

Probe of slanders of Cheminade leads to international 'Murder, Inc.'

by Jeffrey Steinberg

Some of the same foul operators who were implicated in the John F. Kennedy assassination, the destabilization of the France of President Charles de Gaulle, the kidnapping and murder of Moroccan opposition leader Mehdi Ben Barka, and the assassination of the Belgian Congo's Patrice Lumumba, are attempting to subvert the current French presidential elections.

The vehicle for this attempted intervention is a wild slander campaign against one of the nine certified presidential candidates, Jacques Cheminade, a longtime associate of American political economist Lyndon LaRouche. Cheminade sent shock waves through the French and British political establishments when he presented more than the 500 endorsements from mayors across France that were required to gain ballot status in the first round of the presidential vote, scheduled for April 23.

Even before the French National Election Board formally certified Cheminade's petitions and placed him on the ballot on April 7, there were clear signs that at least one high-ranking government official, Prime Minister Edouard Balladur's rabidly anti-American Interior Minister Charles Pasqua, were upset at the prospect of Cheminade being in the race. At a Cheminade press conference in the Bordeaux region on April 5, two Interior Ministry police showed up to "observe" the proceedings. In the past, Pasqua's ministry has served as a conduit for Bush-era U.S. Justice Department slanders against LaRouche, slanders that often originated with the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith (ADL) or the Cult Awareness Network, both U.S.-based groups heavily contaminated by organized crime. Pasqua is himself on the board of advisers of the ADL's French affiliate, LICRA.

Following the Cheminade certification, slanders began appearing in French news outlets, accusing both Cheminade and LaRouche of being "thieves" and "criminals."

A review of the background to those slanders churned up over 30 years of British-directed high treason against the French and American republics, and places Pasqua in bed with a crew of thieves, criminals, and spies.

The "theft" allegations trace back to an early-1990s effort to frame up Cheminade and prevent him from running in the 1995 presidential elections. In October 1986, a longtime supporter of the French branch of the Schiller Institute passed away. After her death, members of her family charged that she had been suffering from Alzheimer's disease during the period of her collaboration with the institute, and that she

had been coerced into making contributions.

Bypassing civil judicial avenues, the family made a criminal complaint, and an investigative magistrate was assigned to probe the complaint. After nearly two years, the magistrate recommended against prosecution, on the grounds that he had turned up no evidence of any kind of criminal misconduct on the part of the accused Schiller Institute officials. But the French prosecutor's office appealed against the magistrate's recommendations, and the case went to trial.

Because of the *sub judice* nature of the proceedings, few further details can be provided at this time; however, when the full details are released, it will be clear that the plaintiffs, along with key figures within the French media establishment, grossly violated French legal standards by spreading false information about the internal features of the case. It will also be clear that the original investigating magistrate's assessment—that there was no basis for criminal prosecution—was correct.

It can be said, in addition, that when the case went to trial in 1992, the deceased woman's relatives admitted under oath that she had continued to drive her own car in and out of Paris, and had managed her own financial affairs right up until the time of her final illness. Despite this testimony, on June 24, 1992, the 12th Chamber of the Paris Criminal Court found Cheminade and three other friends of LaRouche guilty of "theft." The court imposed stiff fines on Cheminade, Christine Bierre, François Bierre, and, and imposed suspended sentences of 13-15 months in jail. According to news accounts, the next stage in the case, which is before an appeals court, will be a hearing on May 9.

Lemarchand behind the scenes

The attorney who represented the family, the plaintiffs in the criminal case, Pascal Dewynter, is a longtime protégé and onetime law firm associate of one of the most pernicious figures in postwar French history, Paris lawyer Pierre Lemarchand. It is the Dewynter-Lemarchand connection that casts a clear light on the forces both inside and outside of France that are out to poison the Cheminade campaign.

Lemarchand was nominally one of the leading "insiders" in the camp of President Charles de Gaulle. His wife, Michelle LePercq, was the daughter of Emile LePercq, the interior minister in de Gaulle's 1944 provisional government.



Jacques Cheminade is interviewed by reporters after the official certification of his candidacy. The media are running a wild slander campaign against him, on orders from the top ranks of the international oligarchy.

When Emile LePercq died in a car crash, Mme. de Gaulle adopted Michelle as if she were her own daughter.

