

Ségolène Royal: Our Only Thinkable Choice

by Jacques Cheminade

The French Solidarité et Progrès party, led by Jacques Cheminade, is distributing 100,000 copies of this leaflet, beginning April 23, 2007.

We will vote against Nicolas Sarkozy, and therefore, for the Socialist Party candidate Ségolène Royal. Without reservations, without hesitation—for were the former Interior Minister to become President, France would overnight fall into submission to the political strategy of Blair, Cheney and Bush. She would turn into a mere soulless pawn in the game of the financial oligarchy.

The pedigree of Mr. Sarkozy is very clear:

1. He is the friend of the American neo-conservatives, whose favors he eagerly seeks. After paying a visit to Mr. Bush in September 2006, he did not hesitate to adopt positions directly contrary to those of his nation and of his own government. On top of it all, he unremittingly supports the leader of the Israeli right of the right, Bibi Netanyahu.

2. His economic policy has always been one of ultra-liberalism and selective repression. As Economics and Finance Minister, he opened the Paris Stock Exchange to foreign investments and closed the doors of social austerity on the workers. As Interior Minister, he was hard on the petty criminality of the most deprived, and soft on great financial criminality.

3. His personality is not reliable. Refusing any introspection, rejecting as absurd the command of Socrates to “know yourself,” he is in flight-forward into activism and the quest of power for the sake of power.

4. To exert this power, he stretches himself around all contradictions, pasting together references of the high moments of Republican struggle in French history, such as the battle of Valmy, waged against the oligarchic forces of Europe during the French Revolution or the Resistance against Nazism, with, on the other side, compliments to the voters of the extreme right-wing National Front, and references to the Crusades!

He claims to be the “protector” of all of those Frenchmen who are “afraid of the future,” although, de facto, he was and still is the protector-protégé of the most powerful financial and economic powers of the country (Bouygues, Lagardère, and Bolloré). His candidacy is, in every way, inadmissible: For him France is not this “certain idea” of General de Gaulle, but a conglomerate of interests of which he thinks he can become the master but of which, in reality, he is the servant.

A vote for Ségolène Royal is thus fully justified, to prevent

Nicolas Sarkozy from coming to power. It must, however, be said bluntly: Today, on April 23, the first round is offering him every opportunity to win the second one.

Ségolène Royal, who, in her April 22 statement, condemned the powers of money and the law of the financial markets, must propose a bolder and more precise policy that would burst open the lock of the oligarchy’s control. This policy must have as its vision, a new international economic and monetary order, a new Bretton Woods and a Eurasian Land-Bridge, “from the Atlantic to the Sea of China,” going to India, Russia, and China; a Europe truly devoted to big projects, to great public works and cultural exchanges worthy of the name—and a France, as she has said, going home to the social impulse of the post-war period, and particularly to the Preamble of the 1946 Constitution. The standard must be set high, for what we are facing is a comeback of fascism, as during the 1930s crisis. From the negative standpoint, Ségolène Royal needs to organize the fight against Bush, Cheney, and Blair, and the interests that promote them, by seriously reaching out to those who are fighting against them in the United States.

From the positive standpoint, she must propose a national bank and a productive public credit policy to finance national and European works and projects.

We are talking about a profound, underlying change; but in a period of crisis, the “elephant” (as the French call the bureaucratic leadership of the Socialist Party, whom Royal fought to get their nomination) could only bring on a disaster. We need a free woman, able to rise above the crisis that grips the world and our nation, with bold initiatives that break the rules of the game, including within her own party. If she does that, Ségolène Royal, with her own instinct and strong character—which is a necessary quality in the midst of a storm—can carry the victory. We hope so.

As for those who voted for François Bayrou, it would be immoral and ridiculous if, first attracted to this “new force,” they would then miserably join the candidate of those in his own party who betrayed him to join Sarkozy. And that having voted, or thought they had voted, during the first round against a “jammed up” society, they would, in the second round, give their vote to the one who will lock it up and subdue it all the more.

It is not by ignoring the dangers that threaten us, but by measuring up to them and braving them, that we will rise to our destiny. By restoring a beautiful society, no longer cowed by the ridiculous display of vanity which characterized the debates that followed the results of the first round, but by finding men and women able to rise above the eternal conflict between the natural and the rational, and to put their most intimate and most intense emotions at the service of justice and of reason. Such is the stake of the second round, and why we must block Nicolas Sarkozy’s irrationality and injustice from power—which is possible, provided that we prepare for a real changing of the guard.