

Yet another blow came with the release of a book about the late Princess Margaret, just two weeks after her death in mid-February. Entitled *Margaret, The Last Real Princess*, by Noel Botham, the book alleges that Margaret was a user of cocaine and marijuana, and recounts an incident when she visited the dressing room of the Rolling Stones rock group, and sniffed cocaine there. Margaret's son, Viscount Linley, is bringing legal action to stop the book's circulation, but news reports revealing the core allegations of the book have already spread far and wide.

The House of Windsor gets particularly nervous about such revelations—even if similar allegations have been made many times in the past. It has invested enormous effort in circulating internationally, including by Anglo-American media circuits, the slander that “Lyndon LaRouche claims that Queen Elizabeth II pushes drugs.” She does not “push them”—in the sense of a street-corner hustler—but, as the case of Princess Margaret suggests, members of the House of Windsor do use them.

The Influence of Diana

Well-informed experts on the monarchy claim that there is a deeper cause for the House of Windsor's woes. Harold Brooks-Baker, who is the chief spokesman for the monarchist *Burke's Peerage*, told *EIR* that more and more people find the House of Windsor (the world's most dysfunctional family) to be less and less relevant.

One reason for this had been the role played by Diana, who had had the misfortune of marrying the “Hare Apparent,” His Royal Highness The Prince Charles. Brooks-Baker pointed to this factor, and observed: “Diana, Princess of Wales, had had an immense influence throughout the world, so it was not bad news for the Royal Family when she died. And, their callousness at her death had an impact as well. . . . There was no room in the monarchy for Diana . . . to play the international political role that she did. . . . Princess Diana had done great harm to the popularity of the monarchy, when she posed the choice to the British subjects of choosing between her or the monarchy. . . .”

“Once, the British monarchy had been viewed in semi-religious terms, and these days are now gone. The monarchy has been unable to make the transition. In particular, Princess Diana made it seem that her former husband, the Prince of Wales, was unfit to govern.”

Diana Entwistle, of the British Fabian Society, who is helping to organize its “alternative Jubilee,” told *EIR*: “The whole of British society was engaged with Diana's plight. She had become of symbol status or celebrity status. She was the Queen of Hearts, and with her death in the way that it happened, people had lost interest in the Royal Family. People do not feel engaged with the Royal Family any more.”

Unfortunately, both of these sources have perhaps deliberately overlooked that it was Diana's quest for a mission, in the footsteps of Mother Teresa, that made her so admired as a moral force, in contrast with the out-of-step British monarchy.

Cheminade Targetted in French Election Crisis

by Christine Bierre

As the French Presidential elections move into their final month—the first-round Presidential vote is scheduled for April 21—the voters' mood is turbulent; all polls are reporting that more than half the French electorate has still not decided for whom to vote. A primary reason is the extremely poor quality of the political debate so far. Never before has a French Presidential campaign been so concentrated on the narrowest of “national” issues, in spite of the economic and strategic crises gripping the world.

“Security problems” have almost entirely occupied the first part of the campaign, with the two main candidates, President Jacques Chirac (RPR) and Socialist Prime Minister Lionel Jospin, vying with each other in initiatives to deal with increasing crime. National TV networks are demagogically using this question to the hilt: It is not rare for petty crime to monopolize the first 10 minutes of the 8 p.m. TV news. The main candidates have totally ignored the world financial crisis and main issues in foreign policy, such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the new American war against the “axis of evil.”

From the beginning, all major candidates abandoned any idea of presenting a vision or program for the global crisis, and have gone instead into an indecent scramble for votes. Ever since political analysts claimed that whoever gets the “center vote” will win, Chirac and Jospin have tailored their “themes” to get that center vote. Jospin declared that although he was of Socialist “sensibility” himself, his program was not Socialist in essence. Chirac, for his part, presents ideas which he has borrowed from Jospin's Socialist Party. As a result, recent polls report 75% of the population can no longer tell the difference between them!

Nomination System Implodes

This scrambling for the “center”—mirroring what corrupt American consultants call “triangulation,” which goes for the middle-class vote—has opened the flanks to both extremes. Arlette Laguillier, candidate for the Trotskyist Lutte Ouvrière, is surging at 9% in the polls, the Communist Party at 4% and the Greens at 6%. On the far right, Jean Marie Le Pen is given 10% of the vote. Jospin's and Chirac's centrist campaigns have pulled the rug out from under former Defense Minister Jean-Pierre Chevènement, the would-be “third man” of the race, now at 8%.

