

Chirac Urges a Social Dialogue On a Global Level

A "social ethic" of globalization must correct globalization's "drifts."

ON SEPTEMBER 20, President Chirac took part in a meeting at UN headquarters on the social dimension of globalization, the subject of a report by the International Labor Organization (ILO). For him, the social question has global implications.

"The price of selfishness is rebellion," he warned. That is why we must "find new balances between capital and labor, between individual interest and collective interest, between liberty and rules. [...] We need to give a boost to social dialogue at the global level, to promote the social ethics of globalization."

While he emphasized that entrepreneurship and the pursuit of profits must remain driving forces of the economy and therefore be encouraged, he noted that there is no future in "a globalization that tolerates predatory behavior and the hoarding of its profits by a minority," or in "a globalization that destroys social and environmental balances, crushes the weak and denies human rights. It is up to us to refuse these drifts."

The ILO report urges "world governance" with the establishment of more equitable rules, notably with regard to trade and increased development aid. France fully subscribes to this principle, stated President Chirac. Indeed, he expressed his support for the creation of a political forum for the economic and social governance of globalization and called on the WTO to give greater consideration to social problems.

After lunching with Kofi Annan, President Chirac attended another meeting on eradicating hunger and poverty, at the invitation of Brazilian president Luiz Ignacio Lula da Silva. Some 50 heads of state were present at this meeting.

Chirac called on listeners to help "pull down the walls" of hunger and poverty in the world. "Pulling down the walls of this prison would be much more than an act of generosity on our part," declared the French president. "It would be an act of justice, intelligence and peace, since dignity and the hope of a better life are the most effective antidotes to the poisons of violence and fanaticism."

After calling on the international community to conduct its first review of the Millennium Development Goals in one year, he defended his idea of "voluntary or compulsory contributions to finance development." While aware of European reluctance and U.S. hostility toward an international tax, he



The French Embassy and the Anti-Defamation League co-hosted a Senate briefing September 9 on the importance of international teamwork to combat the spread of hate speech on the Internet. Among those present were (from left): Christopher Wolf, Chair of ADL's Internet Task Force; Brian Marcus, ADL Director of Internet Monitoring; French Ambassador Jean-David Levitte; Daniel Alter, ADL Civil Rights Director; and Markham Erickson, General Counsel for NetCoalition. Please see our lead article on page 3.

maintained that "such instruments could be designed in such a way as to guarantee the absence of economic imbalances, State sovereignty and the transparent management of funds."

He expressed hope that this issue would be raised at the UN General Assembly, as well as at the IMF and the World Bank and the next G8 summit, to be held in Great Britain in 2005.

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Citizens throughout France protested the hostage-taking of two French journalists, Christian Chesnot and Georges Malbrunot, and their chauffeur, Mohammed Al-Joundi, by Islamic insurgents in Iraq. The French government, refusing to bow to the kidnappers' demands, has launched a major diplomatic campaign to free them (see our brief on page 2, and our in-depth on secularism on page 4).

FRANCE HEADS NATO IN KOSOVO

France took command of NATO peacekeeping operations in the Serbian province of Kosovo on September 1. NATO members volunteer for command on a rotating basis, and French Major General Yves de Kermabon will now lead the operation for one year. Consequently, both of NATO's major operations—in Afghanistan and in Kosovo—are now led by French generals. French Defense Minister Michèle Alliot-Marie, in Kosovo during the change of command, characterized the current situation there as "a period of maximum risk." Indeed, Kosovo is entering a critical phase of its history, as it prepares for parliamentary elections, six months after a NATO-imposed peace deal following the 1998-1999 war between Serbs and Albanians.

FRANCE AND U.S. AFFIRM LEBANESE SOVEREIGNTY

France and the U.S. co-sponsored a resolution calling for the withdrawal of foreign troops from the territory of Lebanon, and for "free and fair elections according to Lebanese constitutional rules devised without foreign interference or influence." The resolution, number 1559, was adopted by the U.N. Security Council on September 2. Indeed, the U.N. fears that Lebanese politics are excessively influenced by Syria, which has maintained a force of 20,000 in Lebanon since its intervention in 1976 to halt its neighbor's civil war. French Ambassador to the U.N. Jean-Marc de la Sablière insisted that Lebanon's future "must evolve in the full restoration of sovereignty and not in the intensification of foreign interference."

FRENCH-GERMAN-SPANISH SUMMIT

Prime Minister José Luis Zapatero of Spain met with the leaders of France and Germany on September 13, after having vowed to strengthen the ties of his country with the rest of Europe. The main topic of discussion was the ratification of the European Constitution, which will be subject to a referendum in Spain on February 27, 2005. The discussions also dealt with E.U. finances, an important matter for France and Germany as they are the E.U. budget's two main contributors. Finally, the three leaders discussed the Middle East peace process, as well as providing additional assistance to Iraq and Afghanistan.

NEWS FROM FRANCE / September 22, 2004

Chirac to Launch "Year of France" in China

PRESIDENT JACQUES CHIRAC will undertake an official visit to China from October 8 to October 12. Following the "Year of China" in France, the "Year of France" in China is set to begin on October 10 and will, according to the Elysée, give France "unprecedented visibility in China during the next 10 months." The French president will lead a delegation of business leaders in what is a continuing effort to strengthen economic ties between France and China. Chirac expressed high hopes in

The "Year of France" will begin with a bang on October 11 when, for the first time in history, 50 impressionist paintings by French artists will be exhibited in China. The works, which were loaned to the Chinese government by the Musée d'Orsay and several smaller museums around France, include world-renowned paintings by Manet, Renoir, Cézanne, Monet and Degas. They will be displayed in Beijing's Fine Arts Museum until November 24, and the exhibit will then proceed to Shanghai and Hong Kong, before heading back to France in April 2005.