But Lemarchand exploited that “insider” position to fill the Gaullist ranks with an army of criminals and mercenaries who worked to destroy de Gaulle’s presidency through a series of high-profile scandals at crucial moments during the 1960s. In this respect, Lemarchand played a far more pernicious role in destroying General de Gaulle than did all of the Secret Army Organization hit squads that tried repeatedly throughout the early 1960s to assassinate the French President. Moreover, a profiling of the gangster apparatus built up by Lemarchand betrays numerous links to the very OAS anti-Gaullist apparatus he was ostensibly fighting.

Lemarchand was part of the rabidly anti-communist paramilitary group *Volontaires de l’Union Française* in the 1950s, during which time he consolidated long-standing contact with key figures in the French and French colonial underworld, a gangster apparatus centered out of Marseille and Tangiers with close ties to the international crime syndicate of Meyer Lansky et al. The Lansky organization in turn played an important, albeit subsumed role in British intelligence’s *Permindex* international derivative assassinations bureau—the apparatus implicated by New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison’s probe in the 1963 assassination of President Kennedy.

The ‘barbouze’

In 1961, when President de Gaulle launched his decolonization policy, beginning with Algeria, he was confronted

with an open insurrection by elements within the French military and security services, who created the Secret Army Organization (OAS), with backing from the British and from British-contaminated right-wing networks inside the U.S. intelligence services that were involved in the Kennedy assassination.

Lemarchand was brought in by de Gaulle’s Interior Minister Roger Frey to create a “Gaullist” counterforce to the OAS, which came to be known as the “barbouze” (“the bearded ones”). During a short period of time in the early 1960s, Lemarchand recruited 300 hoodlums and mercenaries, many of them his legal clients, to the *barbouze*. Among the Lemarchand recruits were Joe Attia, one of France’s top gangsters; Georges Figon; mercenary Julien Le Ny; and Christian David, later to become a heroin lord in the French Connection.

It was this gangster apparatus that delivered a devastating blow to President de Gaulle’s efforts to forge closer ties to West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer by carrying out the Feb. 25, 1963 kidnapping of Colonel Argoud on the streets of Munich. It was one of several such actions carried out behind the back of General de Gaulle. Argoud was an OAS figure implicated in one of the failed assassination tries against the French President. The kidnapping, orchestrated by Attia on behalf of Lemarchand and the *barbouze*, blew up in the face of de Gaulle, and created deep strains in Franco-German ties—all to the benefit of London, which was at that moment desperate to bust up an emerging American-French-German-Vatican collaboration.

The Ben Barka affair

But by far the heaviest blow to President de Gaulle was delivered on Oct. 29, 1965, when a team of Lemarchand’s *barbouze* kidnapped Moroccan opposition leader Mehdi Ben Barka in Paris. Ben Barka was never seen alive again, and the scandal that ensued—one week before President de Gaulle’s announcement that he would run for reelection—marked the beginning of the end of Gaullism.

At the time of the Ben Barka kidnapping, the Moroccan opposition leader, who had personally received the Legion of Merit from General de Gaulle for his wartime activity in North Africa, was in secret negotiations with Morocco’s King Hassan to forge a national unity coalition. This was consistent with President de Gaulle’s decolonization initiatives in Francophone Africa. However, Moroccan Interior-Defense Minister Oufkir, along with Lemarchand, top SDECE (France’s equivalent of the CIA) officials, Frey, and several other French cabinet officials, had other plans.

Three of Lemarchand’s top *barbouze* recruits were indicted and eventually convicted of the Ben Barka kidnapping and presumed murder. They were all part of the Attia crime syndicate. One of Lemarchand’s clients and longtime personal friends, Georges Figon, who personally set up the abduction of Ben Barka, was murdered shortly after the kidnapping when he threatened to crack and spill the beans on the other conspirators. Figon’s assassination was apparently carried

out by Christian David, another Lemarchand recruit to the barbouze.

Due to political protection, Lemarchand was not himself indicted in the Ben Barka case. However, papers found in Figon's briefcase after his death showed that Lemarchand was deeply involved in the plot, and was probably the hands-on coordinator, according to several published accounts of the murder conspiracy. He was disbarred for three years for his involvement in the obstruction of the prosecution.

De Gaulle personally condemned Lemarchand, Frey, and top SDECE officials for the Ben Barka murder, and he charged that members of his own cabinet had "taken him for a fool."

