speech on the same theme, "*FDR and Jean Monnet: The Battle vs. British Imperial Methods Can Be Won*," which he delivered to the Schiller Institute conference in Bad Schwalbach, Germany.) Cheminade was interviewed in Paris by Christine Schier on Feb. 24.*

EIR: Our readers will be very happy to hear your analysis of the situation in France, as well as news on your Presidential campaign, which began in September. From the outside, what one hears about France mostly has to do with the scandals that have been shaking the political class, left and right. The "Elf Affair" has been catching the biggest headlines. President Jacques Chirac is in deep trouble; Prime Minister Lionel Jospin is not unscathed. To what extent does this affect French policy at home and abroad?

Cheminade: I said during my Presidential campaign in 1995: The 1995-2002 Presidential term (the term then was seven years, now it is five) would be the Presidency of the crash, and no candidate, other than myself, was prepared for it. Now, here it is, and no one is prepared. The scandals are, in a sense, a by-product of that incompetence, because the political leadership is unable to control what is happening. And at the same time, certain interests in the Anglo-American camp are using them as blackmail against French institutions.

As for Elf—the company is now called ElfTotalFina—let me mention that it was a French oil company, and just like any other international oil company, it was also a front for dirty operations by the French secret services in Africa and

for weapons trading. The affair began, when Philippe Jaffré handed the investigation, which had more or less calmed down at that point, over to the New York law firm of Wilkie Farr and Gallagher, which we know very well as a core of the Anglo-American establishment. This information was immediately used as a way to blackmail French institutions.

Confronted with such a situation, the French political elite has absolutely no courage. They have no idea—and worse still, they don't want to have an idea—of what to do about the crisis. They deny publicly that there is a crisis, saying that things have never been better, while privately being very worried. In such a situation, the population starts to realize that the leadership is not up to the task. And that is why, in the Presidential campaign, which—by the normal rules of the game, would be completely controlled by Jospin on the left and Chirac on the right—there's more and more talk of the need for a "third man." And everybody wants to be that third man, so, there will be an overflow of candidates.

As for our organization, although we are relatively small, we are much stronger than we were in 1995. It is known that we warned—and I personally warned during the last campaign—of what was going to happen. So, the more the crisis develops in France, the more I gain in credibility, and even more so, as a person whom the French establishment has persecuted. My credibility grows, not because the population identifies with a victim, but because they understand that a person depicted as a "minor candidate," was in fact attacked and persecuted simply for telling the truth, and for being connected internationally to the LaRouche movement and to our friends in Russia, in India, in Ibero-America, etc., who propose a real alternative.

EIR: What do you mean by saying you were persecuted during the 1995 Presidential campaign?

Cheminade: During the campaign, the press attacked me to such an extent that even the Higher Council of Broadcasting declared that I was not granted equal time by the media. Another agency, the Campaign Control Commission, stated that coverage of my candidacy was biased. But, concretely, these findings had no effect, as they were announced on the Friday just before the elections took place. I was slandered, and so was LaRouche. I had been labelled an anti-Semite, extreme right-wing, bizarre, and so on. The national television network TF1, for example, ran the worst picture they could find of me. It was so overdone, it was not credible. But it was enough to create uneasiness among certain voters who, although they may have been tempted to vote for me, chose another candidate or did not vote.

Now, this "overkill" approach they used toward me is actually turning in my favor. They simply overdid it and they knew it. So, they pulled a second trick after the campaign, in order to prevent me from capitalizing, in the future, on their stupidity. They decided that my campaign expenses would not be reimbursed by the state, which is standard practice for a Presidential candidate in France, no matter how many votes

he gets. My accounts were rejected, and it was decided by the Constitutional Council that I personally would have to pay the 5 million francs I spent during the campaign. That came down to bankrupting me personally.

At that time, the head of the Constitutional Council was Roland Dumas. Now, Dumas is being tried in court and is about to be convicted for what he did as Foreign Minister [under François Mitterrand] in order to protect certain operations of personal enrichment, especially for his mistress, Christine Deviers-Joncourt. So Dumas is totally discredited, and he is the one who headed the Constitutional Council when they rejected my campaign account.

