THE LEFT IN FRANCE

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Neill Nugent

Senior Lecturer in Politics at Manchester Polytechnic

and

David Lowe

*Member of the cabinet of Pieter Dankert,
President of the European Parliament*

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Preface

After being in permanent opposition since the Fifth Republic was established in 1958 the French Left returned to office in 1981. Moreover it did so in a spectacular manner. François Mitterrand became, in May, the first candidate of the Left ever to be elected to the presidency by universal suffrage. In June, in the legislative elections which Mitterrand called, the Socialists won an overall parliamentary majority for the first time in their history. The Left as a whole gained more parliamentary seats than it had won even at the times of the Popular Front or the Liberation. The elections of 1981 were, in short, truly historic.

The major purpose of our book is to provide a comprehensive study of the Left in France. The book falls into three parts. In the first we define and discuss the historical inheritance of the contemporary Left. In the second the political parties of the modern Left are analysed. Finally, in the third part we show that despite its long absence from national office the Left in the Fifth Republic has nonetheless exercised considerable influence in modern France. Even now that it is in government the power of the Left at local level and in the trade union movement should not be overlooked.

It should be explained that this book was initially completed in mid-1980. Proofs arrived, inconveniently for us, shortly after Mitterrand's election. After discussions with Macmillan Press it was agreed to update the text where that seemed necessary and to add an extensive Postscript which would look in some detail at the circumstances of the 1981 upheaval. These two tasks obviously necessitated considerable changes being made to the proofs and we would particularly like to thank Tim Farmiloe and Tim Fox of Macmillan for enabling us to make them.

Many officials and representatives of Left-wing parties and groups assisted us in our research and to them we give our thanks. The unsung heroes of academic research – the librarians – have, as always, played their part and to them we also owe many debts. Neill Nugent would like to thank the Nuffield Foundation (Small Grants Scheme)

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July 1981

NEILL NUGENT
DAVID LOWE

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Every effort has been made to trace all the copyright holders but if any have been inadvertently overlooked the publishers will be pleased to make the necessary arrangement at the first opportunity.

List of Abbreviations

ANECR	Association nationale des élus communistes et républicaines
BCEN	Banque commerciale pour l'Europe du Nord
CD	Centre Démocrate
CDP	Centre Démocratie et Progrès
CERES	Centre d'Etudes de Recherches et d'Education Socialiste
CFDT	Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail
CFTC	Confédération Française des Travailleurs Chrétiens
CGC	Confédération Générale des Cadres
CGT	Confederation Générale du Travail
CGTU	Confédération Générale du Travail Unitaire
CIR	Convention des Institutions Républicaines
EEC	European Economic Community
FA	Front Autogestionnaire
FEN	Fédération de l'Education Nationale
FGDS	Fédération de la Gauche Démocrate et Socialiste
FNESR	Fédération nationale des élus socialistes et républicaines
FO	Force Ouvrière
GEARS	Groupe d'Etude et d'Action Radical-Socialiste
IFOP	Institut Français d'Opinion Publique
ISER	Institut Socialiste d'Etudes et de Recherche
JCR	Jeunesse Communiste Révolutionnaire
LCR	Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire
LO	Lutte Ouvrière
MJCF	Mouvement de la jeunesse communiste de France
MRG	Mouvement des Radicaux de Gauche
MRP	Mouvement Républicain Populaire
PCE	Partido Comunista de España
PCF	Parti Communiste Français
PCI	Partito Comunista Italiano
PCMLF	Parti Communiste Marxiste-Léniniste de France
PCR	Parti Communiste Révolutionnaire (Marxiste-Léniniste)
PDM	Progrès et Démocratie Moderne

PS	Parti Socialiste
PSA	Parti Socialiste Autonome
PSU	Parti Socialiste Unifié
RFSP	Revue Française de Science Politique
RI	Républicains Indépendants
RPR	Rassemblement pour la République
SFIO	Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière
SMC	State Monopoly Capitalism
SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands
UCRG	Union des Clubs pour le Renouveau de la Gauche
UDF	Union pour la Démocratie Française
UDSR	Union Démocratique et Socialiste de la Résistance
UEC	Union des Etudiants Communistes
UGCS	Union des Groupes et Clubs Socialistes
UGS	Union de la Gauche Socialiste
UGSD	Union de la Gauche Socialiste et Démocratique
UJCML	Union des Jeunesses Communistes Marxistes-Léninistes
UNEF	Union Nationale des Etudiants Français
UNR	Union pour la Nouvelle République