

**GAULLISM and the LIBERAL
CHALLENGE - How Parties Change their Programmes**

The Case of the Rassemblement pour la République, 1978-1986.

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of Doctor of Philosophy at the London School of Economics and Political
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ABSTRACT

During the first half of the 1980s, the Gaullist *Rassemblement pour la République* (RPR) abandoned the state interventionism which had been its traditional economic policy, while it was the dominant party in French politics during the 1960s, in favour of a liberalism which stressed individual responsibility and the free play of market forces. This thesis attempts both to describe what happened and to discuss the implications of such a dramatic reversal for theories of party behaviour.

The first three chapters are introductory; the first summarizes contemporary explanations of party behaviour, the second is a detailed exposition of the programmatic changes which took place between 1978 and 1986, and the third recounts the political contexts in which the Gaullists acted from 1969 onwards.

Each of the next three chapters examines a single possible explanation of programme change. These are respectively organizational changes, generational or sociological changes, and an explanation based on the competition for votes. While each of these throws some light on what happened in the RPR, it is argued that they are not enough to account for the denial of previous party orthodoxy.

The party's ideological development is more readily explained by long-run changes in the climate of ideas in society generally, described in chapters 7 and 8, the source of a synthesis which could articulate the interests of an alliance of technocrats and the party's business friends who, as we show in chapters 9 and 10, exerted considerable influence on the drafting of new party programmes. Chapter 11 is devoted to an attempt to give a balanced interpretation of the different variables already mentioned.

Acknowledgements

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In Paris, I was fortunate to be able to discuss my work with Professor Jacques Lagroye of the University of Paris (1), and to discuss their work with a score or so of Gaullist politicians, who are acknowledged individually in the list of sources. My biggest debt is owed to Ross Harrold and Yveline Aumont, whose hospitality allowed me to keep going when I was ready to give up, and who, like my wife Christine, constantly reassured me that clear thinking about the society we live in is independent of academic titles.

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Chapter 1 Introduction - the Causes of Party Programme Change

What factors determine the content of political party programmes? The first intuitive answer to this question would probably be, "The contents of previous party programmes." The second would be, "Voters' wishes, as expressed in opinion polls". Sometimes, however, parties change their programmes dramatically enough to make us suspect that other factors than vote-winning alone account for programme-content, factors neglected perhaps because they have been masked by the long-term continuity of most programmes, or because changes have been regarded as minor, and attributed to the day-to-day rivalries of the political game.

This thesis examines the causes of one such programme change, the transformation of its economic policy in the first half of the 1980s by the *Rassemblement pour la République* (RPR). The notion of "programme" here includes not only the printed texts issued by the RPR in 1980 and 1984 and the platform on which the party leader, Jacques Chirac ran for the presidency in 1981, together with certain of his statements made between 1981 and 1986, but also the writings and characteristic policies of General de Gaulle, founder of the political movement from which the RPR claims descent. We will also refer to the joint platform on which the RPR fought the 1986 elections in partnership with the *Union pour la Démocratie Française* (UDF), and to certain policies carried out by the RPR-UDF government between 1986 and 1988. In other words, by "programme" we mean the stances of party leaders and the characteristic representations of policy made in the course of everyday party competition. Programmes may sometimes be amended to serve strategic aims, but alternatively parties may plan their strategy around defence of the programme. Programmes can be

more or less tactical constructions, and more or less ideological - and they are in turn an element of *party behaviour*. Hopefully, this study of programme change will contribute to the long-term efforts of political scientists to establish typologies of what parties are and what they do.

In this chapter we discuss four main approaches to programme content as defined in this way. The sociological and the market approaches are well-known; the latter has for some years been at the root of explanations of a variety of party behaviours, which it treats as mainly determined by the party's need to win votes in competition with its rivals in a political market. The organizational approach, in the version revived by Angelo Panebianco, became available to English readers in 1988.¹ The fourth approach is a synthetic one which draws on recent articles by Jean Charlot and Jacques Lagroye.²

Most theories of party behaviour accept some interaction of different causes to produce behavioural outcomes and concede a degree of explanatory power to the different approaches. The sociological approach admits that party leaders and members must have some regard to the need to win votes. The market approach accepts that adoption of vote-winning strategies is constrained both by the members' shared aims and interests, and by the way these are organized or represented within the party, while the organizational approach in turn regards sociology and the demands of the political market as challenges to which the organization must respond.

A *synthetic* explanation of party programme content, as its name implies, attempts to combine a number of variables in accounting for party behaviour. The synthetic approach is qualitatively different from each of the above, however, not because it attempts to assign equal weight to each of the variables, (they are more likely to be of different weights for

different parties), but because the factors thought to account for party behaviour are chiefly exogenous. If a continuum is imagined, with endogenous models at one end, and exogenous at the other, the sociological and organizational approaches would be near the endogenous end of the scale, with the market and synthetic approaches at the opposite end. But, for the market approach, the external factors accounting for party behaviour are restricted to the political market narrowly defined in terms of opinion polls, electoral contests and the actions of a certain number of relevant competing parties. The synthetic approach sees party behaviour as determined by a much larger range of external variables. A Marxist explanation of party behaviour would be a special case of the synthetic approach, assigning a key role to the class struggle, structured by changes in the relations of production, themselves provoked by the transformation of the means of production.

The value of an approach which seeks to explain effects by reference to multiple causes is debatable. It may be objected that, in any branch of knowledge, synthetic approaches result only in an infinite number of special cases. Highly productive of precise descriptions, they are unproductive of the paradigms which advance knowledge by positing *general* explanations which are then tested and refined by application to specific cases. Marxists would reply that the imposition on reality of discrete frames of reference, derived from a limited, bourgeois understanding of political struggle, serves to mask the connections between social events rather than to advance knowledge.

But one does not have to be a Marxist to be dissatisfied with existing approaches to the analysis of party behaviour. Their respective limitations have recently been underlined by two distinguished French

scholars who have adopted a more synthetic approach.³ This study of the Gaullist party in the 1980s, although begun before those articles were published, can be seen as the application of a synthetic approach to a particular case. In the rest of this chapter, we justify this angle of attack by outlining the different approaches in turn.

The Sociological Approach

A purely sociological approach would attempt to explain the programme content of any party by reference to the interests or characteristic values of groups assumed to play a dominant role within it.⁴ There is little evidence of a generalized link of this kind. Although we are familiar, since Robert Michels,⁵ with the idea that the aspirations of a party's members might be negated by the preoccupations of a bureaucratic caste of leaders, a 1980 study of 8 European Social Democratic parties found no link in the reverse direction, that is, no systematic correlation between leaders' social class and the policy stances of elected representatives.⁶ On the other hand, research in American politics found evidence that activists in the major parties amended their own stances on certain issues in response to shifting voter preferences.⁷

The sociological approach has been used to account for the content of right-wing programmes in France in the 1980s, by Frémontier⁸ in describing the characteristic values of a new generation of elected local government officials, and by Ysmal⁹ in relation to both the membership and electorate of the right-wing parties. In neither case was any account taken of the contribution of members of these groups to the actual process of programme-writing. No wonder that Panebianco has described this sort of vague juxtaposition of membership and party behaviour as evidence of a "sociological prejudice", which systematically underestimates parties'

ability to mould the preferences of their own followers.¹⁰ It is particularly inappropriate to apply the sociological approach to a party with virtually no internal democracy, in which all important decisions are monopolized by a narrow elite - the case of the RPR in the early 1980s, as we show in chapter 4. Nevertheless, in even the least democratic of parties, sociology may operate as a kind of controlling factor, setting limits on what the leadership may be able to get away with. We deal with the sociology of the RPR membership in this sense in chapter 9, while Frémontier's "discoveries" are dealt with in chapter 5, in the context of the party grass roots' contribution to programme change.

The Market Approach

The political market approach to party behaviour is based on the most visible and directly comprehensible of the roles traditionally assigned to parties - contesting elections and, if successful, supplying personnel to fill government posts. The paradigmatic version of the market approach was elaborated by Anthony Downs¹¹ in 1957. Since he wrote that

parties formulate policies in order to win elections,
rather than win elections in order to formulate
policies,¹²

his approach has achieved unparalleled influence in the politics departments of western universities, from which have emerged a succession of models, all assuming that winning elections is parties' overriding aim, and correspondingly neglecting other determinants of programme content. The market approach has given us Kirchheimer's de-ideologized "catch-all" party,¹³ and its French version, the "electoral" party, applied to the Gaullists of the 1960s and 1970s by Charlot and Lecomte.¹⁴ For Sartori¹⁵, parties' "position manoeuvring" is constrained by little more than the activities of other parties in adjacent positions within an assumed

"continuum". For Budge and Fairlie, parties' "selective emphasis"¹⁵ of certain items in their programme depends more on their assumed popularity with the electorate, while other parties are ignored.

Although the above are examples of vote-maximization models, the market approach also incorporates *vote-production* models of party strategy,¹⁶ the latter usually applied to social-democratic parties which seek to structure their electorate by means of cradle-to-grave social support networks.¹⁷ In the UK however, a recent account has applied it to both Labour and Conservative parties, which are alleged to structure their electorates by astute manipulation of state or sub-state resources.¹⁸

Research on many aspects of the party-voter linkage in the 1980s seemed to have powerfully vindicated the market approach to party behaviour. Voters are no longer faithfully attached, as they used to be, to the same party, for whom they vote at election after election, new social and issue cleavages have disturbed the size and shape of party systems,¹⁹ while parties themselves have been able to call on a battery of increasingly sophisticated techniques to market their messages, thus freeing themselves from the need to recruit and reward an army of enthusiastic and campaigning members.²⁰ Unencumbered by strong ideological traditions, freed by state subsidy from reliance on unruly members, prepared to moderate its policies in pursuit of unattached voters whose preferences can in turn to an extent be moulded to suit party strategy, by the end of the 1980s,

Party increasingly becomes an organization of leaders rather than of citizens. . . . a label by which a group of leaders is known and an organization for co-ordinating elite activity.²¹

It is not surprising, then, to find that the only discussion of the

RPR's programmatic development in the 1980s to have appeared in a British scholarly journal has adopted the classic market approach, treating the party as "sandwiched" between its rivals, and moderating its programme with the aim of winning the votes available in its part of the market.²²

Yet in chapter 6 we show that the market approach gives a fundamentally misleading account of the RPR's programme change. However well it accounts for some aspects of parties' behaviour, such as their reliance on the media and the abandonment of mass integration strategies, the market approach is a poor explainer of programme content and of ideology generally. It neglects not only the sociological and organizational characteristics of parties themselves, but also many factors operating in wider society, outside the narrow domain of party competition.

Its most glaring inadequacy is its inability to predict party behaviour which runs counter to vote-winning. The fact that the Labour party twice, in 1983 and 1987, went to the polls with a defence policy widely regarded as a vote loser is usually attributed to Labour's relatively democratic internal regime and the membership's reluctance to jettison long-standing convictions. But how are we to explain Walter Mondale's promise to raise taxes in 1984, or the RPR's promise to cut taxes for the rich in 1986?

As Dunleavy and Husbands have noted,²³ it is because parties cannot "wish away" their leaders' or their members' ideological convictions, nor voters' perceptions of what the parties stand for, which are structured by history, the party's record in power, and the political messages of other opinion-formers such as business, government agencies, the media, and non-party political movements, that party programmes cannot be amended at will

to suit market conditions. From that dilemma these authors constructed their self-styled "radical"²⁴ model of party behaviour, according to which leaders fall back on manipulating voters' preferences, so that they

can simultaneously preserve continuity with past policy, satisfy their own ideological convictions, prevent damaging divisions inside their party and try to create increased electoral support.²⁵

According to the authors the ideological convictions of party leaders are changed not by direct inner-party discussions, but rather by long-run trends in the patterns of membership and recruitment, and these in turn are

rarely explicable simply in terms of the party's internal affairs, but reflect broader social movements elsewhere in the economy and social system, spilling over into specific political implications.²⁶

As a result of this process, they argue, party positions change after "a lengthy time-lag." Furthermore, as well as this osmosis operating through the party, the same long-run social changes may influence party ideology by their direct effect on the perceptions of the party leaders.

This comes close to being a synthetic approach to party behaviour, similar to that adopted by Jacques Lagroye, (to whom we turn later.) Yet the "radical" authors give a rather cursory treatment of the transmission belts operating between developments in social and economic life, and those in the political sphere, suggesting at one point that the purpose of the British Conservatives' outlawing of some trade-union activity was to encourage voters "to extend 'guilt by association' to the rival party",²⁷ and ignoring the more obvious explanation - that the Conservatives were motivated more in this instance by their particular vision of the sort of society they believe in than by the tactics of inter-party competition.

Like Budge and Fairlie, with their "selective emphasis" model, the

"radical" authors have produced what is really no more than a model of party tactics which cannot explain party behaviour otherwise than in terms of the political market narrowly defined. But other writers have taken up some of the points raised by Dunleavy and Husbands, and turned them into more wide-ranging critiques of the market model. The most systematic of these is the organizational approach of Angelo Panebianco

The Organizational Approach

Panebianco has given us an original and systematic account of party behaviour, containing many fruitful insights too numerous to summarize here. Particularly refreshing is his forthright rejection of the "teleological prejudice" that party behaviour depends above all on the search for votes, because it cannot explain why

parties so frequently adopt courses of action predictably destined to penalize them electorally, or at least act in ways which will not procure them electoral gains.²⁹

The treatment of programme content, however, is one of the least satisfactory elements of his work. He starts out, commendably enough, by dismissing the view that party behaviour can be deduced from formally proclaimed ideology.³⁰ The content of parties' programmes, or their "ends", as Panebianco calls them, is not identical to the party's founding ideology, its "official aims",³¹ but the latter are maintained and defended by the leadership (the "dominant coalition") to the extent that their existence fulfils certain internal and external functions. Internally, the maintenance of ideology serves the function of distributing "collective incentives" to the rank and file members, for whom belief and participation in the shared effort to achieve the official aims constitutes the primary reward of their membership.³¹ Externally, ideology is bound up with the defence of what Panebianco calls the party's

hunting-ground, ie. the part of the environment targeted by the organization's ideology, which the organization must control if it is to maintain its identity.³²

A "crucial aspect"³³ of party behaviour is the conquest or defence of electoral "domains" in the form of party competition;

The competitor, in laying claim to another party's hunting ground, threatens the latter's identity and destabilizes it; the dominant coalition must deny the competitor's claim to the hunting ground in order to preserve its identity (both in reference to the hunting-ground itself - the party's social base - and to the party members).³⁴

This seems rather nebulous until we realize that Panebianco is thinking particularly of parties whose potential electorate forms a homogeneous group delimited by factors other than the party's own efforts;

If a religious party loses part of its electorate to a new religious party, the result is more than an electoral defeat because the party's very identity is at stake. (Such a party could)...bear the loss of a portion of the secular electorate better than a smaller part of the religious electorate. Analogously, a workers' party can more easily stand a loss in its bourgeois electorste than in its worker electorate.³⁵

This would seem to mean that Panebianco's account of externally-oriented behaviour undertaken in defence of ideology applies only to parties whose electoral effort is chiefly targeted on such homogeneous groups. On this reading, it is difficult to see what kind of electoral reverse could threaten a conservative or a merely electoral party's identity and provoke a vigorous restatement of its "official aims".

In this study of a single party we cannot test Panebianco's most original proposition, that *all* parties' behaviour can be predicted by reference to their organizational characteristics, that is, their institutional strength and the degrees of stability and cohesion possessed by their "dominant coalitions".³⁶ He also suggests, however, that in every

case programmatic change is accompanied by some kind of inner-party organizational clash. Like Dunleavy and Husbands, he regards committed members or party bureaucrats as factors which inhibit the leadership's ability to tamper with the party's official ideology at will.³⁷ Such tampering will be easier for leaders of parties in which the office-holders are motivated by career or material incentives rather than by ideological commitment.³⁸ But Panebianco, comes up with a much stronger formulation than that offered by Dunleavy and Husbands, who leave open the possibility that leaders and members can amend their programmatic stances in tandem, in response to events arising outside the party. He believes that organizational characteristics are so decisive that organizational change is a necessary condition for programmatic change;

No party can effect a genuine substitution of ends without such transformations.³⁹

This is a proposition which can easily be tested empirically. We examine the RPR's organizational structure in chapter 4, and return to Panebianco's suggestion in our concluding chapter. Panebianco certainly overreaches himself, however, in attempting to demonstrate that a 1975 rule-change in the British Conservative Party - which allegedly turned the party leader into the "hostage" of Tory backbenchers - was a *sufficient* condition for ideological change, that is the radicalization of Conservative policies.⁴⁰ Crewe and Searing⁴¹ have recently shown just how few Conservative MPs share Mrs. Thatcher's beliefs. Clearly, Panebianco would have done better to consult one of the many synthetic accounts which locate the Conservatives' radicalization, in the broader context of political struggle in Britain in the 1970s.⁴²

In principle, Panebianco allows that changes in party behaviour can

be endogenous or exogenous, arising mainly from within the organization, or provoked primarily by outside events. For him, every party is an organization permanently in contact with its environment, which it can either adapt to or attempt to dominate, as external changes challenge both the equilibrium normally established between party behaviour, ends, and organizational physiognomy, and the leadership's efforts to safeguard the party's stability by harmonizing these three factors.⁴³ The organizational focus is therefore compatible with a synthetic reading of party behaviour, on condition that outside events are considered the primary agents of change, whose impact on parties is mediated differentially by the organizational criteria Panebianco has outlined. But Panebianco's bias towards an endogenous explanation of party behaviour, evident in his treatment of the UK Conservatives, results in an unsatisfactory account of ideology and is unable on its own to account for programmatic development in modern parties.

Ironically, in his last chapter, Panebianco notes that mass integration parties are less and less common; all parties are under pressure to conform to an "electoral-professional" model, de-ideologized and freed from reliance on a mass membership, of the type described above.⁴⁴ Absolved both from the need to defend the party's identity against trespassers on the hunting ground, and from the need to distribute collective benefits to the members, the leaders of such parties seemingly can amend or invent programmes as they wish. The organizational approach therefore leaves us with the question we began with - if not organizational pressures, then what factors structure the changing content of party programmes?

The synthetic approach

According to Jean Charlot, at the time of Duverger's *Political Parties*⁴⁵, there was a risk of forcing the complex and largely unexplored world of parties and party-systems into too reductionist a framework.

Today, the problem is rather the reverse;

So much complexity and so many different meanings have been attributed to political parties, that they seem to have imploded, losing their unity and almost ceasing to exist for political scientists. Fortunately, . . . a few specialists have tried to reconstruct the object known as "party" by redefining the concept. It is doubtless by taking these efforts at synthesis as our starting point that we can advance theorizing about and knowledge of political parties.⁴⁶

Charlot's approach to party behaviour arises, then, from the need to synthesize the results of existing research. In another passage, however, we can find an admirable summary of the definition we have given above of the synthetic approach;

In order to understand what parties are, it is better to start from the whole (the political, economic, social, and cultural system, and the party system) than from the parts (the party), without forgetting, however, the element of autonomy enjoyed by the parts, which are not at the service of the whole.⁴⁷

While Charlot is interested mainly in using a synthetic approach to define the *functions* of parties, his colleague Jacques Lagroye seeks to identify the factors which allow us to assign the label "party" to a given organization, to isolate the activities which are proper to parties, and, eventually, to identify a single partisan entity across changes in generation, organization or official party label. Although he does not use the term "synthesis", he asserts that party activity conforms to continually evolving unwritten norms and rules which are the accretion of social events contributing to the formation of a "political terrain"

(*champ politique* an area of relationships and rivalries moulded by a multitude of social processes, including the evolution of institutions (churches, unions, etc.), of different social groups, and their habits, (patterns of consumption, trade, etc.) and of changing ways of expressing relations between groups and between individuals.⁴⁹ The party system is the "manifest form" of the *champ politique*.⁴⁹

It is not difficult to see the contribution which this schema could make to understanding how party programmes are constructed. To help us in this we have at our disposal another of Lagroye's concepts, the "organizational network", (*structure d'organisations*) based on the postulate that parties develop long-term links to a common network of organizations fulfilling distinct social functions, such as unions, cultural associations and professional groups. Despite their different roles these groups are linked by the fact that some individuals hold positions in two or more of them, by their partial identity of interests, by their mechanisms of socialization, and by a shared outlook or diffuse "ideology".⁵⁰ Lagroye thus expects the determinants of party behaviour to extend over a much larger field than the narrow one of party composition, and to include the characteristics of other organizations than the parties themselves;

In so far as it is inserted in an organizational network, a political party is affected by the transformations undergone by each of the other components of the network.⁵¹

This approach opens up lines of enquiry paralleling the sociological and organizational approaches, but which we may be able to exploit with greater precision than has been done in past. Lagroye refers not only to the need for Socialist and Communist parties to reorient their strategies

to take account of the sociological mutation of their electorates,⁵² (a factor readily predictable from observation of global sociological change), but also to more unpredictable changes in recruitment patterns, such as the influx of professionals, especially doctors, into the RPR during the 1980s,⁵³ (a development illuminated, as we show in chapter 9, by RPR members' activities in key doctors' organizations.) He refers not only to what can be the important organizational consequences of changes in electoral fortunes at local level,⁵⁴ but also, unlike Panebianco, to the role of chance in organizational change, citing the fact that Jacques Chirac was able to turn the Paris town hall into an important power-base for himself only because a rival from another party, Giscard d'Estaing, decided to amend the status of the Paris city government.⁵⁵

In using the synthetic approach to explain the RPR's programmatic development in the first half of the 1980s, we bear in mind that, as Lagroye himself notes, "external" developments only have an effect on party behaviour in so far as they are taken note of and brought into play by specific individuals or groups inside given parties.⁵⁶ We were able to confirm this by means of interviews with a score of middle-ranking party leaders. Thus, when Lagroye evokes

the weakening of the grip exerted by certain organizations liable to socialize and mobilize individuals,⁵⁷

we think of the transformation of the RPR's *Associations Ouvrières et Professionnelles* which we describe in chapters 8 and 9. To this example can be added the role played by the two non-party political clubs which also form part of the "organizational network" to which the RPR is attached. They are discussed in detail in chapter 8.

It now only remains to explain the order in which the issues raised

in this introduction will be dealt with in the rest of the book. In chapter 2 we make the case for the assertion that the *Rassemblement pour la République* operated an unusually dramatic transformation of its political programme between 1980 and 1986, abandoning traditional Gaullist interventionism in favour of the brand of economic liberalism contemporaneously in fashion in the USA and the UK. We also explain why we think this is interesting and important in itself. In chapter 3 we summarize the specifically French political context in which the transformation took place, beginning with the recent history of the Gaullist party and expanding the focus to take in other political forces as the story moves into the 1980s.

Chapter 4, in line with Panebianco's organizational approach, is devoted to an outline of the RPR power structure. It makes little sense to embark on a study of the external factors accounting for programme change unless we are sure to begin with where power lies in the organization and which groups or individuals might be in a position to influence policy. Our conclusion is that the RPR is a highly centralized party in which power is monopolized by a narrow leadership group. This implies that the party grass-roots had very little direct impact on programme content, so we consider, in chapter 5, whether there was an *indirect* transfer of ideas and values associated with liberalism from the base to the apex of the party during the period under consideration. Two broad themes are addressed. Firstly we consider evidence of citizen dissatisfaction with the smothering of personal responsibility implied by the omnipresent state, and the impact on RPR local politicians of citizen demands to take more control of their own lives. This is relevant both to the hypothesis that a hitherto stable pattern of politics in western democracies has been

disrupted by the rise of "post-materialist" or "post-industrialist" values in the manner described by Inglehardt⁵⁰, and to Dunleavy and Husbands' suggestion that "broader social movements elsewhere in the economy and social system" eventually spill over into the political arena. Secondly, we ask whether RPR grass roots politicians developed liberal economic ideas in response to the managerial problems involved in local government. In both cases, we show that the ideas of grass-roots politicians were to an extent affected by social developments external to the party, but this made no great impact on the party leadership.

In chapter 6 we test the market approach to party behaviour by asking to what extent the RPR's programme change was brought about by competition for votes with other parties. We show firstly that the RPR did not really compete on economic issues with other parties in the 1980s, and secondly that some items included in the new programme published in 1984 were inserted against the advice of the party's specialist opinion-testers that they were vote-losers. The market approach is unable to explain programme development in this case.

In chapters 7 and 8 we therefore cast our net further afield to consider long-run changes in political ideas occurring at first outside the party system which may have infected society generally, and specifically the "organizational network" to which the RPR belongs, before having the delayed "specific political implications" which Dunleavy and Husbands foresee. Here we find that ideas were imported not merely from outside the party system, but indeed from across the Atlantic, and introduced into the RPR both directly by leading party members and indirectly through the *Club de l'Horloge* a political club specifically targeted on the right-wing parties.

We continue the examination of transformations which may have affected the RPR's "organizational network" in chapter 9, at the same time considering whether the party sought to act as spokesman for specific interests. We find both that the French employers' organizations for various reasons became much more overtly liberal during the 1980s than they had been probably at any time since 1945, and that some of these organizations supplied influential members to help draft RPR programmes. Nevertheless, the liberal impulse provided from this part of the "organizational network" was partially blocked by the interests of a group of technocrats present elsewhere in the network. In chapter 10, finally, taking the progressive enlargement of focus a stage further, we show that the reinterpretation of their interests by both businessmen and technocrats in France was itself only fully explicable when placed in the context of developments in the world economy in the twenty years since the heyday of de Gaulle's presidency.

Notes to Chapter 1.

1. Angelo Panebianco, *Political Parties; Organization and Power*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988
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7. Dwaine Marvick, "Political Linkage Functions of Rival Party Activists in the US: Los Angeles 1969-74" in Lawson *op cit*, *Political Parties and Linkage*,... pp 100-128
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32. *ibidem* p 204
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40. *Ibidem* p 251
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45. Maurice Duverger, *Les Partis Politiques*, Paris, Colin, 1951
46. Charlot *op cit*, *La Théorie des Partis*, . . . , p 8; *Un trouve tant de signification et de complexité au parti politique qu'il implose et, perdant son unité, cesse pour ainsi dire d'exister aux yeux du politologue. Fort heureusement, conscients de ce danger, quelques spécialistes tentent de reconstruire l'objet "parti" en redéfinissant le concept. C'est sans doute en partant de ces essais de synthèse que l'on peut faire progresser la théorie et la connaissance des partis politiques.*
47. *Ibidem* p 6. *Pour comprendre la réalité partisane il vaut mieux partir du tout (le système politique, économique, social, culturel; le système des partis) que les éléments (le parti), sans oublier pour autant la part d'autonomie des éléments, qui ne sont pas au service du tout.*
48. Lagroye *op cit*, *Les Partis Changent-ils?* p 3bis
49. *Ibidem* p 8
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51. *Ibidem* p 9. *En tant qu'il est inséré dans une structure d'organisations, un parti politique est affecté par les transformations de toute autre composante de cet ensemble.*
52. *Ibidem* pp 13-14
53. *Ibidem* p 15
54. *Ibidem* p 16
55. *Ibidem* p 19
56. *Ibidem* p 5
57. *Ibidem* p 15. *On pourra simplement évoquer l'affaiblissement de l'emprise exercée par certaines organisations susceptibles de socialiser et de mobiliser les individus, . . .*
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Chapter 2 The Programmes Compared -

the transformation of Gaullist economic policy.

