The Rise of the Socialist Party in France: A Study of the National Relevance of Local Elections as Illustrated by Lyon, Nantes and Rennes

Heather Allison Lehr
College of William & Mary - Arts & Sciences

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THE RISE OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY IN FRANCE:
A Study of the National Relevance of Local Elections
As Illustrated by Lyon, Nantes and Rennes
1971 - 1983

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of Government
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

by
Heather Lehr
1989
APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

[Signature]

Approved, April 1989

[Signature]

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DEDICATION

For my parents
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to explain the national relevance of local elections through an examination of the rise of the Socialist party to national power in France. I will prove that the 1981 presidential victory was not a sudden event; instead, it followed a series of concerted efforts to build a political base on the local level. I will cite four factors which must be present in order for a party to develop a political strategy which it then may employ nationally: a decentralized government; significant voter participation in municipal elections; the party's prior exclusion from power at the national level; and the ability of the party to form flexible coalitions. In addition to citing examples from other Western European countries, I will illustrate my thesis with a detailed study of the rise of the Socialist party in Lyon, Rennes and Nantes in the municipal elections of 1971, 1977 and 1983.
THE RISE OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY IN FRANCE
INTRODUCTION

There are three essential items for any dinner table in France: a loaf of bread, a bottle of wine, and a discussion of politics. The recent phenomenon of a Socialist government in a nation which still retains vestiges of its monarchical past has raised such political discussions to a fevered pitch. Every Frenchman has his own opinion of the Socialist regime headed by President Francois Mitterrand, from the Parisian plastic surgeon who describes it as "a nightmare from which France will soon awaken" to the teacher in Draguignan who proclaims "Our country is finally listening to all of its people, not just the upper-class."

This thesis represents an effort to explain the rise of the Socialist party to national power through a study of the national relevance of local elections. I wish to prove that the 1981 presidential victory was not a sudden event; rather it followed a series of concerted efforts to build a political base on the local level. By gaining control of many large cities, the Socialists were able to earn a local reputation and cultivate Socialist support on a regional level, facilitating their subsequent national success.
I have selected three French cities for study: Lyon, Nantes and Rennes. These cities have certain common traits: all three are large, urban-industrial areas, with politically-diverse populations. Because of their locations, they are less subject to large influxes of immigrants. In addition, the three are economically diverse, with representatives from primary, secondary, and tertiary sectors.

To explore the ramifications of the Socialists' rise to power, I will study three municipal elections: 1971, 1977 and 1983. These elections were significant in that they formally capitalized upon the municipal elections of 1965—the beginning of Socialist-Communist cooperation in that with the election of 1965 the Socialist party and the Communist party formally established joint lists in a number of large cities in an effort to defeat the Right. The elections of 1971 and 1977, in particular, espoused the political lesson learned in 1965: that only through cooperation and alliance could the Left hope to defeat the Right. The elections of 1971 and 1977 will show how the Socialist party gradually consolidated electoral power or built upon a previously-developed political base; the 1983 municipal election will reflect voter reaction to the Socialists as both a local and a national force, following their 1981 presidential victory.

Although this thesis concentrates on data from three
cities, it is not intended to be exclusive. Rather, I hope that these three cities will serve as examples proving the validity of my hypothesis that a political movement does not always radiate out from the capital to more provincial areas. Instead, in the presence of four primary factors, a party may effectively develop a political strategy on the municipal level which it then may employ nationally. These factors are: the presence of a decentralized government; significant voter participation in municipal elections; the party's prior exclusion from power at the national level; and the ability of the party to form flexible coalitions.

In the chapters which follow, the examples of Lyon, Rennes and Nantes, as well as other Western European nations, will illustrate how, in the presence of these four factors, a political party may attain national success by first gaining support locally, in urban areas outside of the capital.
CHAPTER I

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS IN FRANCE:
A Comparative Study of Local Politics in Western Europe

Before exploring the results of the municipal elections in Lyon, Rennes and Nantes, it is important to first understand the context of the municipal system in France. The mechanics of local elections not only provide a vital framework for any study of municipal politics; they also offer an integral unit from which to explore comparatively local elections in a Western European context.

The basic administrative unit of French local government is the commune, a town, city or village. Based on the pre-revolutionary parish, communes were established in 1789. There are presently approximately 36,000 communes in France. Each commune has a municipal council elected for a six-year term. The composition and electoral system for the councils varies with the size of the commune.

Municipal councils are responsible for regulating the affairs of the municipality. The council selects one of its members as mayor and then supervises his governmental activities. Although the mayor usually declares his intention of seeking the mayoral post before an election,
he must be elected as a councillor, and then chosen as mayor by his fellow councillors. Thus, it is vital for the mayor to form pre-election coalitions carefully and wisely, since not only he, but also his political allies must be elected in order for him to assume the mayoral post.

The mayor is charged with implementing national laws, the registration of births, marriages and deaths, the maintenance of electoral lists, and the issuing of building permits. He is responsible for keeping order, but his police force is financed and controlled by the national government. Thus, there are many national checks which prevent any local official from becoming too powerful or autonomous. However, the mayor of a large municipality is able to exert a certain amount of influence on his party on a national level, and if his local popularity and effectiveness remain constant, he may be elected to the Parliament, where he may influence national policy directly.\(^2\)

The mayor frequently runs municipal affairs in a personal manner, developing popularity based on his personality. If the council remains actively and unanimously satisfied with his decisions, this signifies that the municipality is politically united.

Municipal elections are held on Sundays. In 1971 and 1977, the first and second rounds of the elections
were held on the second and third Sundays in March, while in 1983 they were held on the first and second Sundays of the month. Voting locations are open from 8:00AM to 6:00PM, and voters are required to present a voting card, demonstrating their registration, and one additional piece of identification before casting their ballot.

The laws governing municipal elections have undergone significant changes in the past two decades. On June 27, 1964, a law was passed eliminating the system of proportional representation in all cities with populations greater than 30,000. Previously each party could present a candidate or list of candidates, and based upon the election results, each party was rewarded with a proportional number of council seats. This often resulted in council members with widely-divergent ideologies, unable to act cohesively or effectively.

Following the 1964 law, municipal elections have been conducted under the two-ballot system. Each party or coalition presents a complete list to fill all the seats on the council. The leader of the victorious list is expected to be the mayor, and is normally elected to that office by his colleagues at the first council meeting following the election. Voters may only choose a complete list, and lists are "blocked," meaning that they can't be modified between ballots. Thus, it is to the advantage of many political parties to ensure victory
by presenting a joint list, with candidates from two or more parties represented. Since the lists are blocked, these coalitions must be coherent and organized before the campaign begins. Due to these coalitions, it is often impossible to arrive at a figure for the percentage of people voting Socialist, or any other party. 4

This law is modified somewhat for Paris and the four largest provincial cities: Lyon, Marseille, Toulouse and Nice. These cities are divided into sectors, each one treated like an individual city with its own election and victorious list. Paris is split into twenty sectors, Lyon into nine, Marseille into eight, and Toulouse and Nice into three. The parties or coalitions wishing to govern must present lists in each sector; however, it is possible for opposition parties to exist on these large municipal councils if different lists prove victorious in different sectors.

If one list does not win a majority of votes on the first ballot, then the two lists gaining the most votes have a "run-off," or second ballot, one week later. Parties which were unsuccessful in the first round may support the two finalists, but lists may not be changed to include new candidates between the two ballots.

Following the 1971 municipal elections, the Socialist Party (PS), Communist Party (PCF) and the Left-wing Radicals signed an accord on June 28, 1976 which declared that
they would join together in all municipal elections to present a unified list: "the Union of the Left." As a result, the 1977 elections were significant because of the remarkable success of the Union. Joint lists were presented in 200 of the 221 largest cities, in many instances representing a shift from a Socialist-Centrist to a Socialist-Communist coalition. The Left gained control of 159 of the 221 cities, a gain of 56. The number of Socialist mayors in these cities rose from 46 to 81 between 1971 and 1977.

The following chart demonstrates the effectiveness of the Union of the Left, showing the marked increase in the number of Socialist and Communist mayors following the 1977 elections:

**MAYORS OF CITIES WITH 30,000+ POPULATION:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communist (PCF)</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extreme Left</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialist (SFIO, PS)</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radicals</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2 (MRG)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Left</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center Left</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MRP/CD/CDS</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNR/UDR/RPR</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RI</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDP</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independents, Local Action, etc.</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

France is not the only European nation to experience the successful electoral strategy of coalition tickets. In West Germany, electoral victory depends on the ability
of parties to form coalitions. The German system may be described as a "2½ party" or "2 group" system. The Social Democratic Party (SPD) has never had sufficient voting strength to carry it into federal office on its own, and the moderately conservative Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and its Bavarian affiliate, the Christian Social Union (CSU), only once won a popular majority (in 1957). In most recent elections, both major parties have depended on a coalition partner, usually the Free Democratic Party (FDP). Free Democrats provided the essential balance of power in both the 1969 and 1982 elections. The recently formed Green Party is certain to become a factor in elections, both on its own and for its ability to serve as a coalition partner.

In addition to the coalition, other factors were responsible for the successful rise of the Left in France in 1977. The economic and social factors (unemployment, etc.) sparked voters' interest in a party that represented both change and hope. While the programs the Left offered may, in retrospect, seem overly idealistic, to voters they demonstrated a difference from the Right. In addition, the Left appealed to youth, and by 1977, eighteen-year-olds could vote. Good organization and leadership at the local level, and young teams who were willing to devote great energy to their party also greatly enhanced the appeal of the Left in 1977.
In the spring of 1982, a law was passed stating that "the communes, departments and regions shall administer themselves freely by means of elected bodies." The law abolished the Office of Prefect, replacing it with the Commissaire de la Republique. Both the city and general councils were given increased power to collect taxes, and the decisions of municipal councils were made self-enforcing, abolishing the a priori veto of these decisions by the Prefect or Commissioner. These changes were made in an attempt to do away with the idea of national "tutelle" or guardianship.

In November 1982, an additional change was made in municipal election procedure, this one applying to all towns with populations of 3500 or more. A switch was made to proportional elections. Now, the winning list secures one-half of the council seats plus its proportionate share of the remaining half of the seats. Other lists that receive at least 5% of the vote obtain their proportionate share of half of the seats. The hope was that the Left would make inroads into the smaller town councils. However, the 1983 elections were marked by a swing to the Right. Thus, right-wing parties proved the initial beneficiaries of these decentralist policies.

