

Report from Paris by Christine Schier

Thinking 'bigger than de Gaulle'

Jacques Cheminade's party announces plans to run 2,000 "citizen candidates" in France's next national elections.

Although the campaign speeches in the European parliamentary election hardly went beyond the usual differences among the parties, we must acknowledge that those of Jacques Cheminade were quite surprising by being more oriented to issues of policy than to vote-getting. He admits that 'we are not running in this campaign in order to gain a few votes more or less, but to get across our ideas.' This description from the Lyon newspaper, *Le Progrès de Lyon*, sums up well the impact on French politics of the 81-person Parti Ouvrier Européen (POE) slate in the recently concluded campaign for the European parliament.

France's POE, or European Labor Party, is led by Jacques Cheminade, a leading associate of U.S. economist and presidential candidate Lyndon H. LaRouche. Cheminade's campaign call for France to begin an in-depth mobilization for production of a beam weapon anti-missile system and neutron bombs for the defense of Europe, and his backing for the LaRouche program for a gold-backed monetary system have created shock waves in French politics.

His party has received recognition nationwide. Its candidates' movement, modeled on the U.S. "citizen candidates" movement of the National Democratic Policy Committee, has now recruited 500 French citizens to run for office on its program, and plans to run in the next national elections, the *cantonales*, with a full slate of 2,000 candidates in spring 1985.

Over the course of a two-week campaign, Jacques Cheminade, François Bierre, number two on the slate and national campaign director, and Laurent Rosenfeld, scientific and agricultural campaign adviser, toured the country holding well-attended press conferences in almost every important French city.

The party's local candidates, the great majority of whom were engaging in political activity for the first time, also took the offensive. One of them, Professor Aly Mazaheri, a world-famous Persian scholar, was interviewed on the regional TV in Orleans by a slick journalist attempting to prove him incompetent for "professional politics." When asked how the POE, "such a small party," had the financial means to participate in the European elections, Professor Mazaheri pulled out his checkbook and said "I finance them. And hundreds of others like me. Look at the stubs. You'll see."

In Lyon, citizen candidate Maurice Blanc, a construction worker, walked into the office of the regional newspaper to give an interview on the POE program, boldly stating that "from now on, the POE will be present in all elections in France." Another candidate, Mme. Bareux, a hospital worker from Rouen, was interviewed on local television explaining the importance of a strong Franco-American alliance.

However, the number of votes cast for the POE in the European parliamentary elections June 17 will not re-

fect the real support that the organization has developed throughout the country. Because of the French electoral laws meant to discourage the entrance of smaller parties, political parties are obliged to print ballots and programmatic declarations for every voter in France at their own expense. Due to the prohibitive costs, the POE had to restrict its printing and distribution of ballots to 10, out of a total of 95, departments. This will mean that only about 20% of the voting population will have the opportunity to vote for the POE.

The head of the POE slate made an official three-minute appearance on the three national television channels and Radio France. Cheminade's posters read, "Faced with the war danger and the financial crash, we must think bigger than de Gaulle." Appealing to the republican movement that was created by the late Charles de Gaulle when he first warned of the Nazi danger in the 1930s and then mobilized Free France to fight the Nazi occupation, Cheminade began his television spot with the words: "Munich 1938. We say, never again. That is why we are running in the European elections.

"Munich 1938 was humiliation by Nazism. Today, faced with the Russian threat, it is the same story. All the conditions for thermonuclear blackmail are in place. . . . Therefore, we must react. Not by a flight forward but by an in-depth economic and military mobilization, doing European-wide what de Gaulle did with our force de frappe and civilian nuclear program.

"Today we must develop directed-energy weapons, lasers and particle beams. The arms are defensive and peaceful. They will constitute a shield for shooting down in-flight enemy missiles. In this way, an age of mutual survival can replace the intolerable age of lightning-terror."