This chapter examines the nature and extent of changes in the Gaullist party's economic programme between 1979 and 1986. On February 10th 1981 Jacques Chirac, mayor of Paris and leader of the *Rassemblement pour la République* gave his first press conference of the campaign for the Presidential elections due to take place over two rounds of voting in early May. He surprised the political world by unveiling a programme which seemed to contradict the official position of his own party elaborated only the year before in a book-length programme, *Atout France*¹. As the campaign progressed, the candidate repeatedly tackled two main themes; unemployment, and the growth of income tax and social fund payments as a share of the gross national product. For both problems, Chirac had a single package of solutions; cut taxes and social charges, balance the budget by reducing the number of state employees and ending subsidization of unproductive activities, and firms will automatically expand their activities and begin to take on more workers.²

The message was punched home in a series of poster and full-page newspaper advertisements,

By looking after fewer things, the state will look
after them better,

so the candidate proposed,

purely and simply to abolish the useless and
meddlesome regulations which interfere with the lives
of the people³

In the event, Chirac did not win in May, but the Socialist victory in the Presidential election left him unrepentant about his dramatic change

of direction within months of the poll. In an interview during the summer he told *Le Monde* that he attributed his party's defeat to "inadaptation to the evolution of French society." ⁴

The Right's defeat nevertheless inaugurated a five-year period of reappraisal and reassessment which produced a flood of new books, pamphlets, conferences, debates and discussion circles, in which Chirac and the RPR played a prominent role. In a series of speeches and interviews, Chirac elaborated his new ideas on the best way to govern France. ⁵ Through a succession of working parties, *journées parlementaires*, national and extraordinary conferences, the RPR adapted what some had seen as a maverick Presidential election platform into the official party programme, *Libres et Responsables*, which appeared towards the end of 1984. ⁶

When compared to the last most recently published programme, that of 1980, and to past Gaullist practices during an unbroken spell of power from 1958 to 1974, the new book revealed a considerable transformation in the party's thinking about economic policy, most especially about the proper role for the state in economic affairs. Indeed so sharp was the rupture with the past that, despite large elements of continuity in the treatment of the two other major themes of the programme - social policy, and foreign affairs and defence - the party deliberately gave the title *La Révolution de la Responsabilité* to its preamble, suggesting that the changes required in the 1980s were equal in significance to the *révolution de la liberté* which had inaugurated the rights of man in 1789, and to the *révolution de la solidarité* which had marked the foundation of the French welfare state in 1945-6. ⁷

After presentation to the party congress at Grenoble in November, the

programme was from January to May 1985 subjected to further amendment at a series of meetings and debates around the country involving party officials, the rank and file, and prominent non-party sympathizers. On the 3rd of May the fruits of these efforts were put into shape by a working meeting of regional *chargés de mission*, and on the following day approved by the party Central Committee.¹⁰ On June 1st 1985, at the *Parc Floral de Vincennes* the leadership presented a distilled version of the new orientations for the official benediction of the rank and file at an extraordinary party congress. Republished as *Le Renouveau - Pacte RPR pour la France* they became the programme on which the party went into the campaign for the March 1986 general election.¹¹

The Programmes Compared - Planning

The Gaullists did not invent planning, nor did they have a monopoly of enthusiasm for it in France, where its supporters have included socialists and trade unionists since the 1930s, a branch of Radicalism led by Pierre Mendès-France, and a group of technocrats who coalesced around Jean Monnet to set up the first planning commissariat in the late 1940s. Nevertheless, the Gaullists took up planning so vigorously on their return to power in 1958, and their leading spokesmen referred to it so often,¹² that it must be regarded as one of their key identifying characteristics.

According to de Gaulle himself, planning fixed objectives, set priorities, and compensated the disadvantages of free market economics, (without sacrificing the advantages). In a much-quoted phrase, the general referred to planning as *cette ardente obligation*.¹³ For Michel Debré¹⁴ the plan is not merely a useful tool of economic management, or an arbitrator between the interests of different groups, but a crucial bulwark of national identity. In 1972 he wrote that if France rejected planning she

would cease to be herself, and abandon the evolution of her economic and social life to forces outside the state, even outside the country.¹³

Faithful to these traditions, the RPR's 1980 programme, *Atout France* gave planning a prominent place. In a section headed *Revenir à un plan digne de ce nom*¹⁴, planning is described as the application of political will to economic and social problems, by the determination of 'objectives, choices and methods'. The programme argues that planning serves to free firms from red tape by driving through the bureaucrats' habitual hesitations and obstructions, while foreign experience shows that 'even in liberal countries' the state takes a role in remodelling economic structures.¹⁵

By 1984, however, there was clearly a marked change in party thinking, for the new programme, *Libres et Responsables* contained no mention whatever of planning. Equally striking was its absence from the long speech to parliament with which Chirac introduced his government's programme on a full range of issues, on 9th April 1986.¹⁶ The standing of planning on the public policy agenda had fallen so low that *Le Monde* felt able to publish a kind of obituary in a short article entitled, "Once upon a time there was the Plan."¹⁷

A Voluntarist and Selective Industrial Policy

From the moment of his return to power in 1958, de Gaulle's commitment to an independent nuclear weapons capability for France intensified the national effort towards independence in the production of weapons-grade plutonium and uranium enrichment, projects which had spin-off consequences for other industrial sectors such as computers and electricity generation. Aside from these defence-related industries, however, Gaullist prime ministers have in the past spelled out much more

general aims for state supervision of industry. Debré in particular defended a four-pronged role for the state in industrial policy. He was against foreign domination in sectors affecting export capacity and the acquisition of technical expertise. He favoured state-organized mergers, on the grounds that only firms of a certain size could make the investments and rationalizations necessary to succeed in the export market, and achieve world rank. Thirdly, the state ought to foster specific advanced-technology sectors - atomic energy, aeronautics, the space industry, electronics, computers, and engineering. Finally, Debré accepted the need for state aid to "lame ducks", that is, firms belonging to sectors in difficulties, but where

the problems are not fundamental, but temporary and circumstantial.¹⁸

Jacques Chaban Delmas, prime minister from 1969-72, told parliament in September 1969 that the state must stimulate industrial restructuring with the aim of raising a few powerful groups to world rank, and helping a number of dynamic medium-sized firms to achieve national prominence, especially in exporting and new-technology sectors.¹⁹

In *Atout France* none of these orientations and commitments had been abandoned - indeed a number of additional vital sectors were identified. The party's overall industrial policy was characterized as "voluntarist and selective"²⁰. Selected for special state-organized help were electronics, computers, and the aeronautical, oceanological and nuclear industries²¹, while it was stressed that France ought to make an effort to recapture certain domestic markets as well as continuing the drive for exports.²² Existing resources, (forests and steel) ought to be defended and developed, and in shipbuilding, the state must intervene,

if necessary with orders, in order to maintain productive capacity compatible with the demands of national independence.²³

The programme called for special investment help for the production goods sector, in which France was said to suffer from import elasticity of demand, while in consumption industries such as electrical white goods, furniture, leather, construction materials, mineral chemicals, paper and board, agricultural machinery and office equipment, the state must intervene to reverse consistent decline in shares of value-added, exports and investment.

The orientations of the 1984 programme were completely different. Far from eulogizing the role of the state, the party called baldly for the suppression of administrative *tutelle* (control and supervision) over the nation's productive apparatus, since "liberal decentralization of production has become the condition for economic progress."²⁴ Not only is administrative intervention regarded as meddlesome and harmful, but the focus of interest switches from specified industrial branches to anonymous individual *firms* as the carriers of French hopes for industrial regeneration, for

...it is only the periphery and not the centre, the base and not the summit, the firm and not the state, which can tap the information emanating from the market place in order to make the ten thousand daily decisions required by economic activity.²⁵

Only one sector is singled out for special mention - agriculture, which we shall come to below.

Selective Credit Subsidies

The methods by which the state ought to help selected industrial sectors were a subject on which the RPR's 1980 programme showed some hesitations in respect of previous Gaullist practice. The party suggested

that the blossoming of structures for assessing and handing out the aid, ²⁶ had turned into an impediment to the vital forces of the nation, rather than a stimulant. They alleged that the multiplication of possible subsidy outlets (which ran to scores, if not hundreds, for any single industrialist in search of funds) created stupefaction among would-be claimants, while poor or contradictory targetting blunted the achievement of desired aims. The party declared itself against state intervention *tous azimuts*²⁷, but did not question the *principle* of subsidized credit for industry, nor the system whereby 90% of deposits were in state-owned banks, while the government closely supervised the whole financial system through the Bank of France and the *Conseil National du Credit* and major investment projects were oriented through para-state institutions like the *Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations*²⁸

The 1984 programme, like its predecessor, continued to identify the key problem for French industry as the crying need for investment funds, but the problem was addressed from a completely opposite angle. Investment is not to result either from state-targetted subsidized credit, or from direct state funding of investment programmes. Rather, a new, five-point plan of action is proposed. Firstly, there should be a reduction of taxes and social fund contributions in order to increase disposable income and make it possible for firms and individuals to save more. Saving is to be encouraged by a reform of the appropriate rules and mechanisms in such a way as to provide benefits commensurate with the length of investment and the type of risk. Thirdly, there should be special tax concessions for investment in small and medium-sized firms. Workers are to be encouraged - by both fiscal and social means - to make medium term investments in the firms which employ them. Finally, there should be a general reform of the

banking system to make it more competitive, decentralized and correspondingly more available to meet industry's needs.²⁹

In *Libres et Responsables* only agriculture was singled out for special government attention. The RPR wanted to advance mechanization even further, to induce young farmers to stay in the industry, to enable family firms to survive, and to promote product diversification.³⁰ But even here there is no suggestion of subsidized credit, or other forms of state-organized transfer payments, (though the party acknowledges the help available through the European Common Agricultural Policy). As far as the French state is concerned, the industry must seek its salvation on the same terms as other sectors; the party calls for measures "to encourage savers to invest in agriculture..."³¹

State Ownership

Though defending the principle of state intervention in economic affairs, the Gaullists never argued that the state ought to *own* a strategic share of the nation's productive capacity, in the same way that Socialists have called for nationalization of the 'commanding heights'. Rather, the 1958 constitution simply took on board the preamble to the 1946 constitution, which says that public services and monopolies ought to come under collective ownership.³² In a 1977 speech against the nationalizations proposed in the Common Programme of the Left Chirac refused to rule out nationalizations in principle, suggesting that individual cases might be justified by circumstances, as at the Liberation, and cited the need to prevent important firms passing into foreign hands.³³

Debré believed that the state as a matter of course would exercise power through its mastery of energy, transport and credit.³⁴ In practice,

however, the use of public enterprises in counter-cyclical policy was patchy, while only Chaban-Delmas used state-owned firms in an attempt to propagate by example his enthusiasm for collective bargaining, a tactic which was not popular among all Gaullists. *Atout France* had nothing in particular to say about nationalized industry. It seems fair to say that the state-owned sector in 1980 was the subject of more or less complete national consensus, being regarded as the nation's inheritance from the Liberation, or even earlier in some cases.

By 1984, however, the RPR had taken up a position in sharp contrast to its previous attitude. Proceeding from a critique of the bureaucratic character of the Socialists' nationalizations of 1982-3, the party proposed not only to undo this work, but to go further, re-examining the whole range of state-owned enterprises, "no matter what their nature" and promising to retain in public ownership

only those undertakings which constitute a monopoly and a public service in the strict sense of the terms.²⁵

No definition of the strict sense of these terms was given in *Libres et Responsables*, but at the very least the criteria could not include Renault and one or two other firms nationalized at the Liberation because of their owners' collaboration with the Nazi occupant.

The record after the return to power in 1986 confirmed how serious was the RPR's re-thinking of the Liberation inheritance. With its *loi-cadre* of 2nd July 1986, the new government launched a privatization programme which was to return to the private sector within one year as large a slice of the nation's wealth as Mrs Thatcher's Conservative governments had achieved in seven.²⁶ Significantly, the sell-off included *Société Générale*, one of the three big clearing banks which formed the

core of the nationalizations of 1945.³⁷

Budgetary Policy

De Gaulle was a firm believer in financial orthodoxy and balanced budgets. This was evident especially during the period shortly after his return to power in 1958. At first, with Antoine Pinay, he resorted to a large public loan to restore government finances and public confidence in the franc, as he had done in 1945, and Pinay in 1952. But in December he accepted the recommendations of a special economic advisory committee chaired by Jacques Rueff, which, as well as ensuring the opening up of the French economy to foreign competition, insisted on a tight monetary policy which would require that state expenditure be kept down, in order to head off the risk of inflation.³⁸ These orientations were adhered to under successive conservative finance Ministers, Baumgartner, Giscard and Debré, as long as de Gaulle remained President.

The last decade, however, has seen a sharp discontinuity in the RPR's attitude to taxation and government expenditure. In June 1975 Jacques Chirac, then Prime Minister, insisted on creating 15,000 jobs in the public sector in a classic Keynesian attempt to boost consumption and get the French people to "spend" their way out of the recession provoked by the first oil shock.³⁹ Following disagreements over this and various other matters with President Giscard d'Estaing, he resigned and was replaced as Prime Minister by Raymond Barre.

During the period from 1976 to 1981 the RPR was partly in power and partly in opposition. While some Gaullists such as Peyrefitte and Guichard continued to hold posts in Barre's governments, Chirac and the party centre vigorously denounced Barre's 'gentle growth' strategy, and called for a programme of reflation led by state spending.⁴⁰

By 1980, the emphasis had switched away from *consumption* as a mechanism for galvanizing the economy, and concentrated instead on state investment projects. *Atout France* attacked both Keynesianism and the Giscard-Barre slow-growth strategy and advocated a "third way" model of "structured growth", relying on a 5-year capital investment programme which would allocate some 20 billion francs per year more than Barre was planning to spend on industry, agriculture, housing, infrastructure and commerce. This package was to be financed partly by savings in other areas of government spending, and partly by an emergency wealth tax, but additionally the party argued that at least a small budget deficit was 'tolerable' as long as it was on the capital account and not on current spending.⁴¹

Within months, in time for the Presidential election campaign, the party leader repudiated the wealth tax, denounced budget deficits, and proposed a cut in state expenditure of 30 billion francs in place of the considerable increase which was the likely outcome of the *Atout France* programme. It was a *volte face* which led observers to speak of Chirac's conversion to Reaganomics.⁴²

The party programme of 1984 implicitly demanded this label. All the new orientations - the abandonment of planning, ending investment subsidies, privatization of state assets, absolute cuts in taxes and expenditure, as well as the abolition of price and exchange controls, were given coherence by the insistence on the need to offer "deciders" and owners of capital an incentive to apply their talents or their assets in pursuit of their individual benefit. The short-term fall in tax-yield was to be compensated by the higher revenue arising from an expected up-turn in overall economic activity. This was the proposition integral to the

supply-side economics made famous by Ronald Reagan's 1980 campaign for the American Presidency.

Conclusion

Rarely has a party made such a sweeping break with its characteristic policies as the break made by the Gaullists so soon after their expulsion from power. The parallel with Reagonomics, and the contemporaneous experiment being made by Mrs. Thatcher in the UK led to suggestions that party policy-making had become a question of rank opportunism, or of following the fashion.⁴³ On the other hand, perhaps liberalism was enjoying a resurgence because it really was the only solution for the fitful economic performance of the western industrial countries since the oil-shocks of the 1970s. Or maybe there had been a kind of generational renewal inside the RPR, bringing to power new groups with economic and social philosophies different from those of their Gaullist elders, and provoking an unprecedented consensus on liberal values on the French Right? We will turn to each of these interesting questions in due course. But we must first outline the political events of the 1970s and 1980s which formed the background to the Gaullists' development.

Notes to Chapter 2

1. *Atout France* Paris, Roudil 1980
2. Article by R. Priouret in *Le Nouvel Observateur* 23-2-81
3. *Le Monde* 4-3-81, *En s'occupant de moins de choses, l'Etat s'en occupera mieux,..... abandonner purement et simplement les réglementations inutiles et tatillonnes qui gâchent la vie des français*
4. Interview with André Passeron, *Le Monde* 19-7-81
5. See chapter 6, note 63
6. *Libres et Responsables; RPR - Projet Pour la France* Paris Flammarion 1984.
7. *Libres et Responsables*, p 17
8. *Le Monde* 6-5-85
9. *Le Monde* 3-6-85 In January the party signed a joint programme of government with their prospective coalition partner, the UDF, which took on board some, though not all, of the RPR's propositions, but confirmed the essential economic policy orientations. See Françoise Baroché, *Social, un Programme écrit avec une gomme*, in Intervention no 15, Jan-Feb-March 1986 pp 12-16.
10. J.E.S. Hayward, *Governing France, the One and Indivisible Republic* London Weidenfeld and Nicolson 1983 p 189
11. Charles de Gaulle, *Mémoires d'Espoir, le Renouveau, 1958-62* Paris Plon 1970 p 143.
12. Prime Minister 1959-62, Finance Minister 1966-68; in the late 1970s led the RPR's anti-European faction, and mounted an abortive independent campaign for the Presidency in 1981; seen by many as the guardian of Gaullist orthodoxy.
13. *"La France ne peut renoncer à avoir un Plan qu'en renonçant à être elle-même et en laissant l'évolution de son économie et de sa vie sociale aux mains de puissances extérieures à l'Etat, voire des puissance extérieures à la patrie."* Michel Debré, *Une Certaine Idée de la France* Paris Fayard 1972 p 227 ("France cannot renounce having a plan without renouncing her own identity and leaving the evolution of her economy and her social life in the hands of forces outside the state, even outside the nation.")
14. Return to a plan worthy of the name
15. *Atout France* pp 47-9
16. *Le Monde* 11-4-86
17. *Il était une fois le Plan, Le Monde* 18-4-86
18. *"L'Etat ne peut se désintéresser des secteurs en difficulté, dont il voit que les difficultés ne sont pas fondamentales mais circonstanciées, et peuvent être corrigées dans des conditions que l'initiative privée ne permettrait pas d'atteindre,"* Debré op cit, p 234. ("The state cannot turn away from sectors in difficulty, when it

sees that these difficulties are not fundamental but only circumstantial, and can be corrected in conditions which private enterprise cannot provide,")

19. Jean Bunel et Paul Meunier, *Chaban Delmas* Paris, Stock 1972 pp 267-8
20. *Atout France* p 114
21. *Atout France* pp 105-7
22. *ibid* pp 108-9
23. *Il est là aussi nécessaire d'intervenir, éventuellement par les commandes, pour maintenir un potentiel de production compatible avec les exigences de l'indépendance nationale, (Atout France p112)*
24. *La décentralisation libérale de l'activité productive est devenue la condition du progrès économique, (Libres et Responsables p 27)*
25. *...c'est la périphérie et non le centre, la base et non le sommet, l'entreprise et non l'Etat qui peuvent seules, à partir des informations émises par le marché, prendre chacune des dix mille grandes décisions par jour qu'imposent les exigences de la production, (ibid p 27.)*
26. One of the first in the field was the *Fonds du Développement Economique et Sociale* (FDES), dating from 1955, which handled 5% of the state's budget in 1960. In 1974 the CIASI was created (*Comité Interministériel pour l'Aménagement des Structures Industrielles*); in 1978, the FSASI (*Fonds Spécial d'Adaptation des Structures Industrielles*), and in 1979 the CODIS (*Comité d'Orientation du Développement des Industries Stratégiques*). (*Atout France* p 114)
27. *ibid* p 116
28. See Bryan Bayliss and Alan Butt Philip, *Capital Markets and Industrial Investment in Germany and France, lessons for the UK*, London, Saxon House for the Centre for European Industrial Studies, Bath; Albert Holveck and Charles Mull, *Cours Pratique de Commerce*, Paris, Delagrave 1980
29. *Libres et Responsables* pp 73-80
30. *ibid* pp 80-83
31. *ibid* p 82
32. J-L. Quermonne, *Le Gouvernement de la France sous la V^e République* Paris Dalloz 1983 (2nd ed) Annexe 1, pp 587 and 589.
33. Jacques Chirac, "Les Nationalisations: Une Politique", supplement to no 21 of *Rassemblement Actualité*, which was the text of Chirac's speech to the annual meeting of RPR deputies, 29-9-77.
34. Debré *op cit*, *Une Certaine Idée*,..., p 221
35. *Notre objectif est le rétablissement d'un vrai partage entre secteur public et secteur privé, en ne gardant dans le secteur public que les entreprises qui constituent un*

monopole et un service public au sens strict, (Libres et Responsables p 79, Our object is the re-establishment of a real division between public sector and private sector, retaining in the public sector only those enterprises which constitute a monopoly and a public service in the strict sense of the terms)

36. Mairi Maclean "The Future of Privatization in France, a crisis of confidence?" in *Modern and Contemporary France* no 31, October 1987 pp 1-9
37. *Le Monde* 10-7-87
38. René Sédillot *Histoire de Franc* Paris Sirey 1979 pp 227-240,
Georges Dupeux *La France de 1945 à 1969*, Paris, Armand Colin 1969 pp 260-268
39. Volkmar Lauber *The Political Economy of France, from Pompidou to Mitterrand*, New York Praeger 1983 pp 81-8
40. *ibid* pp 113-4
41. *Atout France* p 20
42. Lauber *op cit* p 115
43. *Le Monde, Dossier et Documents* no 129, January 1986.

Chapter 3 The Contexts of Party Programme Change

We have identified the transformation of the Gaullists' economic policy as being completed during the period 1979-86. Before describing the political context of those years, however, it is important to recount, albeit briefly, earlier episodes in Gaullist history which formed leaders' policy beliefs and their attitudes to each other.

The Gaullist movement has gone through several 'ages' in its history, defined by the party's position in or out of power, and by its acceptance or refusal of the established regime. The first age belonged to the men of 1940, who rejected Pétain, the *Etat Français* and the Armistice. After a few heady months in power at the Liberation, many of them followed de Gaulle into the wilderness during the Fourth Republic, believing as he did that post-war politics was proving as inadequate to France's needs as the politics of the twenties and thirties. A few who were later to become pillars of the Fifth Republic did continue to sit in Parliament and play a role in public life, but they were disowned by de Gaulle and cannot be treated as representative of "official" Gaullism.

There are two main reasons for passing rapidly over the period of 'opposition Gaullism'. Firstly, the immediate post-war period is rather remote from the experience of the majority of those who played an active role in the party at the turn of the 1980s. Secondly, the policy pronouncements of a party which has adopted a position of anti-system opposition form a dubious basis of comparison with what they would propose in 'normal' party competition. This chapter, in four parts, therefore takes up the story in 1958 and deals with de Gaulle's decade of power which consolidated the new Republic's institutions, the events of 1967-9,

and the struggle for the succession from which Pompidou emerged victorious. The latter's death in office (1974) opened up a period of conflict and redefinition, (described in the second part of the chapter) which ended with the foundation of the *Rassemblement pour la République* by Jacques Chirac in 1976. Next, we trace the RPR's evolution in its role of junior partner in the Giscardian coalition, (1976-81), and in the forth and final section of the chapter we signpost the most significant events during the period of opposition to the Socialist government of 1981-6.

Gaullism in Power

In 1958 the leaders of the regime established in 1946 were unable to disarm a coup threatened by army officers unhappy with the government's prosecution of the four-year old war against the Algerian National Liberation Front. In response to their call, General de Gaulle agreed to return to power after 12 years of political exile, on condition that French institutions be reformed to strengthen the executive's powers at the expense of the legislature. Approved by a referendum, the constitution of the Fifth French Republic came into force on 1st January 1959.

In the 1960s the Gaullists formed a heterogeneous party. Success in ending the war (in 1962) and the durability of the new regime attracted to their ranks politicians of the Fourth Republic who had not previously been noted supporters of the general, along with a generation of young civil servants drawn to the new fields opened up for their talents and ambitions by an increasingly interventionist state. The historic Gaullists had always differed amongst themselves, anyway, in their attitude to economic and social questions. This was natural in people who were originally brought together by a national struggle and a man who adopted a consciously cross-class rhetoric and appeal.

The early Gaullist organisations, both the *Rassemblement du Peuple Français* (RPF), and the *Union Pour la Nouvelle République* (UNR), founded in order to contest the 1958 elections, represented an uneasy marriage between the traditions of the cadre party and the mass party. They consciously aimed at a mass membership, but their appeal was more closely related to their link with de Gaulle than to a clearly defined programme. To join an UNR list in the hope of being elected *maire* or councillor or deputy was to associate oneself with the work of reconstruction and renewal which de Gaulle had set himself.

The cadre party tradition appeared also in the way that different 'families' of Gaullists emerged and linked themselves to the UNR, but claimed to embody a particular and precious part of the Gaullist identity. The best-known French historian of Gaullism has listed more than thirty 'Gaullist' organizations, '.

Some, like the *Service d'Action Civique*, which kept order at Gaullist meetings, had no particular ideological focus. Similarly, the *Association Nationale pour le Soutien de l'Action du Général de Gaulle*² sprang into action for referendums or presidential elections but otherwise had no political life of its own. Of those which did represent a genuine contribution to a diverse Gaullist identity, however, two of the more important were on the left; the *Union Démocratique des Travailleurs* (UDT), and the "*Groupe des 29*". The first named, led by René Capitant and Louis Vallon, admired de Gaulle particularly for his use of the techniques of direct democracy - the referendum, and the election of the President of the Republic by universal suffrage. Capitant and Vallon were the leaders of those who tried to make the general's promise of a third way between capitalism and socialism into a reality. In 1962 and 1967, the UDT

contested the parliamentary elections on a joint list with the UNR, but the attempt to go solo after the death of de Gaulle in 1969 ended in failure.

The "group of 29" exemplified what united the disparate elements of Gaullism at this time. Consisting mostly of people who came from the left - including catholic intellectuals and some prominent journalists - they were not in complete sympathy with the conservative social attitudes of the mass of Gaullists, but supported de Gaulle because they considered that foreign policy was the most important issue of the day.²

In general, in the early years of the new Republic, any internal disagreements were more than outweighed by the Gaullists' common distaste for the "party spirit" which was held to be responsible for the demise of two previous regimes, and by their commitment to shared goals: consolidation of the new institutions against the threat of any putsch emanating from the armed forces, and against what was taken to be the threat of the miners' strike of 1963, and to the resurrection of French prestige and influence in the world, symbolized by the explosion of the first atom bomb in the Sahara in 1960, and by de Gaulle's denunciation of super-power domination.

The events of May 1968, when for a moment the regime itself seemed to be under threat, necessarily tested the cohesion of the Gaullist elites. But a number of separate issues of contention had been brewing for some time. The UNR's 1967 conference at Lille, where they came to the boil, was a significant turning point in the party's history.

On one level, there was a problem about regenerating the leadership. Some in the party recognized that the old guard could not go on for ever,

and demanded that 'new blood' be infused into the leading party organs, even though the new leaders might be people who had never been part of the 'historic Gaullism' of the 1940s. Others, for whom Gaullism remained "first and foremost the flame of the Resistance"⁴, found this difficult to accept. The argument was sharpened by an element of personal spite, in that the most energetic 'renovator' was Georges Pompidou, himself resented by the old Gaullists for remaining quietly in Paris during the Occupation, where he had worked as a school teacher and taken no part in the Resistance.⁵

Overlaying this dispute was the restiveness of the Gaullist left. Tired of waiting for the great social revolution which they expected de Gaulle to impose by means of a referendum, the UDT leaders themselves took the initiative by forcing an amendment to government legislation which laid legal obligations on some firms to share profits with their workers. Pompidou's hostility, given the discretionary powers at his disposal as prime minister, was enough to ensure that the *amendement Vallon*, first moved in 1965, had no practical consequences.⁶ The UDT responded by issuing a declaration that they would not even go to the Lille congress; they disagreed in any case with Pompidou's project for strengthening the organization and discipline of the party, which they thought ought to remain as an amorphous 'movement'. In their absence, Pompidou consolidated his hold, had the party renamed *Union Pour la Défense de la V^eme République*, (UDV^m), soon to become simply UDR, *Union des Démocrates pour la République*, and secured the election as General Secretary of Robert Poujade, who had been only 12 in 1940, the first holder of the post who did not belong to the generation of the 'historics'.⁷

One of the seeds from which flowered the events of May '68 was undoubtedly the Gaullists' image of conservative authoritarianism in social policy. Only the year before a wide-ranging reform of the social security system had been pushed through against a strong parliamentary opposition by relying on a series of votes of confidence which effectively delegated legislative power to the government. This had already provoked the resignation of one of the Gaullists' centre-left fellow-travellers, Edgard Pisani. In 1968, he was followed by Capitant and Alain Peyrefitte.

The events of May and their sequel played an important role in the way that Gaullist leaders and their rival supporters subsequently behaved towards each other. The start of the movement found prime minister Pompidou in Iran on an official visit; returning to Paris to find that the tactic of repression had not succeeded in cowing the students, he made a conciliatory gesture by ordering the re-opening of the campuses. As long as the issue of the conflict remained in doubt, Pompidou was the target of Gaullist accusations of 'laxism'. He persuaded de Gaulle to shelve his plan for a referendum, and instead dissolve the Assembly. As the summer progressed, and it became clear that the Gaullists owed their survival (and perhaps more) to Pompidou's cool head and shrewd tactics, opposition to him took more subterranean forms. Held at arm's length by a de Gaulle mortally wounded in his pride, he resigned as prime minister and suffered a difficult few months in the wilderness while the hot story in the Paris scandal magazines was his wife's alleged implication in a murder-mystery involving figures from the *beau monde* and the Paris underworld.⁶ Once de Gaulle had committed political suicide with his ill-judged referendum of April 1969, Pompidou's position became unassailable.

Georges Pompidou's political and social itinerary was in a sense the reverse of de Gaulle's. The son of primary school teachers, from an obscure village in the Cantal, whose father was a card-carrying member of the pre-war Socialist party, he made a career as a banker with Rothschilds before taking up politics full-time. Ironically, he never received as high a share of the working-class vote as did de Gaulle, who had been formed by the austere environment of the northern industrial bourgeoisie, and the military academies.