In the first round of the 1983 elections, the Right won 50.9% of the vote and captured about twenty of the larger cities from the Left. However, with voter turnout
reaching 80% in the second round, the left-wing groups received approximately 50% of the votes while the Right slipped to 49%. Marseille, Lille, Rennes and other large towns which had seemed threatened were retained by the Socialists.

As the following chart demonstrates, the past two decades have witnessed some swift changes in municipal politics. In a sense, these changes have been harbingers of similar changes on the national level.

MAYORS OF CITIES WITH POPULATIONS OF 30,000+ (except Paris)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>PC</th>
<th>PS</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Center</th>
<th>RI</th>
<th>UDR/RPR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

West Germany, Britain, Italy and Spain: Local Elections in Comparison

Additional insight may be gained by studying the role of local politics in other Western European nations. As opposed to the U.S., these nations have shared both a similar history of class-based politics and the economic ravages of war. The political developments these have incurred, both nationally and especially locally, provide an interesting comparison for the events in France. More importantly, the nations of Western Europe offer several clear examples of ways in which a national party's political
strategy can frequently be best served by first focusing on the local level, taking advantage of the opportunity to foster regional support, build coalitions, and demonstrate their ability to govern in the municipal forum.

In many ways, West Germany is the best model for comparison with France amongst other Western European nations. As previously discussed, German parties have learned the value of coalitions, and the elections, both national and local, have thus tended to be dominated by two groups: one moderately-conservative, the other moderately-socialist.

The rise of the Socialist party in France is similar to the rise of the SPD in Germany. In 1969, the SPD won elections by concentrating on promoting the interests of labor and policies of social welfare, relegating to second place the more Marxist ideology and their policies of nationalizing industry. They attracted 42.7% of the votes in regional elections, then moved on to win an impressive victory in the 1972 federal election by forming a coalition with the FDP. They held onto the reins of government until the FDP defected to the CDU/CSU in 1982.

Local power in Germany is vested in the Lander, regional governments similar to American states. The Lander control the police, education, and the radio and television stations. West Germany has a field system of
administration with only a very small number of bureaucrats in the federal capital of Bonn. Thus, the federal government has no choice but to negotiate and cooperate with the centers of state power.

Land elections are held once every four years but staggered over the three years following each federal election. As a result, the outcomes of these regional elections have been variously interpreted as barometers of support for both the government coalition and the parliamentary opposition. The political composition of the Bundesrat (Federal Council, through which Lander governments cooperate in federal legislation and administration) is directly affected by the outcome of these Lander elections. Although the CDU/CSU was out of the national government from 1969 through 1982, it enjoyed a Bundesrat majority, consolidating its strength in the Lander whilst being in opposition in the federal government.

Voting participation in local elections ranges from 50-85% (more than double that in the U.S., but slightly lower than that in France). As in France, the proportional representation list is used, ensuring that representation is given to a wide range of opinions. Contributions to local parties, but not to individuals and voter groups, can be deducted from income taxes, and local parties receive funds from higher-level party organizations for meeting some of their local election campaign costs.
This represents an effort to divert the electoral focus from personality to party, and has been somewhat successful although personality continues to hold the same importance in German municipal elections as it does in France.

In marked contrast with France and West Germany, there is a clear disjunction between national and local politics in Britain. In France and Germany, the advancement of a political career depends on having a local base, and parliamentarians are expected to act as local spokesmen. In Britain, many local councillors are localists, regarding Westminster policies as remote, and regarding themselves primarily as members of a local political community rather than a national political party.20

The problem in Britain is that there is a real interdependence of central and local governments on the one hand, yet the central government holds the power of major decision-making on the other. The local authorities' powers are much less decisive. They administer most social welfare programs (except the NHS), including the schools and public housing, but all of the financing and regulation is controlled by national officials. The major power of local authorities seems to be in the way they follow Westminster's edicts. They have the power either to do nothing, or to delay implementing government policies for a long period of time, or simply to be half-hearted about doing something they dislike.21 Above all,
the central government cannot force local councils to do something well.\textsuperscript{22}

In Britain, political parties have their roots in strict class bases. In most elections, the Labour and Conservative parties have dominated, although third party voting has risen from 9\% in 1970 to 27\% in 1983, indicating that coalition-forming may become a crucial factor in future elections.\textsuperscript{23}

Party affiliation is also strongly affected by region. Labour support is high outside the southeast, in large urban or industrial centers and in inner-city areas. Conservatives dominate a large majority of rural, suburban and southeastern districts. It is estimated that up to 3/4 of the people in England and Wales live in districts which are under the "control" of one of these two parties.\textsuperscript{24} Because party affiliation has its roots both in the prevailing class structure and regionally, membership in political parties is much higher in Britain than it is in France, and party affiliation tends to dominate personality, at least on the local level.

In 1972, reforms of local government eliminated many smaller municipalities in which elections were frequently uncontested. The creation of new, larger municipalities encouraged national political parties to contest all seats and the number of independent and uncontested elections fell sharply.\textsuperscript{25} Similarly, the party in op-
position in Westminster recognized that control of a locality was a good base from which to harass the government.\textsuperscript{26}

In recent elections, local elections held between general elections have brought sweeping gain for the opposition, as in 1981 when Labour captured control of all seven metropolitan counties and a large number of shire counties, as well. Such shifts indicate that resistance to implementing central policy goals will grow, and the government's ability to control local government is usually weaker in the second half of its term, as a result.\textsuperscript{27}

In France, local authorities are able to implement their policies independently, developing their own budgets and financing. In Britain, the financial power held by Westminster severely hampers the ability of local representatives. In addition, the party in power affects the type of local services provided. Labour authorities are more willing to spend on housing, for example, while Conservatives favor law and order and fire service.\textsuperscript{28}

Recently, the Thatcher government has relieved local authorities of statutory obligations to provide certain services (such as school meals and milk), or a specified type of service (comprehensive school), and encouraged the privatization of some local services.\textsuperscript{29} This will no doubt serve to further diminish the influence of local
authorities, while underscoring the remoteness of Westminster from the areas it regulates.

In sum, local politics in Britain—as opposed to France—are marked by regionalism, dependence on a remote national government, and on an M.P. whose ties are often much closer to Westminster than to the area he represents, and parties dominated by ideology and class-based membership.

Italy and Spain also provide an interesting comparison with France as part of a Western European context. The recent forces of social change and industrialization have caused considerable imbalance regionally in these two nations. The attraction of new industries and the rapid rate of urbanization have created problems on a regional level which must be resolved on the national level. Socioeconomic changes in Western Europe after World War II altered the class structure of society throughout Western Europe, but the effects were felt most strongly in Italy and Spain.

In the language of Almond and Verba's classic _The Civic Culture_, both Italy and Spain are marked by a greater number of "parochials" and "subjects" than "participants." The strong presence of the Catholic Church served as a socializing force inculcating deference and obedience. Authoritarian regimes discouraged participation by the people and allowed, even encouraged,
distance between the upper and lower classes to grow, resulting in a vast group of people who didn't identify with their country's regime. Only recently has this begun to change.

Italy is markedly different from France in its extreme regional imbalance. The north is peopled by small, independent farmers who give strong support to the Christian Democrats, a Catholic, anti-communist party, whose members total approximately 1.3 million. Central Italy has a widespread system of sharecropping, the mazzadria, and the injustices of this type of tenant framing result in widespread support for the Communist Party. The south is dominated by large estates, the latifondi, which have fostered the development of a cohesive rural proletariat; the favored party is the Christian Democratic party.

It is interesting to note that, although the Christian Democrats have dominated Italian government, the Left has been making inroads on the regional level, and seems certain to follow the example of the French Left in moving from local power to national power, if it can employ the same effective tactics of building local coalitions into national ones. The present membership in the Italian Communist party is estimated at 1.7 million (three times the size of the French Communist party). More than 1200 Italian mayors are Communist, and the left-wing
coalitions are a strong presence in many of Italy's fifteen regions. The PCI's administration has proven very efficient, and the way in which it manages municipal affairs has alleviated the fears of many anti-Communists.

Spain provides a more difficult comparison with France as its constitution is a mere ten years old, and the Spanish elected representatives for the first time in forty years on June 15, 1977. However, it can be noted briefly that, in the past decade, four major political parties have risen: the Popular Alliance, the Union of the Democratic Center (UCD), the Socialist party (PSOE), and the Communist party. The UCD disintegrated in 1982 following electoral defeat, leaving a void in the political center. However, it is important to note that there are many regional and ethnically-oriented parties which are also quite strong.

The Socialist party assumed power in 1982, due in part to a strong organisational foundation laid during the final years of Franco's regime. Unlike the Communists, who lived in exile and worked from outside the country, the PSOE was firmly positioned within Spain, with strong regional bases, and thus able to mobilize support nationally.

A source of political strength, the regions of Spain also threaten its political stability. Addressing the separatist movement of the Basques in the north, and other regionalists' desire for autonomy in a multilingual
nation, is the most threatening problem Spain's democratic leaders face today.\textsuperscript{41}

Conclusion

The examples of West Germany, Britain, Italy and Spain offer additional insight as to how local elections may best serve as part of a political party's national strategy. Perhaps the most important factor is a decentralized government, free of regionalism and largely financially independent, as illustrated by both France and West Germany, enabling political parties to demonstrate their ability to govern in the smaller, municipal forum, in addition to implementing policies and shaping regional concerns.

Significant voter participation in municipal elections is also important, so that election results may offer a viable tool for predicting a party's support on the regional level. In addition, a certain exclusion from power at the national level is valuable, so that parties may more clearly represent "a breath of fresh air" or an alternative to disillusioned, disaffected voters. The examples of local politics in West Germany, Italy and Spain briefly illustrated on the previous pages show that these conditions are not exclusive to French municipal elections.

By contrast, the example of Britain shows how the
absence of these conditions can thwart leftist parties' efforts to build a regional base of support to yield national strength. Britain's highly centralized government, with financial power tightly controlled by Westminster, as well as its class-based political parties ensure that regional politics prove sparse sustenance for parties seeking to base a national political strategy upon local elections.

Under the right conditions, municipal elections can be an important testing ground, providing a forum for leftist parties to display their ability to govern moderately and wisely, as illustrated by the rise of the PCI in Italy. They also may offer an opportunity for the Left to build a base, fostering support regionally by focusing on regional, as well as national and ideological, concerns. The importance of the coalition also is clear—in order to stand on their own, Leftist parties must first be prepared to stand together.