Now, a journalist from *Le Monde*, Hervé Gattegno, has revealed that the judges who were on top of the Dumas case, Eva Joly and Laurence Vichnievsky, discovered in Dumas' personal coffers, the original campaign accounts from Jacques Chirac and [former Prime Minister] Edouard Balladur. And these accounts prove that they overspent in the campaign, especially Chirac—they went way over the limit allowed for their expenses, and their accounts should have been rejected. But they were not, because Dumas had arranged for them to be doctored, and presented in a legitimate way—which means lying. So now, it is becoming more and more widely known that the Constitutional Council did not act as an instrument of French justice, to ensure the elections were conducted in a fair way, but, on the contrary, it served as a weapon of the French elites to prevent a newcomer, one with my ideas, from coming on stage. This is becoming so clear that even certain alumni of the National School of Administration are considering intervening in my favor, to denounce a great scandal in French politics.

So, my new campaign will take place in a very different environment than the first one. The French institutions and French elites are under attack, and they have proved their utter lack of the courage required, to do what they should have done. Second, I am known as the one who exposed them. Third, people understand that it is the international situation that determines what is happening in France. For these reasons, things are much more favorable for our ideas and my candidacy than they were in 1995. There is no doubt about that. And we decided, since one should never repeat the same tactic, to start the campaign early, even with the relatively limited means we have, throughout France.

And now, in contrast to 1995, we have many more people supporting us. Some of the mayors [who had signed petitions in 1995 for Cheminade to acquire ballot status] were so shocked by what happened five years ago—when it was said that the mayors supporting my campaign had been subjected to bribery, sexual seduction, and whatnot—that they have decided to sign a declaration, saying they would support me again, and that they consider me to be, as far as they can see, the best candidate they can think of.

EIR: There has recently been a major offensive by the employers union, in particular attacking the retirement and old-

age-benefit plans. How do you plan to intervene on this question?

Cheminade: First of all, Medef, the French employers union, is not headed by industrialists, but by people from the banking and insurance sectors who clearly represent the dominant Anglo-American conception of economics. Denis Kessler, the “Leporello” of Baron Seillière, the head of Medef, is a former Maoist who converted to insurance management, and now he is the “intellectual light” of Medef. He promotes a violent Thatcherism, totally contrary to the French tradition. He wants employees to have to work longer before retiring, and then, to receive less during their retirement. He also wants to create pension funds à la American, or à la British, or à la Chilean, in France. His approach, however, is so crude that it has provoked a lot of opposition. Some of the unions, the so-called Christian unions that are not Christian, have supported Kessler and Medef, while the others are resisting. That has exposed these unions as following a policy of total cooperation with Anglo-American interests.

What is interesting, is that the battle is now out in the open. Traditionally in France, the fight tends to be under the table, and Venetian in nature. Now, it's clear. So, it is becoming dangerous for the forces in France favorable to a compromise with the Anglo-American powers, because they have to fight in the open. And you have a certain tradition of directed economy in France, which is coming to the fore, and the Gaullist tradition of an independent foreign policy, as expressed by Hubert Védrine, the Foreign Minister. For example, France was the only Western country that condemned the British and American bombing of Iraq.

Then you also have the campaign I am conducting, and the reaction to it in certain trade unions and political parties, including those in the present government. In this situation, the enemy has to do something. And this time, as usual, they are sending countergangs into the scene, whose role it is to distract the opposition from the real issues. There are various operations. One is around the Pôrto Alegre summit [the so-called World Social Forum in Pôrto Alegre, Brazil, to protest “globalization”]. Most of those attending or supporting it, were honestly against the International Monetary Fund [IMF], the World Bank, and the financial market economy. But they promote an ideology of “each against all,” where everyone comes with his own recipe, his own complaint, and they claim that it is by adding up what each one says at the lowest level, that they will come up with a solution. This time, in Pôrte Alegre, there was not even a final declaration. The organizers claimed that this was normal, because it is impossible to find common ground today, that that would be totalitarian. Instead, what is needed is a sum of small fights and small experiences throughout the world. This, as we know historically, leads absolutely nowhere except to suicidal actions.

This operation was in great part French, and also supported by Teddy Goldsmith. He just launched a French version of his English-language publication, *The Ecologist*, with the first issue in Autumn 2000. The Winter issue promotes a

farm leader named René Riesel. His political tradition, he says, is to be against the idea of progress. He is in the tradition of the Luddites in England or the Canuts in the Lyon region of France, that is, the workers who, during the 19th Century, destroyed machines in order to keep their jobs. So it's clearly an anti-technology movement. This is the extreme version, but there are also softer versions.