DIPLOMATIC PUSH TO RELEASE FRENCH HOSTAGES

The al-Jazeera network aired a video of kidnapped French journalists Christian Chesnot and Georges Malbrunot on August 28 in which they stated the demands of their captors. The Islamic Army in Iraq conditioned their release on a repeal of the French ban on the display of ostentatious religious symbols in public schools. The French government refused to submit to such blackmail and instead launched a forceful diplomatic campaign to put pressure on their captors and secure their release. Foreign Minister Michel Barnier voiced France's unwavering defense of human rights and tolerance to highlight the preposterous rationale behind the abduction. French envoys to Iraq and neighboring Islamic nations prompted the denunciation of the kidnappings from the likes of Yasser Arrafat, president of the Palestinian Council, and King Abdullah of Jordan. French officials, bolstered by support from most of the Islamic world, assiduously continue their efforts to free Chesnot and Malbrunot.

the future of the relationship between the two countries, and emphasized the opportunities it provides in terms of employment and trade, especially in the fields of aeronautics, transportation and energy.

In related news, the first official Chinese tourists to Paris were welcomed at Charles de Gaulle airport on September 1. Thanks to a recent agreement between 27 European countries and China, France can now be counted among the "authorized tourist destinations" for Chinese nationals. While 300,000 to 400,000 Chinese visited France on business or family visas in 2003, that number is expected to double to 600,000 to 800,000 in 2005. According to Paris Tourist Board Director Paul Roll, "in 10 years, the Chinese will be ranked first or second among visitors to France—ahead of the British, the Americans, or maybe even the Japanese." France is preparing itself for this flood of tourists: from the Louvre to the Galleries Lafayette, maps and information brochures are being printed in Mandarin and staff members are learning a few key phrases to greet customers. Hotels are offering Chinese newspapers and television stations, as well as traditional Chinese breakfasts to cater to this new market. Initially, Paris will be the only French stop in the European packages offered to the Chinese, but the Loire Valley, Normandy, the Cote d'Azur are expected to soon join the list! ■

French President Sets Tone for France's Diplomacy

Jacques Chirac made an impassioned speech during the 12th Ambassadors' Conference



DURING HIS SPEECH at the 12th Ambassadors' Conference on August 27, President Jacques Chirac spoke of the difficult issues that have emerged as major concerns for France and other global actors. While addressing several hundred French Ambassadors at the Elysée Palace, Chirac broached the subjects of E.U. enlargement, E.U. policies towards neighboring countries, terrorism and globalization. He reiterated his conviction that Europe must invest more in scientific innovation and research, particularly in the fields of space technology, medicine, and the environment. Chirac also emphasized that the roadmap to peace in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict continues to be a priority for France, as it conditions the entire Middle East peace process.

change is urgent in three particular areas: social rights (by "strengthening the international regime of corporate responsibility"), financial aid (by ensuring that "the international community fulfils its commitments") and environmental protection ("we must strengthen global environmental governance groups"). Chirac fervently advocated the creation of a permanent United Nations environmental organization to tackle "the environmental crisis, climatic upheavals and the reduction of biodiversity." He also called for a revival of the efforts seeking to establish some sort of international taxation that would raise funds for developing countries and thereby help finance their economic development.

With respect to globalization, the president suggested that Chirac's speech at the 12th Ambassadors' Conference is available in its entirety at www.ambafrance-us.org/news. ■



U.S. Senate Briefed on French Actions

French Ambassador Jean-David Levitte outlines French efforts to combat online anti-Semitism

A PANEL DISCUSSION, "International Cooperation Against Online Hate," was held in Washington, D.C., on September 9 in order to brief U.S. Senators and congressional staff on the importance of international teamwork to combat the spread of hate speech on the Internet. The Senate briefing was co-hosted by the French Embassy and the Anti-Defamation League, and co-sponsored by U.S. Senators George Allen (R-VA) and Ron Wyden (D-OR). In June, several of the participants participated in a landmark Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) meeting, hosted by the French government in Paris, on the relationship between hate crimes and racist, xenophobic and anti-Semitic propaganda on the Internet.

During his presentation, the French Ambassador, Jean-David Levitte, stated that France has already taken strong actions to quell the recent rise of anti-Semitism, including the appointment of special prosecutors to deal with anti-Semitic and xenophobic acts and the adoption of educational programs to promote tolerance. Also, the French media watchdog CSA (Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel) now has the ability to prosecute companies that broadcast hate.

However, Ambassador Levitte also stressed that while these actions are effective within France, the Internet exists in a realm devoid of national borders. Because of this, he stated his belief that international cooperation is essential to fight the spread of anti-Semitism and other forms of online

hate. According to Levitte and the other panelists, this international cooperation must respect the differences in European and American legislation concerning free speech, while finding a common set of principles that would provide a framework for forceful cooperation. ■ ■



Mr. Brom, Gen. Knowlton (retired), Col. Friedling and Chargé d'Affaires Denis Pietton (from left to right).

