JB: Yes, and we don't have a lot of employees, but this fellow—Sam, Sam Riddle was there tonight. Do you know him?

ADK: *But are there black people, Latinos and others who reflect diversity, as you said, traveling with you all the time?*
JB: Well, Sam was in the Michigan contingent, and we want to get Dennis [Rivera] over here, and Cesar [Chavez] traveled with me. And Jesse Jackson.

ADK: *The major piece that's lacking from your campaign now is blacks, and up until Michigan you had basically a minuscule black vote. Even after campaigning with Jackson in Connecticut, you lost the black vote there to Clinton. Why?*
JB: I just feel I haven't been able to communicate my message out there. I'm not as familiar. Clinton has a familiarity; he's been at it now; he's spending money. I don't know. That's a good question. I'm not fully sure I can give you an answer to that.

AC: *Are you just waiting for Clinton to blow up from a scandal?*
JB: I think his vulnerabilities are a definite part of a scenario that would envision my getting the nomination.

AC: *Do you think he's fatally damaged by what's already been said?*
JB: I've said he's not electable and I'm trying not to be too negative. I find it hard to conceive of him both getting the nomination and surviving the onslaught of George Bush, with the kind of low turnouts he's getting. The weakness of the Clinton candidacy is evident to anyone who looks at all the stories that have been coming out, but it's also masked in that people have not focused on the lack of enthusiasm or outreach to the kinds of elements in the electorate that are needed if we're going to overcome the enormous strength of the incumbent, with all the fiscal and monetary tools at his command. I think the party hierarchy is sitting on a keg of dynamite in this sense: that if Clinton were to get the nomination and if it turns out, as a lot of thoughtful observers would say, that Clinton is fatally flawed and Bush pulverizes him, then the people who made this possible and who sat around saying "Don't spoil Clinton's chances" become obviously the spoilers of the party's chances, and it will certainly discredit the leadership in a very fundamental way. □

LETTER FROM EUROPE

Hate in a Warm Climate

DANIEL SINGER

He came, he threatened, but he didn't conquer. The French Riviera will not be the first important region in Europe to be ruled by neofascists. The growing shadow of Jean-Marie Le Pen prompted people throughout France to go to the polls on March 22. Half of them were expected to stay home, but at the last minute some 69 percent cast their ballots, thus reducing the share of the xenophobic National Front. Since Le Pen had boasted in advance that he represented a wave submerging the country, France sighed with exaggerated relief.

Actually, the disease is getting more serious. Garnering 14 percent of the vote, the Front managed to do as well in a regional election as its charismatic leader had done in a more favorable presidential poll. One person out of seven throughout the country, and one out of four in large sections of southern France, was willing to vote for a party that admired apartheid, praised Pinochet and intends to kick Arabs across the Mediterranean.

The last-minute democratic surge was no boost for the establishment. Indeed, consensus politics, barely introduced into France, is already threatened with extinction. François Mitterrand, who did the introducing by destroying the left as a radical alternative, discovered that his countrymen are not fond of the politics of tweedledum and tweedledee. The Socialists, who promised to "change life" and then nicely fitted into the prevailing pattern, are now paying the price. For a ruling party to win less than one-fifth of the vote, as the Socialists did, is plainly disastrous. Yet their principal rival—and partner in the establishment—the conservative coalition headed by Jacques Chirac and Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, did not take advantage of this fall. Receiving barely one-third of the vote, it too suffered a setback. The only winners were the outsiders: the National Front and the environmentalists, who, in their two incarnations, the Green Party and the Ecological Generation, also took 14 percent of the vote. One has the feeling that, in a society shaken by crisis, citizens are groping toward new forms of political expression. The March elections conveyed a double message: The spectacular climb of the ecologists is a potentially optimistic portent for the future; the continued rise of the National Front is a sinister reminder of a ghastly past.

