
Organized Crime

Interior Minister Defferre leads Mafia family warfare

by Christine Juarez, Paris Bureau

François Mitterrand's decision to nominate Gaston Defferre as France's Interior and Decentralization Minister sent chills down the spines of a majority of Frenchmen, including a good number of those who voted for the Socialist Party in the May 1981 elections. Most Frenchmen are persuaded that Gaston Defferre is one of the "untouchable" bosses of the "French Connection" drug ring uncovered by American anti-drug authorities in the early 1970s.

Defferre has done everything possible to live up to this public image, and through massive purges in the police, and a virtual shooting war against his Mafia opponents, Defferre has succeeded, at least temporarily, in installing his own mob in power.

In July, 1981, Defferre declared war against all competent police officers—those who had fought the French Connection drug runners and who had effectively secured France from the plague of international terrorism. In a series of interviews, Defferre accused the police of being infiltrated by right-wing fascist elements, and announced that all such elements would be purged. In the city of Marseilles alone, 2,618 police officials were transferred and redistributed throughout France. But the height of the witchhunt was reached when Defferre decided to shut up Marcel LeClerc, the head of the national criminal brigade, by "kicking him upstairs." LeClerc is perhaps France's most respected police official, and the man responsible for the successful fight against such top mobsters as Jacques Mesrine, the Zemmour gang, and the Guerinis, old friends of none other than Gaston Defferre.

The silencing of LeClerc led to a near revolt in many police headquarters. Francois Lemooul, the head of France's judiciary police and a fighter against the French Connection, resigned in solidarity with LeClerc. In spite of this backlash, Defferre followed his action against LeClerc by taking steps against the Paris head of the criminal brigade, Lucien Aimé Blanc, another respected policeman who also fought the drug mob.

Defferre against the SAC Mafia

At the same time he worked to dismantle France's law enforcement apparatus, Defferre launched a major

fight for control of the Mafia networks hegemonic under the former regime, networks generally associated with the Mafia elements in the neo-Gaullist RPR party and clustered around the Service d'Action Civique (SAC). Major casinos controlled by mobsters or personalities close to the former administration saw their operating permits suddenly canceled, and their managers thrown into prison for fraud. But it was not until early January of this year, when Defferre moved to cancel the operating permit of the large Paris casino known as the Cercle Haussman that he posed a serious challenge to the former Mafia leadership.

Marcel Francisci, the owner of the Cercle Haussman, was closely associated with RPR and SAC networks, and was considered to be one of the top ten most important casino "kings" in the world, and the "cappo di tutti cappi" in France. On Jan. 15, 1982, Francisci's body was found in the garage of his Paris residence. He had been murdered in classic Mafia style.

The Mafia war burst into public view during the recent cantonal elections in France, when, at a public electoral meeting in Marseilles, Defferre accused Charles Pasqua, Bernard Pons, and Jacques Chirac—respectively the Treasurer, Secretary General, and President of the RPR party—of having protected Francisci and his dirty money operations. Defferre went so far as to accuse the RPR officials of having profited from their alleged Mafia connections. Charles Pasqua responded by remarking that it was a "very strange" coincidence that Francisci was found murdered so soon after Interior Minister Defferre had closed down his casino.

War within the family

Underneath all the public accusations, one thing is clear: the French gang war is a fight within the family. Up until Mitterrand's election, all parties to the conflict were on the friendliest of terms. Defferre is merely attempting now to control a machine in which he was formerly only a partner.

Just days after the murder of Francisci, *EIR* learned from reliable sources that Francisci's main business partner in real estate dealings in Corsica was none other

than Jean Pozzo di Borgo, also known as the Socialist Party's man on the island. The same source reported that Gaston Defferre's closest associate in Corsica, one Bastien Lecia, is often seen with Pozzo di Borgo.