LIBERATION OF PARIS COMMEMORATED IN DC

During a moving ceremony held at the new World War II memorial in Washington, D.C., on August 25—exactly 60 years after the liberation of Paris—those who sacrificed their lives to liberate the French capital were honored by French and American officials. Mr. Brom, vice-chairman of the 60th Anniversary Commemoration Committee which organized the ceremony, General Knowlton (retired), a WW II veteran who took part in the liberation of France, French Military Attaché Colonel Jean-Luc Friedling, and Denis Pietton, France's deputy chief of mission in the United States, observed a minute of silence after having laid a wreath at the foot of the Atlantic Arch. A grateful message from the mayor of Paris was then delivered to U.S. and French veterans, as well as to the military attachés from Britain, Canada and Poland, who were also present.

This marks the third cooperative effort between EADS and Northrop Grumman, the most notable being the Euro Hawk program to develop an unmanned reconnaissance aircraft for the German Air Force. The two companies are also building reconnaissance aircraft for NATO. Though EADS's Eurocopter is already the largest supplier of civilian helicopters in the U.S., with factories in Texas and Mississippi, it sees an alliance with America's Northrop Grumman as a vital opportunity to strengthen its position in the United States' defense market, the world's largest.

DaimlerChrysler and French holding company Sogade each own more than 30 percent of EADS. ■ ■

EADS, Northrop Grumman to Jointly Build Helicopter

EADS NORTH AMERICA and Northrop Grumman Corporation announced on September 1 their intention to cooperate in a bid to provide the U.S. Air Force with a next-generation personnel recovery helicopter to replace its aging Sikorsky-built Pave Hawk. The contract, which will be worth several billion dollars, would involve the delivery of 132 vehicles. EADS, through its subsidiary Eurocopter, will provide the infrastructure of the new craft, based on its existing NH-90 model, while Northrop Grumman will be responsible for outfitting the helicopter with the latest in combat management and electronic networking equipment so that it can be tied into the Air Force's advanced command-and-control system.

Spielberg and Valenti Awarded Legion of Honor

U.S. DIRECTOR Steven Spielberg and Jack Valenti, the retired chairman of the Motion Picture Association of America, were awarded the Legion of Honor on September 6 in two separate ceremonies. President Chirac evoked the importance of cinema in bridging cultural gaps, and he particularly commended Spielberg for his efforts in the fight against intolerance. In response, Spielberg applaud-



President Jacques Chirac with Steven Spielberg and his wife Cate Capshaw

exist between France and the U.S. ■ ■

ed France's strong stance against anti-Semitism. French Minister of Culture Renaud Donnedieu de Vabres in turn praised Valenti for his part in the development of cinema and in the fight against piracy. Valenti, a WWII bomber pilot, was deeply moved and noted the strong and abiding friendship and "shared culture" that

FRANCE AND LOUISIANA RENEW COOPERATION

A new agreement on linguistic and cultural cooperation between France and Louisiana was signed on September 9 in Baton Rouge, adding to the numerous list of bilateral agreements signed since 1969. The new agreement specifically relates to the training of French teachers at Louisiana State University. The teachers will work at the university's French Resource Center, which was designed to become a major reference center on France and the French language. There are over 70,000 Francophone students in Louisiana.

TOM CRUISE MEETS FRENCH FINANCE MINISTER

Tom Cruise and French Finance Minister Nicolas Sarkozy met on August 30 in Paris, where Cruise was promoting his new film "Collateral." For approximately 90 minutes Cruise and Sarkozy discussed the relationship between France and America as well as other subjects. "I love movies and I have a lot of respect and admiration for Tom Cruise," Sarkozy stated. "Since we are practically of the same generation, we had a lot to say to each other." At the end of the meeting Cruise invited Sarkozy to visit him at his ranch in Colorado.

CAEN ROLLS OUT THE RED CARPET FOR CALIFORNIA

The annual Foire International de Caen is celebrating this year's guest of honor, California. Running until the 27th of September, the fair was attended by over 50 international delegates, including the American ambassador to France, Howard Leach, who opened the festivities. The decor of the exposition was designed to invoke the nostalgia of Californian culture, such as the vineyards of Napa Valley, Disneyland, surfing, the Pacific coast, and, of course, Hollywood. For more information, visit www.caen-expo-congres.com.

THE TRUE STORY BEHIND "THE TERMINAL"

Spielberg's "The Terminal," which has just come out in France, turns the escapist image of airports on its head. The film is loosely based on the real-life experience of Merhan Karimi Nasseri, a 54-year-old Iranian who has lived in Terminal 1 of the Charles de Gaulle airport for the past 16 years. Expelled from Iran two decades ago because of his political views, Nasseri tried to immigrate to Britain but was refused entry. After several attempts, he finally settled down in Charles de Gaulle in 1988 and he has since become psychologically dependent on the airport, refusing to leave it when given the option. Philippe Bargain, the airport doctor who visits Nasseri at least once a week, explains that though his physical health is excellent, Nasseri suffers from several psychological disorders. The Iranian, who is not lacking for money (Dreamworks reportedly paid him several tens of thousands of dollars for the rights to his story), insists that he is now waiting for an American visa, but it would seem that he is quite content to live out his life in Terminal 1. To be continued?!



University Professor Blandine Kriegel, 61, is a top advisor to President Jacques Chirac on human rights and on the

integration of immigrants into French society. On tour in the United States from October 9 to 22, Kriegel will seek to shed some light on the differences between the Anglo-Saxon and French conceptions of secularism, which respectively originated in 17th-century England and 18th-century France. Arguing that both models have their advantages and disadvantages, she will analyze their present-day ramifications as the Western world strives to integrate foreigners from very varied religious backgrounds. For more information, please visit www.alliance-us.org.



