

Jean-Marie Le Pen has been the leader of the ultra-conservative French political party, The National Front for many years. His political views have been extremely controversial, especially his comments on the Holocaust. Acceptance of his controversial views by many French people was demonstrated in the April, 2002 national election. Read the following article:

ADL Concerned at Strong Showing of Extremist Candidate in French Election

New York, NY, April 22, 2002 ... The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) today expressed grave concern that the anti-Semitic extremist and Holocaust denier [Jean-Marie Le Pen](#) could come in second in the first round of voting for France's next president. Le Pen garnered more than 17 percent of the vote and will be the sole contender in a runoff against President Jacques Chirac on May 5.

"France has not learned many lessons from World War II, the Holocaust, racism and anti-Semitism if a man of Le Pen's hateful views could outpoll other contenders and enter the runoff against an incumbent president," said Abraham H. Foxman, ADL National Director. "At a time when the Jewish community of France is experiencing the worst eruption of anti-Semitism since World War II, the strong showing of support for Le Pen is a matter of grave concern.

"The events of the last few months raise serious questions about how much France has learned from the horrors of the Holocaust," said Mr. Foxman. "Jews are under attack from the left and the right. National leaders are too slow and not consistent in their reactions to attacks on Jews. Law enforcement has made no serious arrests. Now we see a large segment of the French population who were not deterred from supporting the anti-Semitic and racist views of Le Pen while giving him the kind of legitimacy he only could have dreamed of, until now."

Le Pen has a long record of anti-Semitic and bigoted statements, including attempts to deny the Holocaust. In 1987, he said that the Nazi death camps were "mere details." In 1990, he was convicted of incitement to racial hatred by casting doubt on the Nazi persecution of Jews and Gypsies under a French law banning such rhetoric. Although he downplayed his anti-Jewish position in the recent campaign, Le Pen and his National Front party continue to espouse strongly anti-immigrant and xenophobic views.

The Anti-Defamation League, founded in 1913, is the world's leading organization fighting anti-Semitism through programs and services that counteract hatred, prejudice and bigotry.

Below are some examples of what Le Pen would do, were he to be elected president:

- Develop programs to increase the birth rate and pay benefits to women who stay at home with their children
- End legal immigration
- Deport illegal immigrants and eliminate dual nationality

- Give French citizens priority for all jobs and public housing; create a separate medical benefits system for foreigners working in France, so that French tax money would not be used for foreigners' care.
- Allow only French citizens to teach in French schools
- Reinstate morality classes; require student participation in patriotic events and holidays
- Outlaw the wearing of yarmulkes and Muslim headscarves in schools
- Create 200,000 new prison beds.
- Expand and give new rights to the police.

For more information go to: <http://www.csmonitor.com/2002/0423/p08s03-comv.html>

In what way are the views expressed above consistent with someone who would consider the Nazi death camps "mere details?"

Are there American politicians who would agree with some of Le Pen's political views? If yes, Why?

On April 27, 2002, newspaper articles all over the world printed a statement by Le Pen which further tied his anti-foreigner political world view with the Holocaust. Le Pen turned up his anti-immigration tone by saying that France should set up "transit camps" for illegal aliens and even organize a "special train" to ship immigrants out of France. His choice of words was appalling. The phrasing evoked World War II and the notorious transit camps, where thousands of French and German Jews were held before being deported to death camps on "special trains. For more information go to the Web site

You will have a much better understanding why Le Pen's reference to the transit camp Drancy was so inappropriate and, according to many, reflective of his anti-Semitic views by going to following Web site:

<http://www.jewishgen.org/ForgottenCamps/Camps/DranEngl.html>