Further illustration of these "right conditions" can be found in the case studies of Lyon, Rennes and Nantes to follow. Through their examples, I hope to prove that France is a useful model for a study of the national relevance of local elections.
NOTES FOR CHAPTER I

1 Combat, 13 January 1971, p. 1.
3 Ibid.
5 Ibid., p. 235.
6 Ibid., p. 236.
9 Ibid.
10 Frears, p. 235.
11 Safran, p. 219.
12 Ibid., p. 220.

15 Macridis, p. 162.

16 Ibid., p. 226.


18 Macridis, p. 230.


22 Ibid., p. 115.

23 Macridis, p. 68.

24 Drucker et al., p. 119.

25 Kavenagh, p. 277.

26 Ibid.

27 Drucker et al., p. 120.

28 Kavenagh, p. 227.

29 Ibid., pp. 277-278.

31 Macridis, p. 299.
32 Ibid.
33 Ibid., p. 312.
34 Smith, p. 27.
35 Ibid.
36 Macridis, p. 310.
37 Ibid., p. 311.
38 Ibid.
39 Ibid., p. 326.
40 Ibid., p. 329.
41 Ibid., p. 301.
CHAPTER II
THE FRENCH SOCIALIST PARTY

The Socialist party is the oldest existing mass party in France. It was founded in 1905 in an attempt to unite the four dominant types of socialism: utopian, syndicalist, revolutionary and reformist. Originally titled the French Section of the International Worker (SFIO), it existed as a federation of independent regional units whose representatives were subject to fairly strict party discipline.

While the SFIO was, in principle, committed to the ideals of class struggle and a transformation of bourgeois society, the party was willing to enter into a coalition with bourgeois parties when the Republic was threatened. Thus, the SFIO joined the government in 1914 in a "sacred union" for the defense of France against Germany. In 1936, Socialist leader Leon Blum was chosen as Prime Minister of the anti-fascist "Popular Front" government, which included Communists and Radical-Socialists. This government instituted the forty-hour work week, a two-week vacation with pay, and other social reforms. This would prove to be the high point of Socialist participation in the national government for nearly forty years.
Following World War II and the Liberation, the SFIO, as the third largest political party, participated in a government coalition with Communists and Christian Democrats. It furnished ministers to moderate governments until 1951, and a Socialist, Guy Mollet, headed the cabinet from 1956 to 1957. Although the SFIO was a fervent defender of the Fourth Republic, many of its leaders supported the investiture of De Gaulle and the establishment of the new Republic, fearing that the failure of the current government would result in civil war. However, the SFIO was quickly disillusioned with De Gaulle's conservative domestic policies, and left the government, a move which considerably weakened the party.

In its new role as an opposition party, and weakened by a large defection of members, the SFIO experimented with various alliance strategies. In 1963, some SFIO members promoted the presidential candidacy of Gaston Defferre, the anti-Communist mayor of Marseille, to encourage a reunion of the SFIO with anti-Gaullist center parties, including the Christian Democrats. When this effort collapsed, the party attempted a "United Left" strategy. In 1965, to strengthen their position in relation to the Communists, the Socialists established the Federation of the Democratic and Socialist Left (FGDS), a mixture of the SFIO, Radical Socialists, and several small Social-Democratic groups. Francois Mitterrand,
the leader of one of these groups (the CIR) was chosen as the FGDS president. Quickly consolidating his power, he became the joint candidate of the Democratic and Communist left in the 1965 Presidential elections.

Meanwhile, in 1966, student groups began affiliating with the SFIO, hoping the Left unity could be developed to include the Communist party, which many felt was the key to reviving the SFIO. "Unity and renovation" became the slogan.

While attempts were being made to revive the SFIO, a second Socialist party, the United Socialist party (PSU) was developing independently. The PSU split from the SFIO as a result of disagreements over the Algerian War and the need for "autogestion," or self-management, in various spheres of political and economic activity. During the protests of May and June 1968, the membership of the PSU grew by a third to 15,500; the student base increased to the point where 40% of the members were students. After May 1968, the PSU shifted from the goal of winning over the working class to forming a revolutionary party. Internal debate over ideological positions resulted in the splitting off of various factions to the point that, by 1972, the PSU membership had been reduced by half to 9,000 members. Although this move clarified the ideological position of the party, the loss of membership robbed the PSU of its political effectiveness.
The FGDS maintained its electoral alliance with the Communists for the parliament elections of 1967 and 1968, but it broke down in 1969 as a result of ideological disagreements between the SFIO and the PCF. As the FGDS collapsed, the SFIO was so weakened that, in the presidential elections of 1969, the Socialist candidate Gaston Defferre received only 5% of the first-ballot votes, as opposed to the 21% for the Communist candidate. After this election, the SFIO ceased formally to exist.

The idea of forming a new Socialist party was advanced in 1969, and between June 11 and 13, 1971, a congress held at Epinay-sur-Seine proclaimed the birth of the Socialist party (PS). The PS was founded as a fusion of the SFIO, the CIR and Democratic-Leftist groups. On June 16, 1971, Francois Mitterrand was elected as the party's leader, or First Secretary.

Created as a strategy for unifying the Left, the PS proclaimed itself as anticapitalist, rejecting social democracy. As such, it was much closer to the PC than the SFIO had been. As the PS began to demonstrate a successful effort to regain by means of a new, progressive platform the support of the working class, and also to attract young people, white collar workers, cadres, shopkeepers, farmers and Catholics, the membership grew rapidly, from fewer than 70,000 members in 1971 to more than 150,000 in 1975. Several factors were favorable to the rise of a
Socialist party in the early 1970s. The decline of Gaullism and the limited prospects of the PCF resulted in a greater opportunity for development of the non-Communist left, especially within the context of increasing urbanization and a growing sympathy for Marxist and Socialist ideas in certain sectors of the Catholic church. Additional support came from the Socialists' decision to align themselves with the Communists in 1972, producing a "Common Program" of the Left. The "Common Program" involved a list of commitments for a leftist government, including a guaranteed minimum wage, a reduction of the work week, an extension of social benefits, a strengthening of union rights, gradual limitation of government support for parochial schools, and the nationalization of some industries.

The Common Program held up well during the 1973 parliamentary election and the race for president in the election of 1974. During these elections, the alliance only narrowly missed overall majorities, and during the 1976 cantonal and 1977 municipal elections, the Left, for the first time during the Fifth Republic, gained more than 50% of the popular vote. The greatest gains made were in those Catholic regions which traditionally voted Center or Right: Brittany, Normandy, Alsace and Lorraine. In the municipal elections of 1977, PS mayors moved into twelve cities which had over 100,000 inhabitants, including Rennes.
However, in September 1977, the Common Program broke down. There were several reasons for the disruption of the alliance: quarrels over the meaning of the platform, the extent of nationalization, the leveling of salaries, and the proposed allocation of cabinet posts after a Left victory. In addition, the PCF was concerned that local polls and elections results had begun to show that the PS had overtaken the PCF in electoral popularity and had become, for the first time since 1936, the major party of the Left. The PCF realized that the PS had been drawing votes from the working class, a group which the PCF felt was its special territory.

As the PS and the PCF began to split apart, four main factions emerged within the PS. The first was headed by Mitterrand, the PS's highly pragmatic leader. He believed that there was no realistic alternative to a break with capitalism or to the strategy of a left-wing union. He publicly proclaimed that a new alliance with the Communists must be formed. Michel Rocard led a second faction within the PS, calling for "new language and renewed practical policies" designed to divest the PS of "archaic" and "outdated" policies. This group felt that by reducing the commitment to statism and emphasizing a lack of dogmatism, the PS would be strengthened while the PCF, fearing a further decline, might be forced to a more democratic position, providing a firmer ground for re-
negotiating the alliance. The third faction, headed by Pierre Mauroy, was allied with Rocard, but presented Mauroy as the peacemaker between the two factions. The final faction, marked by the left-wing CERES (Center for Socialist Study, Research and Education, founded in 1967), emphasized that a close relationship with the PCF was the first priority. They felt that this would be possible only if the PS adopted such CERES positions as demands for extensive nationalization and a major redistribution of income.15

Following the March 1978 defeat, the PS decided to begin extending its efforts, especially in those regions traditionally unresponsive to the old-style, anti-clerical republican centrist SFIO.16 These regions were, to a great extent, Catholic areas which were industrialized later than the rest of the nation, including Brittany, the Rhone-Alpes region, and the Department of Doubs. At the same time, the PS was helped by the deepening economic crisis, the widespread unpopularity of Prime Minister Raymond Barre's austerity policies, the hint of a scandal in the Elysee, and increasing tensions within the government majority.17

As the 1981 presidential election neared, Mitterrand began to adopt a new stance, quite different from his previous support of a united Left. In February 1980, he advocated a homogenous and independent Socialist
government. In September of that year, he made it clear that whatever the outcome of the first ballot, the PS would not negotiate with the PCF between ballots. By January 1981, when Mitterrand was formally designated the Socialist candidate for president, a consensus had been reached with the PS that success could be achieved if the PS stood alone.18

Thus, the break-up of the Common Program, which was generally viewed as contributing to the Left's loss in 1978, was in 1981 one of the principal reasons for Mitterrand's victory. It forced him to demonstrate his independence and thus reduced the charge that, once in office, he would become a Communist "hostage." He became less of a risk to those voters who, in the past, had not supported the Left but were now eager for a change or to get rid of Giscard.19 In addition, he was supported by young people, not simply because he was a socialist, but because of widespread disillusionment with Giscard's failure to solve the unemployment problem.

The election results demonstrate the effects of these factors. The combined Left vote on the first ballot was 46.9%, similar to first-ballot votes in previous elections: 45.8% in 1973, 46.2% in 1974, and 48.6% in 1978.20 However, this election demonstrated that there was a major shift within the Left, the PCF losing one-fourth of its electorate while the PS advanced to the highest figure
since 1936. Following the first ballot, supporters of the PCF and even Lalonde's Ecologists were advised by their party leaders to vote for Mitterrand, giving Mitterrand 51.7% of the votes in the second ballot to Giscard's 48.2%. The election of a Socialist president in 1981 highlighted the three factors which had marked elections under the Fifth Republic: the formation of voting groups based on vocation, the bipolarisation of the electoral scene, and the nationalization of electoral forces. The Socialists utilized these factors to their advantage, since they could not rely solely on a solid party-member base to supply a majority of votes. In fact, political parties in France have few registered members. A maximum of 4% of registered voters actually belong to a party. As the propensity of electors to vote for their party, whoever the candidate, is thus somewhat weaker in France than in the United States, politicians have been forced to rely to a far greater extent on local bases of support. Having begun their careers in local politics, national political leaders usually remain closely tied to these areas throughout their careers in order to foster that vital support.