Secularism in France

In France, secularism has traditionally been interpreted as a "benevolent neutrality" of the state toward religion. Though the state neither recognizes nor subsidizes any religion, it respects all faiths and strives to create an environment in which religions can coexist harmoniously.

Unlike in other nations, the constitutionally-mandated separation of church and state is strictly enforced in France. Religion is considered a private matter, and is seldom publicly evoked.

The Revolutionary Origins of French Secularism

THE CONCEPT OF SECULARISM in France was an idea born amidst the revolutionary fervor of 1789 as a reaction to the immense influence the Catholic Church had wielded for centuries in every aspect of French society. Indeed, under the kings of France, Catholicism was the state's religion and so enjoyed many privileges. The driving intellectual forces behind the revolutionary movement put forth the concept of a modern democratic republic, free of official religious influence, pushing spiritual convictions into the private sphere. Such notions were anathema to the Church, and tensions simmered until the signature of the Concordat in 1801. Napoleon Bonaparte, then First Consul, and Pope Pius VII came to an agreement allowing the Catholic Church to take its place in French society as a legal entity subject to secular law, and equal with other faiths such as Protestantism and Judaism.

By the early 19th century, therefore, France was officially a religiously pluralistic nation where religious institutions were subservient to secular law and the State. This century also saw another major reform, that of the educational system which had, until then, been run almost exclusively by the Catholic Church. As education became compulsory and state-funded in the 1880's, it also became secular in teaching and function. This served to reinforce the values of the Republic and to ensure the equal treatment of all students as individuals. Nevertheless, the 19th century became a rhetorical and sometimes literal battlefield between those who wished to see the Catholic Church's power restored and those who opposed the return of an all-powerful Church.

It was not until 1905 that the official split between Church and State was enacted, confirming the overwhelming popular acceptance of the secular state as the best possible form of government for the French people. It became illegal for the state to endorse, aid or affiliate itself with any religious group in order to preserve the "*Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité*" of all human beings— not as members of a group, but as individuals. ■■

On March 15, 1879, Jules Ferry introduced in Parliament the first two texts that paved the way to a compulsory free and secular education for all.



(Drawing from the August 9, 1884, issue of *L'illustration* - Courtesy: Bibliothèque Nationale de France).

The Separation of Church and State is Consolidated in the 20th Century

THE LAW OF 1905 separating church and state was passed in the context of an adversarial relationship between the Roman Catholic Church and the secular Republicans. But it is now universally recognized as a major step toward the freedom of worship and toward a modern framework for dispassionate and productive dialogue between religions and the state.

Throughout most of the 20th century, successive French governments have enhanced and strengthened modern and open perspectives on secularism. After World War I, the French Republic and the Vatican settled their differences once and for all and reopened diplomatic relations (which had been broken off in 1904). From that point on secularism has been conceived as an essential basis for peaceful coexistence in a religiously pluralistic society. Indeed, the principle is firmly set down in the first article of France's Constitution of 1958: "*France shall be an indivisible, secular, democratic and social Republic. It shall insure the equality of all citizens before the law, without distinction of origin, race or religion. It shall respect all beliefs.*"

In recent years, the growing importance of Islam in French society has brought up the question of its coexistence with the secularist principle. President Jacques Chirac recently stated that "Islam has its full place among the great religions present on our soil" and stressed the fact that secularism is an opportunity for Islam to become fully integrated into French society. Nevertheless, giving new beliefs such as Islam a warm welcome is not inconsistent with fighting growing trends toward radicalism and proselytism, and safeguarding the principle of equality, especially between men and women. This is why the law banning the display of conspicuous religious symbols in public schools must be seen as the expression of the French government's continued belief that these institutions must remain a common and neutral place for each and every one, since, by instilling the values of the Republic, they form a key institution in the integration of newcomers. ■■

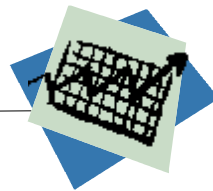
Secularism Adapts to the Challenges of the 21st Century

THE LAW BANNING the display and wearing of conspicuous religious symbols in public schools (such as Christian crosses, Jewish skullcaps or Muslim veils) came into effect on September 2 when some 12 million French students began their 2004-2005 school year. The day passed without a great deal of defiance. With very few exceptions, female students who arrived to school wearing their veils removed them after entering school premises. In another welcome sign that the new law is understood by the vast majority, French Muslims strongly denounced the hostage-taking in Iraq of two French journalists whose release was initially contingent on the law's revocation. In large demonstrations, thousands—including many women wearing veils patterned along the lines of the French flag—turned out into the streets to demonstrate against terrorism.

The law has nevertheless been the target of much international attention. In response to those who characterize it as being discriminatory toward Muslims, the French minister of education, François Fillon, insisted that the law should not be "misinterpreted" and is not directed against any religion. "*All children, whether they are black or white, of the Muslim, Catholic, Jewish or any other faith, will be treated in a just and equal manner in the schools of the Republic.*" ■■



Muslim women participate in a march protesting the kidnapping of the two French journalists in Iraq (August 30, place Kléber in Strasbourg)



France Telecom Privatized

In this year's largest share offering, the French government sold 10.85 percent of France Telecom

BY SELLING 10.85 percent of France Telecom through a private placement with institutional investors on September 1, the French government achieved the world's largest share offering so far this year, and effectively privatized the second largest European phone company. Indeed, the government cut its stake in the former telecommunications monopoly to 42.25 percent, placing it below the 50 percent threshold. The sale raised 5.1 billion euros, which will be used to reduce France's debt, thereby demonstrating the government's commitment to strengthen public finances.