But is this not reading too much into a local election? The results in France were confusing because of the combination of two polls and the complexity of local government. France is divided into ninety-six departments, including Corsica. These are split into cantons, but in 1982 they were also merged into twenty-two regions. On March 22 half of France chose

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councilors for the departmental assemblies from the cantons, each of which is represented by a single member. At the same time, voters elected members of the regional assemblies by a system of proportional representation. It was this nationwide poll that offered scope for political interpretation.

Let me focus on the region that was most in the limelight, the so-called PACA, which stands for Provence, Alpes, Côte d'Azur. It is a region containing six departments, the three biggest centered around the cities of Marseilles, Nice and Toulon. Each department is entitled to a number of councilors based on its population, and each party puts up a full slate, which has a local head and which proclaims whom it would support for president of the regional assembly. The PACA was in the limelight because in addition to the incumbent, the conservative Jean-Claude Gaudin, it had as candidates for the presidency of the region two stars of the media, the tycoon Bernard Tapie, running as a Socialist, and Le Pen himself. To find out how real the Le Pen danger is, I followed the Leader down south to Nice.

Godfather's Succession

With the mountains to its back and the superb Bay of Angels before it, Nice is a unique city. The British upper classes appreciated it in the eighteenth century. The *promenade des Anglais*, which recalls their memory, stretches for more than three miles along the bay. It is now lined with big blocks of flats for tourists or well-off pensioners. The monotony is broken from time to time by an odd construction like the baroque Hotel Negresco with its pink dome. As you drive westward along the coast toward Antibes and Cannes, you have the impression that the town never ends. Yachts, golf courses, gambling casinos—it's filthy rich and terribly commercialized.

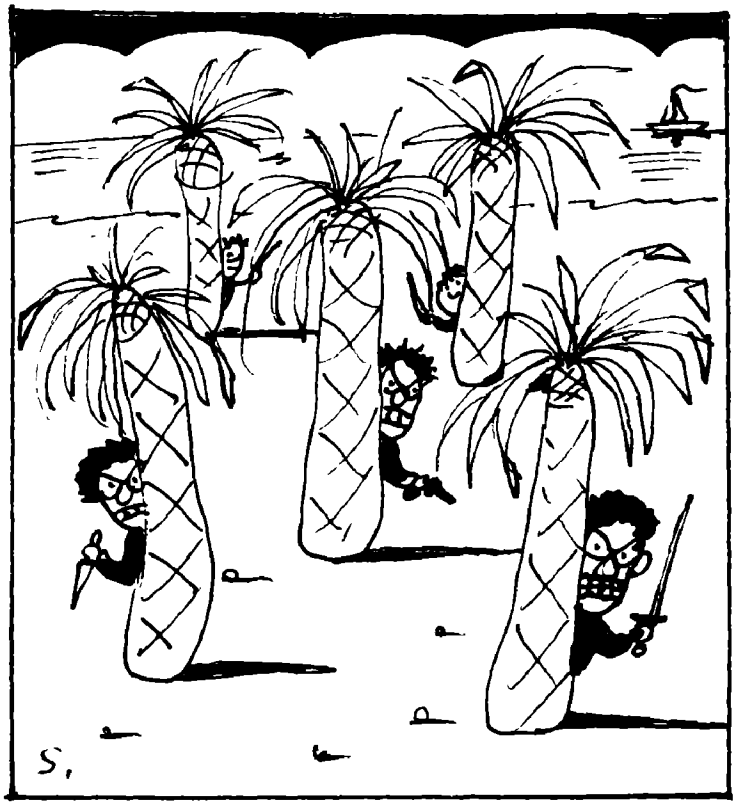
If Nice itself is relatively prosperous, why did Le Pen choose it as the best place to run? The presence of immigrants cannot be the real explanation, since foreigners made up only 8.7 percent of the population in the 1990 census, not much above the national average. Indeed, xenophobia in this area seems rather strange. As you walk around the old town with its ocher houses, you have the illusion of being in Italy. That is not surprising, since the city once belonged to the House of Savoy and became French only in 1860. Generations of Italian immigrants came to find work in the ensuing years. Nationalists often have short memories.