For example, José Bové, who launched a big movement against genetically modified products of all sorts: He claims that bovine spongiform encephalopathy, or "Mad Cow" disease, comes from too much technology, from too much "intensive agriculture." He promotes a tax on institutes involved in research on genetically modified plants and vegetables. He had attacked such centers many times, and has been sentenced to some months in jail, and is now at least in his fifth trial. What could develop out of this, is an uprising with no program, which would be dangerous and destabilizing. At this point, even the old Trotskyites have condemned José Bové as being anti-science and anti-progress.

EIR: What following does Bové have among farmers?

Cheminade: Not so much among the farmers. But the "bobos" like him, the "*bourgeois bohémiens*" of the new type and their sons. His General Peasants Confederation (CGP) has about 25% of the vote in the elections for the Farm Board, and, until now, the FNSEA, which is a sort of corporatist, pro-science farmers union (but no good either), has had about 50% of the vote. But, in Brittany, one of Bové's men who was heading the regional organization of the Board, just lost, because the farmers think Bové's methods are too adventurist and that he is really attacking the farmers, by attacking their methods of production. So, he has little support among farmers, but rather large in the cities, among the post-'68ers.

At the same time, they had to level attacks against the IMF, the World Bank, and financial policies. So, the ground on which the fight is taking place is favorable for us, because on that issue, they have nothing to say, except that they are *against*, and they propose a single-issue method, which leads nowhere.

EIR: Another aspect of the international fight against globalization coming from France, is the ATTAC movement, which also includes many parliamentarians.

Cheminade: It also includes Bové's General Peasants Confederation. The vice president of ATTAC, François Dufour, is president of this confederation. There are also militants from the CGT, the ex-Communist labor union. ATTAC was founded to promote the Tobin Tax [on financial transactions], but now they are also against the market economy and the financial domination of international markets. It was an operation of Bernard Cassen's *Le Monde Diplomatique*. What they do, is they patch together people of various affiliations, who have not been directly involved in politics and who are fed up with the existing political parties. There is nothing wrong

with that in itself, but it became subverted, when a strong ecological impetus was given to the movement, and anti-technology and anti-development influence became more and more important, even hegemonic. Then it took the form, as was expressed in Pôrto Alegre, of an alliance with Bové and others.

If you see the thing from above, as a whole, you have Teddy Goldsmith (he is now called "Edouard" Goldsmith in French) launching his operation. It goes into the Riesel extremist movement, and from there, to the José Bové crowd, then to ATTAC, and finally to Pôrto Alegre. None of them are exactly the same, but in a kind of domino movement, one reaches the next and topples it.

You do find people in ATTAC who are pro-science and pro-technology, who are becoming better aware—thanks to our intervention—of this connection. It is, of course, a political operation, but it was made possible by the ideological weaknesses of the people involved.

And what we bring in, is a much clearer reading of the situation than anybody else has in France. At this point, the Jacobin potential of this movement is being opposed by what we are proposing. This creates, for example at ATTAC forums, a tremendous fight between people on the ecological side, who have hated us historically since the 1970s, this whole swamp, and our side. Now these people are compelled to bring the fight into the open. They can no longer prevent us from talking, we can be very visible, publicly. And my Presidential campaign will be a spearhead of that.

EIR: Concerning the ecologist, green movement, a scandal just broke around Daniel Cohn-Bendit's defense some 25 years ago of children's sexuality. This is also an issue in Germany. What do you think is behind these revelations?

Cheminade: First of all, you have a certain "Ibykus principle" involved: Something wrong done in the past will come back to haunt you in the future. So Cohn-Bendit admits having written these things, but denies having done them. He says it was merely a provocation. But what you find in the book is extremely interesting. Beyond his description of so-called sexual flirtation with children, he says that young children were a challenge for him, because he felt just as young, and as infantile, as they. I think this is even more important, to see the infantile self in this crowd.

We, in the past, stressed this aspect of the ecological movement, and in particular of Cohn-Bendit. Nobody wanted to cover it. Today, it is coming out massively. There are two sides to this. On the one hand, the truth is out in the open, and it is absolutely legitimate. Even *Libération*, the French newspaper that promoted this mind-set in the 1970s and 1980s, published an article apologizing and admitting that they were wrong.

On the other hand, it should also be understood that this big attack against Cohn-Bendit is being used by the right-wing fundamentalist networks, called the "moral order" in

France, who claim to be on the other side of the pendulum, so to speak. But, in fact, what they propose is the same: It is the negation of the creative powers of the human being, but from a different standpoint.