The change of ownership at France Telecom, which was first partially privatized in 1997, is expected to have little impact on the day-to-day running of the company. The main goal is to provide the company with a more flexible capital structure and a larger investment base. This move will allow it

to issue stock to fund future acquisitions, something it could not previously do. Until now, France Telecom had to raise debt instead of capital and to borrow heavily to buy companies such as the British wireless operator, Orange. By 2002, this strategy had made it one of the most indebted companies in the world, with debts running to an estimated 75 billion euros.

France Telecom's debt has since returned to much more manageable levels, and the company has performed well recently, making it a good time for the French government to give it "the freedom it needs," according to Finance Minister Nicolas Sarkozy. ■ ■

EARTH MAY HAVE A DISTANT RELATIVE

A group of French, Swiss, and Portuguese astronomers, have discovered a small planet circling the star Mu Arae, which lies about 50 light years from Earth. The planet is about 14 times Earth's mass, making it actually the smallest of the 139 planets that have so far been found orbiting other stars. It is also one of only three extra-solar planets believed to be composed of rock and ice rather than gas. This is significant because researchers believe that only such non-gaseous planets are capable of harboring life...

FRANCE KEEPS ITS TWO-CENTS WORTH

There may be change in the air when it comes to the change that Europeans carry in their pockets. Some euro-zone member states, such as the Netherlands and Finland, stopped circulating the 1 and 2 cent euro coins in their countries on September 1 (merchants simply round prices to the nearest 5-cent increment). At present, France staunchly rejects following suit. The governor of the French Central Bank, Christian Noyer, fears that taking the small denomination coins out of circulation will raise the specter of inflation and thereby intensify anti-euro sentiments. However, a recent poll suggests that 59 percent of the French public wouldn't be averse to unloading their pockets, so collectors should start moving fast!



Detecting Earthquakes from Outer Space

France will pioneer the detection of seismic activity from space

THE FRENCH SPACE AGENCY successfully launched their first microsatellite, the DEMETER (Detection of Electro-magnetic Emissions Transmitted from Earthquake Regions) on June 29. DEMETER's mission is to measure disturbances in electromagnetic fields which may forewarn us of such seismic activity and geophysical phenomena as volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, and, of course, earthquakes. The idea for the satellite came about after it was discovered that disturbances in the ionosphere occur a few hours before an earthquake, and may thus be a precursor to tectonic activity. DEMETER will attempt to confirm these findings by analyzing the ionosphere over seismically active regions from space.



Designed by the Orléans-based Environmental Physics and Chemistry Laboratory, DEMETER will be sending data to the laboratory approximately four times a day, for a period of two years. If, after this trial stage, the technology proves to be effective at detecting seismic activity, a more ambitious project will be developed in order to predict potentially disastrous geophysical events.

The DEMETER program is one of the two new microsatellite missions selected by the French Space Agency in 1998. Substantially lighter than conventional satellites, microsatellites are much cheaper to build and launch. Indeed, DEMETER weighs a comparatively light 125 kilograms and orbits approximately 700 kilometers above Earth. ■ ■

AIRBUS REACHES THE 5,000 MARK

European aircraft maker Airbus received its 5,000th aircraft order on September 10, an extra cause for celebration as it marks its 30th anniversary. The company was created in August of 1974, with Air France as its first client. Since then, the company has grown in leaps and bounds, with sales almost doubling every eight years. Today, an Airbus takes off every 4 seconds somewhere in the world!

ROLLING OUT THE NEW MODELS

The Mondial de l'Automobile, the world's largest motor show (with 180,000 square meters of exhibit space and 1.5+ million visitors), will feature more than 60 new 2005 models. In the exposition hall, auto-lovers will be able to gawk at the new 1007 from Peugeot and the C4 sedan from Citroën. Held every other year in Paris, the 2004 edition will blaze off on September 25, and slam its brakes on October 10. For more information, please visit www.mondial-automobile.com.

ARIANESPACE TO LAUNCH U.S. SATELLITES

Arianespace won three contracts with two major American communication companies, DIRECTV and PanAmSat, on September 9. The first of two DIRECTV satellites will be launched by Arianespace in April 2005, and PanAmSat's satellite is due to be launched in 2006.

Peugeot Unveils "Stop & Start" System

By turning the engine off during stops, the system can lead to fuel savings of up to 15 percent

PEUGEOT, EUROPE'S second largest carmaker, has burnished its green credentials with the unveiling of a new engine that uses a "stop & start" system to substantially reduce gasoline consumption. Just as a Windows computer goes on standby mode when not in use to save electricity, Peugeot's new engine shuts itself off when the car is idle for more than a pre-determined period of time. The process is meant to go unnoticed by the driver: the shutdown is automatically activated when the brake is pressed, and the engine restarts as soon as the brake is released.



A Citroën C3 Stop & Start waits at a pedestrian crossing

cent in the city, and 15 percent in traffic jams (when cars are constantly idling). Not only does this reduce harmful emissions, it also makes for a much quieter car, which should gratify many city-dwellers! The system will be installed this November in the Citroën C3, the brand's new flagship, and will likely equip other models (such as the C2 and 107) soon afterwards.