It is with Pompidou, nonetheless, that we can situate the transformation of a movement defined by loyalty to a charismatic leader into a political party occupying a definite position on the electoral map. De Gaulle's personal electorate, in presidential elections, had always been both older and more masculine than the French population as a whole, and his appeal to the working class invariably pulled in between two and three million habitual Communist and Socialist voters. Pompidou's presidential electorate included fewer workers, a higher proportion of women, and was distributed fairly evenly through the age groups. In this, his profile of support was very similar to that of the UDR's vote in the general elections of 1967 and 1968. By 1968 the UDR seemed to have acquired the socio-professional profile it needed if it were to become a large, modern conservative party³, and with Pompidou in 1969 it fielded a presidential candidate in its own image.

Another indication that the UDR had consolidated its place in French political life was that the President did not seem to sacrifice any legitimacy in stepping down from his pedestal into the arena of party politics. Unlike de Gaulle, Pompidou did not hesitate to get involved in the spadework of political organization. As prime minister in 1966-7 he

succeeded in persuading the Giscardian *Républicains Indépendants* to agree to a jointly-approved list of candidates at the first ballot of the 1967 elections. After the presidential election in 1969 he made an even bigger opening to the centre by incorporating the *Centre Démocratie et Progrès* into his majority. Even as President he maintained his interest in the sharing out of constituencies between the various Gaullist hopefuls and their allies.

The Gaullist Left, meanwhile, were shattered by the retirement of their hero, de Gaulle. They blamed the latter's defeat in the referendum of April 1969 on the forces of the right, who, allegedly, had nothing to fear from the likely programme of the next President. In September, the UDT (which had merged with the UNR in 1962) was reformed. Pompidou, sure of his position, soon replied by expelling Vallon from the UDR.

Pompidou's supremacy was not entirely welcome to the older Gaullist "barons", however. After the general's death a number of them set up an *amicale*, a kind of club for Gaullist deputies, dedicated to keeping the general's memory alive. Called *Présence et Action du Gaullisme*, it was chaired by de Gaulle's long-serving Defence Minister, Pierre Messmer. The parliamentary party itself was divided informally into a number of 'clans', each of which grouped the supporters of a particular 'baron'. The Pompidolistes were the most numerous, naturally, but there were also groups of the followers of Chaban Delmas, Roger Frey, Maurice Couve de Murville and Michel Debré.¹⁰

From these, Pompidou chose his first prime minister, Jacques Chaban Delmas, who held the post from 1969-72. Relations between the two men rapidly deteriorated when Chaban made his first and rather controversial statement of general policy, christened the "New Society" programme, in

the National Assembly on 16th September 1969, having neglected to send a copy to the President in advance. Nonetheless, Pompidou stuck with him for two and a half years, and some commentators have found that the period produced some useful reforms, despite the largely right-wing majority.¹² There were increases in the minimum wage and pensions, together with tax and other benefit reforms, to compensate the large wage increases won by employed workers the previous year. The nationalized industries were used as a launching pad for the modernization of industrial relations, including the transfer of manual workers to monthly pay, the first distribution of Renault shares to their employees, and a bigger role for trade unions in organizing the labour market.

When the break with Chaban came it was attributed mainly to the need for a new face at the approach of the 1973 legislative elections, and to allow Chaban to take with him some of the discredit for the rather botched referendum on EEC expansion, which had attracted a less than 50% turnout. Pierre Messmer, Chaban's successor, presented an altogether more cautious political persona, but nevertheless continued the main lines of policy, including the encouragement to collective bargaining. As it turned out, the departure of Chaban meant the end of policy innovations. The President was increasingly disabled by a fatal blood disease, to which he eventually succumbed in the spring of 1974.

1974-6 Conflict and Redefinition

The President's premature death in office opened up a full-scale crisis in the UDR, which ultimately led to its complete transformation. The immediate problem was to find a candidate to run in the presidential election for which there was not much time to prepare. One obvious Gaullist candidate was Chaban Delmas, a historic Gaullist, the mayor of

Bordeaux, with a flamboyant and dashing image, and recently a moderately successful prime minister. Chaban was distrusted by many of the barons, however, precisely because he was able to think up his own ideas, or even, which was worse, import them from the left. His prime ministerial cabinet had included the Mendèsist Simon Nora, who was credited with writing the 'New Society' speech, as well as Jacques Delors, who was keen on pushing industry into more consensual industrial relations, and who would later be minister of finance in a Socialist government.

It was widely known, moreover, that Pompidou had been preparing a younger man for the succession, not one of the barons, but a technocrat, and one whose attitude in 1968 had shown little evidence of secret sympathy towards trade unions and Communists. Born in 1932, the product of a Parisian *lycée*, the *Institut d'Etudes Politiques*, followed by Harvard, military service in Algeria, and the *Ecole Nationale de l'Administration*, Jacques Chirac was the image of the socially privileged and ambitious young technocrat, who makes an early start to political life, in his case as a member of Pompidou's Matignon team in 1962. May 1968 found him at the Ministry of Economy and Finances, where he was responsible for employment. "I have a gun, and I know how to use it," he allegedly told the workers' envoys during the secret and sometimes risky contacts which preceded the Grenelle negotiations.¹⁴ Already in 1974, though only 42, he had had wide government experience, preparing the budget in 1969, responsible for relations with Parliament (Chief Whip) during 1971-2, minister of agriculture in 1973-4, before becoming, shortly before Pompidou's death, minister of the Interior.

Then there was the problem of the finance minister, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, who had skilfully built up his own parliamentary group, the

Républicains Indépendants, and taken care to disassociate himself from the general's disastrous 1969 referendum. He was given credit on the right for his decision not to challenge Pompidou in 1969, although he was already a well-known public figure. In 1974, he could legitimately claim, it was 'his turn'.

An acrimonious debate broke out among the Gaullists, which on the surface was about which right-wing candidate was best placed to beat the Left. Behind the scenes the debate was fuelled by personal rivalries, and by speculation about the attitude of Giscard, who seemed unlikely to withdraw in favour of Chaban, but might do so in favour of a more conservative Gaullist figure like Messmer.

Chirac's problem was that he was not yet well enough known to the public to mount a credible candidature of his own. Together with the others who distrusted Chaban, therefore, he tried to build up support for a Messmer candidacy. Though sharing their apprehensions about Chaban, Messmer declined, fearing that he would not be able to beat Mitterrand. On the eve of the first round vote, Chirac and his supporters published the signatures of 43 deputies of the majority, mostly Gaullists, but including some Giscardians, with a last-minute appeal for more negotiations which would result in the presentation of a single right-wing candidate. Despite the strict neutrality of the appeal's wording, the move was interpreted as a statement of preference for Giscard over Chaban. This was felt by the Gaullist establishment to be an appalling piece of treachery and, as the *Appel des 43*, became a part of party folklore.¹⁵

Chirac argued that, since Chaban had no chance of winning anyway, it was better for some Gaullists to be seen as having contributed to Giscard's victory, for then they would be in a stronger position to 'hold'

Giscard and influence his policy when once he was elected. It may have been that some of the Gaulists among the 43 simply preferred what they knew of Giscard to the unpredictability of Chaban, or thought that their own careers had a more promising future with Giscard and not Chaban at the Elysée Palace.¹⁶

That Chirac became prime minister when Giscard was safely installed, did nothing to allay accusations of treachery and opportunism. Giscard declined to dissolve the Assembly, thus cheating the Gaullists of an election campaign which might have helped restore unity. Deprived of the presidency for the first time since 1958, with its leading figures openly feuding, the party of Gaullism seemed set for disintegration unless someone emerged decisively as the new leader.

It was in this period that Charles Pasqua played a key role in keeping Chirac on speaking terms with the rest of those who, like Pasqua, had reluctantly endorsed Chaban in the election rather than a non-Gaullist. Using the evidence of opinion polls which showed that the party was seen as leaderless and drifting towards extinction, Pasqua persuaded Sanguinetti, then general-secretary, to resign precipitately in December 1974, leaving the way clear for Chirac to be elected to the post himself by a Central Committee of which Pasqua had adroitly calculated the balance of forces.¹⁷

This manoeuvre was denounced as a 'coup', and provoked the departure from the UDR ranks of 'leftists' such as Jean Charbonnel and René Ribière, some of whom joined Michel Jobert in setting up a new 'left Gaullist' organization.¹⁸ Chaban refused to vote for the final motion at the *conseil national* on December 15th, when Chirac's appointment was confirmed, and

thereafter stayed away for two years from the leading party organs of which he was a member. Even a (then) relatively obscure figure like Bernard Pons, a friend of Chirac, and a deputy from the same region, refused to speak to him as long as he remained Giscard's prime minister.¹⁹

The new general secretary's survival at this tricky moment was due in part to acceptance (even reluctant) that his technical expertise combined with charisma and great capacity for work *did* mark him out as a potential presidential candidate. But the other essential conditions of his success were Pasqua's organizational powers, and the refusal of old Gaullists such as Debré and Couve de Murville to lead a revolt against him.

As chief of the party organization he launched sweeping reforms both in the field and at head office, but did not fail to build bridges towards the Chabanists by making Albin Chalandon, one of Chaban's closest friends, one of five *adjoints* to the general-secretary.²⁰ The new team produced some useful results. Finances, controlled by Jean Taittinger, were put on a sounder footing as members actually began to pay their subscriptions, rather than relying on hand-outs from secret Matignon funds. Yves Guéna, another of the *adjoints*, organized a team of study groups which within a year brought out *L'Enjeu*, the UDR's first ever full-length programme. Chirac's spell as general secretary lasted only until the July congress. Satisfied that he had made his mark, he stepped down at the request of Valéry Giscard d'Estaing who preferred his prime minister to be free of partisan responsibilities. André Bord assumed the general secretaryship, until he was replaced by Guéna in April 1976, when Giscard again pressed the claims of Bord's other job as secretary of State for war veterans.

Chirac had won control of the party, but had to admit defeat in his duel with the new President. Giscard refused to allow the Prime Minister

to govern by *ordonnance*, that is by securing the delegation of law-making power from Parliament. He transmitted by open letter the list of affairs the government was required to deal with, not omitting to lay down the timetable. When new social policies were announced, such as votes at 18, or reform of the abortion laws, it was Giscard himself who appeared on television to explain and defend them. In economic affairs, the prime minister's office, at the *hôtel Matignon* was obliged to negotiate with *Finances* and *Industrie*, two powerful ministries held by loyal and long-serving Giscardians, Fourcade and d'Ornano. The ministry of the Interior, held by Giscard's lieutenant, Michel Poniatowski, was "*une forteresse dans laquelle Jacques Chirac n'a pas son mot à dire*".²¹ Some of Chirac's supporters, even those who were relatively sympathetic to Giscard, urged him to issue an ultimatum to the President - "either Poniatowski goes, or I do",²² but the prime minister either did not dare to resolve the matter in that way, or he preferred to bide his time.

Meanwhile, Giscardian initiatives in three policy areas which were crucial for the Gaullist identity did not fail to agitate the guardians of orthodoxy, such as Debré, Messmer, and Guéna. In December 1974 Chirac learned from the radio whilst shaving that the heads of government of the nine members of the European Community had agreed to a system of direct elections to the European Parliament. Giscard added insult to injury in the spring of 1975 by announcing the suppression of a traditional annual military ceremony on 8th May, and its replacement by a sort of European festival. He decreed the abandonment of the construction of a sixth nuclear-armed submarine, without consulting his prime minister. A defence review published an article by the army chief of General Staff, general Mery, which argued for stationing French Pluton tactical nuclear weapons

on German territory, where they could have no purpose other than integration with a joint NATO-inspired defence strategy. Finally, in early 1976, Giscard signed the 'Jamaica agreement' on international monetary policy, which seemed to abandon the resistance which the Gaullists had always maintained to the domination of the dollar.²³

Not all Gaullists were willing to push defence of de Gaulle's triple anathema - supranational Europe, NATO, the dollar - to the point of an open break. Far more issues united Gaullists and Giscardians than divided them, especially relative to what was on offer from the left. What really determined the timing of the break, was the manoeuvring within the majority for leadership of the coalition in the run-up to the 1978 legislative elections. Chirac failed to get Giscard to admit that co-ordination of parliamentary tactics, and strategy at local government elections, fell to the prime minister and leader of the largest party. Poniatowski made a number of speeches looking forward to the day when the *Républicains Indépendants* would be as numerous as the UDR, and implied that Chirac had faithfully carried out the task of 'Giscardizing' the UDR for the purposes of lining it up behind the President in the event of his standing for re-election. Even worse, the Giscardians began to imply that they would extend the majority to include the Socialists, reducing the Gaullists to the status of a right wing (and dispensable) minority within it.²⁴

Faced with this barely disguised threat of suffocation, some of the Gaullist barons appeared happy to throw in their lot with Giscard, but Pasqua and Chirac, urged on by Chirac's advisers Pierre Juillet and Marie-France Garaud, preferred a spectacular gesture which would reinforce - and if necessary redefine - the clarity of their image as a distinct political

party before the next legislative elections. On 25th August 1976 Chirac resigned as prime minister, and the following week-end retired with a tiny group of his closest supporters to a country retreat in the *Massif Central* to plan the relaunch of the Gaullist party with a new name and a new mass recruitment drive.²⁵

In form, the launch of the RPR in 1976 was a repeat of the dramatic *Appel au Rassemblement* which de Gaulle had - with varying success - addressed to the French people at three historic moments, 1940, 1958, and 1968. In 1976 the supposed imminent national disaster was the danger of the left winning the 1978 elections, and the RPR was set to take the role of defender of freedom against collectivism.²⁶

But the RPR planners made a deliberate effort to avoid being cast as purely and simply of "the Right". The keynote speech for the launch, was delivered at Egletons, in Chirac's constituency, on October 3rd. The themes were fidelity to Gaullist institutions, a strong state to protect citizens against the violence of the modern world, and a strong restatement of the traditional Gaullist social policy, where the notion of *concertation* with the unions was deployed alongside commitment to a wealth tax and to the profit-sharing and workplace democracy implied by *participation*. Chirac even said that the RPR would aspire to a sort of *travaillisme français*, which, with its overtones of the British Labour Party, was later recognized by his entourage as a blunder.²⁷ The classic Gaullist notion of the *Rassemblement* - "we are neither of the left nor of the right" - was repeated at Perigueux on October 10th; at Epernay on the 16th, Chirac called for a campaign to ensure that "*la participation au capital soit le plus large possible*".²⁸ The up-dated party programme,

l'Enjeu, promised to abolish inequalities which arise from history, from birth, or simple chance.²⁹

Despite all this, the message did not get home. In November a poll taken by SOFRES for *Antenne 2* revealed that 58% of the French people thought the RPR belonged on the right, while only 38% thought the same of the *Républicains Indépendants*. Giscard's strategy hinged precisely on such a public perception, to which he had contributed by a press-conference remark in September that Chirac was opposed to his reforms and "is deliberately playing the conservative card for the elections."³⁰ To make matters worse, the openly extremist *Parti des Forces Nouvelles*, accompanied by Tixier-Vignancourt (who had stood against de Gaulle in the 1965 Presidential election, in defence of *Algérie Française*) weighed in with support for Chirac's new venture, praising his qualities as a *rassembleur*. Finally Chaban denounced what he saw as a *rassemblement* of the Right, or of a part of the Right, against the Left.

This being so, no matter what the party's propositions are...one has left the path of Gaullism.³¹

With all this stacked against it, the strategic aims of the launch were not achieved. In the short term it stimulated the crystallization of some of the social-Christian wing of Giscard's supporters into the *Centre des Démocrates Sociaux* (CDS), and the fusion of the CDS and the *Parti Républicain* into a new Giscardian umbrella organization, the *Union pour la Démocratie Française* (UDF). In the medium term, the RPR would prove to be a poor pole of attraction to various small groups of left Gaullists who had split off from the UDR during the 1970s.³²

In the organization of the new party, on the other hand, Chirac had things more his own way. Already, during his own tenure of the UDR

general-secretarship, in the first half of 1975, he had given a new impulsion to party education schools, deliberately taking Communist Party practice as a model. From December 1975 onwards, no one could become a candidate for elective office, or hold a party post, without having attended some training sessions, and during 1977 there was a proliferation of stages intended to equip the membership with information and arguments on selected topics. Special schools aimed at the needs of particular groups within the membership, such as the departmental secretaries, or school-teachers, or party women. There were month-long courses for existing members of Parliament, run by professional journalists. At the end of the summer of 1977 there were half a dozen week-long sessions which each "processed" 15-30 of the candidates in the forthcoming elections. Eighty *dossiers* were made available by the party research team, headed by Alain Juppé. The party broke new ground in French politics by organizing correspondance courses, said to have been followed by up to five thousand students. ³³

All this was accompanied by a sharp rise in membership. In September 1977, the party claimed 500,000 members. This figure is widely disbelieved, but one commentator has put forward a figure of 160,000, compared to 60-70,000 for the UDR in the early 1970s. Taking into account the inevitable exaggeration by party sources, and the difficulties arising from the fact that the UDR was notoriously inefficient in collecting dues, most commentators are agreed that party membership as a whole had certainly been doubled, if not tripled by the end of 1978. ³⁴ There is also agreement that the RPR in 1977 contained proportionately more women and youth than its predecessor. More difficult to assess is the degree to which membership of leading bodies had been *renewed* by at least 50%, as

the leadership desired. What is at least clear is that the new-look Gaullists now rivalled the Communists as the largest, most disciplined, and most centralized party in France.

Despite the rhetoric about the renewal of the Gaullist inspiration coming from the people, it seemed clear to outsiders that the new organization was a 'machine' constructed for the purpose of winning elections. To reduce this task to its simplest dimensions, Gaullism would now have two things it had never had before; a detailed programme which could serve as an arm of combat for the activists in their constituencies, and a leader directly elected by a mass of the membership, several thousand of whom crowded into a congress hall in Paris in December 1976 to annoint Jacques Chirac as their official presidential contender.

1976-81, Junior Partners in the Coalition.

Chirac had been replaced as Prime Minister by Raymond Barre, a university professor of economics whose past career included brief membership of the RPF in the 1950s and a post at the European Commission in Brussels. The choice of a non-political figure corresponded to Giscard's ideal of a de-politicized and pluralistic society, but it also served to paper over the cracks in the coalition, making it easier for a number of Gaullists to continue in government.

By March 1977, Barre found himself subject, just like Chirac before him, to Poniatoski's sniping and behind-the-scenes short-circuiting of his policy. Unlike Chirac, he sought out the President, demanded an explanation, and effectively refused to continue while Poniatoski held office. To cover the implicit abandonment of his eternal right-hand man, Giscard arranged with Barre that, as well as Poniatoski, the two other members of the government with the rank of Minister of State should also

step down. The unlucky pair who paid the price for this personal bickering were Olivier Guichard and Jean Lecanuet.²⁵ Neither ever again held ministerial office. Guichard, who became the ever-present critic of Chirac in the ranks of the Gaullist deputies, was replaced as Minister of Justice and number two in the government by Alain Peyrefitte.

A minister seven times under de Gaulle and Pompidou, and made general secretary of the UDR by the latter during the period of preparation for the 1973 legislative elections, Peyrefitte had devoted his time to writing since Chirac's "takeover" of the UDR in 1974, and was said to have impressed Giscard with his most recent book, *Le Mal Français*.²⁶ He and Yvon Bourges, at Defence, headed a list of nine other Gaullists who stayed on in Barre's government.

Having previously had the duty of trying to channel the instincts of the most orthodox of the Gaullist factions, led by Debré, into some kind of constructive reorientation of Giscardian policy, Chirac now threw in his lot with them, and soon ran into conflict with the 'Gallo-Giscardians' who had remained in office. The man in the middle was Claude Labbé, leader of the RPR group in the Assembly both before and after 1976.

The first issue, outside Parliament, which soured relations between the two wings of the coalition, was the campaign for the Paris Town Hall, which ended in March 1977 with Chirac's election as Mayor and defeat for Giscard's preferred candidate, Michel d'Ornano. With the battle of Paris won, many Gaullists thought that the RPR ought to adopt a policy of loyal collaboration with the Giscard-Barre governments. But this was acceptable neither to the Debré group, nor to Chirac himself. From 1977-81 he created many difficulties for himself within his own party by his strident public criticisms of the President, the prime minister and their policies.

The government's decision that French representatives in the European Parliament be chosen by direct election came before the National Assembly for ratification in June 1977. The RPR deputies were split three ways between those who supported the government, those who were relatively indifferent, and some 30-40 led by Debré, who were opposed at any price. The government eventually carried the bill by making it an issue of confidence.

For Chirac the situation became much more serious with the so-called *Appel de Cochin* of 6th December 1978, which he composed in his bed in the Cochin hospital after a car accident. This document, the RPR manifesto for the forthcoming contest, rehearsed the reasons for Gaullist opposition to the direct elections, which were to take place in June; they would imply an increase in the influence of the supranational body (whereas the Debré and Chirac stuck rigidly to the general's formula of a *Europe des Patries*), there had not been enough discussion of the problems raised by the proposed admission of Spain and Portugal, and most of the Community's economic policy was inadequate, apart from the CAP. But the most shocking and controversial part of the *Appel* was the reference to the Giscardians as 'the foreigners' party', *le parti de l'étranger*, which was the formula used by de Gaulle against the Communists during the 1950s.³⁷

Reaction inside the RPR was no less scandalized than outside. Sanguinetti and a number of others announced that they were taking leave of absence from the parliamentary party. Guichard spoke of *une déclaration peu mesurée*, but Peyrefitte launched an attack on Chirac's 'occult advisers', Juillet and Garaud, and became involved in a long-running feud which soured relations between most of the RPR ministers and the party leadership for the next two years. During the campaign a number of RPR

deputies openly dissociated themselves from their party's position.

Chirac's handling of the whole issue was particularly maladroit in that the RPR clearly could not avoid standing in the elections in due course, they were still left supporting Barre's government, and the public saw the affair as just another slanging match between rivals. On June 10th the party duly ran for the European Parliament separately from the UDF, on a list headed by the arch anti-European, Debré, entitled *Défense des Intérêts de la France en Europe*. They inevitably came last of the big four, with 16.25% to the Giscardians' 27.55%. On the same evening, Chirac drew some conclusions, and informed both Juillet and Garaud, with whom he had had an intimate working relationship since the days of Pompidou's cabinets at Matignon, that he would no longer require their services.³⁸

Nevertheless, his onslaught on Barre's economic policies was almost as destructive of party unity. Soon after leaving the government, Chirac had announced a strategy of 'permanent war' against the Giscard-Barre strategy of gentle growth, moderate inflation and creeping unemployment.³⁹ The main practical result of the continual series of RPR amendments to government projects was to oblige Barre to make one after another an issue of confidence. The highpoint of the campaign was in March 1979 when Chirac led the RPR in calling for an extraordinary session of Parliament devoted to debates on the government's policies on employment and information. In this, he was energetically supported by the Communists and Socialists, a source of embarrassment to the RPR ministers and not a few deputies.

There was already tension between party headquarters and the RPR deputies, who complained that their traditional role of elaborating policy in specialist areas such as health, defence and agriculture was being usurped by a team of young technocrats installed at the rue de Lille.⁴⁰ On

March 5th Yves Guéna, who, as the last general secretary of the UDR, had acted as a loyal Chiraquian in smoothing the transition to the RPR in 1976, resigned his membership of the *Conseil Politique* in protest at the attacks on Giscard and at the leadership's failure to consult the deputies adequately before announcing policy.⁴¹ Undeterred, Chirac devoted a series of press interviews to explaining the case for a Keynesian-type reflation, import controls and government direction of investment funds.⁴²

This official line was contested in the press by two senior Gaullist figures, Guichard, and Albin Chalandon, a former general secretary of the RPF and minister under de Gaulle who had since made a career in banking and industry. Chalandon's front page article in *le Monde* on 2nd October 1979 was an undisguised critique of the policies currently being pressed by his leader, and an argument for the reduction of the role of the state in economic policy. Guichard's article,⁴³ appearing on the front page of the same newspaper at the end of the month, tried to get to grips with some more technical problems, and, unlike Chalandon, implicitly accepted the need for an industry policy. But both former ministers expressed their respect for prime minister Barre's "tenacity, clarity, and spirit of responsibility", which was not exactly the message their party leader wanted to get across.

A little over a year later, Chirac would make a lot of their proposals his own in the 1981 Presidential election campaign. Despite this conversion, however, right up until the election the party officially, through the mouths of Chirac, general secretary Bernard Pons, and Jean Méo, the expert on economic and social policy, never ceased to lambast Giscard's and Barre's policies. Time and again, they repeated that if Giscard continued on the same path he would have no chance of being re-

elected. A minority, led by Peyrefitte, and consisting essentially of most of the Gaullist ministers and their friends, openly declared their support for Giscard.

Throughout 1980, however, the only Gaullist who announced that he would be a candidate for the Elysée against Giscard was Michel Debré. The 67-year-old Debré did not exactly break with Chirac for any doctrinal reasons, but regarded himself as the more uncompromising defender of the faith, and better able to rally all of the disparate Gaullist movement. Relations between Chirac and Debré, and especially between their entourages, became more and more strained as the year advanced, and Chirac refused to rule himself out of the race. (He eventually declared his candidature in February 1981.) This conflict, superimposed on that between the party and the Gallo-Giscardians, muddied yet further the pool of ideas, personalities and options from which Chirac and his friends would in due course fish the RPR version of economic liberalism.

The Socialists in Power, 1981-86.

In the first ballot of the 1981 Presidential election Giscard and Chirac together outpolled the left; Giscard was comfortably ahead with 28.31% of votes cast, and Chirac, with 17.99% had the satisfaction of beating the Communist into fourth place, effacing his party's lamentable showing in the European election two years previously. But the second ballot on 10th May revealed the price paid for their four years of public feuding. Giscard picked up an additional six and a half million votes, but François Mitterrand overhauled him with more than a million to spare, having gathered all the Left's first ballot votes, and some of Chirac's as well.

In the June parliamentary elections which followed Mitterrand's

immediate dissolution, the RPR was well-placed to take the leadership of the coalition; Giscard's temporary retirement deprived the UDF simultaneously of a single recognized leader of national stature, and of the 'cement' which would hold together the disparate ideological tendencies of the federation. Even more important, the two parties had agreed on a single first ballot candidacy in two thirds of the constituencies. From this the RPR, with more outgoing members who would become candidates by right, derived a built-in advantage, which was reinforced by their superior party organization.⁴⁴ In the event these differences were put in perspective by the unprecedented Socialist landslide, which gave them 287 seats in the new Assembly, a crushing majority over all parties, with the RPR on 88 and the UDF on 62.

After the two elections Chirac gave a long interview to *Le Monde*⁴⁵ in which he spelled out his interpretation of the result, and his plans for the future, indicating a desire to 'recentralize' the party on the political stage, after the attempts by both its enemies and friends to classify it on the right. In his view the defeat was not due to any particular decisions taken by Giscard, nor to the RPR-UDF rivalry, but simply to the wear and tear of office, and the Right's "inadaptation to the evolution of society". To remedy this, he planned a rejuvenation and renewal of the party ranks, serious proposals for social reform, to be expressed in a new language, greater attentiveness to the needs of the electorate, a better understanding with the UDF, and greater openness towards other tendencies. An indication that a rather long-term "rethink" of policy was envisaged was the plan to create a new *club de réflexion*, to build on the support from non-political sources for the ideas raised by Chirac in the Presidential campaign. It would be led by two RPR loyalists, ✓

Alain Juppé and Michel Aurillac, but it would have separate offices and would not be a part of the official Gaullist movement.⁴⁶ ✓

The first major party event after the defeat was the *Assises Nationales*, or party congress, in January 1982. Observers noted a change of atmosphere from previous such occasions. There were no giant pictures of de Gaulle, Pompidou, or even Chirac, no *croix de Lorraine*, and on the podium sat none of the revered old Gaullists, only the present party functionaries. Only one of the 'historics' made a speech, and others, such as Couve, Messmer, Guichard, and Guéna could be seen mingling with the rank and file. Chaban and Debré were not even present.⁴⁷

The new slogan was *nation, liberté, progrès*. Although some commentators⁴⁸ thought that 'liberty' was now the dominant value, still Chirac's keynote speech struck a note of ambiguity with passages which would not have been out of place in a social-democratic party;

We are for the liberation of the productive forces...because we believe that efficiency, creation, growth depend above all on initiative and responsibility. It is not the state which produces the wealth of a nation; its role is only to collect part of it in order to redistribute it and correct injustice.⁴⁹

Subsequently, although the party never denied the principle of social solidarity, they did not dwell on the merits of redistribution.