This emphasis on local ties is carried over into the PS's organization. At the base, party adherents are grouped into sections, which always have a geographical
base, whether a quartier, a commune, or some other locale. Members from the same business or factory form a section within that company to encourage party development. The sections within a French department form a departmental federation, which works for local application of party policies.

The National Congress is the supreme decision-making body of the party. While the Congress rules on all decisions, it is advised and governed by the National Convention and the Committee of Directors. The highest level within the PS is the Executive Bureau, a group of 27 men and women who shape the direction of the PS.

Within the present PS, several factions exist. These include: a social-democratic and anti-Communist group led by Gaston Defferre and Pierre Mauroy; supporters of Michel Rocard, the former leader of the United Socialist Party, who rejoined the PS in the mid-1970s and who brought into the party innovative ideas regarding industrial democracy, economic planning and regionalization; members of CERES, who call themselves Marxists and are committed to the alliance of all left-wing parties; those like Pierre Dreyfus and Jacques Delors, relatively indifferent to ideology but using a technocratic approach to problems and known for their good relations with the business community; and the Mitterrandistes, concerned less with dogma than with election strategies and now primarily
concerned with the exercise of power. These various strains of thought have complicated attempts at concerted policy action.

A curious dichotomy has sprung from the fact that the action of the French Socialist party on a national and local level has been reformist and moderate, whilst its doctrine has remained firmly tied to Marxist and revolutionary ideals. However, the prevailing current in the Socialist party is a pragmatic one, placing work in town halls and unions above ideological struggles and seeking to widen party appeal by acts, not discourse.24 Clearly, the party's efforts on a municipal level are an important part of this struggle.

In a preface to the PS' La France au Pluriel, Mitterrand detailed the party's goals once in power. Primary among these was decentralization. Mitterrand stated

The Socialists favor decentralization because they believe that it is the essential means to give back power to the people, to permit them, in the place where they work, to decide what is best for them and for their group.25

However, since the 1981 election, the Socialist government's strategy has been to attempt to reduce unemployment with greater state intervention in the economy and policies designed to stimulate demand.26

Other problems have arisen, including an upward trend in inflation, an increased budget deficit, a fall in
investment, a reduction in world trade, and the low profit levels of many companies. As a result, the Socialists have been forced to change many of the strategies made during the campaign. Thus, the policies they have pursued since 1981 have been a combination of ideological traditions and reactions to economic pressures: selective nationalizations, tax reforms, a raising of the minimum wage, reducing the work week, abolishing capital punishment, slowing salary increases but increasing social security deductions, and limiting public sector jobs. In addition, the Socialists have continued several Giscardist traditions, including a massive infusion of capital into globally competitive industries and into research and development, the promotion of sexual equality, and revisions of the penal code.  

In sum, several factors have shaped the growth of the Socialist party. In 1983, the PS counted more than 200,000 members, less than 50% of whom were from the working class. The Socialist electorate had expanded to include the upper and middle classes, businessmen, and Catholics. The Socialists have continued to foster regional support by enacting legislation advocating the use of regional languages in school curricula, and pushing for greater regional autonomy.

Pierre Mauroy defined the objective of the Socialist government as to "ensure a successful passage from the
industrial age to a post-industrial age." The answer
to whether future voters will allow the PS to remain in
power to achieve this goal lies in the municipal elections
of France's larger cities.
NOTES FOR CHAPTER II

1 Safran, p. 57.
2 Ibid., p. 58.
5 Ibid., p. 110.
6 Safran, p. 58.
8 Safran, p. 59.
9 Bell, p. 127.
10 Safran, p. 59.
11 Bell, p. 75.
12 Frears, p. 120.
13 Bell, p. 127.
14 Safran, p. 59.
15 Bell, p. 76.
16 Bell, p. 113.
17 Ibid., p. 72.
18 Ibid., p. 78.
19 Ibid., p. 83.
20 Ibid., p. 82.
21 Ibid., p. 83.
22 Lancelot, p. 97.
24 Bell, p. 129.
27 Safran, p. 60.
28 Ibid.
CHAPTER III
LYON

Lyon has a population of 1.2 million and a two-thousand year history. Since October 10, 43 B.C., when a former lieutenant of Julius Cesar, Lucius Munatius Plancus, founded a colony named Lugdunum on Fourviere, one of the hills of Lyon, it became the capital from which the Romans administered the three provinces of Gaul during the time of Augustus. While the Roman Empire declined, Lyon remained a city of religious importance, ruled by its archbishops until it was added to the French kingdom in the fourteenth century. With the Renaissance, Lyon became the center of banking, printing and the silk trade in France. It has remained an important center of trade and commerce, and during the German occupation of France in World War II, was the center of the French Resistance.

Lyon is the second largest city in France in terms of population, although it is only one-eighth the size of Paris. Dairying has always been an important feature of the region, and the recent completion of the high-speed TGV train between Lyon and Paris has condensed the distance between the two to a two-hour trip. Rhone-Alpes, the Department in which Lyon is located, is the most
important provincial manufacturing area in France, employing 10% of the country's industrial labor force; Lyon is the largest and most influential of its centers, with 35% of the Department's total industrial employment.4

Industry in Lyon dates from the growth of silk manufacturing in the sixteenth century. Industrial development relied on a large textile industry based around numerous small, family manufacturing units. The silk industry served as the base of industrial expansion, with the accumulation of capital, a skilled work force and the acquisition of linked industrial activities.5 By the latter part of the nineteenth century, the production of chemicals began to expand, and both the chemical and textile industries became partly responsible for the subsequent development of mechanical engineering, which grew to become the third pillar of the city's industrial economy.6 By 1975, the secondary sector employed over 45% of the active population, following an annual rate of increase in its labor force of 0.8% since 1968.7

Industrial employment has stabilized in Lyon. Recently, job growth has been the highest in the tertiary and quaternary sectors. Although growth has been somewhat hampered by the fact that control of the resources of many of the large Lyonnais companies is in Paris, the French government's strategy within the last few years has been to create provincial counterweights to Paris,
thus promoting greater autonomy for the Lyonnais region, and the politics in Lyon have reflected its position as a city which is gradually nearing Paris in influence and importance.

The Lyonnais municipal election of 1971 was marked by many outside factors. Lyon was plagued with an especially cold January, leaving a city with no snow or ice equipment paralyzed by several blizzards. At the same time, it was revealed that the mayor of Lyon, Louis Pradel, had used city funds to finance the completion of a major tunnel giving greater access to Italy, a national project. Local taxes were raised 25% to finance the project, and the newspapers predicted that taxes would double within the next five years. The population was angered by the evidence that their tax money was apparently not being spent for their needs. Thus, Louis Pradel faced an unusually controversial electoral climate during the two months preceding the March 1971 municipal elections.

An interesting dimension of the elections was added by the presence of Jacques Soustelle. The former governor of Algeria, Soustelle resigned in September 1962 and voluntarily went into exile following charges that he had been plotting against the State. He decided to make his political comeback in Lyon, where he had made his political debut when elected to the municipal council in 1951. Twenty years later, he appeared on the municipal list
prepared by Mayor Pradel, his friend and political ally.

Pradel was first elected mayor of Lyon in 1957, and re-elected in 1959 and 1965. He had based his career on a reputation of being "apolitical," surrounding himself with every color of the political spectrum except communism, which he violently opposed. The Communist newspaper L'Humanité described him as "apolitical in the way that some people become vegetarian: on the condition that they can have a little red meat from time to time."

For the 1971 municipal elections, Pradel continued his efforts to seem "apolitical" by wooing members of a variety of political parties to appear on his ticket. This involved more than two months of complex negotiations. For example, Pradel met frequently with Louis Joxe, a member of the UDR and the former minister and deputy of Rhone, during an eight-week period which culminated with the offer of five council seats to Joxe's UDR party. As a result of the increase in population, the number of members of Lyon's council was raised from 61 to 63, and the number of council seats offered to the UDR was raised to six.

While Pradel's opposition met, on January 5, to plan a joint declaration uniting the Communist, Socialist and Radical parties, Pradel assured his five incumbent Socialist councillors that they would be retained on the ticket. However, a few days later, on January 11, the Rhone
Federation of the Socialist party announced that no member of the Socialist party would be allowed to appear on a list with representatives or members of the UDR and other reactionary forces, the same groups which had just won places on Pradel's ticket. Thus, the five Socialist municipal councillors who chose to keep their spot on the Pradel ticket were forced to resign from their party.

Part of the misunderstanding was a result of the demise of the SFIO and its replacement by the PS, as discussed in Chapter II. Pradel, himself, had been a member of the SFIO before assuming his cloak of apolitism, and many of his followers were also SFIO members. However, as the PS took shape and began to grow in 1971, the Socialists made a decisive move away from ties with moderate and rightist groups, and toward a greater unity with left-wing parties. It was believed that a Socialist victory depended upon a union with the Communist party; Pradel, a virulent anti-Communist, could not accept this. Thus, the municipal election of 1971 represented a significant break between Pradel and the Socialists, and the emergence of the Union of the Left.

Economic development was the central issue during the 1971 municipal elections. Pradel promoted efficient and non-partisan municipal management as the key to achieving this, and it seemed that his list of centrists, independents, former socialists, and others was proof of the
power of planning over politics. However, his campaign was somewhat affected by the visible presence of Jacques Soustelle and his allies on the ticket. Soustelle enjoyed the sudden attention heralding his return from exile, and thus appeared in the newspapers nearly as often as Pradel, himself. In one interview, Soustelle declared: "I consider my participation on M. Pradel's list as a way to make amends to my friends and myself." He was eager to participate once more with his friends (eight of the 63 councillors) in the administration of Lyon, and clearly felt that his political return was of national, as well as local, importance. He and his friends organized a national congress at Versailles on January 23 and 24 as a forum for him to deliver his thoughts on regional and national problems and his opinion of the President and various other political leaders.