Minister for Ecology Serge Lepeltier, who was present when Peugeot's CEO Jean-Martin Folz introduced the "Stop & Start" system on September 7, reiterated his intention to offer incentives to consumers who purchase environmentally friendly cars. ■ ■

The result is impressive, with fuel savings of up to 10 per-

FRENCH SING PRAISES OF "LES CHORISTES"

Director Christophe Barratier's "Les Choristes" (The Choirboys) has reawakened the French public's interest in choral singing. Since this feel-good, family film's March release, thousands of moviegoers have been inspired to join choirs across the country. Set in a reform school in 1949, "Les Choristes" tells the story of a teacher who uses music to subvert the institution's repressive system of education. Already seen by over 7.6 million people, this film could potentially rival the international success of 2002's hit "Amélie." On September 16, it was selected as France's contender for best foreign film at next year's Academy Awards.

24 HOURS OF TELEVISION ARCHIVES

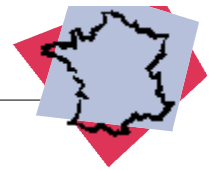
The National Audiovisual Institute (INA) celebrated its 30th anniversary with its third annual "24 Hours of Television." From September 18 to 19, previously unseen clips from the history of television were shown in free screenings in over 350 towns throughout France. With this program, INA sought to demonstrate the value of these fragile images, which the institute works to preserve. For more information, please visit www.24heures.tv.com.

HIGH-FLYING HIGH SCHOOL OPENS

With aeronautical giants like Airbus calling the Midi-Pyrénées home, the region has stepped up to meet the sector's demand for qualified workers. This September, the region celebrated the opening of a new, state-of-the-art "lycée de l'aéronautique" near Toulouse. Built in only 18 months at a cost of just under 32 million euros, the high school will eventually accommodate 1,500 students. Nearly 40 corporations in the aeronautical sector contributed to the new lycée, offering technology to better equip the school and internships for its students.

ALCOHOL-FREE WINE DEVELOPED

Bruno Marret, president of Signatures d'Alsace, recently announced the launch of a new, alcohol-free wine label, Côte de Vincent. Through a cooling process, wine is separated from the alcohol, keeping the beneficial antioxidants while eliminating calories. Marret hopes to market his product to airlines, such as Air France and Lufthansa, and fast food restaurants in countries such as the U.S. where alcohol cannot be sold. Sample bottles have been available in France since September.



Paris Says No to Anti-Semitism

THE MAYOR OF PARIS, Bertrand Delanoë, announced a city hall campaign to condemn anti-Semitic and racist crimes in Paris. Municipal officials have created leaflets which succinctly state their stance: "Paris says no to anti-Semitism, racism and all forms of discrimination." The massive campaign was launched on September 1, projecting its message of tolerance on 1,200 billboards and in numerous newspaper ads.

The August 22 vandalism and arson that occurred in a Jewish community center in eastern Paris and which initially prompted this campaign has since been imputed to a disgruntled Jewish employee, who is now on trial. Nevertheless, other anti-Semitic incidents have troubled French authorities, and Delanoë, born in Tunisia and the first openly gay French politician, has vowed to actively combat all hate crimes.

Beyond the public advertisements currently in effect, the municipal government plans to work in conjunction with

school teachers on educational programs that stress the dangers of discrimination. Furthermore, Delanoë proposed an increase in the city's expenditure devoted to surveillance cameras and security in and around Jewish schools, synagogues and other sensitive sites. This initiative will be put to a vote at the next city hall meeting in Paris at the end of September.

In related news, representatives from France's Jewish and Muslim communities met on September 9 to study ways to "better live together." Talking on behalf of their respective organizations, Mr. Alaoui and Cukierman praised their "serene and frank dialogue," explaining that their objective was "to live together under the roof of France while getting rid of all forms of racism and xenophobia." ■ ■

MAURESMO TOPS WORLD RANKINGS

France's Amélie Mauresmo became the first French tennis player to be rated number 1 in the world when the Women's Tennis Association released their new rankings on September 13. Though Mauresmo has not yet won a Grand Slam event, her consistency and overall excellence have earned her this consecration, which she hopes to consolidate soon. "Hopefully, now the grand slams will follow," she said, smiling, when given the news. Mauresmo won a silver medal in this summer's Olympic Games.

More Immigrants Opt for French Citizenship

ACCORDING TO a recently released report by the Ministry of Justice, more than 120,000 foreigners became French citizens in 2002, twice as many as 10 years ago. Almost 45 percent have been naturalized after meeting several requirements, namely having legal immigrant status, having resided in France continuously for five years and showing good moral character and integration into French society. The remaining 55 percent have acquired French citizenship because of their birth and residence in France (40 percent of the total) or their marriage to a native (15 percent).

Statistically, most newcomers are Africans (62 percent), with the countries of the Maghreb forming the largest portion (Moroccans alone represent almost 28 percent of the total). But the countries of origin have recently diversified, with a rise in

Asian nationals and, to a lesser extent, Turks and immigrants from eastern Europe. The biggest European contributor is Portugal.

France is traditionally a country of immigration and a land of asylum for political refugees: for hundreds of years, it has been welcoming foreign populations to ensure its demographic vitality and sustain its economic growth. A largely successful effort has been led to integrate these newcomers, essentially through access to citizenship (today, over one-third of immigrants have become French). Access to citizenship is an integral part of the French tradition of assimilation. It is also a way to promote two pillars of France's policy, the fight against discrimination and racism and providing equal opportunities for social advancement. ■ ■



"Extreme" Forest Courses Gaining Popularity

FRENCH CITIZENS of all ages are flocking to acrobatic forest courses to experience fun, adventure and perhaps a little bit of danger. The courses, many inspired by military training exercises, feature a maze of ropes and footbridges connected to trees, allowing adventurous souls an opportunity to frolic 30 feet above the ground while safely harnessed.