Meanwhile, the Socialists had begun pushing some sweeping reforms through Parliament. By mid-1982 they had passed the nationalization law which would result in the state controlling virtually all of French banking and insurance, 79% of steel, 75% of synthetic fibres, 74% of arms production, 71% of iron mining and processing, 42% of consumer electronics, and 34% of information technology.⁵⁰ The Right did all in their power to oppose this extension of the state sector by sniping in the

National Assembly, and by a referral to the constitutional court. They would have done this even if the RPR had not been launched on a reappraisal of its philosophy. What was new, and announced by Chirac for the first time at the RPR's extraordinary Congress in January 1983, was that when returned to power they would re-examine all nationalizations, even those dating from the liberation.⁵¹

If a set piece confrontation over nationalization had been predictable when the left won the elections, the event which worked most powerfully to reinforce unity and confidence on the right was something of a gift. This was the proposed *loi Savary* intended as a step towards the Socialists' ideal of a single national educational system. In 1984, protests by parents in defence of catholic education and by unions in defence of existing conditions and financial arrangements were joined by the right-wing parties and turned into the most massive demonstrations, up to a million strong, seen in France since the Liberation.⁵² These events made it all the more plausible to present other Socialist measures as attacks on freedom. These included the reduction of the age of retirement, the rather ham-fisted introduction of the 39-hour week, and the *lois Auroux* which obliged employers to negotiate with their employees annually and to keep them informed of their firms' economic health.

The rebirth of co-operation between the mainstream right-wing parties was helped by their common assumption of an all-embracing defence of *les libertés* against anything which seemed to threaten them, and by a certain re-drawing of their own organizational boundaries. The defeated President did not feel it appropriate to return immediately to day-to-day politics, and he was upstaged in his own *Parti Républicain* by its young president, François Léotard, and in the UDF federation as a whole by Raymond Barre,

who was quietly building a network of personal supporters which would form the basis for his presidential candidature in 1988.⁵³ Differences over Europe were buried as the RPR and UDF contested the 1984 European elections on a the same platform with a joint list of candidates headed by a former Giscardian minister, Simone Veil.

Within the RPR the ecumenical mood and an unaccustomed intellectualism were fostered by the *Club '89*. Founded in September 1981, by the following May it claimed 30 provincial sections, and was able to organize a banquet for 1,700 at which Toubon defined its mission to

contribute to the intellectual and cultural renewal which will help the opposition to win the next elections,⁵⁴

while Chirac took the opportunity to paint with a very broad brush his conception of a 'new humanism' which would reconcile economic liberalism and the Gaullists' traditional moral sense. Referring to Gide, Camus, Glucksmann and Le Roy Ladurie, he appealed for a new order in which

society must become more just but without sacrificing freedom...The new humanism is not a woolly philosophy, it's not an archeo-liberalism which lets everyone do as he wants. We must have a code of conduct, a law which marks the dividing line between social good and social evil. We must have a State which incarnates the rule of law, and which controls the means of enforcing respect for the dividing line.⁵⁵

In February 1985, Club '89 held its *convention nationale*, to which Chirac and Giscard made speeches, while Barre sent a message which was read by one of his lieutenants.⁵⁶ In early summer, the follow-up to this meeting was the return invitation of the Giscardian *Clubs Perspectives et Réalités* to Club '89. This time all three of the heavyweights were present. Billed as the *Convention Libérale*, the occasion was turned into a big media event, where the parties of the Right were able to congratulate

themselves on "une impressionante convergence de pensée"⁵⁷ before the parliamentary elections, which were now less than 12 months away.

As the Socialists' unpopularity mounted, it had long been thought that the elections of March 1986 would result in an easy victory for the Right, but as the day drew near this was thrown into doubt by the Socialists' unexpected resurgence in the polls and by the stabilization of a regular 10% share of voting intentions by the *Front National*. The first of these two developments was helped by the withdrawal of the Communist party from the governmental coalition, and by the timely replacement of Pierre Mauroy as prime minister by the younger Laurent Fabius, who was less associated in the public mind with previous ideological battles. The RPR countered by replacing its own veteran general secretary, Bernard Pons, with the 43-year-old Jacques Toubon at the end of 1984.

As for the *Front National*, this party had progressively improved its showing at a series of municipal and by-elections since 1983, culminating in an average 10% in the 1984 Europeans, a significant national success, for which some blamed the erosion of differences within the mainstream Right.⁵⁸ Accordingly, from 1984 to 1986 there was friction within the RPR on the correct attitude to take towards the FN. But, as we show in the next chapter, on this issue the leadership avoided making itself a butt for the criticisms of one section of the party, as it had done with its attitude to Giscard and Europe. The Right were particularly critical of the Socialists for their decision (in conformity with their published programme) to change the French electoral system from a majoritarian to a proportional one in time for the 1986 contest, which made it certain that the FN would gain seats and possibly threaten the RPR-UDF's ability to gain an overall majority. As it turned out, the FN gained some 35 seats,

but the second danger was narrowly averted. The RPR (145) and UDF (129) together with 14 independent conservatives, totalled 288 seats, a majority of two over all other parties. With this mandate they set about implementing their liberal programme.

Conclusions

During the 1960s and early 1970s the Gaullists underwent a number of sharp internal conflicts as they tried to shake free of the head of state's patronage and develop into an autonomous political party.

The expulsion of the party's left wing by Pompidou resulted from a conflict over policy. From the mid-1970s onwards, however, policy conflicts were overlaid by personal ones, in that Chirac's takeover of the UDR and his foundation of the RPR in 1976 were interpreted by his party rivals as manoeuvres in the service of personal ambition rather than as a strategy aiming at the victory of his ideas. The personal conflicts were exacerbated by the party's ambiguous position from 1976 to 1981, in opposition to the state President, but half in and half out of government. ✓

It was only after 1981 that the party as a whole - in opposition for the first time in a generation - was faced with the task of closing ranks and developing a programme, or at least a strategy, which could lead to a return to power as soon as possible. Opposition to the Socialists, and sympathy for the contrasting policies pursued in the USA and the UK, seemed to point in the direction of liberalism. In the next chapter, we consider how the RPR's organizational features, partly inherited from the past and overlaid with past conflicts, and partly newly invented, affected the way it faced up to the new challenge. ✓

Notes to Chapter 3

1. Jean Charlot *The Gaullist Phenomenon* London, Allen and Unwin, 1971 p 101, (First published as *Le Phénomène Gaulliste* Paris Fayard 1970)
2. The National Association for the Support of General de Gaulle's Action
3. Charlot *op cit*, *The Gaullist Phenomenon*, . . . , p 102
4. Raymond Triboulet, quoted by Charlot, *ibidem*, p 94
5. Eric Roussel, *Georges Pompidou, le Président d'avant la crise* Paris Lattès 1984
6. One of the left Gaullists, who was a junior minister at the time, remembers Pompidou as being broadly in favour of *participation*, and blames Debré for the sabotage, (Interview with Philippe Dechartre, 6-12-88) Perhaps he was thinking less of Pompidou as prime minister than of Pompidou as President. As has sometimes been pointed out, the politician who makes the transition from the one office to the other abandons to his subordinates the task of implementing policies which may be attractive to the electorate but less so to pressure groups such as the employers and the trade unions. See also Dorothy Pickles, *The Government and Politics of France* London Methuen 1973, vol 2, Politics pp 96-98; Charlot *op cit* pp 102-104; Roussel *op cit* p 208
7. Charlot *op cit* p 94
8. Roussel *op cit*
9. Charlot *op cit* p 75
10. *ibidem* p 126
12. George Ross, "Gaullism and Organized Labour; two decades of failure", in W.G. Andrews and S. Hoffman (eds), *The Fifth Republic at Twenty* Albany, State University of New York Press, 1981 pp 330-347; Pickles *op cit*.
13. Michel Debré, *Une Certaine Idée de la France* Paris Fayard 1972 p 242
14. Laurent Greilsamer and Daniel Schneidermann, "Jacques Chirac, le sabreur au grand coeur", in *Le Monde* 19-12-85
15. On the *Appel des 43*, see *Le Monde* 16-4-74,
16. Thierry Desjardins, *Les Chiraquiens* Paris La Table Ronde 1986 p 120
17. The manoeuvre was assumed to have been mounted deliberately during Guichard's absence. (Desjardins *op cit*, *Les Chiraquiens*, . . . , p 100)
18. Pierre Crisol and Jean-Yves Lhomeau, *La Machine RFA* Paris Fayolle 1977 pp 24-30
19. Desjardins *op cit*, *Les Chiraquiens*, . . . , pp 120-1
20. To reinforce the impression of collegiality, Chalandon accepted nominal responsibility for 'politics' knowing that in reality Chirac himself would control all political

questions in close consultation with René Tomadini, his minister for relations with parliament. (Interview with Albin Chalandon, 1-12-88; interview with Yves Guéna, 5-1-89)

21. A fortress in which Chirac has no influence. Crisol and Lhomeau, *op cit* p 62
22. Interview with Yvon Bourges, 11-1-89
23. This interpretation of the Giscard-Chirac cohabitation follows Crisol et Lhomeau *op cit* pp 60-73
24. *ibidem* p 71
25. *ibidem* pp 220-222
26. One author has suggested that Chirac at that time expected a left victory, and therefore intended to base the identity of the 'renewed' Gaullist party on anti-Communism. When the union of the left unexpectedly broke down in September 1977, the familiar Gaullist themes and symbols were reinstated. (William R. Schonfeld, "The RPR; from a Rassemblement to the Gaullist Movement", in Andrews and Hoffman (eds) *op cit* pp 91-111) An alternative view is that a poster campaign was originally planned in three waves, of which the third was intended to deploy the 'red scare'. In the event, the theme of the first wave, '*Oui à la France que nous aimons*' was so successful that it was repeated in the second, and the third was simply dropped. (Crisol et Lhomeau, *op cit* p 163.)
27. "...expression tellement surprenante qu'il ne l'utilisera jamais plus." Crisol et Lhomeau *op cit* p230
On the Egletons speech, see *ibidem* pp 229-30; Desjardins, *op cit*, *Les Chiraquiens*, ... pp 120-121; André Passeron "Le Parti d'un Homme" in *Pouvoirs*, no 28 1984, pp 27-34. The speech is reprinted in Jacques Chirac, *Discours pour la France à l'Heure du Choix, La Lueur de L'Espérance* Paris, Livre de Poche 1981 pp 15-26 (First published, Paris Stock 1978)
28. Crisol et Lhomeau *op cit* p 231
29. *ibidem* p 233
30. *ibidem* p 225
31. *ibidem* p 233
32. Michel Offerlé, "Transformation d'une Entreprise Politique; de l'UDR au RPR (1973-77)", in *Pouvoirs* no 28 1984 pp 5-26 (p 6)
33. Crisol et Lhomeau *op cit* p 155-165
34. Schonfeld *loc cit*, "The RPR, from a Rassemblement, ..."; Passeron *loc cit*, "Le Parti d'un Homme", ...; Kay Lawson, "The Impact of Party Reform on Party Systems", in *Comparative Politics*, vol 13 no 4, July 1981 pp 401-19
35. Interview with Yvon Bourges, 11-1-89
36. Crisol et Lhomeau *op cit* p 30; Alain Peyrefitte, *Le Mal Français*, Paris, Plon 1976,
37. Thierry Desjardins, *Un Inconnu Nommé Chirac* Paris Table Ronde 1983 pp 399-401

38. Desjardins (*ibidem* pp 411-2) implies that Chirac sacked them, *Le Monde* 19-12-85 tends more towards resignation. Concerning the career of Marie-France Garaud, see her interview in *Le Nouvel Observateur* 15-12-80
39. On Barre's policy, see Volkmar Lauber *The Political Economy of France, from Pompidou to Mitterrand* New York Praeger 1983 pp 91-109
40. Crisol et Lhomeau *op cit* pp 147-54
41. For Guéna's statement of the reasons for his resignation, see Jean Peltier, "Jason-Chirac", in *Ecrits de Paris* March 1979 pp 21-26
42. Lauber *op cit* pp 113-4. See also Chirac's interview with *Le Nouvel Observateur* 14-5-79,
43. *Le Monde* 30-10-79
44. Irène Allier "RPR-UDF; un remariage de raison" in *Le Nouvel Observateur* 25-5-81
45. Chirac's interview with André Passeron, *Le Monde* 19-7-81
46. *ibidem*
47. *Le Monde* 26-1-82
48. "Au concept de nation, auquel de Gaulle avait donné la priorité absolue, s'ajoute aujourd'hui celui de la liberté, autour duquel s'articulent toutes les revendications." (*Le Monde* 26-1-82, "To the concept of the nation, to which de Gaulle had given absolute priority, is added today that of 'freedom', around which all demands are articulated.")
49. Speech by J. Chirac at the *Assises Nationales* held in Toulouse on the 23rd and 24th January 1982. *Le Monde* 26-1-82, *Nous préconisons la libération des forces productives, ... parce que nous croyons que l'efficacité, la création, la croissance ont pour vrai ressort l'initiative et la responsabilité. Ce n'est pas l'État qui produit la richesse d'un pays; son rôle est seulement d'en prélever une partie pour la redistribuer et corriger ainsi les injustices.*
50. Diana Green "Industrial Policy and Policy Making, 1974-82", in Vincent Wright (ed) *Continuity and Change in France*, London, Allen and Unwin, 1984 pp 139-158
51. *Le Monde* 21-1-83
52. *Le Monde, Dossiers et Documents*, special issue, *Bilan du Septennat, l'alternance dans l'alternance*, Paris 1988 pp 116-119
53. On the emergence of Barre as a "leader" of his own current, see *Le Monde* 22-8-84, 17-12-85, 20-12-85, and a long retrospective in *Le Monde* 7-1-87; for portraits of spokesmen of the "Barristes", see *Le Monde* 11-6-85 and 27-12-86; see also Jean-Pierre Delilez, "Le barrisme, une variante du conservatisme", in *La Nouvelle Revue Socialiste*, Jan-Feb 1986 pp 77-80, and Franco Rizzuto, "Anti-Political Politics: the Barre Phenomenon", in *Government and Opposition* vol 22 no 2 Spring 1987 pp 145-162.
54. "... contribuer au renouveau culturel et intellectuel qui aidera l'opposition à gagner les prochaines élections. *Le Monde* 7-5-82

55. *... la société doit devenir plus juste, mais sans rien sacrifier de la liberté des hommes. Voilà le vrai défi que nous devons relever, ... Le nouvel humanisme n'est pas une philosophie molle, ce n'est pas un archéo-libéralisme qui laisse à chacun la bride sur le cou, il faut un code de conduite, il faut une loi qui trace le partage du bien et du mal social, il faut un Etat de droit qui dispose de tous les moyens de faire respecter cette ligne de partage, Le Monde 7-5-82*
56. *Le Monde 5-2-85*
57. Michel Aurillac "La Convention Libérale" in *Revue des Deux Mondes* July 1985 pp3-8. For a more jaundiced view, see *Le Monde*, 9/10-6-85
58. There is a massive literature on the FN. For its impact in this period, see, Alain Rollat and Edwy Plenel, *L'Effet Le Pen*, Paris, Le Monde/La Découverte, 1984; Monica Charlot, "L'Émergence du Front National", in *Revue Française de Science Politique*, 36/1, February 1986, pp 30-45

In Chapter 1 we suggested that political parties are complex organizations, whose strategy may be derived from many points of contact to the wider society, and influenced by rivalries within and between party bodies with more or less institutional power. In this chapter we focus on the party's internal life. We describe the formal structure of the RPR and attempt to pin-point where power lies by examining a number of cases of inner-party conflict which occurred during the period 1978-86.

In the first section we show how elements of the party's structure have their origins in the old UDR's role as parliamentary "cannon fodder" for de Gaulle. Only when he departed from the scene did the party gradually recognize that representative institutions would help it to assert a degree of autonomy against the dictates of the new President, Georges Pompidou. This movement was distorted by the foundation of the RPR in 1976 with a populist constitution which allowed the party leader to use his support among the mass of the rank and file as a counterweight to the party committees and other notables.

In the second section we describe the role of the party president's personal advisers, especially those grouped at the Paris town hall, who sometimes acted as a screen between the leader and the party and sometimes as rivals of the headquarters officials, whose functions we outline in the third part of the chapter.

Fourthly, we turn to the parliamentary party, enumerating the occasions when the deputies have resisted dragooning by the leadership, sometimes succeeding in influencing party policy as a result. The final part of the chapter is devoted to a comparison of the effective influence

wielded by these different sources of power in the party.

The Search for Autonomy, and the Constitution of the RPR

During the Gaullists' years of power nothing illustrated better both the government's grip on the UDR and the ramshackle party 'structure' than the articles (28 and 29) of the statutes which specified the composition of the Central Committee, the sovereign decision-making body, (Table 4.1)¹

Table 4.1

Composition of the UDR Central Committee in 1973

The prime minister

All former Gaullist prime ministers

A minister of the day, designated by the prime minister

The president and former presidents of the National Assembly

The presidents of the two Gaullist parliamentary groups

40 deputies or senators, elected by their peers

10 members elected directly by the party congress

23 members elected by specially mandated delegates of the regions, also at party congress

A number of members co-opted "with regard to their competence or their standing", up to a limit of 15% of the total of the elected or *ex officio* members.

The UDR also had a *Bureau Exécutif* whose mode of selection reflected the domination of a virtually self-perpetuating elite. Half its 36 members were *ex officio*, owing their places to their status as deputies, senators, former prime ministers, or holders of some other post in the state or Gaullist hierarchy. The other 18 were elected by the Central Committee,

doubtless after suitable consultation with the 'permanent' members. The *ex officio* element in these two leading committees effectively ensured that power stayed firmly within the small area of Paris bounded by the National Assembly, the prime minister's office and party headquarters, while the modest number of elected members provided enough sops to buy off the opposition of any outsiders wanting to rock the boat. In 1974 the parliamentary groups forced a partial breach in this cosy arrangement when the composition of the *Bureau Exécutif* was changed so that 9 *ex officio* members and 9 elected by the CC faced a further 9 elected from among their own number by the deputies and senators.

Demands for more party democracy had been containable as long as de Gaulle remained to exert his all-class electoral appeal. But soon after Pompidou's election as President there were some among the rising generation who suspected that the rank and file membership were beginning to articulate aspirations for social progress which the establishment did not share.² In discussion prior to the party congress in 1971, voices were raised to ask whether it was not now time for the party to elect its own president, democratize its structure and debate policy.³ Jacques Chirac, minister responsible for relations with parliament, put the establishment's view: the President of the Republic is our leader, even if his official function prevents him identifying himself with a political party.⁴

During 1973 and 1974, however, Pompidou was visibly seriously ill, and his new prime minister, Pierre Messmer, never succeeded in establishing his popularity in the opinion polls. Realizing that a leader with a poor image risks dragging his party down with him,⁵ some prominent party members began to call for the UDR to be 'restructured',

(Sanguinetti), or to rise above its purely electoral function (Peyrefitte).⁶

As general secretary, Sanguinetti organized an opinion poll in 1974 of both party members and the 'man in the street', in order to find out what the members and electors thought about the image and prospects of the UDR. The most salient finding was that the party was seen as leaderless, and therefore condemned to inevitable decline.⁷ But there were also demands for a new party title, for the departmental secretaries and the general secretary himself to be subject to election by the membership, for changes in the way deputies were represented in the party deliberative bodies, and for a reduction in the large number of *ex-officio* positions in the hierarchy.⁸

The leadership responded with a new set of statutes, ratified by the party congress at Nice in June 1975, which increased the proportion of elected to non-elected members on the three existing deliberative bodies, and spelled out the rights and duties of the 95 *fédérations*, the units which correspond to the essential unit of French local government, the department. The federations' domain was defined as being the electoral problems and internal affairs of the movement; all applications for membership had to pass through the federal committee; the federations alone had the right to communicate with the national centre, and they had the right to call regional conferences, with the consent of the central committee.⁹ The post of federal secretary did not become elective, however, remaining subject to appointment by the general secretary, himself designated by the party's central committee, a body now containing slightly more than 50% of elected members.¹⁰

The incremental changes of the years 1970-76, then, which spanned the

death of the founding father and the movement's loss of the state presidency, had seen a partial democratization of the Gaullist movement. Jacques Chirac's resignation as prime minister in August 1976, as we saw in Chapter 3, led to an altogether more dramatic rupture with the old forms of organization.

In the UDR, legitimacy was inherited from personal contact with the general; in the RPR in theory it belongs to the mass membership, and behind them, to the voters. In the UDR, power belonged to a ramshackle

Table 4.2

Power of the Party President in the RPR Constitution, 1976

Leads the Rassemblement

Takes the chair at meetings of the national deliberative bodies

Ensures the execution of their decisions

Represents the Rassemblement in all political events or situations

Appoints the general secretary

Appoints the members of the Executive Committee, on the proposal of the general secretary

Defines the size of the Executive Committee, and the functions of its members, in consultation with the general secretary

Appoints directly to the Political Committee an unlimited number of members of his own choice

May propose candidates for election to the Central Committee (approx 250 members)

May appoint directly to the National Council, (approx. 1,000 members), whomever he likes, in accordance with their competence and their national reputation.

majority among the historic elite; in the RPR, power is vested in the party president and an appointed executive committee.

The functions of the RPR president are defined in article 23 of the statutes (table 4.2)'. Like his UDR predecessor, the RPR general-secretary directs the work of the Executive Committee, appoints all departmental secretaries (subject to ratification by the federal committees) and appoints, where the need arises, a number of regional *chargés de mission*. The duo of president and general secretary, provided they get along well together, therefore represent, along with their appointed executive committee, an enormously powerful core executive with the party's system of government.

As for the rights of the grass-roots members, the 1976 statutes made a number of changes to the status of the local party organizations, some of which were in the direction of democratization, while others were the reverse. Among the first kind was that the post of secretary of the constituency parties, the unit below the federation, was made elective for the first time. The federations lost their monopoly control of communication with the centre, and of membership applications, which could now be made at any higher or lower level, even to workplace groups (which it was intended would be revitalized and grouped in the so-called *Action Ouvrière et Professionnelle*).

If these changes could be seen as a welcome freeing of grass-roots party life from the strangle-hold of networks of local notables, there were other ominous signs. The federations were no longer allowed a role in the calling of regional conferences. Although they retained the right to ratify the centre's choice of their departmental secretary, this was in effect no more than a right of veto. The centre now had the right to

remove - without appeal - even those secretaries which their local members felt were doing a good job. (This was in line with Chirac's ambition to ensure the replacement of at least 50% of all departmental secretaries who had been appointed before 1974.) As for the newly elective constituency secretaries, in the 1976 statutes these were subject to arbitrary dismissal by the departmental secretary, but in 1978 an amendment to the statutes increased central control even more; the prerogative of sacking the duly elected constituency secretary no longer belonged to the next highest rung in the hierarchy, but was transferred to the general secretary himself.¹²

In short, the members may elect their constituency committees, and they have a role in electing the departmental committee (two-thirds elected), but the secretaries, the executive officers of these grass-roots units, are strictly controlled by the centre.

We have not yet reached the heart of the 1976 statutes' conception of inner-party democracy, however, for the RPR's great innovation in this field was to expand the role of the mandated delegate, (*mandataire*). There are two kinds of *mandataire* - some *ex officio*, and some elected by the grass-roots members.

The first kind are members of Parliament, of the *Conseil Economique et Social* (CES), or outgoing members of the Central Committee. In exercising their chief function, that of electing the party president, the *ex officio mandataires* are always swamped by those elected from the grass roots. Each federation has a right to a certain number of *mandataires*, which are attributed as a result of two different calculations, one of the number of members in the federation, and the other of their number of locally elected councillors. At the first and founding congress of the

RPR, held in Paris on December 5th 1976, Charles Pasqua had managed to organize some 14,000 of these *mandataires*, out of fifty thousand members present.¹³

The *mandataires'* other main responsibility is to elect, at the congress, 100 members to the new Central Committee, who then form that fraction of the committee known as elected 'on the national list', as well as another 70 or so on the so-called 'regional list', whose nomination emanates from the party's regional organizations. From time to time the *mandataires* may be asked to do other jobs, such as endorsing the party's presidential candidate.

The grass roots elect the party president, then, and they have a role in electing a portion of the Central Committee, (officially the sovereign decision-making body of the party). On paper these are large steps in the direction of democratization. But the delegates cast their votes at a week-end outing, in an atmosphere of warm emotional solidarity induced by rabble-rousing speeches, drum-beating, flag-waving, and the close physical proximity of fifty thousand fellow members. They often have only a vague idea of the ideas and achievements of those for whom they are voting. The candidates who regularly top the poll in the Central Committee elections are singers, sportsmen or other entertainers.¹⁴

This applies in a magnified way to the leadership election. The relationship between leader and members in the RPR mirrors traditional Gaullist populism. As in the general's referenda, there is no other choice but for or against, there is no room in the RPR for 'yes, but.....' The members are not asked to initiate, to debate, or to lead; these things will be done for them. They are expected to execute, to endorse, and to follow.

For many years the system seemed to work to perfection. In 1976, Jacques Chirac was elected party president by an overwhelming 98% of the mandated delegates; his candidature for the presidency of the Republic was endorsed by similar huge majorities at extraordinary national congresses in 1981 and 1988.¹⁵ Should Chirac's decisions ever be questioned by colleagues in the hierarchy, he could always point to his popular mandate as a crushing final argument. For their part, the RPR activists, alone in France in having a share in the designation of their party's presidential candidate, had political issues simplified for them, had their fanatical loyalty to Chirac reinforced, and got a tremendous boost from the feeling of belonging to a solidly united movement. It was subject to this rather large constraint that the party's representative committees accomplished their assigned tasks.

The Central Committee is a body which the RPR inherited from the UDR. In 1976, as we have seen, it surrendered to the party president the right to designate the general-secretary, but remained formally very powerful. According to the RPR's 1976 statutes (article 24); "Following the directives laid down by the national congress or extraordinary congress, the Central Committee is in overall charge of the movement and takes all decisions which the circumstances may require."¹⁶ On the recommendation of the general-secretary, the Central Committee may decree the dissolution of a federation or constituency party. It meets at least once a year, when called by the president.

The composition of the Central Committee in 1976 is shown in table 4.3. (The Political Committee, whose members sat by right, is a smaller policy-discussion committee of variable size which we deal with in a moment.) In 1978 an amendment to the statutes made *ex officio* places open

to all deputies and senators, and all departmental secretaries. This had the effect of increasing the overall size of the Central Committee from 266 to 482, if one counts 95 departmental secretaries, 153 deputies, and just 28 senators (1977 had been a bad year in the senatorial elections) and it increased the representation of the group who were always likely to be the most articulate and independent, the parliamentarians.¹⁷

In 1976 they had 60 of 266 members, or 22%; in 1978 they had 181 of 482, or 37.5%. In 1981, of course, the Socialist victory at the polls decimated the RPR group in the National Assembly. The 88 deputies and 44 senators now made up exactly 30% of a Central Committee of 430.¹⁸

Table 4.3

Composition of the Central Committee, 1976

All members of the Political Committee

The 100 members elected on the national list at the party congress

70 members elected (also at the national congress) on the regional list, in proportion to the number of constituency parties in each region

60 members of Parliament, elected by their groups, in the proportion of 6 deputies to one senator

In 1984, more amendments to the party statutes opened up Central Committee membership *ex officio* to all Euro-MP's, (20), all regional councillors (373), and, for good measure, former general secretaries of the Gaullist movement, if there were any who somehow did not have a mandate on any other count. This brought the total up to a possible 831,

but the actual figure would have been less than that, given the large number of people who would have qualified under more than one head. In size the Central Committee now resembled the old UDR *Conseil National*, a collection of notables numbering about 1,000. But that body was always merely advisory, while the RPR's Central Committee in 1984 was still formally decision-making. From that date, it was no longer the parliamentarians, but the regional councillors who formed the largest single group, but clearly there is no sense in which such an amorphous group could form a blocking minority.

These calculations imply that the Central Committee was hardly likely to have played a crucial role in policy making. It has certainly never operated as a representative decision-making body. In theory it meets over two days, with the first day devoted to discussions in six standing committees, but already in the 1970s it met in practice for only a few hours at a time to listen to speeches before voting unanimously for the resolutions drawn up by the leadership. One member confided to an American researcher that he didn't bother to attend any more for he preferred to sleep at home.¹⁹ More recent conversations with Central Committee members confirm the lack of internal debate.