Soustelle's presence on the list sparked controversy even among the other participants on the list, especially among the UDR and Independents, who argued that his past would damage Pradel's reputation and their own chances for political success. In order to gain additional national support, Pradel had opened the list to the UDR and Giscardians. The arrival of the Giscardians upset the Independent councillors who would have to share five seats with them. Pradel's offer of five or six seats to
the UDR's Joze upset the Radicals and Socialists. The Radicals were torn between a national doctrine of not participating on a list with the UDR and a partisan favoring of Pradel's policies. The Socialists who chose to renew their participation on the Pradel list created conflict within the Rhone Socialist federation involving the expulsion of many PS members. Thus, the Pradel "union" was not a harmonious one.

On January 28, the PC and PS, for the first time in 25 years, announced that they had signed an accord for the municipal elections, and urged other left-wing parties to join them. For the 61 council seats, the PS-PC list contained 33 Communists, 15 Socialists, 8 Radicals and five other. A different list had to be presented in each of Lyon's nine districts or arrondissements; five of the lists contained a Communist at the head, while four did not. The Union of the Left hoped thus to supplant the incumbent municipal council, consisting of four Socialists, three members of the UDR, ten Radicals, three members of the MRP, eight ex-UNR members (a group supporting Soustelle), thirteen Independents, and eighteen apoliticals (including Pradel). 10

On February 2, the executive committee of the Radical Federation announced that it had voted 41 to 26 to appear on Pradel's list, apparently ignoring the words of the
Party's General Secretary Servan-Schreiber, who said on November 26: "We may ally ourselves with anyone except the UDR." On February 10, the UDR announced that it, too, would participate on the Pradel list with 9 of the 63 candidates, on the condition that no UDR candidate appeared with Soustelle on a list. Since Soustelle was to appear on the list in the first district, where the Hotel de Ville was located, no UDR candidate was presented there.

On February 14, the incumbent regime presented its official list, entitled PRADEL (For the Active Realization of Lyonnaise Hopes). Of the 61 candidates, 29 declared themselves "apolitical." The 32 others included 4 members of Progress and Liberty (a new party founded by Jacques Soustelle), 9 members of the UDR, 2 Independent Republicans, 4 Radicals, and 5 former SFIO members. A condition of appearing on the PRADEL list was that each candidate sign an agreement declaring whether or not he belonged to a political party, after which he agreed to not attempt to create a political group within the main council, to submit all political efforts to a council vote, and to not use the PRADEL ticket in any other political consultations. The list was also marked by six women, and younger candidates.

The PRADEL list was quick to emphasize the achievements Pradel had fostered during the past six years. Despite these accomplishments, the Union of the Left
received a good deal of popular attention. Its candidates represented a variety of professions, including eight factory workers, two craftsmen, three social workers, four housewives, four lawyers, three professors, two teachers, and one student. The list consisted of 12 women and 49 men. As the first such union in 25 years, its program was not a catalogue of promises, but a list of objectives and what it would take to achieve them. With the list, the parties of the Left presented their united municipal contract based on three points: the democratization of all institutions; a more Socialist-oriented administration leading to economic development; and the decentralization of the bureaus governing culture and media for greater participation.

By the time of the election on March 14, voters had four lists to choose from: the Union of the Left; the PRADEL list; a list presented by the PSU; and a list presented by the UJP, a party of Orthodox Gaullists. The results showed that, despite the victory of the PRADEL list, the Left had made important advances and paved the way for a future electoral victory. Of the 276,773 registered voters, 142,287 voted on March 14. Of these votes, the PRADEL list received 90,613, or 66.4%; the Union of the Left received 35,778, or 26.2%; the PSU obtained 9,166, or 6.7%; and the UJP ticket obtained 1,127, or 0.7%. Thus, there was technically no opposition on the Lyon municipal council, as the PRADEL list won all nine
districts of the city on the first ballot.

In the six-year interim between the 1971 and 1977 municipal elections, Lyon experienced many changes. From the beginning of the post-war boom in 1954 until 1975, Lyon's population had grown by 370,000 to a total of 1,171,000. By 1977, however, employment opportunities in the large Lyonnaise industries had begun to decline. Unemployment had increased to 8.8%. The greatest rate of job increase had occurred in the tertiary sector, with Lyon benefitting from national efforts to promote business relocation and development in the regions outside Paris.

The municipal elections of March 1977 reflected the changes that had occurred in the economic structure of Lyon. On November 27, 1977, Mayor Louis Pradel died, ending 20 years of apolitical administration in Lyon. Francois Collomb was selected to complete the remaining three-month term; he continued Pradel's policies and announced his intention to run for mayor as the municipal elections approached.

However, the death of Pradel marked the end of unification within his party. Immediately following his death, Jacques Soustelle, the former governor of Algeria who had caused controversy in the 1971 municipal elections, had been offered by Pradel's supporters the position of Pradel's successor. He had refused, permitting Collomb, a non-aligned senator, to be unanimously elected on
December 5, 1976. However, on December 21, Soustelle was named by the PRADEL commission as the head of their lists for the upcoming municipal elections.

On January 7, 1977, Soustelle officially announced his intention to present lists in all nine districts of Lyon. In spite of his ties to conservative administrations, Soustelle denied that he would make up right-wing lists, and declared that he always had been and would remain "a man of the center left." He promised to continue Pradel's apolitical stance by composing lists of candidates representing a wide range of parties.

Soustelle's candidacy created a split within the majority. He had maintained a clique of adherents who, even during his exile, remained to ensure his presence in Lyon. Collomb had managed to win several of these over shortly before Pradel's death, and his position as incumbent mayor gave him a slight advantage, yet the party in-fighting was bitter and divisive.

Collomb received crucial support from Andre Soulier, a lawyer of local celebrity who had been a spokesman for the PS at Lyon. When the PS signed its accord with the PC, Soulier quit the party and joined the supporters of Collomb.

Collomb took advantage of his position as Pradel's heir apparent. A tall, elegant man with white hair, his distinguished appearance gave him a certain personal
popularity which Soustelle could not match. In addition, Collomb subtly promoted the idea of his candidacy as a continuation of the Pradel "dynasty." In interviews, he frequently mentioned that he kept a picture of Pradel on his desk: "Sometimes I look at it and ask him for advice."¹⁸

The division in the majority party was a welcome event for the parties of the Left, which had been steadily consolidating their support since the 1971 municipal elections. With the death of Pradel, the municipal election had become a political, as well as a personality, race and the Union of the Left was determined to emphasize its own unity to contrast with the disunity of the majority party.

On January 6, 1977, the PS and PC announced that they had signed an accord in preparation for the upcoming elections. However, the accord failed to solve a dispute surrounding the distribution of council seats. The PC felt that its greater popular support should give it the right to 27 of the 61 seats and 4 of the 9 heads of lists. The PC did offer the PS the opportunity to head the third, seventh and ninth district lists, three of the districts considered most favorable to the Left, which did demonstrate a willingness to compromise. However, the PS proposed that the PC should have only 22 seats and head only one list, in the eighth district. Negotiations continued until February 3, when the arrangement proposed by the PS
was ratified, clear evidence that the PS was quickly assuming a more powerful position than the PC. This trend would be reflected nationally during subsequent elections.

Claude Bernardin was chosen to lead the Union of the Left list. He had been instrumental in helping to renew Socialist thought following the formation of the PS, and had the added appeal to more conservative voters of being a proclaimed Christian and a lawyer. Support for the Union was evident when, on February 11, 15,000 workers demonstrated in Lyon. Blocking traffic and disrupting business as they marched through the streets, they chanted "United Action" and announced their support for the Union of the Left.19

While the Union was polishing its accord, Jacques Soustelle announced that he would seek office under his own party label, Assembly for Lyon (RPL). On February 5, the party was officially formed.

Even within the PRADEL party, disunity was publicized. When Bernardin proposed a series of debates with the majority leader, Collomb refused to attend, sending in his place Andre Soulier, the former PS member who was quickly becoming a media "star" as Collomb's official spokesman. Many of Collomb's supporters were angered by how rapidly Soulier was advancing within the municipal hierarchy, and upset by Collomb's refusal to participate in any encounter with Bernardin or Soustelle.

On February 25, Collomb presented his list, which
included members of the conservative RPR, Independents, Radicals, and non-aligned. In order to compete with the youthful composition of the Left slate, and aware that the incumbent council had 27 members older than 65, Collomb proposed 24 new candidates. However, the sociological composition of his list differed markedly from that of the Union of the Left. While the Left proposed candidates who had a working- or middle-class background, Collomb's proposed council consisted mainly of doctors, lawyers, judges and company presidents.

On March 1, Jacques Soustelle announced that his RPL party would present lists in 7 of the 9 Lyon districts. In order to ensure that the Left did not win the seventh or eighth districts, he chose to allow the PRADEL list to go uncontested there. His list included three incumbent councillors and four others who were not placed on the Collomb list. Soustelle selected himself as the head of the list in the first district, where he had been elected on the PRADEL slate in 1971.

While most attention was focused on the lists of Soustelle, Bernardin and Collomb, five additional organizations presented lists in the Lyonnaise districts. These were primarily single-issue parties with small, concentrated groups of supporters: the Ecologist Movement of Rhone-Alpes (MERA); the Committee to Defend the Sites of Lyon (COSI-LYO); the Friends of the Earth; the Rhone
Federation of the PSU; and a Red Cross district association known as the Hope of Lyon for a Balanced Urbanism (ELUE).

With so many competing parties and interest groups, it was clear that the age of apoliticism in Lyon had ended. This was primarily due to the rebirth of the Union of the Left, which ended the prevalence of bourgeois and clerical politics. The election results exposed these changes.

The first round of ballotting in March left no party in a majority position. The Union received an astounding 41.6% of the votes, while the Collomb and Soustelle lists, together, lost 13.8% of the votes obtained by the PRADEL list in 1971. Following a second, run-off ballot between the Union and Collomb's list, the Left won the eighth district with 54.85% of the votes, and the ninth district with 54.73%. Thus, for the first time in 12 years, the Left won representation on Lyon's municipal council. The results were 12 council seats, five Communist and seven Socialist. In total, the Left had obtained 45.75% of the votes cast, compared with 26.2% in 1971, while the PRADEL party slipped from its 66.39% in 1971 to 54.26% six years later. The Left had become a participant in the administration of Lyon.