These courses, which are often located near more traditional tourist sites, illustrate a new trend in French recreation, with citydwellers eager to rekindle their ties with nature. Their appeal is widespread, as both the young and old are able to participate and successful-

ly complete them. Their sweeping popularity is understandable since they offer varying levels of height and difficulty at reasonable prices (usually around \$8 to \$17).

The acrobatic courses have multiplied, with the number of sites in the Alps region—where they first originated—jumping from 19 in 1999 to 87 in 2002. In all, at least 300 forest adventure courses sites already exist throughout France, including one dubbed "Davy Crockett," recently opened in Eurodisney, near Paris.

The courses' popularity is now spreading to neighboring European countries, such as Belgium, Italy and Switzerland, and they have even been exported as far away as China. ■ ■



A boy tests his mettle on a course in the Haut-Rhin (Lac Blanc).



Creativity in its Purest State

The modern art museum of Roubaix is holding a special exposition on Picasso's artisanship

A DOMINANT FIGURE of 20th-century art, Picasso took part in all of the century's artistic upheavals, including the gradual easing of the boundaries between high art and decorative art. Indeed, Picasso produced many everyday objects that, because they were unique and handmade, became original pieces of art. He once self-deprecatingly told his friend André Malraux, then the French minister of culture, "Have you heard? I've made some plates. They're pretty good... You can even eat off them."

The Modern Art Museum in Céret (in southwestern France) and the La Piscine-Roubaix Museum of Art and Industry (near Lille) are jointly presenting a new exhibit on Picasso, "Painter of Objects and Objects of the Painter," which is devoted to this little-known side of

Picasso's artistic production. The exhibit includes more than 400 works that demonstrate how objects both inspired and were transformed into art by the great Spanish artist. Throughout his career, he crafted thousands of items—such as bowls, plates, vases, pitchers, trays—using all kinds of materials.



Head of Beast, Pablo Picasso

(Photo: Marc Domage)

In particular, Picasso experimented with ceramics, producing over a period of 20 years some 3,500 original ceramics, 29 of which he offered to the Céret Museum in memory of the summers he spent in the French village from 1911 to 1913 and then again in 1953.

"Painter of Objects and Objects of the Painter" will run in Roubaix

from October 9 to January 9, 2005. For more information, please visit www.musee-ceret.com or museeroubaix.free.fr.

2004 Brings in Bevy of Books

EVERY FALL, French readers have the opportunity to discover hundreds of new works by both young and established authors. For this year's "Reentrée Littéraire," 661 works of fiction—440 French and 221 foreign—hit bookstore shelves. As always, these literary debuts were accompanied by considerable press and media attention.

The works of first-time French authors account for 121 of the novels. Gaspard Keonig's *Octave Avait Vingt Ans* and *Monsieur Dick*, by Jean-Pierre Ohi, have already met with critical acclaim. Naturally, established authors also play a large role in the success of the *rentrée*. They include Daniel Rondeau (*Dans la Marche du Temps*) Jean-Paul Dubois (*Une Vie Française*), and Marie Nimier (*La Reine du Silence*).

Many of the established authors are contenders for some of the country's most distinguished literary prizes which are to be awarded at the conclusion of the *rentrée*. Watch for the results of the Fémina and Médicis prizes on November 3 and of the Goncourt and Renaudot prizes on November 8. Of the foreign novels being released, nearly half are the works of Anglophone authors, including a new translation of Philip Roth's *The Dying Animal*.

Works of fiction form only part of the *rentrée*; nearly 700 non-fiction essays and documents will also be available. These are dominated by works on Iraq, Islam and the United States, including analyses of the Bush presidency, presidential candidate John Kerry, and American society.

"Grande Braderie" Takes Over Lille

THE LARGEST STREET FAIR in Europe was held in the city of Lille over the first weekend of September, attracting two million visitors and offering almost 200 kilometers of sidewalk space for vendors. Throughout the weekend, the vendors at the *Braderie* sold everything from collectors' items to clothing and antique furniture, turning the city into one giant garage sale. Though the focus of the *Braderie* is the street market,



The crowd gathers in Lille's Grand'Place

other activities were organized as well, including concerts and a semi-marathon. Also open for business were the restaurants serving *moules frites* (mussels and French fries), unarguably the most popular meal during the *Braderie*.

This popular dish, however, has not always been the traditional meal of the *Braderie*. The annual fair first began during the Middle Ages as a way for merchants from various regions to come together to buy and sell products and share news. During the 16th century the fair got its modern name from the Flemish term *braaden*, to roast (at present, the French verb *brader* has come to mean "sell cheaply"), and *bradeux* gathered around roasted pork or hare, not *moules frites* (these did not appear until the 19th century). One of the best known features of the *Braderie* is also rooted in this century, when maids were allowed to sell old objects found in their employers' homes for their own profit. Today, the *Braderie de Lille* combines history and tradition with the celebratory spirit of Northern France. For more information (in French), please visit www.mairie-lille.fr.



Pile of discarded mussel shells

"NUIT BLANCHE" IN PARIS

Paris will hold its 3rd "Nuit Blanche" (Sleepless night) on October 3. Public parks and buildings, featuring new contemporary works of art and music, will remain open until the wee hours of the morning. As before, all 130 locations—including the Chateau de Versailles and les Halles, but also 3 swimming pools and a former hospital—will be open to the public free of charge. Rome, Brussels, and Montreal have followed in Paris's footsteps, and Budapest, Athens, Madrid, Barcelona, and Seoul soon will. For more information, please visit www.paris.fr.