Its just rhetorical for us. Its a shame. But the Central Committee is tactical when its a question of the distribution of power, its rhetorical for anything connected with ideas, and it has no practical influence.²⁰

Some younger deputies expressed disappointment at the prostration of the grass-roots federations whose influence was "more or less zero".²¹ Others accept it as a matter of course. Yves Guéna, though he resigned from the Political Committee in 1979, and lost his parliamentary seat in 1981, remained a member of the Central Committee, and president of his

federation, the Dordogne. Nevertheless, at the end of 1981, he decided to set up his own political club, the *Club Périgolais*,

because I wanted to have my own means of putting my ideas across, given that, in the Central Committee, you don't have much chance of doing anything.²²

Guéna explicitly compares the operation of the RPR Central Committee and that of the French Communist party, quoting with approval the judgement of the historian Philippe Robrieux;

There are three types of members. There are those who know, and therefore keep quiet. There are those who know that they don't know, and are prudent enough to keep quiet. And there are those who don't know that they don't know, and speak, but it serves no purpose. Well in the RPR its the same, its what you'd expect; its the same in every party.²³

These members versions of the low level of genuine debate at CC level are echoed by the findings of a group of researchers from Grenoble who interviewed over 2,000 delegates when the National Congress was held there in 1984, and found that only 6.5% claimed to have spoken during the proceedings.²⁴

The 1976 statutes changed the old UDR's *Bureau Exécutif* into the *Conseil Politique*. Article 31 states that, "The Political Committee assists the president. It meets at his request. The resolutions or recommendations which it thinks useful to make are transmitted to the Central Committee by the president."²⁵ The *ex officio* members remained at 9; these were the president himself, the other 5 surviving former Gaullist prime ministers,²⁶ the two heads of the parliamentary groups, and the party general-secretary. In addition, 15 members were to be elected by the Central Committee and an unlimited number appointed personally by the president.

In practice the Political Committee was often called in conjunction

with the bureau of the parliamentary group, and frequently shortly before a meeting of the Central Committee. As it had no executive role Chirac had no incentive to "pack" it, and when it was working well he was able to use it as a sounding board to keep him in touch with feeling in different sections of the party.²⁷ His personal nominees for the first Political Committee numbered 12, of whom 9 were parliamentarians. At least four, André Bord, Yves Guéna, Georges Gorse and Jean de Lipkowski had at some stage been connected with the left, and could thus balance up the former prime ministers, most of whom had not.²⁸

The status of the Political Committee remained unchanged for the next eight years. In November 1984 it was suppressed and replaced by a new body, the *Bureau Politique*. The president's personal nominees were abolished, and the number elected by the Central Committee rose from 15 to 20. The party treasurer was added to the list of those with an automatic right to a seat, but the number remained at 9 because, among the former prime ministers, Edgar Faure had left the RPR by 1984 (and has since died).²⁹

The democratization of the old Political Committee came after a period of agitation by what the press called a group of 'young Turks' within the party led by Alain Juppé and Jacques Toubon. The impression of a victory for the *forces vives* was reinforced when Toubon at the same time replaced Pons as secretary-general. The new body also found favour with some of the old guard. Early in 1985 *le Monde* reported that Chaban Delmas and Debré, who both had reasons for bitterness at Chirac's past actions, would be attending meetings, having for many years boycotted the party's leading committees. Toubon even announced that the *Bureau Politique* would have a more decisive role than its predecessor. Instead of being merely

consultative, it would "define the movement's actions, and take decisions to this end."²⁰ There was apparently no intention that the new body would encroach on the Central Committee's sovereignty, however; the latter body was still referred to as the *organe de direction du mouvement* in a 1988 party hand-out. It was not likely, on the other hand, that a 29-member body meeting infrequently could act as a working executive, especially when an appointed executive committee based at the party head office existed at the same time.

The Party President's Advisers

The decision to launch the RPR was taken on 29th August 1976 at a meeting attended by Jacques Chirac, Pierre Juillet, Marie-France Garaud, Jérôme Monod, and Jacques Friedman. Chirac had so far pursued his rather controversial career with such obvious relish, and his close associates were so little known to the public, that French observers have often been unable to resist the image of a highly strung political animal, and his handlers or trainers.²¹ The journalists who wrote the story of the transition from the UDR to the RPR referred to a closely knit *cellule politique* who took all the key decisions. In English, the most appropriate idiom seems to be the 'kitchen cabinet'.²²

It is part of the definition of kitchen cabinets that journalists or political scientists never find out *all* there is to know about the influence of this or that individual, when it began or ended, and its operation on specific decisions. A study of their membership should not be neglected, however, because it can reveal the unexpected influence of people who have no official role in a party or government.

Juillet, who hosted the gathering at his farmhouse in the Creuse, was a former *résistant* and RPF member. Apart from the Gaullist orthodoxies

relating to the national destiny, his political views were founded on old-style authoritarianism, faith in market forces and an appropriate hatred of trade unions. Since 1962 he had been continuously in Pompidou's *cabinets*, where his slow accumulation of immense irresponsible power encouraged the French press to treat him as the power behind the throne. Juillet and Garaud, who also had an office at the Elysée, made a particular enemy of Pompidou's first prime minister, Jacques Chaban Delmas, whom they regarded as a crypto-socialist.³³ Sharing with Chirac a devotion to Pompidou's memory, they had helped him to set up the *Appel des 43* which blocked Chaban's presidential chances in 1974. When Giscard replaced Pompidou in the presidential palace, both Juillet and Garaud immediately transferred their offices and their allegiance to Chirac and Matignon.

Up to 1976, Jérôme Monod had made a successful career as a model Gaullist technocrat. Trained at the *Ecole Nationale d'Administration*, he worked in Debré's prime ministerial *cabinet* from 1959-62, and thereafter spent 10 years as a servant of the state, turning the regime's industrial ambitions into reality, especially as director of the powerful regional planning body, DATAR (*Délégation à l'Aménagement du Territoire et à l'Action Régionale*) In 1974, he returned to politics as director of Chirac's *cabinet* at Matignon.

Of the four, Jacques Friedman was the one who had worked most closely with Chirac in his successive ministerial cabinets, and who has remained closest to him as personal friend and adviser. Soon after the founding operation was completed, however, he withdrew from his party role, such as it was, and concentrated on a business career in which he has acted as an invaluable bridge between Chirac and employers' organizations.³⁴

To this group should be added the names of Yves Guéna and Charles Pasqua, two rather different figures with long Gaullist pedigrees. Guéna, a Breton, joined the free French in London in 1940 at the age of 18. He was a *haut fonctionnaire* with a long African career and a taste for literature who owed his start in politics to a family connection with Michel Debré.⁹⁵ Pasqua, son of a policeman, one of Marseille's numerous Corsican immigrants, had a couple of years in the maquis, organized for the RPF in Provence, and graduated from commercial traveller to marketing director during a long career with the firm of Ricard before founding his own business. His reputation was indelibly marked by his creation of the *Service d'Action Civique*, an organization of strong-arm men originally intended to defend de Gaulle's supporters against threatened OAS terrorism, but which later degenerated into an all-purpose goon-squad. He and Guéna did not always see eye to eye.⁹⁶

Chirac's kitchen cabinet did what was necessary to launch a new party, including writing the new party's statutes, duly ratified by the founding rally of December 1976.⁹⁷ In order to emphasize the break with the past, Monod became RPR general secretary, with the task of bringing modern-style management techniques to bear on party organization. Guéna accepted the post of *délégué politique*, while Pasqua was content with the title of *secrétaire national à l'animation* which he had enjoyed since 1973.

Monod at least had a clear title and a job to do, and at first he was left all the power he needed to get on with it. His collaborators soon realized, however, after a poor showing in a television debate with Michel Rocard, that Monod was not the man they needed as a leading spokesman. Already by July 1977 Guéna had replaced the general secretary as leader of

the RPR side in the negotiations with the UDF over the choice of candidates for the impending municipal elections.³⁹ Meanwhile it was Juillet and Garaud, already credited with persuading Chirac to resign as Giscard's prime minister, who induced him to declare open war on the President by contesting the Paris municipal elections, resulting in his installation as mayor in the spring of 1977. Conscious that his authority was dwindling away, Monod was ready to resign by the end of the year, but held back until after the March 1978 general elections, so as not to damage the party's chances.⁴⁰ His turn to private industry, however, in no way weakened, any more than did Friedman's, the value of the services he would be able to render Chirac later on.

The new general secretary was Alain Devaquet, a university research scientist who, it was widely recognized, was not old enough and not abrasive enough to face down the prestige of a Guéna on the one hand, or counter the subterranean manoeuvrings of Pasqua, Juillet and Garaud on the other. These now achieved notoriety in the press as "Chirac's occult advisers", and by the beginning of 1979 were regularly referred to as the RPR's "gang of Four."

By the end of that year, however, only Pasqua was left. Guéna had come round to the view of his parliamentary colleagues, complained that the party's attacks on Giscard were far too sharp, and resigned his seat on the Political Committee in March in protest at the exclusion of the deputies from the decision-making process. Juillet and Garaud were disgraced by the party's disastrous result in the June Euro-election, though it is not entirely clear whether their departures were due more to their own volition or to Chirac's.⁴¹ Pasqua, in the meantime promoted to the rank of assistant general-secretary in charge of organization, was the

great survivor. In June 1979 he was caught so blatantly by the deputy André Fanton in an entirely gratuitous act of fraud in the counting of CC ballots for the Political Committee election that Chirac was obliged to annul the results of the election and order a re-run.⁴¹ In October his name was removed from the party's organigramme. Nevertheless the press continued to speculate about his real behind-the-scenes influence, and, sure enough, the same Charles Pasqua appeared towards the end of 1980 in charge of a suite of offices rented for the staff HQ of the presidential campaign which Chirac was yet to announce.⁴² Clearly he was a man whose organizing powers were difficult to do without, but at least one of the inner circle, Jacques Boyon, who was treasurer of Chirac's 1981 presidential campaign, describes Pasqua as incomparably the most influential of the team as far as *ideas* were concerned at that time.⁴³ Among other ways of fostering his influence, Pasqua made an alliance with a number of young protégés who would eventually all become deputies and mayors in his own power base, the *Hauts de Seine* department, which borders the west end of Paris.⁴⁴ For good measure, he had himself elected to the presidency of the RPR group in the Senate, an exploit which struck some of his colleagues as particularly audacious.⁴⁵ All in all Pasqua so carefully built his own network of supporters inside and outside the party, that he has almost never been absent from the highest party conclaves. In 1986 he duly took his place as minister of the Interior.

On April 11th 1979 a communiqué announced Chirac's appointment of a new personal 'adviser for economic and social affairs' This was Jean Méo, a state-trained technocrat who had worked in the oil and newspaper industries. From 1974-8 he was managing-director of the state-owned advertising group, Havas. In the autumn of 1979, Méo became assistant

secretary-general at the *rue de Lille*. For two years he would be the party's main spokesman on economic and social policy,⁴⁶ taking charge of the party programme *Atout France*, launched at a press conference in October 1980.⁴⁷ But at the end of 1981 Meo was thanked for his services and rewarded with one of the party's seats in the European Parliament, where he was to deal with 'European economic problems'.⁴⁸ He stayed at Strasbourg only during 1982, however, and the following year was elected as a Paris councillor, indicating that he was still available for use by Chirac in whatever capacity need might dictate.⁴⁹

By this time the Paris town hall had become an important power-base, which some regarded as the site of Chirac's new kitchen cabinet. It was the ideal place to accommodate a number of private study groups which the party president might desire to be set up on any Parisian, national or even international topic which interested him. Since 1939 the budget for councillors' expenses had been subject to no state auditing procedure, and was a virtually limitless source of finance for ample research services including secretaries, telephones and even cars.⁵⁰

Members of the town hall groups talk about them with discretion and a certain amount of hesitation, but do not disguise the fact that the party president does not rely on the party alone for the 'ressourcing' which makes his public role possible;

Q. Did you work with M. Chirac at the town hall for a while?

A. At the town hall? No...not...oh, at the town hall ... not really at the town hall, yes I was part of a small personal study group which worked for him on local government questions....It was in no sense an RPR group, it was completely outside...The group was made up essentially of a few personal advisers and a few people from the town hall. But at that time, anyway, there was a parallel system of study groups. Jacques Chirac has always wanted

there to be RPR study groups and at the same time more personal ones for himself.⁵¹

Among others, the Paris payroll covered the activities of Robert Pandraud, for a while the mayor's nominal *directeur de cabinet*, but in reality the RPR's key contact with all branches of the police. Bernard Pons and Daniel Naftalski had charge of French overseas territories; Jean Colonna's field of competence included New Caledonia, Corsica, the preparation of the 1986 parliamentary elections, and a study group dealing with local government questions. From 1977 to 1984 the Paris information director was Denis Baudoin, former head of Pompidou's press office; his brief extended to the party's and Chirac's global communications strategies. In the run-up to the 1986 elections, Maurice Ulrich headed a group which mapped out what would be the future government's policy on broadcasting.⁵²

The town hall was not the only place where the RPR president was able to find groups of faithful sympathizers organized outside the party apparatus to study and advise on questions he might submit to them. He also listened to a group of personal friends, mostly businessmen, who themselves preferred not to get involved with party or administrative problems. The most influential were generally agreed to be Jacques Friedmann and Jérôme Monod; others included Michel François-Poncet and Elie Crespi.⁵³ Yet another group of businessmen and technocrats, headed by Edouard Balladur, spent the months preceding the March 1986 elections drafting the privatization and tax legislation introduced as soon as the new government took office. Among the participants were politicians like Nicole Catala and Alain Juppé, but the group operated entirely outside the official party organization.⁵⁴

Chirac also habitually requested written analyses of particular questions from individual specialists not connected with study groups.⁵⁵ Finally, the RPR leader is inevitably subjected to a cacophony of unrecorded and unquantifiable verbal advice. Balladur claimed to see him on average twice a week during 1985-6; their conversations covered the full range of domestic and foreign policy issues, as well as the more prosaic questions of party strategy.⁵⁶ Jean Charbonnel, an old left Gaullist who had little taste for Balladur's privatizing schemes, tried to counter them during fleeting contacts with his party boss at the fortnightly meetings of the *conseil-général* of the Corrèze, of which they were both members.⁵⁷

Party Headquarters

For a brief period in 1977, in order to emphasize the break with the UDR, the RPR national office was situated in the ultra-modern skyscraper, the *Tour Montparnasse*. The price of modernity, measured in physical distance from the centre of power, was soon judged too high however, and the party returned to its old buildings in and around 121 *rue de Lille*, literally next door to the National Assembly. Hence the common journalists' shorthand use of *la rue de Lille* to refer to the staff, the party machine, or simply the general secretary and his closest colleagues.

The first general secretary of the RPR was Jérôme Monod, brought in for his competence as an administrator. He held the job only until early 1978, when he was forced out for political reasons by other members of Chirac's entourage. Monod was succeeded by Alain Devaquet, a recent recruit with little political experience who from March 1978 to October 1979 tried in vain to face up to the forces which had removed his predecessor. During the first 2-3 years of the new party's existence,

then, the *rue de Lille* sheltered a less than closely-knit team.

Devaquet's successor, Bernard Pons, was a completely different personality. A hardened veteran of tough electoral battles with the Communists in their Limousin stronghold, he was one of those Gaullists who, from the beginning, had realized the contradiction between his own values and Giscard's 'advanced liberalism'.⁵² This conviction, and his unconditional loyalty to Chirac, were soon put to use in fustigating the President's policies during his numerous tours of the party branches, as well as at every available press conference and television programme.⁵³ Far more visible than either Monod or Devaquet had been, Pons effectively took over a great deal of the dirty work, and of the consequent unpopularity which had devolved on Chirac as the chief party spokesman since Guéna's departure. There were advantages too, in having this role played by Pons rather than by Guéna's replacement as *délégué politique*, Claude Labbé, who was president of the parliamentary group and had to preserve a certain minimum of good relations with the Giscardians.

As a political figure, Pons was the ideal general secretary - able, if need be, to state the party's position himself in response to new or unexpected circumstances, and never once during his five years tenure publicly in conflict with Chirac.⁵⁴ Above all, however, Pons has been described by those who worked closely with him as a fine team-leader who succeeded in inspiring the rank and file members with whom he came in contact, both by his own example of hard and uncomplaining work, and by his knack of finding the time to listen to grass-roots problems and complaints.⁵⁵

Pons was replaced by Jacques Toubon in November 1984 when he and his friends had convinced Chirac that Pons' prolonged political exposure had

begun to give him the air of a has-been whose image compared badly with those of the new, young prime minister, Laurent Fabius, and the new, young president of the Republican Party, François Léotard.

Toubon was an *énarque* who had gained profitable experience in Chirac's *cabinets* during the Gaullists' years in power, and had spent the first four years of the party's existence at the *rue de Lille* in charge of the elections department. He justified the immediate reason for his appointment in that he proved an effective and reasonably sympathetic television performer. Toubon is generally considered to have been an awful secretary general, however. He was unavailable to the grass roots members, usually abused them roundly whenever he did see them, and was notoriously unable to keep his appointments even with his most senior colleagues.⁶²

The structure of the the head office organization is revealed from time to time, usually when there is a change of general secretary and the press lists the names and responsibilities of those who are to be his most important colleagues.⁶³ The first important distinction to make is that between the traditional 'services' and the portfolios attributed to different *délégués* or *chargés de mission*. The service divisions have changed little in ten years. In 1977 they were *animation*, research (*études*), elections, communication, press, and membership.⁶⁴ Research disappeared altogether from the organigramme in 1981 when leading party members set up the *Club '89*, intending to dream up new policy ideas without the inhibitions which sometimes result from too close an association with a party.

The definition of the political portfolios, unlike the services, has varied frequently. The traditional Gaullist preoccupations with war veterans, the family, or overseas territories rub shoulders with more

mainstream policy areas, such as youth, foreign policy, defence. But both kinds of portfolio change hands frequently, and they sometimes share office space with more ephemeral and idiosyncratic-sounding departments.⁴⁵

Some policy areas are divided and regrouped with every re-organization. Michel Giraud was responsible for local authorities from the beginning of 1977 up to October 1979, when he departed the *rue de Lille* and was succeeded by Jean-Pierre Cassabel. In October 1981 the portfolio's title was changed to *élus locaux*, and Cassabel was obliged to work as assistant to Jacques Boyon. The team of twenty national secretaries formed in November 1984 contained no less than three responsible for this area, one for *élus locaux*, one for *élus départementaux* and one for decentralization. By 1988 *élus départementaux* had given way to regional affairs. The same to-ing and fro-ing has gone on in the general area of commerce, artisanat, independent workers, professionals and managers, and the traditionally semi-independent *Action Ouvrière et Professionnelle* (AOP), whose function, since de Gaulle's day, has been to provide a transmission belt into the factories in search of working class recruits.

It is open to the occupants of these posts how much effort they put into them, depending on how interested they are in the subject, whether they are paid, what stage they have reached in their career, and so on. Sometimes they are mere window-dressing, sometimes they represent efficiently existing party views, but they have rarely succeeded in elaborating original policy positions.

Only a small group can be said to make a career at head office. These are the professionals, without a high political profile, who usually work in the services. Mmes Lydie Gerbaud and Marie-Antoinette Isnard ran their respective press and public relations offices in the mid-eighties, as they

had in the mid-seventies. Their colleague Jacqueline Crépy has held the pensioners' and handicapped portfolio without interruption from 1977 to 1988, a feat almost matched by Georges Repeczky, a retired former industrial manager who brought his skills to tighten up the AOP organization in 1978, and was still there ten years later, after surviving a succession of different bosses with sharper political profiles. From 1977 to 1984 neither Hubert Buchou nor Jean Mouchel was absent from the staff dealing with agricultural questions. All these are the people who perform, away from the limelight, the vital work of keeping records up to date and producing newsletters and bulletins on time, without which no party can function efficiently.⁶⁸

Another group consists of those who are interested more by ideas than by the nuts and bolts of party organization. In this category one could place Alain Juppé, head of research in 1977, and Nicole Chouraqui, who began in 1978 responsible for *vie associative*, took over the research department in October 1979, and switched to employment in October 1981. Another is Michel Aurillac, a retired prefect who worked on defence policy for 18 months in 1980-1 before joining Juppé in setting up the new think-tank, *Club '89*.

Perhaps the most vital groups of workers at head office are those concerned with elections, *animation* and membership (or *fédérations*, as this department is now called.) Jacques Toubon headed the elections department from 1977 until October 1981. In French parties this post requires an encyclopaedic knowledge of the electoral map in order to prepare one's arguments for the frequent negotiations which take place between coalition partners in order to decide which party has the right to a jointly agreed candidate in the various constituencies. Toubon's

successor, Jacques Chartron, a retired prefect brought in from outside the *rue de Lille* also held the post for four years, before passing it on to Dominique Perben, one of the stars of the Right's triumph in the municipal elections in 1983.

Between them, the *animation* and *fédérations* services are concerned with making sure that the local party organizations are adequately staffed and led, and are supplied with the material and ideas appropriate to carrying out the tasks assigned to them by the centre. The overlapping of the field of operations of these two departments sometimes in practice led to them pursuing different or even conflicting strategies. In October 1979, when Pons took over the *rue de Lille* he installed Alan Marleix at *fédérations* and Michel Noir at *animation*, but neither could ignore the fact that Noir's predecessor, Charles Pasqua, had no intention of dropping his close contacts with the grass-roots party organizers. Jean-François Mancel, who was Noir's successor and *secrétaire national à l'animation* from October 1981 until October 1984, illustrates how one may occupy a post without performing its functions;

Pasqua always dealt with it (party organization), in practice if not in name. Pasqua was a man who was permanently in touch with local problems. There was always someone else nominally in charge, and then there was Pasqua, who was more often on the 'phone to the departmental secretaries than the person in charge of the federations at the *rue de Lille*. I think that, and anyway it's what Michel Noir told me often, being in disagreement with Pasqua on a few points, he found himself short-circuited by Pasqua, and he couldn't really do his job; and the result was, I think, and in fact I've seen it for myself, as far as the members are concerned, at the departmental and constituency level, Noir never existed as the RPR party organizer.⁵⁷

In speaking of his own work as party organizer, Mancel went on to reveal conflicts and ambiguities which doubtless exist in all parties, and

offer a useful corrective to the RPR's reputation as a superbly drilled machine;

There was always an ambiguity at that time, which already existed when Noir was there, which was that the *fédérations* and *animation* were not in the same hands, and, at the time I was *secrétaire national à l'animation* and Marleix looked after the life of the federations. So it was a bit of a bastardized solution, in the sense that one couldn't exist without the other. Marleix dealt often directly with Bernard Pons, and doubtless directly but unofficially with Charles Pasqua, on questions affecting the organization of the federations, the appointment of departmental and constituency secretaries, and my job was to activate things. Well, it wasn't always easy, its true, because it would happen that, coming back from a trip to a federation, I would say, 'We're going to have to change this departmental secretary sooner or later, because he's not very dynamic, he's not active enough.' Then I would often run into obstacles, because the reasons why this or that departmental secretary were kept in power had nothing to do with their organizing abilities, but were more complex; it was a question of putting or retaining in leadership positions people we wanted to keep on account of the ideas they might express or not express.⁵²

As an example of the damage caused by this subtle rivalry of influences, Mancel cites the case of Marseille and the surrounding department, the *Bouches du Rhône*, where, despite his urgings, the party leadership did not foster the emergence of a talented local leader who could adequately champion the RPR against the other parties present locally.

What we have said so far argues against the idea that the *rue de Lille* exercised a coherent independent influence on policy. Sometimes even the general secretary was not sure of his position, his chief collaborators might find themselves undercut or neutralized by activists whose power-base was elsewhere, and the more permanent HQ workers performed mainly routine tasks. Furthermore, a substantial number of those

Table 4.4

Proportion of Parliamentarians holding main Head Office posts

Monod

total size of team; 37
serving parliamentarians; 12 (32.4%)
délegués; 12
seving parliamentarians; 5 (41.6%)

Devaquet

total size of team; 28
serving parliamentarians; 9 (32.1%)
assistant g-s, national sec, and *délegué*; 17
serving parliamentarians; 5 (29.4%)

Pons I

total size of team; 42
serving parliamentarians; 17 (40.5%)
asst gen-sec, national sec. and *délegué*; 20
serving parliamentarians 7 (35%)
total newcomers; 16, of which serving parliamentarians; 11 (69%)

Pons II

Total size of team; 37
serving parliamentarians; 9 (24.3%)
+5 who lost in most recent election
=14 (37.8%)
national sec. and *délegué*; 9
serving parliamentarians; 3 (33.3%)
+3 who lost seat in most recent election
=6 (66.6%)

Toubon

national secretaries; 20
serving parliamentarians; 10 (50%)

who nominally held political posts, the *secrétaires nationaux*, *délégués* and *chargés de mission*, simultaneously pursued other occupations and/or held other important positions in the party.

By far the largest such group were parliamentarians (overwhelmingly deputies), whose importance in the *rue de Lille* organigramme has steadily increased, as shown in table 4.4.⁶⁹ During the periods of office of Monod, Devaquet and Pons I, parliamentarians were always between 30% and 40% of the total team. During this period, parliamentarians appeared to shrink as a proportion of the highest-ranked staff at the *rue de Lille*, but this can be explained by the inflation of the number of these posts for protocol reasons. In fact Pons I can be seen as a period of massive re-entry of parliamentarians, after a relative loss of influence during the Devaquet term; of 16 of Pons' colleagues who had not previously held office at party headquarters, no less than 11 (69%) were serving parliamentarians. Pons II seems to mark a sharp decline in parliamentarians' influence, but if we include in the count those deputies who had lost their seats in the disaster year of 1981, then it is seen that parliamentarians again make up 37% of the total team, and no less than 66.6% of the highest-ranked officials. The growing influence of parliamentarians was confirmed by Toubon, who filled 50% of the national secretary posts with deputies or senators.

From this it seems that possession of a parliamentary seat is an asset for those who covet a place at head office. In 1978, when Devaquet's team took over from Monod, *Le Monde* suggested that five of those who were dropped had been sanctioned for their failure to win seats in the recent general election. Among them was Alain Juppé.⁷⁰ In fact it is just as likely, in the case of sitting deputies, that the loss of their seat will

result in the offer of a place at the *rue de Lille* as in their sacking. For example Jean-Pierre Cassabel became *délégué national* for local government in October 1979, eighteen months after he had lost his seat at Castelnaudary. Two years later he was demoted to assistant, to make way for Jacques Boyon, who in turn had lost his parliamentary seat in June 1981. In 1979 André Fanton, another ex-deputy, was made *délégué national* for communication in rather unusual circumstances which we discuss below.

Another case is that of Jean-François Mancel, who was *chargé* for commerce and artisanat during Pons' first two years. Far from being sanctioned after electoral defeat in 1981, he was promoted in October to be one of four national secretaries, in charge of *animation*. Jean-Pierre Delalande was elected to parliament in the Oise for the first time in 1978 at the age of 33. He lost his seat to the Socialist landslide in 1981 just 4 months after he had started work as *délégué* for *Action Ouvrière et Professionnelle*. In October, at Chirac's prompting, he accepted promotion, like Mancel, to the post of national secretary for foreign affairs. In so doing, he displaced Jean de Lipkowski, scion of a noble family which claimed friendship with de Gaulle himself, and who had for many years followed foreign affairs for the party both at the *rue de Lille* and in the relevant committee of the National Assembly.

Some, such as André Fanton, a former barrister and secretary of State, and Boyon, who chose to return to work at the *Cour des Comptes* gave their services free at head office.²¹ But for Mancel and Delalande, who were much younger (33 and 36 respectively) promotion to *secrétaire national* carried with it a salary which compensated them for the loss of their deputy's wage. Delalande soon found that multiple foreign trips jeopardized the regular work needed to win back his parliamentary seat,

and during 1983 left the *rue de Lille* for a job in the private sector.⁷² Mancel, who was delighted with his new job, stayed on until his boss, Bernard Pons, was replaced by Toubon in October 1984. For these young ex-deputies, who in due course would win back their parliamentary seats, the periodic reorganizations at the *rue de Lille* helped them over a difficult patch in their careers. As Mancel put it;

(Chirac) wanted to take the chance, presented by the move into opposition, to reshuffle his party workers around Bernard Pons, and, inevitably he turned to the one or two young parliamentarians who had lost their seats in 1981, which meant that at the same time some new blood could be brought into the RPR, while the ex-deputies themselves would not have to give up politics, but could be paid in return for their work for the party.⁷³ Other cases illustrate the willingness

of Chirac and his general secretaries to use the attribution of the *rue de Lille* portfolios as rewards for past services or continuing loyalty.⁷⁴

Although in theory the official spokespeople for their subjects, the *délégués* or national secretaries at the *rue de Lille* have rarely had decisive influence on the development of policy, partly because they have typically changed often from one field to another.⁷⁵ They can usually only aspire to be the unquestioned party spokesperson in their field if they speak on the same subject in parliament, preferably as a member of the relevant commission in the Chamber or the Senate. In the second half of the seventies this was relatively rare. Philippe Séguin was promoted to *délégué* and given the unemployment portfolio at the *rue de Lille* shortly after he had introduced the unemployment debate at the *journées parlementaires* in September 1979. During the previous session he had been *rapporteur* of a special parliamentary committee of inquiry on the subject. Nevertheless Séguin did not decisively influence the party's policy. When he became minister for social affairs and employment in 1986 he was

obliged to implement abolition of administrative control of redundancies, a step which he had always argued against. Etienne Pinte combined the 'family and social policy' portfolio in parliament and at head office during 1977-9, until he resigned his place at the *rue de Lille* in protest at Chirac's anti-Giscard polemics.⁷⁶ Jean de Lipkowski, *délégué* and parliamentary spokesman on foreign policy from the beginning of 1977 to October 1981, is always listened to with respect when he speaks at the Central Committee or the *journées parlementaires*, but there is no way that, on such an important subject, he could pretend to make policy independently of Chirac. Michel Giraud, long-time senator and president of the regional council of Ile de France is unquestionably one of the people in the whole of France best qualified to speak on local government matters, but his views have long been far in advance of the rest of his party on decentralization, and hence it did not make sense for him to remain for long at the *rue de Lille*.

