

Report From France by Christine Bierre

'End-of-Regime' Crisis Is Under Way

Of all the 2007 Presidential candidates, only LaRouche's friend Jacques Cheminade offers a real alternative.

It is with a deep sense of crisis that France is preparing its 2007 Presidential elections, although none of the candidates, with the exception of LaRouche co-thinker Jacques Cheminade, are prepared to propose a real alternative to the present situation.

France has clearly come to the end of the political system which Charles de Gaulle and the forces of the Resistance bequeathed to the country after the Second World War. On March 15, 1944, de Gaulle proclaimed the following reforms: "Have the nation acquire the main sources of energy: coal, electricity, gas, which it alone can develop as they should be; ensure its control over credit so that its activity is not at the mercy of financial monopolies; . . . free from anguish in their life and labor, those men and women from our country, by ensuring them officially against sickness, unemployment, old age. . . ."

On the same date, the National Council of the Resistance (CNR), which assembled the main components of the Resistance against the Nazis, published its own program, which included among the inalienable rights of every citizen: the right to a job, to a high-quality education, to a home, and to health and retirement insurance. These inalienable rights were then included in the Preamble of the 1946 Constitution, and in de Gaulle's 1958 Constitution.

It is this, the French social model, which has now come to an end, destroyed by the 14-year Presidency of former Pétainist François Mitterrand, and by 12 years of the extremely weak, neo-Gaullist Presidency of

Jacques Chirac.

Historically in France, end-of-regime crises of this type have often called forth a great leader for a republican upsurge. These are the times for a Joan of Arc, a Charles de Gaulle, or an FDR, in American terms of reference. This time, however, with the exception of Jacques Cheminade, only two paths are being proposed to the nation. Nicolas Sarkozy, the president of the majority party, the UMP, is proposing to lead France down the road of neo-conservatism—even after Bush's Nov. 7 defeat! During an official visit to the U.S. last September, Interior Minister Sarkozy pledged allegiance to Bush and publicly distanced himself from the policies of his own government.

On the other side of the spectrum, the attractive Socialist Party Presidential candidate, Ségolène Royal, will probably seduce France into voting for her, so much are people fed up with the manipulative style of politicians trained often at France's high-level schools of administration, and happy to have a woman dealing in a seemingly simple and direct fashion with their daily problems. Glamour and style, however, have allowed her to cover up for her lack of policies on most of the life-and-death issues facing France.

It should be noted however that one of the better reasons for Royal's success is her attack on the "do your own thing" 1968 cultural paradigm. One of her main campaign themes is the need to reestablish a "just order" in all domains of society. In a recent speech at Ilkirch, she called for the

state to bring security and protection to the people. "One hears that the state is impotent. I reject that characterization," she stated.

François Bayrou, head of the center party UDF, contending to become a "third way," between Sarkozy and Royal, is also betting on a similar paradigm shift. In declarations made while visiting the poor ghettos of the Lyon area, Bayrou called for a state which is "present, impartial, balanced, directed, and legitimate."

While such personalities might wish for a paradigm-shift in the right direction, they are not willing to risk their careers and perhaps their lives, by calling for the only changes which could make that shift a reality. And this is the role that LaRouche's French friend, Jacques Cheminade, is playing in the race. With hardly any funds and no support from ruling circles, Cheminade has been campaigning for the Presidency in a truly Promethean manner. Beyond his well-known personal talents, Cheminade's main claim to legitimacy, is that of having abandoned his comfortable post at the Economics Ministry in order to build a real movement in opposition to the deregulation follies that have taken over the advanced sector since the 1970s. While most of his peers were grabbing top positions and promoting policies that would destroy the productive economy and the perspectives for future generations, Cheminade decided instead to build a movement which is today fighting for the defeat of financial power, against the European Union's Maastricht Treaty and the Stability Pact, for the replacement of the independent European Central Bank by a system of national banks, and extending Marshall Plan-type credits for research and for the construction of great infrastructure projects throughout Eurasia.