

# A Vision for France Without Oligarchism

by Christine Bierre

PARIS, April 15—Presidential candidate Jacques Cheminade opened his webcast on April 15, one week before the first round of the French Presidential elections, with a sobering challenge to French voters: “A civilization that cheats its own principles is a dying civilization,” he said, quoting Aimé Césaire, the late poet and political leader from Martinique. “This has now become the case,” Cheminade added; “we are facing a great crisis of civilization.”

Speaking directly to the citizenry, away from the small group of media hounds operating in defense of the financial order, who have been working full-time to completely distort his very clear message, Cheminade was able to get across his program to deal with the measures of social justice that are urgent for France, but which unfortunately cannot be realized until the financial stranglehold of the oligarchy is lifted by adoption of a Glass-Steagall banking reform and the productive public credit policies which prevailed after World War II and during President Charles de Gaulle's tenure.

Some 4,200 people were online for Cheminade's speech and the question and answer period (two hours total). More than 200 questions on a broad range of subjects were received before and during the event. Many contributions were made by new and longstanding supporters to the Cheminade 2012 campaign account.

Cheminade stressed that a Presidential election is the ideal moment to take up these big questions, to build resistance to the current financial feudalism, and to create a new Renaissance of science and culture. Unfortunately, none of the other Presidential candidates has a vision; they propose only right-wing austerity or a left-wing version of the same. The right wing likes to play on fears—of Islam, of immigration, of a downfall like that of Greece; the left wing manipulates people to accept the illusion that the system can be changed from

within, without rejecting the fundamental axioms of oligarchism and monetarism.

Today, he said, “I will speak to all those who suffer and are victims of exploitation and marginalization, about the world we all want, which is one where everyone has the right to a job, to a home, to improved living standards, to health care, and to a quality education.

Rural areas of France are losing their public services and businesses, unemployment has reached 5 million, and of all the jobs now being created, 85% are temporary, and 60% last less than a month! Close to 9 million Frenchmen live under the poverty line, and in 30 years, France has lost 3 million industrial jobs.

It is most ironic, Cheminade said, that while leading candidates are debating non-issues such as driving permits, these same people have been driving the country against the wall.

## Reorganize the Banking System

What must be done? Starting May 7, when the election is over, we must launch a policy of social resistance and of war against the financial powers, against a system which is stealing the lives of those working in the factories that are now threatened with being shut down. Our enemy is the financial oligarchy and it has a face. In France, BNP Paribas, our megabank, has officials on 47% of the administration councils of all the CAC 40 top companies on the national stock index.

A true public service for employment must be created, the candidate continued. A two-tier fiscal system must be applied to companies, with lower rates to those that create jobs, and higher ones to those who pay benefits. Public contracts must be granted to companies that create new jobs, especially for youth. The minimum wage must be increased from the present EU1,200 per month to EU1,700.



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*Jacques Cheminade files 585 petition signatures from elected officials from all over France on March 8, thereby qualifying as a Presidential candidate. A clique in the “major” media has been consistently hostile to his campaign, but he bypassed them with his webcast, going directly to the voters.*

After taking control of credit emission, renationalizing the Bank of France, and creating public productive credit for great projects from the Atlantic to the China Sea, Cheminade proposes to create public banking that will provide low-interest-rate credit to especially high-tech small and medium-sized companies.

Cheminade proposes an ambitious policy of dealing with immigration by creating a Ministry of Integration and Cooperation, which will fight against both foreign and also forms of domestic colonialism. While helping the countries of the South to fight against the looting policies of the so-called Washington Consensus and the free-market policies of the EU, Cheminade also proposes offering these countries real development, in the form of great projects such as replenishing Lake Chad, the Tunisian and Algerian chotts, and finishing the Jonglei Canal in Sudan. Emigration from these countries will then be a matter of choice and not one of necessity. Those who choose to come to France can be fully integrated, through citizens’ houses that will centralize all public services, and houses of law that will teach people

their rights and duties.

However, all this can only be done after a total financial reform, which will separate commercial banks from speculative ones, and carry out, through a Pecora-style Commission, the controlled elimination of public debt, and forbid the practices of the financial casino.

This can only be done, said Cheminade, if investment is reoriented towards great projects of the future. He polemicized against those who attack his ambitious space policy as being in contradiction with urgent needs on Earth. The irony, he said, is that during the “Glorious 30” postwar years, France had both an ambitious space program, and a fully functioning social safety net, while now it has neither of the two!

Cheminade also took on the left parties, saying that he respects their social policies, but rejects totally their attempt to do away with nuclear power. You cannot achieve social justice without high energy-flux-density technologies, he said, comparing the power released by burning 25 tons of wood to the power of half a gram of uranium.

## **A New Renaissance**

He concluded with a beautiful, humanist concept for the development of culture and education in France. “There are two concepts of culture,” he said, “that of the oligarchy, for whom education means recruiting an elite to manage the world, and for which culture is merely a social status. That is a sterile world without creativity, one in which people learn formulas, codes, and catechisms as if they were robots or domesticated animals.

“Real culture and education, as promoted by the great humanists, lead human beings to walk in the footsteps of the great inventors and artists of the past, thus reliving the moments of history at which the works were created, and what was revolutionary about them.”

In France, people must learn to work together, Cheminade stressed, proposing that schools be run like small republics, with a “parliament in the small” made up of teachers, parents, and students, coordinating to solve problems and discover new principles together. “I will fight for the arts to be taught in schools, for children to be taught to sing in choruses at the same time that they learn how to read and write; I will fight for philosophy, prehistory, and astronomy to be taught early to children.”

“A utopia?” he asked. “No, it is the power of banks, of people like [banker] Michel Pebereau, who are more

powerful than [French President Nicolas] Sarkozy, which is leading us straight into the wall. Against this negative utopia, we need a positive utopia to save our social system, and give back to our society a sense of beauty, truth, and justice.”

In the question period, Cheminade dealt with many more issues, such as his commitment to Middle East peace; his inspiration by Lyndon LaRouche when they first met, when LaRouche linked the economic and financial crisis to the culture of pragmatism and sense-certainty; the great project perspective throughout the world, in particular, the North American Water and Power Alliance (NAWAPA), and his agricultural policies.