In 1981, the Left became the government of France, pressing its efforts from local to national success. Despite a national total of 51.7% of the votes cast,
Francois Mitterrand did poorly in Lyon, winning only in the eighth and ninth districts, the same districts which the Left had carried in the 1977 municipal election. Even in those districts, the percentages were a modest 58.6% and 59.05% respectively. Thus, Lyon remained somewhat segregated politically, and unwilling to wholeheartedly embrace political change. The Left in Lyon was forced to carry the burden of Socialist policies, as well as their own political promises; thus, the 1983 municipal elections would provide a forum for the Lyonnais to evaluate the Left on a national, as well as local, level.

In the years between the municipal elections of 1977 and 1983, Lyon again experienced great economic and social change. By 1980, the area surrounding Lyon represented nearly 10% of the total population of France. Fifty-one percent of the region's employment lay in the tertiary sector. Industry was no longer the primary source of employment and income in Lyon, as the following chart demonstrates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>% Mean Annual Rate of Increase</th>
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<tr>
<td>1954-1962</td>
<td>+1.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>1962-1968</td>
<td>+0.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>1968-1975</td>
<td>+0.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>1975-1981</td>
<td>-1.8</td>
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</table>

Agriculture also experienced a serious decline in employment. In Lyon in 1954, 21% of the labor force
was employed in agriculture. By 1980, that figure had declined to 5%. In 1982, the total unemployment rate for Lyon had risen to 10%.

A scandal struck the Collomb administration on December 1, 1982, when 29 administrative employees of the Construction Corporation of Lyon (SACVL) sent a letter to Mayor Collomb accusing the president of SACVL, Jean Meriot, of granting permits for the construction of sixteen social service buildings to a private company without inviting competing bids. The scandal had several political implications. Fifty-five percent of SACVL was owned and controlled by the city of Lyon, and amongst its 12 administrators, 11 were municipal officials. Meriot, himself, was a political figure, a former Rhone deputy, a deputy-mayor responsible for traffic, vice-president of the urban community and a close personal friend of Mayor Collomb's. In addition, he had been promised to head Collomb's list in the second district for the upcoming municipal election. As the scandal grew, he was forced to step down as head, although he did remain a candidate for a council seat.

Other currents were flowing through Lyon in the months preceding the March 1983 elections. Problems were caused by the concentration of immigrants in certain areas of the city, despite the administration's efforts to re-distribute them. As certain districts in Lyon became overcrowded and poverty-stricken, the rates of delinquancy rose. on January 11, 1983, a gang known as the "New
Lyonnais" attacked two policemen. They sandwiched the police car between two other vehicles and opened fire on it. In response to public outrage over the incident, a force of 100 policemen was formed and, from January 17 to 22, they arrested 21 members of the gang, including thirteen women. However, the 33-year-old leader of the gang, along with one of his lieutenants known as "The Bison," escaped the raid and continued to commit acts of terrorism and to operate a large prostitution ring.

Public safety was thus promoted as a primary issue of the 1983 campaign, and more effective measures were demanded to stamp out this new breed of "gangsters."

One important administrative change preceded the 1983 municipal elections. The number of municipal council seats was increased from 61 to 73, in response to population growth within the city.

The municipal election of 1983 was described in Le Monde as "The War of the Three." Three principle candidates emerged as the mayoral race began: the incumbent Francois Collomb, Socialist Gerard Collomb (not related to the mayor), and RPR spokesman Michel Noir. The campaigns took as their theme not only the need for increased public safety, but the issue of age and the idea of a "new Lyon," contrasting 35-year-old Gerard Collomb and 39-year-old Michel Noir with the 72-year-old incumbent. Posters emphasized this. While F. Collomb proclaimed
"Lyon first," G. Collomb promised "Assure the future of Lyon" and Noir announced "Lyon, the heart, Lyon, the courage."\textsuperscript{28}

On January 9, Michel Noir presented those who headed his lists and declared that his campaign would center on five key words: energy, heart, rigor, courage and ambition. Estimating the maximum cost of his campaign as between 1,300,000 and 1,500,000 francs, Noir explained that his financial sources would be a support committee consisting of some 4300 Lyon RPR militants and the national RPR. Many contested these figures, claiming that it would be impossible to wage this kind of campaign for less than 3 million francs.\textsuperscript{29} He proposed a new contract for the city with three essential ideas: to freeze public expenditures, to solve the most urgent problems (quality of housing, safety, employment), and to assure greater participation for all Lyon citizens in the decision-making process.

Concurrently, on the Left, Gerard Collomb announced his intention to compose a union list with the PC, MRG and Ecologists. He declared that his campaign would be concentrated on five areas: social action, the economy, traffic and transportation, culture, and urbanism. On February 15, he presented his 221 candidates for the municipal and district councils. Emphasizing the priorities of the Left as housing, a city open to everyone, and the amelioration of the employment situation, G. Collomb
revealed that PS candidates would head eight of the municipal lists, while a PC candidate would head the list in the first district. 30

Francois Collomb chose to emphasize his record as the incumbent mayor throughout his campaign. On January 17, he announced that his priorities during a new term would include completion of a fourth Metro line, a revitalization of several of the larger city districts, the renovation of numerous city buildings, and more centrist politics. This last declaration prompted the UDF to mobilize in his favor, but F. Collomb carried a political liability in the form of the Meriot scandal. No longer was the Pradelian policy of apoliticism the prevalent view of the majority party.

Rhetoric dominated the campaigns. M. Noir declared "Lyon needs a breath of fresh air," F. Collomb responded "You don't have my experience." 31 Plans for ensuring safety in the city dominated the debates. Incumbent F. Collomb proposed the installation of a bodyguard for elderly women, since retired persons represented 35% of the city's population. Each district would sponsor approximately ten bodyguards who, upon receipt of a phone call, would go to the elderly woman's home, accompany her to her destination, and then take her home. 32 Noir felt that the answer lay in increasing the police force by 1000, and creating five additional police stations within each district. 33
G. Collomb chose to depict a potential Left victory as merely a continuation of Lyon's true heritage:

We are at a turning point. F. Collomb is the last descendent of the leftist line which was transformed by Victor Augagneur, by Herriot, and finally, by Pradel, elected by Socialist votes. No, this is not a rightist city. After the Commune, in 1871, Lyon took an independent socialist as mayor. It's simply that this leftist tradition has degenerated from socialism to the radicalism of Herriot. It was Pradel who took the most significant step in enlisting in his camp the ex-members of the SFIO.

It was F. Collomb who demonstrated how greatly the former Pradelian administration had changed when he declared: "No, we are not apolitical. We are non-aligned. That means that we are clearly in the national opposition."

The lists suffered under the double blow of a fall in the popularity of the PS at the national level and the preference of certain left-wing voters for tradition over change. Following the first ballot, the two Collombs faced each other in a run-off ballot. The results were decisive: a victory for Francois Collomb of 65.60%. The Left lost even in its strongholds of the eighth and ninth districts, leaving it in possession of only eleven seats on the municipal council.
NOTES FOR CHAPTER III


2Ibid., p. 348.


7Ibid., p. 135.


9*Combat*, 19 January 1971, p. 3.


11Ibid., 2 February 1971, p. 8.


62.
16 Ibid., p. 173.
18 Ibid., 13-14 February 1977, p. 6.
19 *L’Humanité*, 11 February 1977, p. 3.
20 Ibid., 15 March 1977, p. 4.
21 Ibid., 21 March 1977, p. 6.
24 Ibid., p. 149.
25 Ibid., p. 96.
27 Ibid., 10 February 1983, p. 10.
29 Ibid., 9-10 January 1983, p. 5.
32 Ibid., 10 February 1983, p. 10.
33 Ibid.
35 Ibid.
CHAPTER IV

RENNES

Since the fourth century A.D., when the Celts of Great Britain migrated to Brittany, Rennes has been a town of economic importance. Following a catastrophic fire in 1720, much of the ancient city was destroyed, and the classic style of architecture with which it was rebuilt provides a strong contrast with that of surrounding towns, giving it a more modern appearance. Twentieth-century Rennes is the administrative capital of the region, with a population of over 200,000, an established and prestigious university, direct air and rail links with Paris, and a wide range of specialized services and institutions.

Rennes lies at the heart of the Department of Ille-et-Vilaine, an area dominated by a highly agricultural population scattered mainly on small farms interrupted by two large towns, St. Malo and Rennes. Within the past twenty years, new industries have developed in the region, but the Rennes basin remains one of the best grain-farming centers in France. In the 1960s, industrial growth took hold, with the decentralization of electrical and electronics industries from Paris to Rennes. Rennes
became the host for the large laboratories of Rhone-Polenc, Kodak and Fairchild. In addition, Rennes benefited from the transfer of Citroen factories, which created 8,000 jobs in the city between 1962 and 1968. The late 1960s were marked by an exodus from rural areas in Brittany, and Rennes served as one of the urban absorption spots.

Despite the influx of a largely youthful population and the increase of industrialization, the Left in Rennes in the late 1960s amounted to little more than a small Communist party presence, unlikely to progress for want of a strong union base in the factories, and a PSU with a fairly strong base amongst certain members of the Rennes intelligentsia. With the omnipresent Catholic church and a tradition of resistance to Paris and its centralizing administrations, the prospects for implantation of leftist tradition seemed slight. The region’s political sympathies overwhelmingly went to the Right, either to Independents or to the MRP.

Preparation for the 1971 municipal elections in Rennes was marked by several well-publicized examples of city development. On January 2, 1971, an Olympic swimming pool was opened, completing the construction of a new sports complex, which included two indoor gymnasiums and one outdoor stadium measuring 1000 square meters. The new pool was capable of containing 1000 swimmers at a time, with seating for 11,000 spectators. Concurrently,
it was announced that a new factory specializing in the manufacture of miniaturized electronic components would be built in the industrial zone of Rennes. The factory, operated by the Telephonic Construction Company (CGCT), was to begin operation in the spring of 1972, employing 1200 to 5000 people.

These announcements provided great assistance to the re-election campaign of Henri Freville. Mayor of Rennes since 1953, Freville expressed his eagerness to follow the example of Nantes mayor Andre Morice in the institution of several large committees composed of up to 30 residents capable of giving advice on local problems and issues. Freville proposed this as the best way to quench what he described as a "thirst for collaboration" in Rennes.

A demonstration by approximately 1500 merchants on January 22, involving police action to quell the violence, seemed to emphasize the need for greater communication between residents and the municipal administration. Freville quickly proposed to hold a round table with representatives of the merchants.

