

Mitterrand turned from a supporter into an opponent of French policy toward Algeria.

Most recently as President, Mitterrand has argued that the policies of the developed world toward the Third World should be based on the principle of non-interference in the affairs of others. And he has expressed deep sympathy for the economic plight of the peoples of the Third World. At the Cancun conference in Mexico in October, 1981, he criticized the position of the Reagan administration, saying that "the antagonism between East and West can in no way explain the struggle for emancipation of the damned of the earth any more than it helps them to resolve that struggle." And in a very moving passage he said:

In international law, non-assistance to people in danger is not yet a crime. But it is a moral and political offence which has already cost too many dead and too much pain to too many abandoned people for us, in our turn, to commit it.

Thus, Mitterrand has stated that the same principles hold in international politics as in domestic politics — there can be no political justice without social justice. Toward that end Mitterrand has committed his government to doubling the amount of French economic aid to the Third World, increasing it to seven-tenths of one percent of the GNP by 1988. And he has called on other governments to follow suit.

Domesticating the communists

Finally, what is the relationship between the Mitterrand revolution and the Communists? Thus far there is little doubt that Mitterrand has used the Communists with consummate skill. Despite the fact that the PCF was

lukewarm toward him in the presidential elections, and that in the legislative elections the party suffered the largest decline in its popular vote since 1945, Mitterrand has been able to maintain Communist support in the legislature and to keep Communist ministers in the government. Although some have argued that Mitterrand has well and truly trapped the Communists in an untenable position — the longer they remain in government the more the PCF will be identified with the fortunes of the Socialist Party, while if the Communists withdraw their support for the Socialists they will be seen as betraying the cause of left wing unity — still there is another way to look at Communist support. The Communists can be seen as both a threat to, and the guarantors of, the continued radicalism of the Mitterrand regime. As long as they remain in government their mere presence will serve to inflect policy toward the left. Although Mitterrand, like DeGaulle in 1945, was careful not to appoint Communists to posts that had any relation to foreign policy or to internal security, nevertheless two important ministries, those of Health and Transportaiton, are in the hands of Communists. Clearly they will do everything in their power to ensure that their policies bear the impression of Communist ideology. However, if they should feel that their policies are being blocked, or that the Mitterrand government is sliding toward the right, then their resignation could in fact precipitate a movement to the right and an effective end to radical change. This is not to say that the fate of the Mitterrand revolution is in the hands of the Communist Party, but it is to emphasize that their role should not be underestimated.

In the end then, it is still too early to tell whether the Mitterrand revolution is one of intentions or of actions. However, if intentions are anything to go by, France, as the Chinese would say, is in for some "interesting" times. □



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