Some members of the head office staff, finally, were members of the *Commission Executive*, which was in theory responsible for day-to-day management of the party, though not all its members enjoyed equal influence. The existence of the Executive Committee is enshrined in party statute, albeit with its size, members and functions defined by the president. A 1977 account suggests that its members were all those at the *rue de Lille* with a political title.⁷⁷ Seven years later, announcing Toubon's appointment of 18 *secrétaires nationaux*, each of them responsible either for a major policy area or for an important political function, such as communication, federations, or relations with other parties, *Le Monde* informed its readers that, with the general secretary himself and the national treasurer, these constituted a 20-strong Executive Committee

which reputedly had a working session with Chirac every Tuesday morning.⁷⁶ Whatever the intention, it is doubtful if such a large body could play the same role as the working Executive Committee which ran the party during Pons' general secretaryship - the period which was crucial to the transformation in economic policy.

Its membership was very restricted, but nevertheless included people from outside the *rue de Lille*. As well as Chirac and Pons there were the four *secrétaires nationaux* appointed in October 1981, Mancel, Marleix, Delalande (later replaced by Kocsiusko-Morizet) and Chouraqui; Elie Crespi, a marketing specialist with little political experience recruited from the business world especially to brush up Chirac's image, and also given the title of *secrétaire national* for Communication; Lydie Gerbaud, the party's professional press attachée; Claude Labbé, president of the group of deputies; Charles Pasqua, president of the group of senators, and Yvan Biot, who was the *directeur de cabinet* of Bernard Pons, and therefore had an unrivalled knowledge of every issue dealt with by the general secretary's office.⁷⁷ ✓

It is unlikely that all of the Executive Committee's members met every week, and doubtless some important affairs were dealt with elsewhere by other groups directly responsible to Chirac. Some of its members were perhaps rather lightweight - Delalande, Chouraqui and Gerbaud; but there were enough of the people who really counted in the party at the time to arbitrate in the continuous problems of day to day management, and to have a serious discussion - even if they did not have the last word - of the tactics to be adopted in the daily battles with their rivals on television and in the press.

In theory the Executive Committee should not trespass on the

territory of the Political Committee, which had the right to take positions on the important national questions, while the Executive "looked after the shop".²⁰ In reality, the Political Committee was an unwieldy body which met only 6 or a 8 times a year, and then sometimes co-ordinately with the *bureau* of the group of deputies. Between those meetings, and to an extent despite them, the Executive Committee was the one official party body where the top leaders made their decisions.

The Parliamentary Party

In December 1976 all the existing members UDR parliamentarians became members of the RPR. The other party power-centres had therefore to deal with a group of deputies whose self-confidence and experience made them a powerful force especially during the period 1978-81, when they numbered 148, and rather less afterwards, when they were reduced to 88 by the Socialists' landslide. The group soon split three different ways in votes on certain of the Barre government's proposals, and later clashed with Chirac over the choice of the party's candidate for the presidency of the Assembly. At the end of the 1970s Chirac was unable to impose on all the deputies his line of unremitting hostility to Giscard and became embroiled with some of them in a polemic about European policy and about the correct amount of deference towards a sitting President required by the constitution of the 5th Republic. Unable, as we have seen, to influence policy through the party's representative institutions, dissidents resorted to vantage-points in the press from which to denounce their leader publicly. Worse still, as the 1981 Presidential election approached, many deputies and most of the Gaullist ministers made it clear that they would consider voting for Giscard or for the RPR's own Michel Debré rather than for Chirac. At least one of the ministers treated the

clashes as a struggle for the leadership of the party.

These conflicts abated after 1981 with Giscard removed from the scene and the deputies chastened by the sweeping Socialist victory; they were further mollified by Chirac's amendment of his European policy, and his new willingness to co-operate with the UDF. After 1984, however, one or two deputies again had the temerity to contest publicly what they regarded as an unsatisfactory party line on the question of the *Front National*.

A significant clash between the deputies and the party president arose immediately after the parliamentary elections of April 1978. In the traditional election of the president of the National Assembly, which takes place at the start of every session, Chirac wanted the RPR to support a recent convert to party ranks, the outgoing president, Edgar Faure. A more authentic gaullist candidate was Jacques Chaban Delmas, Chirac's *bete noire*, who had himself occupied the president's rostrum, the *perchoir*, from 1958-69. The Giscardians deliberately presented no candidate of their own, and had the satisfaction of seeing Chaban elected with the support of at least 30 RPR deputies.⁸¹

Later in the month Claude Labbé, president of the RPR deputies' group, explained to the press that the group did not consider itself bound by any committee, even the RPR Central Committee; "a deputy, once elected, has responsibilities towards his constituents which are not the same as those of a party activist."⁸² At the same time Labbé stressed that Chaban had been present at a recent meeting of the parliamentary group's *bureau* (executive committee), in conformity with the bureau's statutes, just as he attended group meetings like any other deputy, despite a recent party statute change which aimed at excluding government ministers and presidents of the chambers from the RPR leading bodies.

There were a number of occasions in the late 1970s when the RPR deputies' unity was threatened by the intransigence of a group of traditionalists led by Michel Debré. This occurred on issues such as ratification of direct elections to the European Parliament (June 1977) and of new statutes for the International Monetary fund (April 1978). In the following autumn session, Debré and nine others refused to vote for the 1979 budget. In 1980 the group was again split on whether to vote for Peyrefitte's law and order bill.

These were rather minor parliamentary revolts, however. In a sense, they did no more than reflect the leadership's own ambiguity. Throughout the parliamentary sessions from 1978-81 Chirac stuck to a contradictory strategy of attacking publicly government policy on a wide range of issues, both domestic and foreign, while equally publicly pledging that on no account would the RPR vote a motion of censure and provoke the government's fall. Small wonder that with such a guarantee of their ineffectiveness some of the Gaullist deputies occasionally allowed themselves the luxury of a vote of conscience.

Conflict on the party's European policy flared up immediately after Chirac's *Appel de Cochin* of December 1978 set out the leader's platform for the European elections due in June 1979. Alain Peyrefitte, the senior Gaullist minister reacted by sending to all RPR councillors, deputies and senators a letter which drew attention to what he believed was the excessive power of Chirac's personal advisers. He denounced

these outrageous statements... (and)... certain occult figures who seem to have taken control of our movement²³

and invited Chirac to put the house in order when he had recovered from the results of his car accident. Chirac replied that Peyrefitte had no

place in the RPR, and had him suspended for 6 months by his local party in Seine-et-Marne, whereupon Peyrefitte received a letter of support from the other ten Gaullist members of the government.²⁴

The end of March saw the publication of the names of 80 candidates who would run on the party's platform entitled, 'Defence of the Interests of France in Europe' (DIFE). Of those elected, it was intended that all except Debré would sit only for a few months before passing on their mandate to another from the list, under a controversial arrangement christened the 'tourniquet'.

The tone of the proposed RPR campaign was soon criticized by Antoine Rufenacht (Seine-Maritime); there was no need for such a blanket rejection of direct elections, and it was wrong of the RPR to attack the European commissioners directly.²⁵ Joseph Comiti, (Bouches du Rhône) distributed a leaflet to the press denouncing Chirac's separate campaign as a helping-hand for the Socialo-Communists.²⁶

The composition of the DIFE list was attacked by Michel Cointat, Breton deputy and former minister, who complained that European Gaullists had either been carefully eliminated or had refused to stand, 30% of the chosen candidates were from the Paris region (like 69% of the current Central Committee), and the tourniquet would prevent deputies from learning the ropes and doing a useful job.²⁷ Rejecting the UDF list as supranational, Cointat briefly envisaged forming a list of European Gaullists.²⁸ In the event nothing came of this, but he wrote to all RPR deputies denouncing the fact that the DIFE list had been drawn up without consultation either of the party or of the parliamentarians.²⁹ The same day *Le Monde* published extracts from a letter of resignation sent to Chirac by Etienne Pinte, until then the RPR *délegué national* for family

policy. The young deputy gave as his reasons for quitting both the inadequate internal debate in the party and the fact that the euro-campaign

seems to me to go against Franco-German rapprochement and the construction of Europe begun by general de Gaulle.²⁰

Within two weeks Cointat was back, with a longer article in which he again deplored the lack of a real choice for Gaullists in the forthcoming election, and called on European Gaullists to work against 'useless ideological quarrels' and for a 'Europe of realities'.²¹ Meanwhile another group of 11 RPR parliamentarians, probably co-ordinated by Guichard,²² had written to the *Figaro* to say that, unlike Cointat, they would support the DIFE list, but would express their disagreements with Chirac's conduct of the campaign as and when they arose.²³

While by no means involving a majority of the parliamentary party, opposition to Chirac's European policy was clearly widespread, and attracted enough interest from the press to hamper the party president's efforts to get his message across. During the same period the latter's exaggerated attacks on Giscard and Barre were disavowed equally publicly and embarrassingly.

A major grievance was Chirac's insistence on calling for an extraordinary session of parliament in March 1979 to debate the government's employment policies. The deputies were also complaining about the conduct of parliamentary tactics generally, and that their role of elaborating policy was being usurped by the *rue de Lille*.²⁴ Yves Guéna, one of the RPR's founding *cellule politique*, resigned his membership of the Political Committee, and sent a letter to his constituents in the Dordogne, explaining that

relations between the leadership and the deputies have deteriorated completely... (It is) ..a mistake to force the hand of the parliamentary group...always without consultation.²⁵

Guéna was echoed by René La Combe, (Maine-et-Loire) who publicly criticized the idea of the extraordinary session on the grounds that the government ought to keep the initiative in parliament, otherwise there would be a return to rule by parties, while Ruffenacht deplored the 'state of war' between the coalition partners, and stressed that the RPR, as a *rassemblement*, should respect differences.²⁶

Later, in the middle of the Euro-election campaign, Chirac received a letter signed by nine previous general secretaries of the various incarnations of the Gaullist party who complained that

the movement has fluctuated and lost its good standing in public opinion...We disapprove of the policy which consists in assaulting the government and the President daily.. (the latter's legitimacy)..should not be challenged before the expiration of his mandate.²⁷

A desire to defend Giscard's integrity was natural among those who already enjoyed state office, or who hoped to do so. But Chirac and his friends could not make this accusation of opportunism stick against all his critics; logic was with them when they argued that de Gaulle's reverence for the state required that they give all their support to the sitting President. The approach of the next Presidential election in 1981 served to harden the positions of those on both sides of the argument.

In June 1980 *Le Monde* published extracts of a letter to Chirac from yet another deputy, Jean Bonhomme (Tarn-et-Garonne), who called on his leader not to attack Giscard, not to be an agent of discord, and to put his trust in patience.²⁸ A few weeks later, Pons warned the RPR ministers not to support an eventual Giscard candidature, for all members were bound

by official party decisions, and to flout them would bring automatic expulsion.⁹⁹ This threat did not dissuade Robert Galley, the RPR minister for the Post Office, from promptly announcing his full support for Giscard. Peyrefitte and Bourges had already made up their minds to campaign for the outgoing President, but were spared having to commit themselves until the turn of the year when Giscard officially announced his candidature.¹⁰⁰

The issue remained a source of tension even after the first round of the election in April 1981, when the outgoing President faced François Mitterrand in the decider. Chirac persuaded the Central Committee which met on the 29th April to adopt a motion which refused to express a preference for either of the remaining candidates. The atmosphere was heavy with attacks by the Chiraquian young turks, including Toubon and Juppé, on the rival candidature of Michel Debré, which had given the Gallo-Giscardians an excuse for not supporting their hero. Some of the Debréists walked out. None of the Gallo-Giscardians plucked up the courage to speak, but two of them, Adrien Gouteyron and José Frézal, abstained on the final vote.¹⁰¹ In the country, some began to campaign for Mitterrand¹⁰², but the Gallo-Giscardians fought back, demanding, through Bonhomme, that the entire parliamentary group be called together before the second round in order to endorse the President.¹⁰³ This was rejected by Labbé,¹⁰⁴ but Michel Giraud, RPR Senator and president of the Ile de France region succeeded in gathering together all 22 regional presidents for the same purpose.¹⁰⁵

By the 5th of May the press were listing those Gaullists who were now actively campaigning for Giscard, but to the end Chirac resisted the pressure on him to endorse Giscard publicly and unequivocally. There were

some among his entourage who clung to the illusion that if Mitterrand were elected and dissolved the assembly, then the electorate, shocked by what they had done, would seek shelter from the Socialist menace by returning to the RPR in the ensuing legislative elections. It was better, then, to maintain the *cordon sanitaire* between the defeated Giscard and the potentially victorious Gaullists. On the other hand it was thought that a number of Chirac's closest colleagues (Pons, Aurillac, Lipkowski) who had announced their personal support for Giscard would not have done so without his knowledge and agreement. ^{10E}

Debré's presidential candidature was another issue which revealed the less than total support for Chirac among Gaullist parliamentary notables, including some who had no particular hope of Giscardian patronage. On 26th April 1981, de Gaulle's former prime minister received 481,821 votes in the first round of the presidential election. At 1.65% of the popular vote, this was fewer than the scores of two extreme left candidates, Arlette Laguiller and Michel Crépeau, each of whom received over 600,000, and it was far behind the ecologist, Brice Lalonde, with 1,126,254. Compared to Chirac's five and a quarter million, (17.99%), Debré's candidature seems like an irrelevance.

Although he was a derisory candidate on the day, throughout 1980 Debré was a serious source of embarrassment to the RPR president. By upstaging his leader at crucial moments, he effectively set the agenda, taking for himself the defence and illustration of traditional Gaullist principles, and adding to serious doubts among Chirac's advisers as to whether the party president ought to stand.

That his share of the vote ultimately gave no hint of the determination and professionalism of his campaign, and of its consequences

for the RPR, was due essentially to two reasons. Firstly, although Debré gathered the support of about one fifth of the Gaullist deputies, and of practically all the associated movements of the Gaullist diaspora, Chirac's own candidature was enough to deprive him of the transmission belt to the popular vote which is the RPR. Secondly, as even his best friends admit, Debré had "plenty of things to say, but he says them very badly,"¹⁰⁷ repelling the average voter by his didacticism, self-sufficiency and his apocalyptic visions of national disaster round every corner.

In August 1979, when the RPR was still reeling from the shock of the electoral defeat of June, Debré held a press conference at which he unveiled a veritable platform for government, containing all the points he would reiterate at every stage of his campaign; the laxism and complacency of the government in face of the 'economic war'; the need for European, or even French protectionism to beat back foreign competition, along with an incomes policy, and a wealth tax; the protection of the welfare state, but a reduction in the expenses borne by businesses, and hence the necessity for a thorough reorganization of the state budget to free resources for investment; expansion and improvement of the French nuclear deterrent, a solution to the demographic crisis, and strengthening of the teaching of French history in schools.¹⁰⁸

Debré's proposals were received with a certain amount of scepticism by the press, because of his failure to spell out where he would make cuts in the budget, but this did not alter the fact that when Jean Méo and Jacques Chirac in turn presented the *rapport Méo* on economic and social questions, it was seen as "following the thread of M. Debré's analyses",¹⁰⁹ and "partly inspired by M. Debré's August 28th press

conference."¹¹⁰

In January 1980 when Debré addressed a meeting in Nice, attended by 1,000 people, and chaired by the local RPR deputy, Emmanuel Aubert, the press began to treat him as a potential presidential candidate,¹¹¹ and reported on the deterioration of his relations with Chirac.¹¹²

At the end of May the two rivals met, and agreed not to do anything without informing the other in advance.¹¹³ A month later, on 30th June, without informing Chirac, Debré made a formal declaration of candidature with the full panoply of press conference¹¹⁴ and campaign platform.¹¹⁵ Chirac was once again placed in the situation of replying to Debré's initiative. He issued a rather vacuous formal statement which tried at the same time to denounce the premature opening of the campaign, to imply that he had not yet made up his mind, and to keep alive the possibility of his own candidature.¹¹⁶

With Debré now out in the open, civil war broke out in the party. Pons issued his statement warning the RPR ministers to support only the party's officially designated candidate. Debré, in an (8 page) letter appealing for the support of his parliamentary colleagues, denounced the 'atmosphere of threats and even of excommunication'.¹¹⁷ Antoine Rufenacht lost no time in declaring 'all my support' for the outsider, while Chiraquian loyalists began to set up local 'support committees' appealing for their idol to stand.¹¹⁸ Labbé made a thinly veiled attack on Debré in *Le Monde*, in the shape of praise for the rejuvenation of the Gaullist movement, brought about by the RPR.¹¹⁹ and his appeal for a Chirac candidacy at the September 1980 *journées parlementaires* sparked off some highly personal mud-slinging.¹²⁰

The Debréists began to feel that their campaign was building up

momentum in the country. On 23rd of October the campaign published the names of 150 prominent personalities endorsing their candidate, and followed up with 150 more on 20th December.¹²¹ Among them were a selection of *compagnons* from earlier days; six former ministers, seven former deputies elected in 1958, and six of de Gaulle's ambassadors.¹²² One by one the small associations dedicated to fostering their own special brand of Gaullism gave him their support; Pierre Lefranc's *Association Nationale d'Action pour la Fidélité au Général de Gaulle*,¹²³ Léo Hamon's *Initiative Républicaine et Socialiste*,¹²⁴ Gilbert Grandval's *Union Gaulliste pour la démocratie*,¹²⁵

These adhesions must have been especially galling to Chirac. In September 1979 he had secured the agreement of Jean Charbonnel, leader of another left Gaullist splinter, to act as an intermediary in bringing the diaspora closer to the RPR.¹²⁶ Charbonnel himself duly rejoined the RPR in January 1980, and was given a prestigious title at the *rue de Lille*.¹²⁷ After a year's effort, however, not only did he have to report his mission a complete failure, but he himself announced his 'total support' for Michel Debré after a vain appeal to the rivals to compose their differences.¹²⁸

Twenty-eight RPR deputies and four senators had been included among the first list of 150 Debréistes.¹²⁹ There were plenty more who would have preferred Chirac not to stand but, unable to convince him, preferred not to flout the party leader openly. More independent spirits like Messmer and Séguin chose a less than whole-hearted formula to endorse their president - they would vote for whichever candidate was chosen by the extraordinary congress scheduled for February 7th 1981.¹³⁰ The adherence in December of a fifth senator was highly symbolic. Christian de la

Malène, *premier adjoint* to the mayor of Paris from 1977 to 1983, had owed his start in politics to Michel Debré, and worked with him in the 1950s and 1960s. The private dinner which he offered to Debré and Chirac towards the end of January was the ultimate and vain attempt by a mutual friend to get one of the two to desist in favour of the other.¹³¹

All in all, Michel Debré had put the Chirac camp on the defensive, costing them a good deal of time and nervous energy, and ultimately winning the declared support of about one fifth of the gaullist deputies and one eighth of the senators. He had set the campaign time-table; he had made Méo's social and economic ideas look like pale imitations of his own; he had articulated more eloquently than any other Gaullist could the faith in French greatness which Chirac claimed inspired his own criticisms of Giscard; in so doing he captured the historic legitimacy distributed among the various organizations of the diaspora and reduced the RPR president's candidacy to a paltry party affair. His presence in the field complicated the most agonizing of decisions - to stand, or not to stand.¹³² The Chiraquian leaders themselves rated extremely highly the damage done by the maverick Debré candidacy and the much less significant campaign of Marie-France Garaud;

Their stabs in the back were atrocious. They cost Chirac very dear. Infinitely more than the the 2% of the vote they won.¹³³

Some of the dissident deputies' who defended Giscard, or supported Debré's presidential bid were also prominent in demanding a more democratic internal party regime. On April 9th 1978, in an atmosphere heavy with Chaban's recent successful defiance of Chirac over the election to the *perchoir*, an extraordinary Party Congress had ratified changes in the party statutes. In order to erect a barrier between the RPR as a party

and the government whose decisions it was now regularly criticizing, membership of any RPR committee, whether departmental or national, was made incompatible with the holding of any ministerial portfolio, the presidency of either the Senate or the National Assembly, or membership of the *Conseil Constitutionnel*.¹³⁴

The measure was not aimed exclusively against Chaban, however, as Guichard had claimed in a sharp exchange with Chirac at the congress,¹³⁵ for Chaban was not alone in losing his seat on the party Central and Political Committees. So also did Maurice Papon, who accepted the post of minister for the budget in April 1978, while Peyrefitte (Justice) and Bourges (Defence) were both excluded from the Central Committee.

The statute-change, resented as an infringement of party democracy, achieved by the steamroller of an extraordinary congress, was the subject of a running battle between Chirac and his critics during the run-up to the European election. In a television interview on 2nd April 1979 Chirac told the ministers they would have to choose between their party and the government in deciding between the RPR and UDF lists.¹³⁶ The eleven ministers responded with a joint statement read to the press by Yvon Bourges. Defending their own integrity and the government's record in the light of Gaullist ideals, (including the *rassemblement* of the French people around a majority resulting from the presidential as well as parliamentary elections) the ministers admitted that their instinct was to support the list which was most representative of the Gaullist family. But there must be a stop to certain behaviour which was harmful to the country and contradicted the traditional Gaullist concern for the primacy of the executive and the cohesion of the parliamentary majority in support of the executive's actions. This listing of principles not to be transgressed was

interpreted by the press as the ministers' laying of conditions for their eventual support of the RPR list.¹³⁷

The ministers' defiance was in turn immediately taken up by several deputies at their group meeting. Among others, Labbé, Guéna, and one of the eleven, Jean-Paul Mouro, secretary of state at the ministry of Justice, demanded the readmission of the ministers to party committees.¹³⁸ The Political Committee on 10th April implicitly disavowed Chirac by issuing a statement noting that the government, being supported by a coalition of the Right, had no reason to opt for one list or the other.¹³⁹ At the beginning of May, the Gaullist minister of Labour, Robert Boulin, defended his record in a radio interview, and insisted that Giscard, as legitimate President, was deserving of all loyalty.¹⁴⁰ After further warnings from Peyrefitte¹⁴¹, on May 31st the ministers again collectively reaffirmed their solidarity with Raymond Barre, in view of the "repeated attacks on his government and his person", and stressed the need for unity in the majority "more than ever" in view of the problems faced by the country.¹⁴²

With the European election out of the way, however, Peyrefitte continued his campaign against Chirac's leadership. In September his call for a special *états généraux* of Gaullism implicitly contested the RPR's claim to be the main source of Gaullist legitimacy.¹⁴³ In the same month he turned up at the *journées parlementaires* and demanded that Pasqua's departure should follow those of Juillet and Garaud.¹⁴⁴ But, like his target, the minister apparently also had a weakness for more clandestine forms of political struggle. In April 1980 the satirical paper *Le Canard Enchaîné* gleefully published extracts from an alleged leaked memo from Peyrefitte to Giscard, in which the minister of Justice explained to the

President of the Republic how he should go about destabilizing the RPR and securing Chirac's removal as leader. The memo referred to Peyrefitte's previous efforts to convince Giscard of the benefits of such a course of action....¹⁴⁵

Such a document, greeted by a lame and unconvincing denial of its authenticity from Peyrefitte, did not call for a political response. It gave Chirac and his friends the chance to claim the higher moral ground, particularly as the press simultaneously harried Giscard's close friend Poniatowski over a property scandal.

The endemic conflict between the party and its ministers was finally buried by the 1981 election results. It was still a live issue, however, in July 1980 when Pons' spoke of the 'divorce' between the government and the RPR, prompting yet another Gaullist minister, Maurice Papon, to issue a statement to the press which reaffirmed his total solidarity with his colleagues and questioned the Gaullist character of Pons' defence of party interests.¹⁴⁶

The rights and duties of the ministers were not the only cause of complaints about the functioning of party democracy. The long-serving and hitherto loyalist deputy, Roland Nungesser announced on 17th May 1979 the creation of a new Gaullist umbrella organization, the *Carrefour du Gaullisme* which was immediately seen by the press as a vehicle for a number of disparate Gaullist personalities whose only common point was their hostility to Chirac.¹⁴⁷ Nungesser summarized the group's aims more innocently; to foster co-operation between Gaullists both in and outside the RPR.

We would like to see changes in the structures and methods of the RPR with a view to more democracy and participation.¹⁴⁸

A week later, Michel Cointat demanded a better definition of the powers of the party leaders, more co-ordinated management of the party, and clarification of the relationship between the party and the group of deputies.¹⁴⁹ In July, in a long interview with *Le Monde*, Rufenacht reported that the parliamentarians thought the party machine was too cumbersome, neglected their problems, and alienated the voters by too enthusiastically coat-tailing party-activists; there was an atmosphere of monolithism, harmful to the free circulation of ideas, while the continued attacks on Giscard turned away grass-roots right-wing voters.¹⁵⁰ At the end of the year he openly called for anti-Chiraquians to organize more effectively in the parliamentary group and in the party, in order to make their voices heard.¹⁵¹

After 1981, with the simultaneous defeat of Giscard and Debré, and the Socialists' victories which cut a swathe through the ranks of the RPR deputies, there were far fewer conflicts between the party leader and the deputies. One of these, however, concerned the party's attitude to the National Front (FN). Dissent was less widespread and vocal than opposition to Chirac's 1979 European policy. One reason for this was doubtless that, while the trenchancy of the *Appel de Cochin* left no room for misinterpretation, the leadership's attitude on immigration and race, both practically and ideologically, was shrouded in ambiguity.

In the spring of 1983 the eight-vote Socialist-Communist local election victory at Dreux, a dormitory town to the west of Paris, was annulled for irregularities. After the first round of the re-run in September, the three main right wing contestants fused into a single RPR-UDF-FN list on which Jean-Pierre Stirbois, the FN secretary general, was given fourth place. The defending left-wing team was defeated and the FN

took three seats on the new council.

The only nationally known right-wing politician to protest vigorously against the opportunistic alliance was Simone Veil of the UDF. In excusing themselves, her prominent colleagues suggested that she had her reasons ... she was the only member of her family to have returned from Auschwitz in 1945.¹⁵² Chirac, for his part, had refused to fuse the right-wing lists in Paris in March, where the FN leader Le Pen was standing. In the face of the national publicity focussed on the Dreux by-election, he chose to extoll his colleagues' choice, on the grounds that a one-off alliance with a handful of fascists was less dangerous than the Socialists' alliance with the Communists nationally.¹⁵³

The solidity of the FN's implantation, soon confirmed by a national score of 10% in the 1984 European elections, eventually brought the RPR leadership into simultaneous conflict with opposing groups of their own members. Impressed by Le Pen's pulling power, and by his visceral hatred of the left, pockets of the rank and file began to demand that Chirac abandon the 'soft centrism' which led him to form a joint list with the UDF (headed by Veil) for the European poll. Unsatisfied with the response to their appeals, sometimes frustrateed by the attitude of their local leaders, they began to vote with their feet, deserting the RPR for local FN sections, in some cases setting them up themselves.¹⁵⁴

For the 1985 cantonal elections, the party issued a formal proscription against alliances with the FN, even at the local level,¹⁵⁵ while Chirac's public statements, responding to the worrying loss of members and votes, more and more frequently adopted the FN's anti-immigrant themes.¹⁵⁶ With this kind of ambiguity it is not surprising that RPR members on the whole failed to denounce Chirac's betrayal of de

Gauche's multi-ethnic vision of a *Communauté* in which citizens of all French-speaking countries would have equal rights.¹⁵⁷

Only Michel Hannoun, the obscure mayor of Voreppe in the Isère (who became a deputy briefly only after 1986) had publicly defended the rights of immigrants.¹⁵⁸ It was not until 1987 that RPR trade minister, Michel Noir, made headlines by arguing in *Le Monde* that it was better to lose an election than to lose one's soul by allying with the racists.¹⁵⁹ Later in the year, Philippe Séguin, minister for social affairs, said on television that if the RPR ever made a political deal with the FN he would immediately leave the party.¹⁶⁰

Although pressure was exerted on Noir to retract, his and Séguin's behaviour could be interpreted by the leadership as a public airing of differences between party comrades which was perhaps regrettable but did not present them with a direct challenge in the same way that opposition on the European issue had. In the 1988 election the leadership effectively called Séguin's bluff by concluding a deal with the FN wherein five RPR candidates withdrew from the second ballot in certain constituencies and allowed the FN to go forward as the only representatives of the Right. Séguin is still a member of the party.¹⁶¹

Conclusion - Power in the Party

We can now identify three different but sometimes overlapping sources of the inputs from which policy and strategy were eventually elaborated. These are the parliamentary party, the *rue de Lille* and the party President's advisers. The RPR's official deliberative bodies have never counted as more than rubber-stamps to register decisions arrived at unofficially elsewhere.

