

France Continues Global Pattern: Falling Tsars

by EIR Staff

In the first round of the French Presidential elections on April 21, French commentators claimed that “an earthquake” had hit the country. Incumbent President Jacques Chirac just narrowly took first place in the voting, over right-wing extremist, anti-immigrant head of the National Front, Jean-Marie Le Pen; and Prime Minister Lionel Jospin’s career abruptly ended, his Socialist Party shocked by his failure even to make the runoff. With 16 Presidential candidates on the ballot, President Chirac polled just over 19%, Le Pen 17%, and Jospin just over 16%. The total of votes cast was millions fewer than in the last Presidential election, in 1995.

The results, however, were not surprising to those with an overview of the politics of many nations now hammered by economic depression conditions; not, for example, to Jacques Cheminade, the French Presidential candidate linked to U.S. Presidential pre-candidate Lyndon LaRouche. The French elites launched an extraordinary dirty tricks campaign, which kept Cheminade off the ballot, as he explains in the accompanying interview.

Continuing the pattern seen in Italy, Germany, Colombia, Venezuela, Argentina, and emerging in all the Western nations, governing and major parties’ popular support is collapsing, in tandem with their failure to address the economic collapse. Instead, they insist on austerity measures and attempts to prop up unpayable debts. In the French contest, fully one-third of the eligible voters failed to cast ballots, and half of those who did, threw their votes to parties of the extreme left or extreme right—including Le Pen, who actually received the same number of votes for his racialist poison, as he had in the 1995 election, but emerged this time as the “spoiler,” because of the collapse of the major parties.

More Turbulence Ahead

As with George Bush and Al Gore in the U.S. Presidential election of 2000, both Chirac and Jospin had colluded in lying to the electorate that the economy was doing well, and concentrated obsessively on the “issue” of local crime. As in the Bush-Gore charade, the only candidate who was truthful about the economic collapse, growing unemployment, bankruptcies, etc.—LaRouche’s ally, Cheminade—was kept out of debates and, finally, off the ballot. Socialist Jospin destroyed his candidacy by attempting to “move to the center” as the U.S. Democratic Party has, resulting in French liberal and socialist-leaning voters abstaining or going to the Trotskyist and other far-left candidates.



Jean-Marie Le Pen’s National Front party did not actually increase its Presidential vote; France’s traditional major parties’ votes collapsed, due to ignoring economic reality.

On the right side of the spectrum, Chirac and other “conservatives” also lost voters from 1995. Le Pen’s vote total hardly changed, but its composition shifted, showing the mood of revolt in a population being laid off and lied to. It was evenly distributed among all age groups, rather than concentrated among older voters; one exit poll showed Le Pen getting 38% of unemployed votes, 20% of farmers’ votes, and a high percentage of votes from working people in part-time or otherwise unstable jobs. And though Le Pen is noted for anti-Semitic comments in the past, this time—where, in the context of the Israeli invasion of Palestinian territories, anti-Semitic incidents have been on the rise in France, with synagogues burned, cemeteries desecrated, and Jews assaulted on the street—Le Pen curried votes, including among the Jewish community, when he pledged to crack down on areas with high crime and large populations of unemployed youths of African and Arab Muslim background.

With such “leaders” emerging at a time of worsening economic crisis, more turbulence is ahead for France. Chirac is expected to win the run-off in May, primarily by virtue of a mobilization of Socialist voters, firmly holding their noses to vote for him. But then in June, these forces will mobilize against both Le Pen *and* Chirac, in national legislative elections. Should the left wing win those elections, Chirac will face the choice of resigning and calling a new Presidential election, or inviting a new Prime Minister from the discredited Socialist Party to “co-habit” with him in government. And Le Pen’s National Front, and other extreme parties, may win far more legislative seats than they have in the past.

Either way, this is a recipe for extreme political instability, which will continue, perhaps with one government after another falling, until leaders emerge who are willing to adopt entirely new economic policy-axioms—those which Jacques Cheminade had injected into the race.