But these strange connections date back even farther. The key links between the SAC mafia and Defferre are through the top mobster family of Jean and Dominique Venturi. According to published FBI reports, and to other sources referred to by Alain Jaubert in his book "*D*" *comme drogue* ("*D*" *As In Drugs*), the Venturi brothers have been highly important operatives in the international drug trade for decades. In the years following World War II, Dominique Venturi collaborated with Francisci to organize the Mediterranean drug trade for Joe Renucci, a lieutenant of Lucky Luciano. Renucci's second-in-command, Gabriel Graziani, is known to have been in personal contact with top mobster Carmine Galante, a close collaborator of Joseph Bonnano and Lucky Luciano. Jean Venturi settled down in Canada, where he organized the receiving networks for the dope traffic into North America. Venturi functioned in Canada under cover of his position as official representative of the firm Pastis Ricard, directly under the supervision of SAC vice-president Charles Pasqua, then head of Pastis Ricard's overseas operations.

The Lucet affair

The Venturis were also good friends of Gaston Defferre. The Venturis became notorious for rendering services to Defferre when he was the Socialist Mayor of Marseilles, and this collaboration is ongoing, as was revealed during one of the major scandals to yet hit the Mitterrand administration: the Lucet affair.

In March 1982 Raymond Lucet, the head of the state-owned security company Bouches du Rhone based in Marseilles, was found dead in his villa, apparently a suicide. Investigations revealed that Lucet had used his position to conduct major financial warfare against certain Socialist Party factions centered around National Solidarity Minister Nicole Questiaux, Socialist Party First Secretary Michel Pezet, and the left trade unions CGT and CFDT. The issue of the fight was whether Mutuelle des Travailleurs, the social security company controlled by the factions above, or the RPR controlled Société Mutuelle des Bouches du Rhone, would receive a subcontract from Lucet's company. At stake were a few tens of millions of francs. Lucet, who was close to the RPR, decided to hand them the contract.

But there is more to the story. The Paris daily *Le Monde* revealed that Raymond Lucet had engaged in lucrative business ventures with a Marseilles firm by the name of Cooperative d'Enterprise Generale du Midi. Further investigations revealed that this company includes among its administrators Dominique Venturi.

Mitterrand's policy scorecard reviewed

by Garance Upham Phau

One year after taking office, François Mitterrand has been forced to slow, or outright cancel, the radical projects for reorganizing the French economy he put forth during the presidential campaign. The strong popular pressure that came into play to restrain the government is likely to intensify: in January, four by-elections were won by the opposition; in March, local cantonal elections produced a landslide for the opposition. On May 10 polls published by the Paris newspaper *Le Monde*, a pro-Socialist daily, showed Mitterrand commanding only 40 percent of the electorate, with a paltry 20 percent still supporting his economic program.

Popular disenchantment with the Socialist regime has led to friction between the government's ministers, who are forced to listen to constituents, and the ideologues of the Socialist Party, who want to carry out the original disruptive and actually fascist de-urbanization plans put forward during the campaign. Prime Minister Mauroy is being attacked by both the party ideologues and the free-enterprise business circles for being too lenient on labor. There is talk of his replacement by either Economics and Finance Minister Jacques Delors, or party Chief Lionel Jospin, who recently toured the United States in search of patronage. It is doubtful, however, that even should Delors or Jospin replace Mauroy either one would do better, for it is not good will that is restraining the Prime Minister from carrying out the full Socialist program, but an increasingly angry French population. A conference of so-called French experts, sponsored by the Maison Francaise club at New York City's Columbia University on April 28 and 29, was dominated by grumbling and growling on the failures of the Mitterrand regime to deliver on its electoral promises. Mitterrand's track record can be summarized as follows.

Industrial policy

Of all of Mitterrand's campaign trail promises, he has most fully implemented his pledge to nationalize all of France's major industrial and banking concerns. One of Mitterrand's first actions in office was to nationalize, with compensation from the tax-payers' pockets, virtually all of France's steel, electronics, and construction sectors, all of aluminum and chemical production, half of glass and computer production, and a good portion