The meetings of the parliamentary group provided the rare party

occasions at which diverse, at times critical, views could be expounded spontaneously with no pre-programming and a minimum of psychophancy. The refractory deputies, not always able to swing a majority of their colleagues behind themselves, used the press and television to undermine Chirac's authority. Those who showed most independence usually controlled solid local power-bases. Chaban Delmas, as mayor of Bordeaux for three decades, disposed of a network of power and patronage which conditioned the careers of succeeding generations of Gaullist militants in Aquitaine. No-one could get on in the party or in local government without Chaban's acquiescence. Guichard disposed of a similar, if smaller, bastion of support as mayor of La Baule in Brittany, while in the 1980s Michel Noir bound the local party to himself through his emergence as credible candidate for the mayoralcy of Lyon.

From time to time the deputies were able to set limits to the arbitrary behaviour of Chirac's advisers and to force changes in the way the party operated. André Fanton, a deputy for twenty years before voluntarily abandoning his Paris seat in 1978 in search of another in the provinces, was one of those who had openly called for Pasqua's departure from the *rue de Lille*. At the end of the June 1979 Central Committee, astounded to find that he had not been elected, as usual, to the Political Committee, he went to Chirac with proofs of a simple fraud involving the addition of 100 votes to the totals obtained by more modest candidates. Chirac was obliged to annul the elections, sack one of Pasqua's henchman, Roland Vernaudeau, and call an extraordinary CC for the autumn, billed as the occasion when the leadership would announce a reorganization at the national office, and new policy initiatives. Fanton himself was given the task of preparing a report on the party's press and publicity work.¹⁶²

When the CC met again in September Chirac admitted that in the European election campaign "mistakes may have been made in the presentation of our ideas; I am the first to admit it."¹⁶³ The general secretary, Devaquet also admitted errors, and a week later was replaced by Pons, whose new team at the *rue de Lille* included a significant number of deputies.¹⁶⁴ Pasqua disappeared from the organigramme, and Fanton became *délégué national* for communication.

During 1979-81 Chirac was subjected to perhaps the most sustained attack by his own deputies which a modern party leader has ever survived. The fact that he *did* survive illustrates the limits of the parliamentarians' power. Despite their victories of the autumn of 1979 they could not persuade Chirac to mend his fences with Chaban and Sanguinetti, even though the CC accepted a report from Fanton calling for their reinstatement in the leadership. Pasqua, the deputies' *bête noire* soon returned from exile. Furthermore, although most of the deputies were too legitimist to stomach easily Chirac's cavalier attacks on the prime minister and the President, their instinctive Gaullism made them wary of those whom, like Guichard, Rufenacht and their friends, they suspected of wanting to dissolve the party's identity into the Giscardian amalgam. Their disagreements with Chirac concerned less his basic political line than his tactics, the tone of his attacks on the UDF, and the fact that decisions often seemed like improvisations.¹⁶⁵ In 1979 their mood of frustration tempered by rueful deference to the leader was summed up memorably by Robert Poujade, deputy and mayor of Dijon, and a former party general-secretary, "*Chirac est à la fois impossible et irremplaçable, et il faut vivre avec*"¹⁶⁶

When Chirac returned to Matignon in March 1986, he took with him from

the Paris town hall Maurice Ulrich as his *directeur de cabinet*. Denis Baudoin returned from a brief idyll in Strasbourg to become the prime minister's official spokesman. Colonna and three or four others of the Paris backroom staff made the trip across town. At the same time Pandraud and the town hall's chief executive, Camille Cabana, entered the government, where they joined Devaquet, now mayor of the 11th arrondissement, and Didier Bariani, mayor of the 20th,¹⁶⁷ as well as Juppé, Balladur, Barzach and Catala, all holders of Parisian mandates. There was a general rush by other new ministers to secure the services of many of the talented backroom staff who had worked in the Paris administration or in the mayor's private think-tanks.¹⁶⁸

We should beware of concluding from this, however, that the town hall staff or the "Parisian connection" had become the real motor force which ran Chirac and the RPR. Devaquet's history of activity in the party did not depend only on his association with Paris. Juppé was someone in whom Chirac had had confidence for many years, deliberately using the patronage resources of Paris to make him budget director in 1980 (a paid post in the city administration), before his election as councillor in 1983. Balladur, like Barzach, became a Paris deputy for the first time only in 1986, the same year in which Catala entered the Ile de France regional council.

Paris has affected the party and general political careers of two different groups of RPR members in two different ways. On the one hand it has provided soft landings for loyal Chiraquians who have already served the leader in some way. Balladur, Juppé, Pons, Barzach, Catala and Jacques Toubon, all gained elected office at some level in Paris during the 1980s, and their progress was sometimes at the expense of existing Gaullist notables, such as Pierre Bas and Christian de la Malène¹⁶⁹

On the other hand Paris has been a proving ground and field of advancement for recruits taking their first steps in politics, who should accordingly be seen as policy executants rather than influential advisers. After 1981, when Gaullists no longer controlled even the meanest junior minister's portfolio, Paris provided the last remaining supply of the sorts of jobs which ENA graduates and other would-be politicians had usually found in the *cabinets ministériels* of their patrons. It was to be expected both that the quality of Chirac's new young collaborators was very high, and that when the portals of power opened again in 1986 there would be competition amongst the new ministers to secure the services of the brightest and best. Chirac even had to intervene at the last moment to retain Daniel Naftalski, whom Pons wanted to take to the ministry of overseas territories, as his *directeur de cabinet* at the town hall.¹⁷⁰

By the turn of the 1980s, the activities of men like Pons, Mancel and Marleix had won for the *rue de Lille* credibility with both the leadership and the rank and file, and head office emerged as influential force in the party. Pons was far more than just an adviser, but he was in no sense Chirac's rival. Publicly, their views were never at odds, but in private the general secretary had to fight for the leader's ear just as his advisers and other party figures did. Sometimes he won, as when he favoured Chirac's candidature in 1981; sometimes he lost, as when he urged the formation of a separate RPR list for the European elections in 1984.

A good indicator of who had conquered positions of influence in the party during the years of opposition was the list of RPR members who joined the government which took office in March 1986. As table 4.5 shows, the top ministerial posts, Finance, Interior, Justice, went to the 'lone rangers', Balladur, Pasqua and Chalandon, who all had rather different but

effective claims on Chirac's loyalty. After this, the most striking feature of the allocation of posts is that 9 of the 20 went to a solid cohort of aspirants who had either accomplished long spells of service at the *rue de Lille*, or were actually in post there when the government was formed. No less than 6 of these took a portfolio corresponding exactly or

Table 4.5

Previous activities of the 20 RPR members in the 1986-88 government.

<u>Lone Rangers</u>	<u>Rue de Lille</u>
Edouard Balladur	Michèle Alliot-Marie * + education
Charles Pasqua	Michèle Barzach + health
Albin Chalandon	Christian Bergelin * + sports and youth
	Jacques Boyon
<u>Paris Town Hall</u>	Alain Carignon * + environment
Camille Cabana	Michel Noir * + foreign trade / industry
Robert Pandraud	Alain Juppé * + economy / budget
Alain Devaquet	Bernard Pons
(Juppé)	Philippe Séguin *
(Boyon)	
<u>Club '89</u>	
Michel Aurillac - president	
Nicole Catala - first vice-president	
(Juppé - secretary general)	
<u>Overseas Territories</u>	
Lucette Michaux-Chevry - deputy for Gaudeloupe	
Gaston Flosse - deputy for French Polynesia	
<u>Renegade from the Socialist Party</u>	
Georges Fontès	

* denotes *secrétaire national* at the *rue de Lille* immediately before being appointed to government
+ denotes someone responsible for the same or closely related field in government as at the *rue de Lille*

closely to the policy area for which they were responsible at party head office, 5 with the rank of *secrétaire national*.¹⁷¹ Four of the 9 had never previously held a seat in parliament; Carignon, Juppé and Barzach were ✓ elected for the first time in 1986, and Alliot-Marie not until 1988.

Naturally there are one or two personalities who cross the frontiers of these categories. Boyon and Juppé were equally at home in the town hall or head office, and Juppé was additionally the general secretary of Club ✓ '89. Pons, who sat for a Paris constituency, had moved unofficially to the town hall after leaving his party job. Nevertheless, the clear conclusion to be drawn from these figures is that the surest route to the top for ambitious young politicians in the RPR was not through the Paris town hall but through the *rue de Lille*.

If they did not stand out numerically, the 'Parisians' did not shine qualitatively either. Pandraud fitted in well with Pasqua, his boss at the Interior Ministry, but Cabana fared less well. While he had apparently been a dominating, some said dictatorial, chief executive in the Paris administration, he failed to impress Balladur, and soon left the ministry of the Economy, Finances and Privatizations for a vaguely defined post as minister of administrative reforms and *rapatriés*.¹⁷² Alain Devaquet, a luckless secretary general who had loyally fought in the ranks since 1979, was handed the poisoned chalice of university reform which rapidly brought about his own ignominious resignation after only nine months in office, and soured the entire government's image in the country.

The groups of advisers based at the town hall were subject to the same play of influences as any others. They had to compete for Chirac's attention with the staff of the *rue de Lille*, the deputies and other outside figures. As we show in chapter 6, Denis Baudoin from the town

hall, along with Fanton at national office, had less influence on Chirac's communications strategy than did Elie Crespi, who was brought in from the advertising industry. In chapter 5 we show that the Paris privatization strategy was by no means a model for all party members who wielded power in local government.

As for the president's other advisers, some individuals like Méo failed to impose themselves, Juillet and Garaud dominated for a while, but succumbed to the failure of their strategy and the hostility of the deputies. Pasqua succeeded in entrenching his position, though significantly he only sealed his victory by himself becoming a parliamentary notable. Balladur, on the other hand, had no party position, and no electoral mandate to speak of, when he was propelled into the Ministry of Finance in 1986 to take charge of policies of which he (as we show in chapter 9) was one of the principal architects.

On the basis of our study of the RPR what appreciation can we make of Angelo Panebianco's idea that, in every party, it is organization which determines power and policies? Organizationally, nothing very significant had changed in the period between 1978-80, when the RPR still embraced state intervention, and 1984-6, when they had become enthusiastic liberals. The same man was still at the head of the party, still relying on the Paris town hall to provide him with tremendous resources of patronage, prestige and money. His sweeping formal powers within the party were unimpaired, although his style of leadership - while stubborn - had never been dictatorial.¹⁷³ In the mid-1980s, as in the late 1970s, national party behaviour and career prospects were the outcome of the same three-cornered fight between the president's personal advisers, head-office, and the parliamentary party. ✓

Each of these had experienced modest and ultimately circular changes in their fortunes. Before the summer of 1979 the personal advisers seemed to carry all before them, only to be checked by the parliamentarians, who were in turn brought low by the decimation of their ranks in 1981. In formal terms, they were given greater influence by the expansion of the Central Committee, but the more ambitious of them found in head office important resources for career advancement. Yet they in turn had to yield the greatest position of influence, and ultimately the major prize, to Balladur, the private adviser.

The passage from power to opposition in 1981 had affected Chirac far less than his opponents; he retained Paris, while they lost all their ministerial portfolios and any chance of regaining them. This would seem to provide a thorough refutation of Panebianco's thesis that programmatic change is always a function of corresponding organizational reform. As we show in chapter 8, the former ministers and secretaries of state were impotent witnesses of the victory of their ideas!

Notes to Chapter 4

1. This table is constructed from information contained in William R. Schonfeld, "La Stabilité des Dirigeants des Partis Politiques," in *Revue Française de Science Politique* 30(3) June 1980, pp 846-866
2. Michel Noir, *Réussir une Campagne Electorale; suivre l'exemple américain?*, Paris, Editions d'Organisation, 1977 p 247
3. Jean Charbonnel, *Comment peut-on être opposant?*, Paris, Robert Laffont, 1983 pp 91-2
4. Michel Offerlé, "Transformation d'une Entreprise Politique: de l'UDR au RPR (1973-77)", in *Pouvoirs* no 28, 1984 pp 5-26, p 6
5. Noir *op cit* p 248
6. In 1973 Sanguinetti, the general secretary, nevertheless confirmed to the press that his role was essentially one of animation, organization and spreading the party's influence, while the prime minister was the leader of the majority, and "really the president of the UDR", and if this were not so the UDR would have to elect a president. A year later, with Giscard at the Elysée and Chirac at Matignon, Sanguinetti denied that the new prime minister could be the 'natural leader' of the party, on the grounds that he had been appointed by a President who was himself not a Gaullist. In this change of position can be seen the dawning sense of a political party's need for an autonomy which for so long had seemed dispensable. (Offerlé *loc cit*. "Transformation...." pp 6-8)
7. Noir *op cit* p 259
8. Offerlé *loc cit* p 8-9
9. Kay Lawson, "The impact of party reform on party systems", in *Comparative Politics*, vol 13 no 4, July 1981 pp 401-19 (p 407)
10. Offerlé *loc cit* p14
11. This table constructed from information in Pierre Crisol et Jean-Yves Lhomeau, *La Machine RPR*, Paris, Fayolle, 1977 pp 144-5
12. *Le Monde* 11-4-78
13. Crisol et Lhomeau *op cit* pp 140-2
14. *ibidem*
15. The rival candidates in 1981, Michel Debré and Marie-France Garaud did well to share 4.6% of the votes between them, since both had publicly denied the legitimacy of the operation and objected to their names being placed on the ballot, *Le Monde* 24-1-81
16. Schonfeld, *loc cit*. "La Stabilité...." p 479
17. Offerlé (*loc cit*. "Transformation....") has argued, mistakenly it now seems, that the effect of the reduction of the number of *ex officio* posts in the party's leading committees was to boost the proportion of those which were in the gift of the president,

as if Chirac had wanted to "pack" the CC - a task clearly rendered impossible by the statute changes of 1978 and 1984.

18. This understates the parliamentarians' influence, however, for a good number of those losing their CC mandate along with their parliamentary seat would soon have been re-elected to the CC on the national or regional lists, while waiting for the next legislative elections to re-establish their positions.
19. Lawson *loc cit.* "The impact, . . .," p 411
20. Interview with Patrick Devedjian, 9-1-89, "*C'est rhétorique chez nous. Damage, Mais le Comité Central est tactique quand il s'agit d'un rapport de pouvoir, et il est rhétorique quand il touche au domaine des idées; il n'a aucune influence sur le réel.*"
21. Interview with François Fillon, 5-1-89, "*Je constate avec tristesse que le poids des fédérations au RPR est quasi nulie.*" See also interviews with Philippe Auberger and J-P Delalande.
22. Interview with Yves Guéna, 5-1-89, "*. . . ., parce que je voulais un propre moyen d'expression, étant donné qu'au CC on n'a pas beaucoup de moyens d'action.*"
23. Interview with Yves Guéna, 5-1-89, "*Il y a trois types de membres. Il y a ceux qui savent, et donc qui se taisent. Il y a ceux qui savent qu'ils ne savent pas, et qui donc ont la prudence de se taire. Et il y a ceux qui ne savent pas qu'ils ne savent pas et qui parlent, et ça ne sert à rien. Alors au RPR c'est pareil, et enfin c'est normal, d'ailleurs; dans tout bon parti c'est comme ça.*"
24. Pierre Brechon, Jacques Derville et Patrick Lecomte, *Les Cadres du RPR*, Paris, Economica, 1987, p 119
25. Schönfeld *loc cit.* "La Stabilité, . . .," p 480
26. Michel Debré, Couve de Murville, Chaban Delmas, Pierre Messmer, and Edgar Faure, who had been prime minister in the 4th Republic, and at the moment considered himself a Gaullist.
27. Crisol et Lhomeau, *op cit* p 138, When Pasqua did try to pack the Political Committee in 1979, he was disowned by Chirac. See below, note 41.
28. Maurice Schumann came from the social-catholic wing, while Michel Caldagués and Yves Lancien, both deputies, were important figures in the party's Paris organization. Among the rest was Olivier Guichard, already an open 'Chabanist', who would remain for many years one of Chirac's most outspoken critics within the party hierarchy. Among the 15 Political Committee members elected by the Central Committee in 1977 were a number of deputies including two former ministers, and a clutch of lesser-known representative figures such as the party's youth organizer, the deputy for Martinique, and a former president of the *Conseil Economique et Social*. For a full list of Political Committee members in 1977, see Crisol et Lhomeau, *op cit*, pp 134-145.
29. *L'Aurore*, 3-10-79; Faure, who had been number three on the UDF list for the Euro-election, had left the RPR group, and was to be *Président d'Honneur* of the Radical party.
30. *Le Monde* 14-2-85

31. Interview with Yves Guéna, 5-1-89
32. Crisol et Lhomeau *op cit*
33. On the ideas and career of Pierre Juillet, see; Franz-Olivier Giesbert, *Jacques Chirac*, Paris, Seuil, 1987 pp 82-3, 161; on the influence of Juillet and Garaud in the RPR, *ibidem* pp 321-3; Crisol and Lhomeau *op cit* pp 90-93; see also Interview with Yvan Blot, 24-8-89, who likened Juillet's ideas to those of Margaret Thatcher,
34. Giesbert, *op cit* p 323,
35. Yves Guéna, *Le Temps des Certitudes, 1940-1969*, and Interview 5-1-89
36. Philippe Boggio et Alain Roliat, *Ce Terrible Monsieur Pasqua*, Paris, Olivier Orban, 1988; Charles Pasqua, *L'Ardeur Nouvelle*, Paris, Albin Michel, 1985
37. Friedman, Juillet and Monod, with the help of Alain Juppé, wrote Chirac's keynote speeches, Garaud handled the press, Pasqua began the organization of the type of mass rally for which he has a particular knack, Meanwhile Guéna, the incumbent general secretary, toured the UDR branches fixing it so that, at the appropriate moment, grass-roots statements of support for Chirac's action would be made known, (Crisol et Lhomeau *op cit* p 222)
38. William R. Schonteld, *Ethnographie du PS et du RPR, les éléphants et l'aveugle*, Paris, Economica, 1985 pp 56-8
39. *ibidem*,
40. Chirac was coming under increasing pressure to separate himself from his advisers, On the other hand neither Juillet nor Garaud were slow to air their criticisms both of Chirac's abilities and their view that he had given too much attention to economic and social issues during the campaign. See Juillet's letter to *Le Monde* (17-10-79) and Giesbert's (*op cit* p 321) apparent endorsement of Garaud's jibe about reducing the issues to the price of beans,
41. *Le Monde* 28-6-79; *L'Express* 30-6-79
42. *Figaro magazine*, 6-12-80
43. Interview with Jacques Boyon 27-4-89
44. Interview with Patrick Devedjian 9-1-89
45. Interview with Yves Guéna, 5-1-89
46. *Le Monde* 22-9-79, 10-6-80
47. *Le Monde* 22-10-80
48. *Le Monde* 6-10-81
49. Méo is another of those curious figures belonging essentially to the world of business but tempted by Chirac into a front-rank political role. Not one of the senior Gaullists who worked with him, and to whom I have been able to speak, retains a clear recollection

- of his ideas or impact on the party. Méo himself did not reply to my request for an interview.
50. On Chirac's use of these funds, and his success in neutralizing an enquiry by the newly created Regional Court of Accounts in 1986, see Hervé Liffran, *Les Paris de Chirac*, Paris, Ramsay, 1988 pp 27-29.
 51. Interview with Jacques Boyon, 27-4-89. (Q) "Vous avez travaillé avec M. Chirac à l'Hôtel de Ville pendant un certain temps?" (R) "A l'Hôtel de Ville? Non. Pas ... ah, à l'Hôtel de Ville, non, pas vraiment à l'Hôtel de Ville, oui je faisais parti d'un petit groupe de réflexion personnelle qui travaillait auprès de lui sur les problèmes des collectivités locales... Ce n'était pas du tout un groupe RPR, il était tout à fait en marge... Il y avait notamment dans ce groupe un certain nombre de conseillers personnels ou des gens de l'Hôtel de Ville. Mais à cette époque d'ailleurs, il y avait égalité de cellules de réflexion. Jacques Chirac a toujours souhaité avoir à la fois une cellule de réflexion au RPR et une cellule de réflexion plus personnelle, pour lui."
 52. Liffran *op cit* pp 59-61
 53. On Friedman and François-Poncet, see Giesbert *op cit*, p 323. I am indebted to yvan Blot (interview 28-4-89) for the suggestion that Crespi, as well as advising Chirac on his image, was also an influential advocate of liberalizing economic policies.
 54. Edouard Balladur, *Passion et Longueur de Temps*, Paris, Fayard 1989 pp 37-39.
 55. Philippe Auberger, a rank and file deputy and mayor of a small town in the Yonne, sent a number of papers on economic questions to Chirac during 1980-81, shortly after his return from a trip to California where he had studied the tax-reform movement agitating that state. (Interview with Philippe Auberger, 6-1-89) Yvan Blot sent a large number of short *notices d'orientation idéologique* to the party president during the period (1978-84) when Blot was employed at the party office in the *rue de Lille*. In his case, the notes in question were likely to have been influenced less by discussions with his head office colleagues than by his participation in the work of the *Club de l'Horloge* which he had founded in 1974 precisely in order to foster the development of new ideas within the French right. (Interview with Yvan Blot, 28-4-89) Much less significant, but typical of the contacts which Chirac encouraged, was a case like Philippe Dechartre, whom I met in December 1988 when he had just returned from a three-month trip to Africa, resulting in the compilation of a lengthy report delivered to the RPR president. (Interview with Philippe Dechartre, 6-12-88)
 56. Balladur, *op cit*, *Passion*, ... p37
 57. Interview with Jean Charbonnel 17-4-89
 58. See the portrait in Thierry Desjardins, *Les Chiraquiens*, Paris, La table Ronde, 1986, pp 105-130
 59. *Figaro* 12-2-80; *Le Monde*, 1-3-80, 11-3-80 (Lille and Nantes), 25-3-80 (Toulouse), 15-4-80 (Montpellier); *La Croix*, 14-5-80; *Le Quotidien de Paris*, 12-7-80; *Le Monde* 24-9-80; *Le Matin* 7-11-80
 60. Although it later emerged that he himself had wanted to lead an RPR list at the 1984 European elections, rather than making a joint list with the UDF, under Simone Veil's leadership, (Desjardins *op cit*, *Les Chiraquiens*, ... p 127)

61. Interview with Jean-François Mancel, 20-4-89; interview with Yvan Blot, 28-4-89; Pierre Saurat, *Jacques Toubon, "premier ministre" de Jacques Chirac*, Paris, Cinq Diamants, 1986, p17. While doing justice to Pons, this book does not rise above hagiography where Toubon is concerned.
62. Interview with Jean-François Mancel, 20-4-89; interview with André Fanton, 21-4-89. See also the portrait in Desjardins *op cit*, *Les Chiracadiens...*, pp 21-45.
63. The following account of the *rue de Lille* teams which served each of the general secretaries is based on, for Monod, Crisol et Lhomeau *op cit*, pp 118-126; for Devaquet, *Le Monde* 13-4-78, for Pons I, *Figaro* 5-10-79; for Pons II, *Le Monde* 6-10-81 and 15-1-82, and, for Toubon, *Le Monde* 28-11-84.
64. Crisol and Lhomeau *op cit* pp 175-182.
65. Thus Madame Solange Troisier was *chargée de mission* for prison administration during 1978 and 1979, Nicole Chouraqui was in charge of *vie associative* from April 1978 to October 1979, while civil liberties were inaugurated in 1981, after the Socialists came to power, and given to Noëlle Dewavrin in October 1981, after she had lost the women's portfolio a couple of years earlier to Mademoiselle Françoise Sème.
66. Almost equally part of the furniture are a small category whose special personal qualifications fit them for one role more than any other, but who do not earn their living exclusively in the *rue de Lille*. Who better to be *chargé de mission* for the sea than Guy Guermier, deputy for the sea-faring constituency of Finistère? Who better to advise on science and technology than André Turcat, the Concorde test-pilot, or on sports than Guy Drut, the former Olympic hurdles champion?
67. Interview with Jean-François Mancel, 20-4-89, "*Pasqua s'en est toujours occupé, que ce soit en titre ou en rate. Pasqua était un homme qui était constamment au contact des problèmes des fédérations. Il y avait toujours celui qui avait la responsabilité, et puis il y avait Pasqua qui avait les secrétaires départementaux plus souvent au bout du fil que celui qui en avait la responsabilité rue de Lille. Alors je crois, d'ailleurs c'est ce que Michel Noir me disait souvent, c'est que, étant en désaccord avec Pasqua sur un certain nombre de points, il se trouvait court-circuité par Pasqua, et il ne pouvait pas véritablement accomplir sa mission, c'est ce qui fait que, là je crois, vraiment je l'ai constaté: au niveau des militants, au niveau des départements et des secrétaires de circonscription, Noir n'a jamais existé en tant que responsable de l'animation du RPR.*" Mancel went on to explain that he wasn't sure that there was a single definite reason why Noir did not do more; it might be because he didn't want to, because he preferred to devote himself to his own constituency and legislative questions, or simply because he wasn't given enough resources by the party leadership.
68. Interview with Jean-François Mancel, 20-4-89, "*Il y a toujours eu une ambiguïté à cette époque, qui existait d'ailleurs au moment de Michel Noir, qui était que les fédérations et l'animation n'étaient pas dans les mêmes mains, et à l'époque j'étais secrétaire national à l'animation et Alain Marieix, lui, s'occupait de la vie des fédérations. Alors, c'était un peu bâtarde comme solution, dans la mesure où l'un n'allait pas sans l'autre. Alors Marieix s'occupait en directe souvent avec Bernard Pons, et sans doute en directe mais plus officieusement avec Charles Pasqua, de l'organisation des fédérations, de la nomination des secrétaires départementaux, des secrétaires de circonscription, et moi, je m'occupais d'animer les choses. Alors, ce n'était pas toujours simple, c'est vrai, parce que, il arrivait que, revenant d'un voyage dans une fédération, je dise, 'Bah, ce secrétaire départemental, il vaudrait mieux quand même le changer un jour ou*

l'autre, parce que, il n'est pas très dynamique, il ne bouge pas assez.' Et là je me heurtais à des blocages parce que les raisons pour les quelles on maintenait au pouvoir tel ou tel secrétaire départemental ne tenaient pas à leur capacité d'animateur, mais tenaient à des raisons plus complexes, qui étaient ceux, véritablement, de mettre, de maintenir dans les places des responsables, des gens qu'on voulait garder pour des raisons peut-être de précaution au niveau des idées qu'ils pouvaient émettre ou ne pas émettre."