There are other reasons, however, for the success of the National Front in Nice. Unemployment, at 12.4 percent of the labor force, is above the national level. The *pieds noirs*, the French repatriated from North Africa, who have no love for Arabs, are particularly numerous; the climate suited them and they were politically welcome. Finally, this is the paradise of French old-age pensioners, who, like pensioners elsewhere, are very receptive to the right wing's propaganda about law and order.

Yet there is a deeper reason for Le Pen's choice, which has to do with heritage and a system of rule. Nice is the only big city in France that was governed for more than sixty years by the same family. Jean Médecin was its mayor from 1928 to 1965 except for a brief spell after the war when he was ineligible because as a deputy he had voted Marshal Pétain, the Nazi collaborator, into office. He presided over a system normally associated with southern Italy, with fixed bribes for offices to be gained or for services rendered, and a network of district committees, which could be described as social clubs—or as organized corruption. But the machine worked, and he bequeathed it intact to his son Jacques, who ruled for another quarter-century.

During that time, Nice, the fifth-largest city in France, with a population close to half a million, became a different place. The entire area changed: A scientific city was set up at Sophia-Antipolis and high-tech firms like I.B.M. moved in. Petrodollars flowed in from the Middle East and Mafia money, for laundering, from Italy. Control over the gambling became important, and the battle for the casinos was Chicago-like. When a widow owning an important gambling place refused takeover bids, her daughter was somehow forced to sell her shares and then mysteriously vanished. The bidder in that case was J.D. Fratoni, a bosom friend of the mayor.

Médecin had actually brought in a new team, graduates of Nice University and former members of the fascist student caucus. But he grew careless. Remarried to an American, he often traveled to California, where he was introduced as "Count de Medicis." He was also caught by the U.S. customs services trying to smuggle jewelry. At home, his use of public money for private purposes became too blatant. In September 1990, when the noose tightened and he faced a trial, the professional anticommunist "chose freedom" in Uruguay. Between Médecin, who twinned Nice with Cape Town, and Le Pen there was very little political difference. It was only a question of each one wanting his turf. With the godfather out of the way, Le Pen could begin his bid for the succession.



The Challenger at Work

The Greenery Theater is a tentlike structure in the heart of Nice. Its 2,000 seats are filled. The loudspeakers blare out Wagner. Images on a giant video screen proclaim, "The National Front—It's You," "Oppose Exclusion of Frenchmen," "For the Death Penalty." The candidates are introduced, and the woman sitting next to me explains that *pieds noirs* are numerous, both on the National Front slate and in the hall. Now the music rises—the "Hymn of the Slaves" from Verdi's *Nabucco*—and the people chant, "Le Pen! Le Pen!" It's time for the star.

He looks like a retired prizefighter. His face is bloated and his stylish suit does not conceal that he is overweight. Yet he is still quite a performer, a ham actor who will revel in the limelight for the next two and a half hours. Before this audience, he can get away with anything. He does not have to present a policy or a program. He can claim that the German Greens were founded by the Stasi and were linked with terrorists. He can describe Socialist politicians as "a band of thieves, gangsters and racketeers," after proudly proclaiming that his candidacy has the blessing of Jacques Médecin, presumably a symbol of moral rectitude. He is here to thrill and to amuse. He impresses his audience with Latin quotations. He makes them laugh with music-hall jokes: "When you're in muck up to your ears, you must be careful to keep your mouth shut."

'Not all of them are bastards,' says comedian Guy Bedos. 'Some of them are bloody fools.'

Le Pen has been told that to win votes he must keep his tongue in check, so he's on his best behavior. He makes no openly racist or anti-Semitic remarks. Yet, listening carefully, you can still judge the man. His reference to Jean-Claude Gaudin as "the bearded woman"—a not so gentle hint about the incumbent's alleged homosexuality—gives an idea of his moral tone. The contempt he puts into the words "of every race and religion," describing demonstrators he saw in London, is also revealing. So is his scorn for those who stir up unpleasant memories of World War II: "They only want to talk about Pétain and Touvier" (a wartime torturer, hidden for years by the clergy and only recently arrested). "Whatever the subject, it reminds them of Hitler and Vichy."

