
The Mitterrand Government

Young socialist militants play havoc with national institutions in France

by Mark Burdman from Paris

It is now almost a year since the Socialist government of François Mitterrand swept into power in France. Despite the passage of time, and the results of the March 21 provincial elections in which the Socialists and their Communist and radical-left coalition partners lost 75 seats from their 1976 election totals and won very few of the 167 new seats created in an effort to bolster the power of the regime, a certain mood of euphoric illusion still prevails among the self-defined "young militants" of the Socialist Party now occupying positions of responsibility in the governing bureaucracy.

A junior partner

The fundamental nature of this illusion is that the Mitterrand victory represented a revolutionary "new chapter" in the history of France, a chapter that would also usher in the beginnings of a radical new order in global political relations with the Mitterrand team, heady with power, in the forefront. From discussions with representatives of this point of view during a recent visit to Paris, I can assert with confidence that the insistence on maintaining this illusion will not only destroy the French nation internally, but also establish that France is nothing more than a junior partner in the broader international policies of the Club of Rome and the British Foreign Office for a Malthusian restructuring of the world.

The Socialists are trying to enlist a certain degree of cooperation from North Africa on a policy of "equal distribution of misery," but it cannot be disguised that this policy did not originate at the Champs Elysées or at Socialist Party headquarters, but at those of the Club of Rome. The racial and no-growth premises of the Club of Rome are the actual content of Socialist policy, under the cloak of radical rhetoric.

The false sense of power and ambition is especially prevalent among those self-defined as the "young militants," now in key positions at the Quai d'Orsay, and the international department of the Socialist Party. These represent the "generation of 1968," the veterans

of the British-orchestrated anti-de Gaulle radical ferment of that year, now experiencing the headiness of what they presume to be real power. In American terms, this is the equivalent of the crew centered at the Washington-based Institute for Policy Studies—the Warburg-created left-wing center for promoting terrorist support networks, Malthusian policies, and special operations against pro-growth policies—moving into the State Department and the Treasury.

A favorite refrain of the "young militants" is that France under the Socialists is taking its distance both from the Gaullist policies preserved to an important extent through the 1974-81 era of President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, and from the policies of the United States under the Reagan administration especially in two areas: global economic policy and relations with the Third World, particularly Africa.

Thus, one typical young Socialist militant, now in an advisory position in the Ministry of Economic Cooperation, told me with a great flourish that France was actively opposing the "destructive high-interest-rate policies of the Reagan administration, which are largely responsible for the threat of depression and the fact of high unemployment in Europe." What, then, I asked, was the alternative being offered by the Socialists to the Reagan policy? Again with theatrical effusiveness, the Mitterrand militant said that France was trying to bring West Germany into "greater independence of the Americans," to create a "more independent Europe" that would "increasingly rely on the European Currency Unit [ECU]" in global monetary and financial affairs.

But the "alternative" policy prescription was nothing more than a rehashed version of the much-discussed design to establish a "Third Way" of crisis management between East and West and replace the dollar as the international reserve currency of account. This is hardly a revolutionary departure in policy—especially since the "Third Way" can only be brought into existence through a conscious exacerbation of international mili-

tary-strategic and economic situations over the coming period.

African questions

The brutal domestic and international realities behind the rhetoric were apparent in a broader way during a discussion with a top militant now working under Socialist Party international relations head Jacques Huntziger, himself a leading "Third Way" advocate. Huntziger's aide, also with melodramatic exertions, insisted on the fact that Mitterrand's France was "reversing the mistakes of the Giscard era" in respect to dealings with France's former northern Africa colonies, now the independent nations of Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia. The Socialists, so the account went, would be open to dealings with "liberation movements" such as the nomadic Polisario guerrillas fighting Morocco, and would seek to "cooperate to all possible extent" with the countries of North Africa on matters of vital mutual concern. "To France, North Africa is an area of key strategic interest, not dissimilar to the concern the United States has for Central America and Mexico, so we feel the importance of a new era of relations, more equitable and open to dealing with all the parties than was the Giscard team."

The Club of Rome era

It was, then, with a certain shock that I listened to the Socialist militant describe exactly what this "new era" meant concretely. The Club of Rome itself could hardly outdo the analysis presented. "We are particularly concerned with the extraordinary demographics of North Africa with the explosion of [numbers] of young people proportionately to the rest of the population. This represents alarming trends for the year 2000. You must understand that we cannot allow more immigrants from this region into France. Our attitude must be similar to those who feel that the border must be closed between the United States and Mexico. We already have two million unemployed in France, and therefore cannot tolerate more influx from Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia."

But isn't this only accommodating to the laws of a Malthusian universe, I asked. "Not at all," came the reply, "It's just reality. If we allow more immigrants into the country, this will make French workers more xenophobic and racist, under the conditions of unemployment that are prevailing now in France. It cannot be done. We have to work together with the countries of North Africa to jointly clamp down on illegal immigration. We also hope they will more actively promote policies of population control, although at this point mothers in these countries keep having babies. So what else can we do?"

Under further questioning, Huntziger's aide freely

admitted that this sealing the border policy would be a catalyst for extensive social unrest throughout North Africa in the coming years. "The Muslim Brotherhood and similar groups would like nothing more than to play upon the discontent of the young. The first signs of this are already being played out in Morocco; we hear of troubles there. And in France itself, workers from past waves of immigration are feeling more alienated from French society. There is a return to the mosques going on here as well. It is a new phenomenon."

My Economics Cooperation Ministry official repeated the refrain that "Giscard's mistakes have to be corrected" and that France must "provide an alternative to the misconceived Africa policies of the Reagan administration." The critical error to be corrected, he stressed, is the "adoption of the Western model of development for African countries. Africa doesn't need large-scale Western industrial projects. This only encourages an exodus from the rural areas of the cities, and this exodus is the main cause of social unrest and the gains of the communists on the African continent. "The cities of Africa are ready to explode," he assured me. "Nigeria is the worst case, the most likely to experience violence, but it is not the only one. It is the rule rather than the exception. Cities are breeding grounds for violence."

'A Third Way'

"We must help Africa to concentrate on rural development; on a type of re-ruralization," he continued. "Africa needs appropriate technologies, for example, solar energy in the energy field. Western model technologies and projects are totally unnecessary, and in fact destructive."

If there were any doubt as to the ultimate implications of this policy, it was soon dispelled. "I personally feel strong affinity for the argument of [Colonel] Qaddafi [of Libya] against the Western model of development for Africa. This has struck for good reason, a strong resonance throughout the Third World. I may not like Qaddafi's expansionist military policies and power ambitions, but I fully concur with his critique against the Western model of development for Africans. Africa needs a new model of development, neither East nor West, but toward a "Third Way."

Just as in the March elections French voters expressed their disgust at the militants' destruction of France itself, reports from Africa have indicated that many of France's traditionally close partners are hardly eager to march down the road to suicide as suggested in the paragraph quoted above. They are becoming more openly critical of the latest mouthings from Paris. In view of this pattern of rejections, the remaining question is how much longer the "generation of 1968" will be allowed to play out its fantasies in positions of power.