On February 1, a Breton Communist party was created following a constitutional congress held in Rennes. The party was quick to mobilize and assemble a list for the March municipal race. Labeled as the United List for a Social, Modern and Democratic Administration, the list was led by Yves Brault, the Federation Secretary of the party.
This was not the only leftist list to challenge the Freville candidacy. A Socialist list was presented under the label Socialist Rennes. Emphasizing the ideological nature of the party, the Socialist slate was presented with no candidate leading the list as mayoral candidate. The candidates were listed alphabetically, and included representatives of the PSU and CIR, as well as Socialists.

These two leftist lists seemed little threat to the Center-Right coalition formed by Mayor Freville, the Republican Agreement for the Development of Rennes. Indeed, the only charges leveled at Freville involved the increased taxes necessary to fund the completion of the new sports center, which had become the focus of civic pride. Freville, a Democratic Centrist, labeled as "non-political" his list, which included members of the MRP, Centrists, Independents and one Radical.6

The list of 37 candidates included only 19 members of the incumbent municipal council. Amongst those not seeking re-election was Georges Graff, a deputy-mayor who had opposed Freville in several debates involving the constitution of Rennes' urban district. The majority of the other councillors were not seeking re-election for reasons of poor health or age, the mayor having all councillors older than 70 step down.

The new candidates for the council came from diverse backgrounds which, according to the mayor, would give his
team "an apolitical character, even if the men who make it up hold political opinions which could differ." These included three former members of the Federation of the Democratic and Socialist Left (FGDS), described by Freville as a "socializing influence."  

A short but violent incident took place on March 10 at the gate of the Citroen factories outside Rennes. Thirty militants, including fifteen candidates from the Socialist list, gathered at the gate to distribute political tracts. A group of workers leaving the factory on foot and in cars began to chase them, throwing stones and beating them with sticks. Grabbing the tracts from the militants' hands, the aggressors pushed a few of them into the dirt and then proceeded to beat and kick them. Others, in cars, attempted to run down the militants who were scattered along the road. Two council candidates were doused with oil, and a total of six civil complaints were registered with the Rennes police. A few days later, on March 13, approximately 2500 high school students marched through the city streets to the Three Cross Agricultural School, where they proceeded to expound upon charges that their rights had been violated. 

Mayor Freville remained relatively untouched by these conflicts. As a district official stated:

The mayor is wrong to take any criticism too personally, because everyone knows that the power of local officials is more and more limited, and that success can only come by working together.
Apparently, the majority of voters shared this view, as Freville's list was elected in March 1971 with 31,178 votes, 58% of those cast. The Communist list received 16.8%, while the Socialist slate demonstrated a surprisingly strong showing of support with 25% of the votes. Rennes entered a new municipal term with a council containing four Socialists, three Radicals, 16 Democratic Centrists, eight members of the UDR, three representatives of the CHI, and three Independents.

The great change in Rennes brought by the 1977 municipal election was preceded by several changes in the economic and demographic structure of the city. The population had grown by 93,000 since 1954 to a total of 229,000 in 1975, and the gradual decrease in the pace of industrialization had produced a high unemployment rate of 9.5%.

Mayor Freville had remained a firm proponent of "opposition centrism," voting regularly against the Government and serving as an example of a culture that retained enough of its Catholic and popular origins to think twice about unconditional support of Gaullism. Under Freville's leadership, Rennes had been controlled by a Center-Right council, demonstrating what municipal leadership could achieve when freed from the necessity of consensus politics. However, the Left had obtained 48% of the votes in the preceding presidential elections and
53% of the votes in the earlier cantonal elections. The fact that a percentage of the Centrist electorate was a popular one, coupled with the recent slowing in industrialization and the rise in unemployment, proved that Rennes could be vulnerable to a concerted leftist attack.

Additional concerns arose in February 1977. Late on the evening of February 5, an act of terrorism was committed by the Liberation Front of Brittany-Breton Republican Army (FLB-ARB) in Rennes. Two charges exploded by the north and south sides of the radio and television broadcasting center of Rennes, located in the new district of Colombier, where renovation of several old buildings had sparked public controversy. This incident represented the twenty-third attack by the secret Breton movement since June 1976. Four of these had occurred in Rennes since October against what were labeled "the symbols of the French occupation." These attacks served to dramatize the FLB-ARB's efforts to create a "free, socialist Breton state," by building a society without classes, restoring respect for Celtic history and tradition, and reinstituting the Breton language in Brittany. Every one of their attacks was accompanied by a letter in which they expressed their willingness to undertake a "real battle for national liberation," to fight until they were victorious.

Le Monde described the 1977 battle as a "university affair." Rennes boasted one of the finest universities
in the country, and the theses and books published locally featured municipal administration as one of their favorite themes. Mayor Freville exemplified the blending of academics and politics; as an historian, he had participated in the editing of a history of Rennes and had prepared a detailed study of power.

The campaign of March 1977 focused on a debate of ideas. The list on the Right was led by Jean-Pierre Chaudet, an Independent, and assisted by the presence of Yves Freville, the son of the mayor. Mayor Freville had officially designated Chaudet as his successor when, at 71 years of age, he announced that he would not run again. Chaudet had served under Freville as the deputy-mayor in charge of urbanism and economic development, and chose to present himself as the continuation of the Freville political dynasty.

The challenge from the Left was led by a young Socialist lawyer, Edmond Herve, and by geography professor and social activist Michel Philipponeau, whose text Changer la vie, changer la ville was published shortly before the election and became, to some, the debate at the heart of the campaign. The book criticized Mayor Freville's change from his original ideals to the single aim of achieving greater prestige, portraying an evolution in party members from Christian-Democrats to young, upwardly-mobile professionals.

According to Herve and the Left, it was only with the
assistance of Socialists and Democratic-Christians that Freville was elected 24 years ago, and the departure of Freville marked the end of a long reign of a Christian-Democratic tradition. In the preceding cantonal elections, three generations of Christian Democrats (Henri Freville, Henri Garnier and Gerard Pourchet) were beaten by Socialists. However, the 1977 elections also heralded a rejuvenation of the municipal administration, with 34-year-old Herve and 38-year-old Chaudet vying for the seat vacated by the 71-year-old Freville.

The Union of the Left contained four formations: the PS, with 24 candidates; the PC, with 12 candidates; 4 candidates from the Radical party; and the Breton Democratic Union, with two representatives. With a steadily increasing rate of unemployment, the Left was able to pose sufficient challenge to poll 48.6% of the votes to Chaudet's 42.4%, necessitating a second ballot. The Left did especially well in the most heavily populated districts, receiving 65% of the vote in the region inhabited by 2000 Citroen workers, and gaining a total of 6.5% over its totals from 1971. Following the second ballot, the Left surpassed the Chaudet list, receiving 44,578 votes, or 55.8%.

The 1977 municipals were thus marked by the exceptional success of the Union of the Left, due in large part to the unity of the Communist and Socialist coalitions. This change was of special significance in Rennes, in the
Catholic heartland of France, which Giscard had carried by a comfortable margin three years earlier.

In the years following the 1977 municipals, Rennes joined the rest of France in experiencing a change in economic structure. In 1954, 49% of the Rennes population had been employed in agriculture; by 1980, that figure had dropped to 20%.\(^\text{20}\) This shift was accompanied by an increase in the secondary sector, so that by 1981, approximately 30% of the workforce was employed in industry-related fields, principally aeronautics, shipbuilding, electronics and automobile manufacture.\(^\text{21}\) Unfortunately, these changes were also marked by a rise in unemployment to nearly 12% by 1982.

As the time for the 1983 municipals drew near, the national government made several concessions to those demanding greater regional autonomy. Primary among these was the legalization of the teaching of Breton, Basque and other regional languages in elementary and secondary schools, as well as the allocation of funds for training teachers in these languages.

This gesture by the Socialist government received very favorable response in Rennes. Mitterrand had easily carried the city in the 1981 presidential election, receiving 56.3% of the votes cast.\(^\text{22}\) Mayor Herve relied on his personal popularity and close ties, as Minister of Energy, with the national government to help ensure
an easy victory. He presented a Union list containing 33 PS, 13PC, 4 PSU, 4 Radicals, 2 representatives of the Union for a Democratic Brittany, and 3 Independents.

Since there was little public doubt expressed over the election results, voter turnout was low. As a result, neither Herve nor the opposition was able to poll a majority of the votes, thus necessitating a second ballot. During the interim between the two ballots, the only real campaigning of the election occurred, as each party urged its members to vote. A small conflict occurred when Herve refused to give four places on his list to the Ecologists. Champaud, the leader of the opposition, immediately offered four seats to the Ecologists but they refused, unwilling to "contribute to reinstating" the Right in Rennes.

However, with increased participation in the second ballot, Herve easily won re-election with 53% of the vote. Despite national disenchantment with Socialist policies, the increased regional autonomy granted by the Socialists prompted Rennes to continue its eager embrace of the new ideology.
NOTES FOR CHAPTER IV

1 Thompson, p. 349.
2 Bell, p. 126.
3 Ibid.
4 L'Huma'nit'e, 4 January 1971, p. 4.
5 Le Monde, 10 February 1971, p. 9.
6 Combat, 26 February 1971, p. 3.
7 Le Monde, 26 February 1971, p. 12.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid., 10 February 1971, p. 9.
10 L'Huma'nit'e, 15 March 1971, p. 7.
12 Parodi, p. 173.
13 Bell, p. 126.
14 L'Huma'nit'e, 9 March 1977, p. 3.
15 Le Monde, 8 February 1977, p. 19.
16 Ibid., 22 February 1977, p. 10.
17 L'Huma'nit'e, 14 March 1977, p. 5.
18 Ibid., 16 March 1977, p. 6.
19 Ibid., 21 March 1977, p. 6.
20 Tuppen, The Economic Geography of France, p. 96.
21 Ibid., p. 232.
22 Le Monde, 8 March 1983, p. 17.
23 Ibid., 15 March 1983, p. 16.
CHAPTER V

NANTES

Nantes has long enjoyed a role as a prosperous shipping center thanks to its location about 30 miles from the point at which the Loire River flows into the ocean. Considered by many as the principal city in western France, it serves as the link between the Atlantic and the rest of the country. During the days of Brittany's autonomy, Nantes was its capital city; today, with a population of nearly 250,000, it has the largest shipbuilding industry in France.