"FROM WRITING TO PAINTING"

The art show to see this Fall is not in Paris, but at St. Paul de Vence's Fondation Maeght. Located near Nice, this modern art museum is celebrating its 40th anniversary with an exhibition of limited-edition, artist-illustrated volumes through November 14. The works dramatize the intense relationships between the writers, publishers and painters of the early twentieth century and demonstrate the talent inspired by great literature. Visitors who make the trip are treated to Marc Chagall's early pictures for Gogol's, *Dead Souls*, Georges Rouault's illustrations of Baudelaire's, *Les Fleurs du Mal*, among many others. For more information, visit www.maeght.com.

PHOTOJOURNALISM EXPO IN PERPIGNAN

For the 16th year, many of the greatest works in photojournalism were on display at the International Festival of Photojournalism. From August 30 to September 12, thousands of visitors flocked to Perpignan to view the 30 expositions of current and historical photographs on display throughout the city. The festival also featured a colloquium on the role of photography in a world dominated by television, the awarding of prizes, and a tribute to master photographer, Henri Cartier-Bresson (see NFF 04.09). For more information visit www.visapourlimage.com.

SALE OF CRUISE LINER MEMENTOS

Many of the decorative objects and furniture that made the past century's cruise liners so luxurious were on sale in Cannes on September 12, during the "Légende des Paquebots" exposition. Available items ran the gamut from playing cards from the famous 1962 cruise liner, *France* (52 euros), to a Paul Follet carpet, designed for the *Athos* (20,000 euros). Collectible posters, which evoke the far-away, exotic destinations to which these ships once traveled, ranged in price from 200 euros to more than 10,000 euros.



The 42nd New York Film Festival, which will run from October 1 through October 17, will feature several French films as it upholds its distinguished tradition of including the most important cinematic works by directors from all around the world. Agnès Jaoui's "Look at Me" ("Comme une Image"), a witty comedy that won best screenplay in Cannes this year, will be screened on the festival's opening night. For more information, please visit: www.filmlinc.com/nyff/nyff.htm.

The French Are Playing in Chicago!

French playwrights strut their stuff in one of the nation's most theatrically devoted cities.

THE CULTURAL SERVICE of the French Embassy and the French Consulate in Chicago have put together an incredible program for the city's first ever festival of contemporary plays from France, "Playing French." Seventeen theaters are participating in the event, which will run through October and November, making for a "truly exceptional program," according to Director Yannick Mercoyrol. The purpose of the festival is to "create a forum for contemporary French drama in the U.S." It is also a way for local theaters and university-based theater programs to encourage a new appreciation for the international stage and cross-cultural dramatic experiences.

The idea for the festival grew out of two premises. The first is that Chicago is the theater capital of America. The second is the fact that France is experiencing a sort of renaissance in dramatic expression, with a new generation of playwrights and

production companies exhibiting their art on an international scale. Many of France's leading and established thespians have not yet had the chance to show their work in the U.S., and with its history as a center of the dramatic arts, Chicago is the perfect place to begin.

The festival will showcase more than 20 events, ten of which will be full-scale productions. Other activities include dramatic readings, guest performances, a photography exhibit, and the screening of a series of French films and documentaries. Participating theaters include the Trap Door Theatre, The Piccolo Theatre, and the European Repertory Company. Universities in the Chicago area are also getting involved, including Depaul and Northwestern. Undoubtedly "Playing French" will begin a tradition that will benefit both the American and French dramatic experiences. For more information, please visit www.PlayingFrench.org.



Courtesy: Playing French. Art by Catherine Quillon

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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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EDITOR

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MANAGING EDITOR

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SENIOR WRITER

Aude Rabault

WRITERS

Sarah Allard, Kate Arcieri, Maureen Denoual, Julien Duprat, Katie Kirkpatrick, Carine Morin, Thomas Reval, Eric Sacco, Julia Sprague

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FRENCH EMBASSY PRESS & INFORMATION SERVICE

4101 Reservoir Road, NW
Washington, DC 20007-2182
Tel: (202) 944-6060
Fax: (202) 944-6072

E-mail:

info@ambafrance-us.org

<http://www.ambafrance-us.org>

<http://www.france.diplomatie.fr>

FRENCH INTELLECTUALS ON TOUR IN THE U.S.

Two distinguished French writers will be touring the U.S. this Fall. **Jacques Julliard**, an expert in contemporary history and the executive director of the weekly *Le Nouvel Observateur*, will speak in Atlanta, GA (Sept 20-21), Kansas City, MO (Sept 23), Denver, CO (Sept 25), San Francisco, CA (Sept 28), Washington, D.C. (Sept 30), Cambridge, MA (Oct 4) and New York, NY (Oct 8). The author of numerous works, he will discuss the current state and the future of the French-American relationship.

Claude Imbert, a prolific writer, started his career as a journalist for AFP, and founded the magazine *Le Point* in 1972, at the age of 42. During his visit to the U.S., he will focus on what is known as the "French Exception" (France's unique system of centralized governance), and explain its origins and implications. He will give talks in Los Angeles (Sept 22), San Diego (Sept 25) and San Francisco (Sept 28), as well as Washington D.C. (Sept 30), Birmingham, AL (Oct 3), Miami, FL (Oct 5), Atlanta, GA (Oct 7-8), St. Louis, MO (Oct 11) and Chicago, IL (Oct 14).

For more information, please visit www.alliance-us.org or call 1 (800) 6 FRANCE.

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