But the damage was done. In the 1965 presidential elections, the Gaullists lost their majority in the National Assembly, and de Gaulle himself saw his popularity shrink. The 1965 elections helped launch the political career of François Mitterrand. The scandal surrounding the Ben Barka case lingered into early 1967, accelerating the death of Gaullism.

A prescient earlier warning

It is now known that in April 1961, President de Gaulle sent a confidential personal letter to President Kennedy, warning him that the same people who were behind the OAS had also betrayed the American President in the Bay of Pigs fiasco. It was a prescient warning, and the immediate consequence of the communiqué was a warming of relations between the two Presidents.

Just how prescient a warning it was may never be fully known. However, numerous details have come to light in the intervening decades that point to links between the OAS and both the Lemarchand barbouze networks and the Perminde apparatus that assassinated Kennedy.

One of the most bizarre leads suggesting much closer ties between Lemarchand's dirty networks and the killers of Kennedy centers around one of Lemarchand's most controversial clients, a Swiss-based arms and art dealer named Fernand Legros. According to published accounts, Legros was the homosexual lover of the late United Nations Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld. Legros was scheduled to be a passenger aboard the plane that crashed and killed Hammarskjöld, but at the last moment, Legros cancelled his ticket, after receiving a phone call. A similar incident occurred in 1962, when Legros was again scheduled to be on a flight that crashed, killing Italy's ENI head Enrico Mattei, but cancelled out after receiving a phone call. Mattei was a key collaborator of de Gaulle and the Vatican in efforts to industrialize the Middle East and North Africa.

Legros was in Dallas, ostensibly selling art, the day that President Kennedy was assassinated. Likewise, he was in Paris "on business" the day that Ben Barka was abducted.

In 1972, French authorities abducted Legros in Brazil and brought him back to France to face charges of art forgery. In 1974, Henry Kissinger personally intervened, demanding Legros's immediate release and citing Legros's work for the CIA and his American citizenship which resulted from that

work. Kissinger wrote a letter demanding Legros's release as a "private citizen," although at the time he was serving as both national security adviser and secretary of state to President Nixon. The case against Legros was eventually dropped in 1977, after two crucial witnesses were murdered and others disappeared.

In addition to Lemarchand's links to Legros, evidence also surfaced during the 1975 Church Committee hearings in the U.S. Senate on the CIA that two of Lemarchand's key barbouze hit men, Joe Attia and Christian David, had also been on the payroll of the CIA. Both men were contracted to assassinate Congolese leader Patrice Lumumba (although other CIA-dispatched hit teams accomplished the murder).

The Perminde factor

There are many unanswered questions about the Lemarchand circles' links to the Kennedy assassination. Before his death several years ago, the American lawyer and Kennedy assassination researcher Bernard Fensterwald was pursuing leads on several French mercenaries who were in Dallas the day of the Kennedy killing. Lemarchand recruit and French Connection heroin trafficker Christian David was alleged to have intimate knowledge of the role of these French hit men; and documents still classified in the FBI and CIA archives could possibly shed further light on this aspect of the case.

Certain facts, however, are clear. New Orleans District Attorney Garrison established a hard chain of evidence linking the Montreal, Canada-based Perminde (Permanent Industrial Expositions) British intelligence front to the Kennedy assassination. Although Perminde board member and New Orleans World Trade Mart director Clay Shaw was acquitted of charges that he conspired to kill the President, crucial suppressed evidence showed that Shaw perjured himself to avoid conviction.

A Shaw conviction would have placed the Perminde organization under an international spotlight, not only for the Kennedy murder. In 1967, President de Gaulle had expelled Perminde from France, and French and Canadian newspapers had extensively documented Perminde's links to the OAS hit squads. Perminde funds had been laundered through another board member, the Houston-based Jean DeMenil of the Schlumberger Corp. DeMenil's wife, Dominique Schlumberger, was the heiress to the Franco-Swiss banking family that helped bankroll the political career of de Gaulle rival Mitterrand, and at one time held interests in the French leftist newspaper *Libération*.

The head of Perminde, Major Louis Mortimer Bloomfield, was British MI-5's liaison to J. Edgar Hoover and the FBI's Division V (foreign counterintelligence), and part of the Montreal-based Bronfman organized crime apparatus. Throughout the period of the Kennedy assassination and the destabilization of de Gaulle, Bloomfield was registered to practice law in Tangiers, the center of the French underworld and the base of operations of Lemarchand's barbouze compatriot and Ben Barka kidnapper, Joe Attia.