Toward the end, he becomes more dramatic. He reminds his listeners of the four plagues: immigration, insecurity, unemployment and economic degradation. He speaks in apocalyptic terms about the nomads storming the sedentary people, reciting, in a rather strange sequence, "the Huns, the Magyars, the Turks and the Persians." In Algeria, he intones, the choice was between the suitcase and the coffin—fleeing or dying. Now there is no suitcase. But we must survive for the survival of France.

Outside, the militants are pleased but complain that their hero had to pull his punches. Should one be reassured by his more "moderate" tone? Recalling the expressions of hatred on the faces of the audience when Le Pen referred to "the privileges for foreigners to the detriment of the French," the two middle-aged women hysterically chanting "Le Pen! Le Pen!", the tough-looking guards whom nobody would want to meet in a dark alley, I cannot pretend I really feel reassured.

The Doctor and the Supersalesman

The disease in Nice got so serious that they had to call the cancer specialist, said a wit. He was referring to Professor Léon Schwartzenberg, a famous authority on cancer, who volunteered to lead the Socialist slate against Le Pen. Gray-haired, small and thin, the professor looks frail. He is speaking in a modern hall in the expensive and luxurious Acropolis building, erected recently under Jacques Médecin. This is the last big meeting for his slate. It's attended by government ministers running in neighboring departments and by the head of the regional Socialist slate, Bernard Tapie. The professor speaks movingly about how the French people were promised a change of life by the Socialists. At first there were advances, such as the abolition of the death penalty and five weeks of holiday with pay. But now is a time of gloom and fear. Unemployment and insecurity are linked and unemployment is spreading in capitalist countries. The time of revolutionary certitudes is over, and some of those certitudes were foolish to begin with, for instance, the belief in unlimited economic growth. We must communicate with our planet as a gardener does with the plants. Dr. Schwartzenberg does not hesitate to quote Marx or to include early Communists among his political ancestors. He closes with a famous quotation of Saint-Just: "Happiness is a new idea in Europe."

All this was fine, yet what connection did it have with the technocratic pronouncements the ministers made, or the colorful personality of Tapie? Tapie deserves a separate piece. Here let me just say that he is a self-made man. Born of a modest family in the "red belt" of Paris, he is, at 49, a millionaire. He makes money buying companies in trouble, improving their balance sheets—notably through a cut in the labor force—and then selling them at a profit. He is more a salesman than an industrial tycoon, and he has a great flair for publicity. His ownership of the best soccer club in France, Marseilles, is also an instrument for self-advertising.

Having had a brief career as a pop singer in his youth, he is very much the showman, exuding charm and wit. He is quite funny on this occasion, giving a French version of the anti-David Duke propaganda heard in New Orleans. Tell your well-off friends about the conventions that will not be held in Nice, he says, and the investments that will go elsewhere if Le Pen is elected. Since they love themselves more than their neighbors, tell them at least to be kind to their bank accounts. But it is with managers, not the workers, that he intends to discuss his economic program. Clearly, the "associated producers" are not part of his, or the ministers' for that matter, version of "socialism."

When I interviewed Dr. Schwartzenberg a few days later at his modest headquarters, he showed no illusions. He had waited three months for a Socialist leader to take on Le Pen and volunteered only when nobody came forward. He has not

been helped much by party headquarters in Paris, and the local Socialist Party is almost nonexistent. The only anti-Le Pen initiatives have come from intellectuals, who sponsored a petition, an exhibition of cartoons and a demonstration. Led by a band, several thousand people marched, carrying signs with slogans like "We are all children of immigrants, first, second or third generation," or, borrowing from Tacitus, "Willing slaves make tyrants." But that was at best a beginning. When the Socialist Party chooses a Tapie as leader in Marseilles, which used to be its stronghold, it is clear how far it has sunk. As for the Communists, under Georges Marchais they have achieved their own self-destruction.

