

## Report from Paris by Mark Burdman

### Will a new France emerge?

*The expected bashing of the Socialists in the upcoming elections could cause an earthquake in French politics.*

France may be the epicenter of one of the first political earthquakes of 1986, when national legislative elections take place this spring, probably during March. This earthquake could shake up the precarious European political situation in a positive way.

In the results that would be most favorable, the emerging new French government would support cooperation with the United States on key strategic issues, including the Strategic Defense Initiative. There are also voices being raised, among "Gaullist" circles who should have a substantial impact on the next government's policies, for France to return to its traditional commitment from the period of Charles de Gaulle's presidency, to actively promote development of the Third World, and to reject policies of economic liberalism in favor of a "dirigist" approach to national economic policy.

There is no reasonable doubt at all, that in the elections for the approximately 500 seats in the Chamber of Deputies, the currently ruling Socialist Party will suffer a major defeat, and lose its majority to "the Opposition," a blanket term covering four major political formations. These are the Rassemblement Pour la République (RPR), the party that formally carries the legacy of de Gaulle, and which is headed by Jacques Chirac, the mayor of Paris; the "Giscardiens," one of the significant formations in the coalition called the Union pour la Démocratie Française (UDF), congregated under

former President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing; the "Barristes," the followers of former Prime Minister and Tri-lateral Commission stalwart Raymond Barre, mainly congregated within the social-democratic wing of the UDF, but also in other parties; and the National Front, the party of Jean-Marie Le Pen, which has catered to the baser populist/racist reactions of wide segments of the French population, under conditions where France's economy and living standards are collapsing.

Should the "Barriste" and Le Pen components of the Opposition achieve only mediocre results, as is likely, that would create the preconditions for a nationalist, pro-defense government to come into being, especially under conditions where the issues of the election are, more and more, being shaped by the intervention of a candidates' movement of the Parti Ouvrier Européen, the co-thinker organization in France of Lyndon LaRouche.

Whether or not this most-favorable result transpires, the expected bashing of the Socialists will certainly begin to clean out some of the most obnoxious elements in the current French situation. Here is why:

France has a hybrid presidential-parliamentary system, a kind of mixture of the American presidential and European parliamentary forms. President Mitterrand himself is *not* up for election, and there will not be *presidential* elections until 1988. This seems to bear a similarity to the Amer-

ican process, in the sense that an American President can co-exist with a "hostile" Congress, that is, a Congress under majority control from the opposing political party. The difference in France is that, if the President's own party is defeated in the legislative elections, the President's *government*—or Cabinet—must be dissolved, and he must, then, "co-habit" with an "opposition" government.

In this situation, barring one or two exceptions, Mitterrand will be obliged to agree to the removal of his ministers from their posts. Most happily, this means that Interior Minister Pierre Joxe will be out of his job, by as early as March. Under Joxe's reign, the interior ministry has been used to carry out open warfare against the traditional branches of the French intelligence services, among the best in the West.

Particularly in the "Greenpeace Affair," Joxe's ministry has been the source of repeated leaks to the press, including the unprecedented practice of *naming* the French intelligence officers allegedly implicated in blowing up the Greenpeace radical-environmentalist group's *Rainbow Warrior* ship in a New Zealand port in July 1985.

The backlash against Joxe for the Greenpeace Affair, in fact, is one of the contributing reasons for the expected Socialist debacle in the coming elections, and, as election day approaches, it is not excluded that new information on Joxe's activities in the Greenpeace affair will further damage his credibility. Joxe is also widely hated for his protection of Soviet-linked terrorism in France.

Given that Mitterrand's number-one driving force is his presidential prestige, it is not to be excluded that, under these conditions, he may make more and more political concessions to his "Gaullist" opponents.