This is what is important to understand in the Cohn-Bendit affair. The only true opposition to what he wrote and to what he and his friends were doing, is what we represent, and not something which denies the possibility of a society based on change for the good, instead of simply on repressing evil. This optimistic form of society, one based on hope, is exactly what we want to bring forth in our campaign, showing also what has to be done, personally, in order to be prepared to promote this good. It is a moral and personal issue, it is a matter of efforts to change an ideology that has dominated all Western countries, if not the world, for the last 30 to 40 years.

And this change in the moral, intellectual, and social parameters is exactly the way people in France sense, at this point, that there is a crisis. It is not yet really understood in its financial, monetary, and economic dimensions, but in its effects on the moral and intellectual ground, because of the tendency for cuts in social security, in health care, in the problem of education, especially for youngsters who are the sons or grandsons of immigrants, and the problem of security in the cities. It is through these effects that people can understand the causality and, in every case, we have to stress the real causality. If not, some people will be attracted into this Jacobin upsurge, and others will be demanding law and order and security, but only as single issues. We must show that security and justice can only come through new economic development and the fight against the financial interests and the Anglo-American faction, as it is reflected in France.

EIR: I would like to ask you your idea about French-German relations. Former President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing recently deplored the fact that they are not as good as they were when he was President and Helmut Schmidt was Chancellor.

Cheminade: You can't have good French-German relations with a Jacques Chirac or a Gerhard Schröder on one and the other sides. This type of leader has no sense whatsoever of what those relations should be. Franco-German relations can only be maintained as a living body, if there is a sense of grand design, or mission, in both countries.

A French-German foreign policy should be in alliance with those, in Russia and elsewhere, who want development and fair relations, and at the same time there must be an understanding of what is happening in the U.S., and that is lacking. In Germany, there is a tendency to be more pro-American openly, and then maybe anti-American under the table; whereas in France, there is anti-Americanism which is linked to this Jacobin tendency, and which could be very dangerous.

France and Germany should work to change policies in the United States, by supporting the right people. I don't mean intervening into the domestic situation of the United States, but by exerting pressure internationally for a different policy.

Macedonia: Is the Big Balkans War Coming?

by Alexander Hartmann

The evil spirits that NATO has conjured up in the Balkans, cannot be put down again. Since the news spread, on March 3, that three Macedonian soldiers had been killed in fights with terrorists of the ethnic-Albanian "National Liberation Army" ("UCK" in Albanian, like the "Kosovar Liberation Army" in neighboring Kosovo), the entire region fears a new war, the fifth since 1989. This could become the detonator of a much bigger conflict, and might engulf not only Macedonia, Serbia, and Kosovo, but also Bulgaria, Greece, Albania, and NATO.

Now, finally, NATO is coming under pressure to move against the UCK, which it had handled with velvet gloves until now. Not only Yugoslavia and Macedonia are demanding that there be action against the UCK terrorists; all governments in the region, including Albania, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Greece, are unanimous in their condemnation of the UCK's actions. Even a spokesperson for the (conservative) European People's Party (EVP) faction within the European Parliament, in an interview with the German radio station Deutschlandfunk, pointed to the fact that the UCK is operating freely from the section of Kosovo controlled by the U.S. contingent of KFOR. During the day, there are American patrols, but at night, U.S. forces withdraw to their fortified barracks, leaving the territory to the UCK. Hundreds of UCK militants can cross the borders to Serbia and Macedonia, unchecked, to go about their bloody business, under a slightly amended name.

In fact, the UCK should not exist at all anymore, since it had agreed to disarm and disband, according to the agreements by which the Kosovo war was ended. But, this never happened: The UCK has hundreds of mercenaries operating in Southern Serbia and Macedonia, which are regularly being replaced by fresh troops; these troops are astonishingly well equipped, and obviously, they have weapons caches and training camps in Kosovo, right under the eyes of KFOR.

Albright as 'Frankenstein'

One is reminded of "Frankenstein's Monster." When in the Autumn of 1998, the world financial system was about to collapse after Russia had stopped paying its debt, and Russian Prime Minister Yevgeni Primakov was about to negotiate a new architecture for the world financial system with President Bill Clinton, the UCK was just what U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and Vice President Al Gore needed.

The moderate leader of the Kosovars, President Ibrahim