Bay of Scoundrels

It takes a couple of hours to go from Nice to Marseilles by train; I went there for the sake of comparison. In Marseilles the reasons for the rise of the Front seem more obvious. The casbah, the poor man's ghetto, still lies in the very heart of the city. Unemployment has risen sharply, and the National Front has moved its headquarters to a more impressive building. Its campaign this time was headed by Bruno Megret, a small, thin-lipped product of France's top engineering school and a former public servant who is now Le Pen's second-in-command.

On reflection, each area has its peculiar reasons. Nice has a right-wing tradition, while Marseilles used to be dominated by the left. The south, with its many reactionary repatriates, has merely proved a pioneer. Now the Front captures about a fifth of the vote in Alsace and in the industrial belt surrounding Paris. For Le Pen's movement the immigration issue is merely a pretext. Discontent is mainly inspired by unemployment, insecurity, fear of the future, the absence of hope. And, one is tempted to add, by the bankruptcy of the left.

During the campaign, Tapie caused an uproar with his statement that if Le Pen is a dirty bastard, then people who vote for him knowing what he stands for are also dirty bastards. The leftish comedian Guy Bedos, addressing a pro-Schwartzenberg rally, provoked his audience by saying, "No, they are not all bastards," and then won it over by adding, "Some of them are bloody fools."

But the matter is much more complicated because the very same people can be good or bad, angels or scoundrels, depending on circumstances. As long as a Le Pen is followed by certified thugs and fascists of old vintage, the danger is small. It is only when apparently ordinary people, driven by discontent, fear and lack of perspective, are ready to follow dangerous prophets that the situation threatens to get out of hand, as it now has.

Even if he failed to reach his goals, Le Pen did much better than some people realize. In Nice, the Front came first with just over 30 percent of the poll. In the department of Alpes-Maritimes, it came in second with 27 percent of the vote, and in the regional assembly it won thirty-four out of 123 seats, a good base for launching new offensives. Unless a resurrected left rapidly opens new horizons, Le Pen may prove more successful next time, and the beautiful Baie des Anges may yet become the bay of scoundrels. □

EARTH SUMMIT IN RIO

Will It Do More Harm Than Good?

HERMANN SCHEER

In June 1992 the world will focus on the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro—the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. Gathered at one of the most famous tropical spots in the world are all the elements that have the competence, status and political responsibility to change environmental policy: national governments, U.N. organizations, nongovernmental organizations, scientists and hordes of journalists. Never before has an international conference undergone such extensive preparation. Countless meetings, thousands of scientific treatises and action plans, national preparatory committees and working groups of international organizations are all paving the way for UNCED '92.

No previous international conference has had to endure such high expectations. One reason for this is that in the past few years the contradiction between theory and practice has continued to grow. We now know a great deal about environmental and development dangers: the safety problems and wastefulness of nuclear energy, the depletion of the ozone layer, the shortage and filth of fossil fuels, the destruction of tropical rain forests, the population explosion, soil erosion and water pollution. But despite such awareness, these perils continue to escalate. We are still on the wrong track. Humanity faces an unprecedented tragedy, but no serious attempt has yet been made to avoid it. Thus we take comfort in the imminent Earth Summit and invest excessive hopes in it.

Governments have also added to the pressure placed on Rio, and their reasons for doing so are sometimes quite dubious. For years conferences on environmental policy have served as substitutes for action. A noteworthy example of this was the May 1990 U.N. conference "Action for Our Common Future" in Norway. The impetus for this conference was a report, "Our Common Future," published in 1987 by the World Commission on Environment and Development. Yet the gears of the international consensus-seeking machine insured that the proposals were weakened beyond recognition and in the end completely ineffective. We would have been no worse off had the conference never taken place.

Conferences, reports and studies represent alleged evidence of concern, action and involvement. Caravans of ministers and experts trot around the globe and call for new thinking, although new action is what is needed. The extent to which conferences and reports have become mere public relations maneuvers and substitutes for action can be seen in the fact that their only noticeable consequences are follow-up conferences and reports.

Hermann Scheer is a member of the German Parliament and president of Eurosolar.