But the most striking element is the crisis of the entire system, designed by French President Charles de Gaulle, of “presentation” of Presidential candidates for ballot status. Now, less than 30 days before the election, it is still unclear who, beyond the very top candidates, will be on the ballot. In order to run, a candidate must be “presented” in the form of letters from at least 500 grand electors, chosen from among a pool of about 47,000 elected officials. While the major institutional parties have no difficulty in gathering such letters of presentation, the independents can only hope to collect them by contacting the small-town mayors, who are generally not party-affiliated.

Mayors Go ‘On Strike’

However, whereas de Gaulle determined that the “presentations” would remain secret, the powers that be have since decided to squeeze out their competition, by ruling that the list of names would become public. Thus, the mayors have become targets of pressure and threats from the higher political echelons, upon whom they depend for the rare financial subsidies they can get for their towns.

Enraged about this, and furious at a national political class whom they deem responsible for the ever-increasing poverty of the countryside, some 60% of these mayors decided to “go on strike,” refusing to sign for any candidate. So, a majority of the more independent candidates, and even some candidates with national institutional backing, may never make it onto the ballot.

According to recent reports, it is unlikely that right-wing leader Le Pen will be able to run, despite his 10% poll showing, because he has fewer than 100 signatures. Laguillier is also having difficulties; the Green party candidate has announced he has only 185 signatures in hand; Christine Boutin, a National Assembly deputy and “values candidate,” acknowledged only 200.

There are rumors that even François Bayrou, the head of the UDF party, and the former neo-liberal Finance Minister Alain Madelin, lack the signatures; “third candidate” Chevènement has had to send petition-gatherers back to the job. While some of these candidates will get help from the bigger parties who need them to be able to establish government majorities, some other highly “representative” candidates will not be present in the race.

Cheminade Campaign Blacked Out

Though a majority of French citizens find the level of the campaign abysmal, and declare that they would like to see a new face in the race, the two main parties and their media outlets have imposed a total, determined blackout against Jacques Cheminade, the leading associate of Lyndon LaRouche in France, and the only candidate who could provide an alternative in the race.

Although the national broadcasting regulatory authority has ruled that that between Jan. 1 and April 5—when the

Constitutional Council will publish the final list of candidates—all declared candidates must be accorded coverage, Cheminade has not once been allowed on any TV or radio talk show, nor mentioned in the great majority of the press. Or, rather, the press has outright lied: First, the media invented the rumor that he had not declared his candidacy; then, that he was not an “official” candidate—because he is not part of the “families” that share power in France. It is only when they realized that Cheminade had obtained more than 500 commitments for “letters of presentation,” that the media reacted—but with the intention of stopping him from turning these promises into signatures.

National TF channel France 3 ran an interview with Cheminade along with some of the more picaresque of the minor candidates. Sandwiched between a single-issue candidate and a prostitute heading the Pleasure Party, Cheminade was presented as a true lunatic, whose party platform calls for the colonization of the Moon. A few days later, France 2 TV did a similar job, playing up Nicolas Miguet, a petty fraudster, and candidate for the extreme right. France 2’s coverage insisted that none of these candidates will ever get 500 letters.

Illegal Attacks

Then, while complete silence was again clamped down on Cheminade’s campaign, Miguet was deployed in a major effort to stop the mayors committed to Cheminade from signing the letters. A couple of months before the campaign got into full swing, Miguet provided gift subscriptions for the small-town mayors to his weekly, *L’Hebdo*, which is modelled on the extreme right paper *Minute*. In his Feb. 20 and March 6 issues, Miguet put out a crude warning to the mayors, not to sign for Cheminade, threatening that since Cheminade was “the head of a cult” named in a Parliamentary report, any mayor who signed for him would face immediate investigation and that public exposure would lead to their having their subsidies cut.

Designed to create maximum fear, these bald-faced lies caused many mayors to withdraw their signatures. On March 20, the Cheminade campaign started legal proceedings against *L’Hebdo* for defamation, as well as against the major national newspaper *Le Figaro*, whose March 18 issue had carried another slander. *Le Figaro* reported on the case in which Cheminade was convicted for alleged theft against one of his movement’s supporters, whose family later claimed had Alzheimer’s disease; however, *Le Figaro* neglected to report that this case was reversed on appeal.

In spite of the efforts to get someone who is being trumpeted as a minor candidate, knocked out of the race, Cheminade’s volunteers have presented the Constitutional Council with a first batch of 366 letters. More will be going directly to the Council, and Cheminade’s Solidarité et Progrès volunteers are working day and night, in a race against time to obtain the remainder.