While Nantes is renowned for shipping, it also serves as an important industrial center for food processing, engineering, and chemical production. The shipbuilding, refining and engineering firms are located close to the port and, in recent years, have experienced a sharp decline in activity; the lighter branches of industry located in the city's periphery have had a higher growth rate. Agriculture and horticulture have been confined to the zone encircling Nantes, and the city has remained principally an industrial town. The period from 1954 showed a sharp decline in the proportion of the labor force working in agriculture, falling from 42% in 1954 to 18% in 1980. As industry suffered an economic crisis in the
1980s, Nantes experienced a sharp rise in unemployment, growing to more than 12% in 1982, greater than that experienced by either Lyon or Rennes. Thus, an industrial environment likely to favor the development of socialism continued to suffer under a Socialist presidency.

In the months immediately preceding the municipal elections of 1971, Nantes was plagued by unrest centering in the factories. An especially severe incident occurred on January 16 at the Batignolles boiler works factory which employed 1850 people. The CFDT and CGT had urged their union members to stop work for two hours in order to strengthen their position in negotiations with management. During the work stoppage, a group of 300 workers headed for the managerial offices. Twenty managed to enter and committed severe damage to the office of the chief of personnel, breaking typewriters, phones, and a bulletin board while the six secretaries left the office by a window. One hour later, additional trouble broke out in the factory, resulting in tens of thousands of francs worth of damage.

The unrest at Batignolles succeeded in disturbing the social peace of Nantes. Since the factory workers share a common apprenticeship and thus form a closely-knit community, there was grave concern that the entire city would be divided by unrest. After three days of a
closed factory, the Batignolles workers decided to strike, even though the CGT favored a return to work. To aid the families of striking workers, the mayor's office solicited funds to provide free school lunches for children and to deliver loaves of bread. As factory workers regularly rallied in the town and marched on various government offices, their numbers were augmented by students and other workers.

With this background, preparations began for the March elections. The Socialist party's section decided to remain part of the coalition list prepared by Mayor Andre Morice, president of the party known as the Centre republicain. This list included 10 Socialists, 8 members of the Rassemblement democratique, 13 Independents, and four who were non-aligned.

Mayor Morice had been praised for his idea of forming commissions of up to 30 residents capable of giving advice on local problems to the Mayor and his team. Created in 1965, these commissions had facilitated communication between the community and its administrators, and were especially admired by Mayor Henri Freville of Rennes, who used them as the focus of his campaign for re-election.

As the strike continued, two other lists formed to challenge Morice. One was led by conservative Albert Dassie of the UDR; the other, titled "the united list for a modern, socialist and democratic administration," was led by Michel Moreau of the PC and attempted to capitalize
on the atmosphere of the strike to underscore the need for change in all facets of management.

In February, the faculties of law and economics of the University of Nantes launched their own strike. Soon, police became a semi-permanent presence around the campus. Clearly, the resulting intellectual malaise contributed to the technical and industrial malaise Nantes already suffered.

Fortunately for the incumbent mayor, the 46 days of general strike ended on March 2, two weeks before the election. The resulting atmosphere of relief and renewed urban energy was sufficient to ensure re-election for Morice and his list in the first round of voting. Receiving 58.2% of the votes cast, Morice surpassed the 26.2% received by the UDR and the 15.6% of the PC challengers. The new municipal council comprised 14 Socialists, 3 Republicans, 4 Unionists, 3 Democrats, 2 of the Action sociale, and 11 Independents.

While the Socialists were, in effect, junior members of Morice's centrist coalition in 1971, by 1977 they had gained the political experience and recognition necessary to gain votes on their own. In January of 1977, the national PS declared that the strategy of the Union of the Left would be enforced in the upcoming municipal elections. The Nantes Socialist councillors who refused to abandon the coalition which had brought them into
office were expelled from the party.

Simultaneously, the Democratic Breton Union (a militant regional group seeking a Socialist Brittany) announced its intention to present its own list. This decision was sparked by the refusal of the three leftist parties, the PS, PC and MRG, to allow the Breton group to participate in the Union of the Left. The Union list preferred to remain remote from any charges of militancy, allocating 25 seats to the PS, 15 to the PC (instead of the 17 it had requested), and 7 to the Radicals.7

On February 3, the incumbent mayor, Morice, presented the list which he would head. He emphasized that his list was "apolitical," consisting of 8 Democratic Socialists, 8 members of the CNIP, 7 CR, 6 RPR, 6 RI, 6 members of the CDS, and 7 other leftist representatives. Among the candidates was Loic Sparfel, president of the University of Nantes.8

Morice counted on the fact that, ever since the Liberation, Communists and Socialists had never been truly united in Nantes. The modification of the electoral law in 1964 ousted the PCF from City Hall, while the Socialists entered as part of Morice's team. This majority coalition, described as "a great national reunion," ranged from the extreme Right, with partisans of French Algeria, to the SFIO. In 1971, Morice had easily defeated the Gaullist and Communist lists, but by 1977, the arrival
of many more militant Socialists dissolved the federation. However, the union between the PC and PS was tenuous at best, with the PC, especially, dubious of the fidelity of its partner.

During the first round of voting, the Union of the Left received 44% of the vote, barely surpassing the 43.7% received by Morice's list, while other small Left-wing parties earned 12%. But during the second round the Left scored an equally narrow and surprising success; it was victorious with 50.29% of the votes cast.

Thus, two characteristics of the 1977 municipal elections are of particular significance: the remarkable success of the Union of the Left and the electoral bonus because of this unity. Presenting joint lists in 200 of the 221 large cities, in many cases representing a change from a Socialist-Centrist to a Socialist-Communist coalition, the Left gained control of 159 of the 221 cities. Cities with populations greater than 30,000 led by Socialist administrations passed from 47 in 1971 to 81 in 1977.

The Socialist victory of 1977 proved an effective harbinger of national victory in 1981. Mitterrand scored 51.55% of the votes in Nantes to the 48.44% won by Giscard. However, by 1983, as unemployment continued unabated, and the economic growth promised by the national government failed to touch Nantes' industries, electoral sentiment was quite different. In January,
the Union of the Left led by incumbent mayor Alain Chenard presented its list for the March municipal elections. Included were representatives of the PS, PC, MRG, UDG and the left-wing Gaullists. The opposition's list was led by Michel Chauty, a senator and representative of the RPR. In addition, two other lists were announced in February. One of these, with an extreme Left platform, united two small far-Left parties. The other, entitled "Nantes First," was led by Andre Routier Preuvost, former member of the SFIO and assistant to former mayor Morice.

The presence of three diverse lists on the Left, facing a united opposition, demonstrated the ineffectiveness of the Socialist administration. This was validated in the election results, where the opposition received 50.48% of the votes to the 39.7% received by the Union of the Left. The 1983 Council was made up of 16 RPR, 16 UDF, 8 CNIP, 8 Moderates, 7 PS, 3 PC, 1 UDB, 1 MRG, and 1 Gaullist; 26 Socialists and 15 Communists had to relinquish their seats.

The defeat was compounded by uneven voter participation. In the more exclusive residential districts, voter participation stood at 97%, while it was no more than 55% in the working- and middle-class districts. As the "symbol of the conquest of the West" in 1977, the loss of Nantes was a severe blow to the Socialist party.
NOTES FOR CHAPTER V


2 Thompson, p. 362.

3 Combat, 18 January 1971, p. 4.


8 Ibid., 8 February 1977, p. 9.


10 Ibid., 21 March 1977, p. 6.

11 Frears, p. 235.

12 L'Humanite, 22 March 1977, p. 4.


14 Ibid.

15 Ibid.
CHAPTER VI
CONCLUSION

The municipal elections of Nantes, Rennes and Lyon provide evidence that, under certain conditions, national politics follow the dictates of local experience. The rise to power of the Socialists in Rennes and Nantes in 1977, mirrored by the consolidation of Socialist forces in Lyon, paved the way for the national victory of Francois Mitterrand. The disaffection with Socialist policies demonstrated by the 1983 municipal election results in Lyon and Nantes, while Rennes benefitted from increased regional autonomy under the early days of its Socialist administration, are much more typical of the regional sentiment in 1983.

As discussed in Chapter I, local elections can have significant relevance for politics on a national scale. The rise of the Socialist party in Lyon, Rennes and Nantes during the period of 1971 to 1983 is not an isolated example, but rather illustrated the factors necessary for a party to most effectively develop political strategy on the municipal level.

The first, and perhaps most vital, factor is the presence of a decentralized government. In the decen-
nalized governments illustrated by France and West Germany, political parties are able to demonstrate their ability to govern in a municipal forum, as well as exercising their skills at implementing policies and shaping regional concerns. In France, local authorities are able to implement their policies independently, developing their own budgets and financing. This makes local political power even more useful to parties than it would be in a country such as Britain, where financial power is tightly controlled by Westminster. Thus, for a political party to develop its skills while demonstrating those skills to the voting public, local politics must be free of the regionalism and dependence on a remote national government which marks politics in Britain.

A second important factor is the element of significant voter participation in municipal elections, as in France and West Germany. In France, generally 3/4 of the population vote in municipal elections, while the figure for Germany ranges from 50-85% as stated earlier. Lacking the participation of at least one-half of the population, election results can not be regarded as a tool for predicting a party's support on the regional level.

Third, it is valuable for the political party to have in its recent history a certain exclusion from power at the national level, exemplified by the Left in both France and Italy. In France, the Left was able to represent a significant change to voters disaffected by the unemployment,
inflation and unrest which had occurred under a Conserva
tive administration. Not only were the Left's policies and principles significantly new, they had also been absent from power long enough to seem fresh and untainted by the failures of past administrations. In Italy, the transition has been occurring gradually, as the PCI makes inroads on a municipal level to the political power long held by the Christian Democratic party. Thus, the voters look to these parties with hope and the belief that they represent a will for change.

Finally, it is important for the party to maintain a flexible attitude toward coalition-building. The party leadership must be willing to form effective coalitions, such as those with the PC that aided early PS victories, yet able to dissolve those coalitions and stand alone as soon as those alliances become liabilities. The municipal victories also serve as important testing grounds for coalitions, proving their ability to shy away from extremes and yet govern effectively, as in the successful lists formed by Mayor Louis Pradel of Lyon.

In sum, these four factors can determine the national relevance of local elections. Lacking them, in countries such as Britain, it is much more difficult for a party to build a national strategy based upon municipal efforts. However, with these four factors present, a party may build municipal victories into a national mandate.
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VITA

Heather Allison Lehr


The author is currently an editor with Villard Books, a division of Random House, Inc., in New York.