69. The figures in table 4.4 are based on the sources cited at note 63. The information appears in the press usually shortly after the new general secretary has been appointed. It is not accurate indefinitely, as there was a continual turnover at the fringes and one or two appointments often remain to be made when the main list is announced. In particular, the figures for Devaquet are incomplete. For each team, deputies are shown both as % of the total, and as % of those holding the more important titles - *secrétaire* or *délégué national*.
70. *Le Monde* 13-4-78. The others were Robert Grossmann, Jacques Kosciusko-Morizet, Pierre Mazeaud and Jean-Claude Servan-Schreiber.
71. Interview with André Fanton, 21-4-89; interview with Jacques Boyon, 27-4-89
72. Interview, Jean-Pierre Delalande, 21-12-88
73. Interview with Jean-François Mancel, 20-4-89, "*Il voulait donc, à cette occasion là, comme on entrait dans l'opposition, renouveler un peu les cadres de son mouvement autour de Bernard Pons, et, inéluctablement, il s'était tourné vers les quelques jeunes parlementaires qui n'avaient pas retrouvé leur siège en 1981, ce qui pouvait à la fois permettre d'amener un peu de sang neuf au sein du RPR, et puis d'autre part permettre à ceux-là de ne pas quitter la vie politique, et donc d'être payés pour assumer des responsabilités dans le mouvement.*"
74. When Delalande returned to the private sector, he was replaced as secretary for foreign affairs not by Lipkowski, but by Jacques Kosciusko-Morizet, one of those who arguably had been dropped in 1978 for his failure to win a parliamentary seat and who now, at seventy, was hardly likely to get one. In due course, three more of those dropped in 1978 found their way back, Jean-Claude Servan-Schreiber as *chargé* for the audio-visual industry in 1979, Pierre Mazeaud in 1986 for legal affairs, and Alain Juppé for economic affairs in 1984.
- The same principle is at work in the occasionally labyrinthine protocol. When Devaquet took over in 1978 he was flanked by four assistant general secretaries. These were Toubon, Nicole Chouraqui, whose title was both compensation for her defeat in the Paris council elections the previous year, and a reward for betrayal of the Radical party, which she had left in order to support Chirac in that election, Pierre Charpy, director of the party's daily newsheet, *La Lettre de la Nation*, who had converted fairly recently from professional journalism, and Philippe Dechartre, a historic Gaullist and prickly defender of the prerogatives of what passed for the left in the party. Eighteen months later, with Pons replacing Devaquet at the top, the choice of Méo as sole assistant general secretary emphasized the independence of the new leadership, and indeed it was the only fitting position for a man who had lately been managing director of one of France's largest firms. Immediately below these two Devaquet and the sensitive Dechartre were dignified by the largely meaningless title of *délégué auprès du secrétaire général*. To obviate the sense of deflation which all this implied for Toubon and Chouraqui, they were styled *secrétaire national*, an appellation which they shared with Michel Noir (*animation*) and Jean de Lipkowski, (foreign affairs). Below them again

11 *délégués nationaux* larded it over 22 *chargés de mission*.

Pons next carried out a reorganization in October 1981, to take account of the party's relegation to opposition in national politics. Things were made somewhat easier by Méo's departure for Strasbourg, and the fact that Dechartre had been manoeuvred out his pre-eminence at the AOP, while Devaquet had tactfully faded from the scene. Along with the job of elections organizer Chartron inherited Toubon's title of national secretary, which he shared, as we have seen, with Mancel and Delalande as well as with the decidedly tenacious Chouraqui. The rest of the team formed up as 5 *délégués* and 24 *chargés*.

Toubon in 1984, managed to simplify things so that anybody who was anybody got to be a national secretary. This was a move resisted by Pons, despite Chirac's urgings. According to him the RPR didn't need as many generals as the Mexican army. (Desjardins *op cit*, *Les Chiraquiens*, . . . p 129)

75. Thus Philippe Séguin made his début as *chargé* for *rapatriés* with Devaquet's team in April 1978, the month after he was first elected to parliament. When Pons took over at the end of 1979 Séguin was promoted to *délégué* and put in charge of employment. He seems to have disappeared at the end of 1981, but reappeared in Toubon's 1984 executive committee responsible for decentralization, before entering the government in 1986 with responsibility for social affairs and employment. Jacques Godtrain was in charge of *cadres*, from October 1979 to 1984 when he switched to law and order. In 1986 he became national secretary for *relations sociales and professions libérales*. Another loyal Chiraquien, Didier Julia began in October 1979 with overseas departments, added overseas territories in October 1981, and by 1988 was *délégué* for regional affairs.
76. *Le Monde* 28-4-79
77. Crisol et Lhomeau *op cit* pp 144-5
78. *Le Monde* 8-11-84
79. This account is from Jean-François Mancel, who as *secrétaire à l'animation* was a key member of the inner party circle from October 1981 to October 84. Interview, 20-4-89
80. In the words of Jean-François Mancel - interview of 20-4-89,
81. *Le Monde* 5-4-78
82. *Le Monde* 20-4-78, "Un député, une fois élu, a des responsabilités vis-à-vis de ses électeurs, qui ne sont pas celles d'un militant."
83. Thierry Desjardins, *op cit*, *Un Inconnu Nommé Chirac*, p399, ".propos outranciers. . . . certains personnages occultes qui semblent s'être emparés de l'appareil de notre mouvement." Alain Peyrefitte confirmed the accuracy of this account in an interview on 6-12-88
84. *ibidem*. Chirac's long wrangle with the party's ministers went on until the end of their tenure in 1981, and is further dealt with below.
85. Interview in *L'Aurore*, 12-4-79
86. Interview in *Le Monde*, 12-4-79
87. *Le Monde* 24-4-79

88. *Le Monde* 26-4-79
89. *Le Monde* 28-4-79
90. "ne paraît aller à l'encontre du rapprochement franco-allemand et de la construction européenne, tels que les avait engagés le général de Gaulle," *Le Monde* 28-4-79
91. *Le Monde*, 12-5-79
92. *Le Point* 30-4-79
93. *Le Figaro* 27-4-79. The 10 deputies were Rufenacht, Barnier, Cressard, Delalande, Dhinnin, Goulet, Missoffe, Péricard, Pinte, Pringalle, and the Senator, Chaumont.
94. Crisoi et Lhomeau *op cit*, pp 147-154
95. "les rapports entre la direction et les députés sont profondément dégradés ... c'est une erreur de forcer la main du groupe parlementaire, ... toujours sans consultation, ..." These extracts cited in Jean Peltier, "Jason-Chirac", in *Écrits de Paris* March 1979 pp 21-26
96. *Maintenant* 9-4-79
97. "le mouvement a fluctué et perdu sa bonne position dans l'opinion, ... Nous réproouvons la politique qui consiste à pourfendre quotidiennement le gouvernement et le Président, ... (dont la légitimité), ... ne saurait être mise en cause jusqu'à l'expiration de son mandat," cited in Desjardins, *op cit*, *Un Inconnu*, ... p 410.
98. *Le Monde* 14-6-80
99. *La Lettre de la Nation* 4-7-80
100. Interview with Yvon Bourges, 11-1-89; see also *Le Monde* 4-3-81 for Bourges' eventual statement of his support for Giscard.
101. *Le Monde* 2-5-81.
102. In the country, Chirac's support committees were officially dissolved, and the party machine demobilized, Philippe Dechartre, lately deprived of his imposing title at the *rue de Lille*, but still a member of the Political Committee, issued thousands of leaflets to the local branches calling for a vote for Mitterrand. (Interview with Philippe Dechartre, 6-12-88, and *Le Monde* 2-5-81.) As a result, a number of his former colleagues cut off relations with him including Jean-Pierre Delalande, (Interview, 21-12-88) but he was echoed by a number of other left Gaullists, including Pierre Emmanuel, the RPR's *délegué national* for culture, and by only one deputy, Joël Le Tac,
103. *Le Monde* 3-5-81
104. *Le Monde* 5-5-81
105. Interview with Michel Giraud 10-1-89
106. *Le Monde* 5-5-81; the areas in which Chiraquians campaigned for Giscard were Dijon, Bourges, Cagnes-sur-Mer, the Seine-Maritime, the Yvelines and Ile-et-Vilaine,

107. Interview with Yves Guéna 5-1-89
108. *Le Monde* 30-8-79
109. *L'Aurore* 21-9-79
110. *Le Monde* 22-9-79
111. *Le Monde* 14-1-80
112. *La Croix* 18-1-80
113. *Le Monde* 23-7-81
114. *Figaro* 1-7-80
115. *Que voulons-nous faire de la France? Que voulons nous faire de nos libertés?* in supplement to no 45 of *La Lettre de Michel Debré*, Paris, 1981 (no page numbers)
116. *Le Monde* 23-7-80
117. *Le Monde* 26-7-81
118. *Le Monde* 5-7-81. The support-Chirac committees were set up in Bas-Rhin, (by MM Bord, Sprauer and Durr), Aude (Cassabel), Eure (Tomasini), Seine-et-Marne (Didier Julia), Allier (Hector Rolland), and in the Pas-de-Calais, Puy-de-Dôme, Saône-et-Loire, Loire-et-Cher, the Landes and the Lot
119. *Le Monde* 9-7-80
120. *Le Matin* 30-9-80; *Le Figaro* 2-10-80; The former minister Jean Foyer, trying to pour oil on troubled waters, stressed that Debré's candidature was valuable as a kind of "bearing witness" to Gaullist ideals, even if he had no chance of winning. Calling on Chirac to "think ten times" before declaring himself, he argued that if the party leader stood and got 15% Gaullism was finished, whereas if Debré stood and got 5% the set-back for the movement would be less serious. This in turn was rejected by Debré and his closest supporters who insisted that he had taken the field 'to convince and to win'. Rufenacht, the Gallo-Giscardian, justified his support for Debré, while admitting that he didn't agree with him on all points. This was putting it mildly, since Debré's attacks on Giscard were even more severe than those of Chirac and Pons. Incensed by this display of opportunism, Didier Julia accused Rufenacht of being an "anti-Chiracien primaire", and Mme Missoffe felt impelled to appeal for calm.
121. *Le Monde* 24-10-80 and 21/2-12-80
122. *Le Monde* 9-12-80
123. *Le Monde* 23-10-80
124. *Le Monde* 31-1-81
125. *Le Monde* 24-10-81
126. *Le Monde* 19-9-79

127. *Le Figaro* 8-1-80
128. *Le Monde* 6-2-81
129. These were mainly old friends like Guéna, the group around Guichard, the *suppléants* of the RPR ministers, and deputies from the two areas where Debré himself was influential, the Loire valley, where he was a mayor, and the island of Réunion, where he had his parliamentary constituency. (*Le Monde* 24-10-80.) The deputies were: MM, Beaumont (Val de Marne), de Benouville (Paris), Berger (Côte d'Or), Bizet (Manche), Boinvilliers (Cher), Castagnon (Indre-et-Loire), Cressard (Ile-et-Vilaine), Delhalle (Aube), Dhinnin (Nord), Druon (Paris), Eymard-Duvernay (Seine-et-Marne) Foyer (Maine-et-Loire), de Gastines (Mayenne), Godefroy (Manche), Guéna (Dordogne), Guichard (Loire-Atlantique), Hamelin, (Ile-et-Vilaine), La Combe (Maine-et-Loire), Marie (Pyrénées-Atlantiques), Moulle (Cher), Neuwirth (Loire), Roux (Paris), Rufenacht (Seine-Maritime), Sourdille (Ardennes), Taugourdeau (Eure-et-Loire), Thibault (Indre), Voisin (Indre-et-Loire). The senators were MM, Gautier (Maine-et-Loire), Moreau and Portier (Indre-et-Loire), and Répiquet (Réunion).
130. *Le Monde* 23-1-81 for Messmer; 27-1-81 for Séguin
131. *Le Monde* 21/2-12-80
132. Debré was 67, Chirac not even 50. The graceful thing for the younger man would have been to hold back, and wait for 1988, just as his closest friends advised. With or without Debré in the field, they argued that if Chirac stood and Giscard lost, Chirac would be to blame. But if he stayed out, he won all round. If Giscard won, it was thanks to Chirac; if he lost, it would be despite what Chirac did for him. This advice came from Denis Baudoin, as well as Friedmann, Juppé and Chirac's wife Bernadette, (Giesbert *op cit* p 327) from Ballardur, (*op cit, Passion . . . , p 30; Giesbert op cit* pp 328-9) and from André Fanton. (Interview with André Fanton 21-4-89) It was no accident that those on this side of the argument were mostly, with the exception of Fanton and Juppé, non-party advisers. To those most closely associated with the RPR machine, chief among them Pasqua, the opposing argument was decisive, and ultimately won the day; if Chirac didn't run, Debré would score between 8 and 12%, which would be disastrous for the party. (Giesbert *op cit* p 329)
133. Cited in Desiardins *op cit, Les Chiraquiens, . . . , p 129, "Leurs coups de poignard ont été effrayables, ils ont coûté très cher à Chirac. Infiniment plus que les 2% qu'ils ont récoltés."*
134. The last prohibition was somewhat redundant, as *conseillers* are banned from political activity by the state constitution, *Le Monde* 20-3-78 and 11-4-78
135. This interpretation is accepted by Kay Lawson (*loc cit, "The impact, . . . ,"* p 411)
136. *L'Aurore* 3-4-79
137. *Figaro* 10-4-79
138. *Le Monde* 12-4-79
139. *L'Express* 14-4-79
140. *Le Monde* 2-5-79

141. *Le Monde* 9-5-79
142. *Le Monde* 2-6-79
143. *Le Matin* 24-9-79
144. *Le Monde* 17-10-79
145. Peyrefitte's proposed method essentially consisted in Giscard being nice to RPR deputies suspected of not being Chirac's friends, and in giving the Gaullist ministers more of the appearances of power. (*Le Canard Enchaîné* 16-4-80)
146. *Le Monde* 17-7-80
147. *Figaro* 12-6-79
148. "Nous souhaitons une modification des structures et des méthodes du RPR en vue de davantage de participation, de démocratie," *Figaro* 12-6-79
149. *Le Monde* 19-6-79
150. *Le Monde* 10-7-79
151. *Le Matin*, 18-12-79
152. Edwy Plenel et Alain Rollat. *L'Effet Je Pen*, Paris, Le Monde/La Découverte, 1984 p 99
153. Martin Schain, *Racial Politics in France: the National Front and the Construction of Political Legitimacy*, Paper presented to the annual meeting of the British Political Science Association, Nottingham, April 1986, pp 14-15; Plenel et Rollat *op cit* pp 98-103
154. In January 1984 a Strasbourg member, Marc Matz became leader of the local FN departmental committee. Shortly afterwards, in Toulouse, the FN claimed the adhesion of the former RPR departmental organizer, Jean Pingault, with several of his comrades; in Roanne, in the Loire, Pierre Place, of the RPR departmental committee, deserted the party of which he had been a member since 1978, along with some of his colleagues, and some from neighbouring St. Etienne. At Sete, on the Mediterranean coast, 15 or so went from one party to the other. In the Vaucluse, Avignon and Isle-sur-Sorgue were affected. (Plenel et Rollat, *op cit*, pp 68-71)
155. Schain *op cit*, *Racial Politics*, . . . , p 16
156. *Liberation*, 30-10-84; Colette Ysmal, "Le RPR et l'UDF face au Front National, concurrence et connivences", in *Revue Politique et Parlementaire*, November-December 1984, pp 6-20
157. Charles de Gaulle *Mémoires d'Espoir, Le Renouveau, 1958-62*, Paris, Plon, 1970, p72
158. Michel Hannoun, *L'autre cohabitation*, Paris, L'Harmattan 1986
159. *Le Monde* 15-5-87
160. *Questions à domicile*, TF1 24-9-87, Quoted in *Le Monde* 27/28-9-87

161. *Le Monde* 10-5-88; Peter Fysh, "Defeat and Reconstruction - the RPR in 1988", in *Modern and Contemporary France* no 35, October 1988 pp 15-25
162. *L'Express* 18-8-79
163. On Fanton's report, *Figaro* 21-9-79; on the CC generally, *Le Monde* 25-9-79
164. *Figaro* 5-10-79
165. *Le Monde* 13-6-79
166. "Chirac is at the same time impossible and irreplaceable, and we have to make the best of it," *Le Monde* 14-6-79
167. A Chiraquian fellow-traveller who was officially a member of the Radical party.
168. Marc Ambroise-Rendu, *Paris-Chirac*, Paris, Plon, 1987 pp 360-362; Liffra *op cit* pp 62-3
169. Pierre Bas was deposed as Paris deputy in 1988 and ousted from his town hall in the 6th arrondissement in 1989, for the crime of wanting to vote for Raymond Barre, Christian de la Malène who as *rapporteur* had effectively controlled the Paris budget for twenty years, was exiled to Strasbourg at the start of the mayor's second term. (Liffra *op cit* - on Bas, pp 80-81; - on de la Malène, pp 51-56)
170. Liffra *op cit* p 63
171. Barzach had held lower rank at the *rue de Lille*, while Philippe Séguin was the only *secrétaire national* in the government who switched portfolios, from decentralization to social affairs and employment.
172. Liffra *op cit* p 64
173. William R. Schonfeld, *op cit*, *Ethnographie du PS et du RPR, ...*

Chapter 5 Grass Roots

The subject of this chapter is the connection between grass-roots politics, attitudes to the state, and the making of national policy in the RPR during the late 1970s and the 1980s. The attack on the state mounted by the party during its years of opposition was inspired by diverse and sometimes conflicting conservative ideologies. Some came to the view that the state ought to concern itself solely with internal policing and external defence, since its expansion into welfare was always a mistake, resulting from the political victories of socialism, which should be rolled back as quickly as possible.¹

Alongside this unambiguously Hayekian version of liberalism, a decentralizing current developed in the party in the 1980s, holding that the state's involvement in welfare is not illegitimate but may become more burdensome than helpful to its citizens if it fails to take account of widespread social changes fostered by the economic success of the 1960s and 1970s. As the party's 1984 programme put it;

The French people are today wealthier, better educated, have more free time, and thus desire more autonomy and a bigger share in decisions that affect them than they did in the past. Because of this they aspire to a transformation of their relationship with the all-protective state.

Their critique of the state works on three levels. Firstly they denounce the soaring cost of the welfare system and public services which can no longer be financed from the surplus of an economy which has stopped growing..... Secondly, our citizens are worried by the frequently inferior quality of public provision in the fields of health, education and help with finding work, for example. Finally, they are irritated by the persistence of authoritarian and bureaucratic behaviour which prevents them sharing the running of things and the solving of problems which concern them.... Like the customer, the user wants to be king!²

All tendencies in the party at least agreed that government, both local and national, needed competent management within given budgetary constraints which they accused the Left of ignoring. But the last sentence of this passage contains at least a latent rejection of the traditional Gaullist acceptance of hierarchy and the state's right to command. Its author believed that the Left parties had cleverly taken advantage of citizens' increasing demands for autonomy, foolishly neglected by the Right in power, and that the "Socialo-Communists" were only narrowly beaten in the 1978 elections, and won in 1981, because their promises of administrative decentralization and work-place democracy seemed to fit with the voters' evolving aspirations.³ Once in power, however, the bureaucratic mentality and authoritarian behaviour of the PS and PC showed that their promises were lies and the voters' hopes merely illusions;

Instead of the dawn of a society of responsibility expected by an impatient France, we were given a bureaucratic, archaic and moralizing centralism, the gloomy victory of a stagnant France without imagination over the ambitions which could create a new society.⁴

It therefore fell to the Right, argued the "communicators" in the RPR, not necessarily to re-emphasize the repressive role of the state, but to adapt redistributive or egalitarian ideals to the requirements of what they supposed to be the more educated and autonomous citizens of the 1980s. They began to call for decentralisation of power from national to local government, to denounce the "mass" character of industrial society, to praise citizen involvement in a plethora of local associations which were thought to be the future channels of political expression, and even to call for the use of binding referenda in local politics.⁵

The results of the 1983 local government elections gave the Gaullists the chance to demonstrate in practice both their management skills and

their sensitivity to grass-roots demands for greater democracy. The combined popular vote of the two Left parties fell to 44% from the 53.8% recorded in 1981, and the opposition won in 31 towns with populations of more than 30,000 which had been controlled by the left since 1977. Some startling victories by young and untried RPR challengers in Socialist or Communist bastions seemed to confirm that voters were tired of being taken for granted by remote and routinized municipal governments and were prepared to transfer their support to candidates talking a new language of responsibility, accountability and participation.

These developments suggest three questions, to which we seek answers in this chapter. Firstly, was it true (as the 1984 programme implied) that the RPR locally was becoming more attuned to citizens' frustration with the bureaucratic state? Secondly, was concern with "value for money" at the grass roots associated with the adoption of liberal and privatising policies by RPR local politicians? Thirdly, in either case, did grass roots politicians spread this awareness into the party leadership in such a way as to bring about a change of policy at national level?

We begin by showing that at least some Gaullists had already protested against excessive centralism in the 1970s. The local experiences of two senior party figures had led them to campaign for decentralization and "citizen power", but for different reasons neither enjoyed good relations with the Chiraquian leadership, and neither had enough influence to make a difference to national policy.

During the mid-1980s, however, commentators began to focus on the emergence on to the political scene of a new generation of young right-wingers bearing values different from those of their elders. Two related propositions were advanced; first that the representatives of the "private

sector" (owners and managers of private firms) gradually took over the institutions of local power, and secondly that this generational renewal necessarily had an impact on the RPR national policy stance.⁶

In the second part of the chapter it is argued both that the quantitative dimension of the alleged "invasion of the private sector" has been exaggerated, and that a closer examination of the attitudes of the individuals included in the "renewal" reveals a certain heterogeneity of experiences and ideas, not always in conflict with existing Gaullist orthodoxies, and in any case not directly attributable to their work situations.

Next, we suggest that some RPR local politicians *have* been willing to engage in more open-ended two-way communication with the voters, and that some tried to participate in the revival of community and interest associations which expressed citizen discontent with conventional politics. However, the RPR's failure to channel this discontent back to themselves and the other opposition parties was a measure of the limited nature of their conversion to "grass roots liberalism".

In the fourth and final part of the chapter attention is turned to *managerial* practice at the local level. First, it is accepted that Chirac's "liberal" management of Paris after 1983 (albeit with a heavy residual dose of interventionism) was a political option, designed to demonstrate at a local level what could be done nationally if the RPR were to return to power.⁷ But we go on to show that, while the Paris experiment has been taken as a model by some, others have treated it as an exception, dependent on particular conditions which do not exist elsewhere. The party did not fight the 1983 local elections on a liberal platform, and the attitudes and management practice of RPR mayors then and since have

continued to range between the poles of intervention and disengagement. The party leadership made no particular attempt to generalize from examples of successful local liberalism, nor did it specifically recommend liberal solutions to local problems. Our overall conclusion, therefore, is that there was no process of transmission, whether upwards or downwards or between generations, by which liberalism was transferred from one level to another or from periphery to centre within the party.

Early critics of the State

During the 1970s the two most prominent critics of the state within the Gaullist party were Alain Peyrefitte and Michel Giraud. For different reasons, however, neither of these talented and capable men achieved positions in the party which they could use to achieve the victory of their ideas. Like many of their colleagues, their positions in national politics have been buttressed by local careers. Peyrefitte has been deputy and mayor of Provins (Seine-et-Marne) and Giraud the mayor of le Perreux (Val-de-Marne) for two decades. Both have attacked the delays, waste and injustice which arises when the insensitivity of remote officials is turned into arrogance by the absence of any popular check or control on their activities. Giraud, President of the Paris regional council from 1976-1988, has occupied a special position in the party as the chief proponent of decentralization and the defender of local interests.

In 1976 Peyrefitte published what became a celebrated book, *Le Mal Français*, in which he identified the cardinal vice of French society, arising from its catholic culture; the dictatorial tendencies at the top and the centre, frequently mirrored by the cravenness and lack of imagination of the base and the periphery. Telling examples were drawn from routine work in his own constituency. It took local china-clay miners

25 years to win part of the pension and early retirement rights enjoyed by coal-miners since 1945, because of the mindless obstructionism of the civil service.⁹ The author and some of his local government colleagues from the Seine-et Marne spent five years trying to prevent an unnecessary and expensive scheme to tap underground drinking-water in the Paris region, again dreamed up by an irresponsible bureaucracy.⁹

The combination of immobility and injustice highlighted by Peyrefitte was counted by many sociologists as a prime cause of the mounting frustrations throughout French society which culminated in the explosion of May '68. The following year there were signs of recognition, even among the Gaullist establishment, that something had to be done. Chaban Delmas' 'New Society' programme contained as eloquent a summary as any other of the accumulated dysfunctions of the over-centralized bureaucracy.

Chaban was brought down not so much for that as for his suspected friendliness with the left. Clearly, however, Peyrefitte's later proposal to devolve as many decisions as possible to the level of the department, with the consequent break-up of the Paris-based administrative *corps* and the reconstitution of the civil service itself at the departmental level¹⁰ was unlikely to find favour with the political elite of the 1970s, the vast majority of whom were products of the same training schools and socialization process as the bureaucrats who were under attack.¹¹ Furthermore, as we saw in the previous chapter, Peyrefitte's role in Giscardian governments ensured that, like Chaban before him, his ideas were either ignored or combatted by the Chiraquian power system.¹²

If Peyrefitte was in a sense a traitor to his own technocratic upbringing, Michel Giraud is an eloquent and authentic representative of the grass roots in conflict with the state. Author of a number of books

which are hymns to the co-operative virtues of provincial France, he has vented his frustration with interfering bureaucracy by recounting the history of the steps involved in the provision of an elementary piece of social equipment in his commune of Le Perreux.¹³

While not so overtly Giscardian as Peyrefitte, Giraud has been suspect within his own party for a number of reasons. To begin with, his career was an oddity at a time when the elite of Gaullist politicians was formed by privileged young technocrats used to serving their apprenticeships in ministerial *cabinets* before a carefully arranged soft landing in a safe Parliamentary seat.

Born in 1929, Giraud did not become mayor of his town until 1971, after being encouraged to enter politics by the local deputy. Founder of a successful business (importing exotic wood), father of a large family, in line with his catholic convictions, his role in the community made him a catch for any party. He was the founder and leader of an amateur choral society which won a string of international prizes for its singing, built a holiday village, and spawned a variety of charitable activities.¹⁴

Drawn by his grass-roots commitment into defending the interests of small communes within the Paris region, he was rapidly projected, as a compromise candidate, to the regional presidency.¹⁵ Elected to the Senate in 1977, the same year in which he was president of the *Fédération Nationale des Elus Locaux*, he specialized in all local government questions and enthusiastically defended, in his own words, "the respect for man, the diffusion of responsibilities, decentralization in all its forms, participation..."¹⁶ At every stage in the stumbling devolution process from de Gaulle's defeated referendum in 1969 through to the Socialists' law of 1982, Giraud sought to increase the powers and the

budgets of the regional councils. In 1986 he had the satisfaction of being designated president of his beloved Ile de France by the regional councillors themselves elected by universal suffrage for the first time.¹⁷

Another reason why Giraud was never fully integrated into the party leadership was that his formidable and restless energies were not and never could have been entirely channelled through his own party. From 1982-4 he was president of the Union of Capital Regions of the European Community, in 1983 president of the *Association des Maires de France*, and in the same year he founded and became the first president of the *Association Mondiale des Grandes Métropoles*. His latest venture, the *Fondation pour la Communication Locale*, was set up in April 1987 with eight partners drawn from business, the press and local government organizations, with the aim of ensuring that the grass-roots get the full benefit of the social and technical revolution in communications.

Giraud's greatest pride and joy, however, is the *Institut du Citoyen*, founded in 1982 with Alain Chevalier, a self-styled progressive among the leaders of the French employers. The Institute's activities are perfectly tailored to the needs of the society in search of participation evoked by the RPR programme which we quoted at the start of this chapter. Its aim is "to help citizens in general, and business and community leaders in particular, to participate more actively in public life."¹⁸ For the general public, the Institute holds evening lectures on a variety of social science topics at the rate of 3 or 4 per week, and an astonishing range of one-day or half-day guided tours; of firms (IBM, Renault, etc) of parts of the state apparatus from Parliament, through the Atomic Energy Commission to the Bank of France; of the public hospitals, the law courts, the Paris Opera; and even a two-day tour of NATO installations in Belgium.

The Institute's most serious work, however, is reserved for would-be or actual local councillors, who can attend a variety of specialized courses, short or long, held either in the evenings at the Institute or frequently for a full day at town halls within the Paris region, designed to equip councillors with the knowledge and skills necessary to grapple with the bureaucracy at succeeding stages of their careers.

Despite this fine record in the service of decentralized democracy, Giraud's ideas and talents have undoubtedly been underused by his party. One or two RPR mayors figure among the personalities running the Institute's practical sessions and on its management board. But the party nevertheless provides its own separate training programme for local candidates and party full-timers. There is a *de facto* division of labour; for the *rue de Lille*, training with a distinctly partisan flavour; for the *Institut du Citoyen* a more general civism within an ideological framework set by conservative and private enterprise values.

Overall, Giraud's position in his own party has been that of a prophet without a following. To the leadership, he is a disconcerting outsider who made his own way without the benefit of contacts forged in the *grandes écoles*. In 1978 he even turned down the offer of a government post in order to pursue his ideal of grass-roots democracy.¹² This did not prevent his coming under attack from his own colleagues for being too ecumenical because he insisted that the RPR and UDF contingents should sit as one group in the Paris regional assembly.

I had some difficult moments. You know from time to time they used to say - but I don't bear any grudges - that I was too soft, that I was a disguised centrist, that I was a Trojan horse, that I put unity before the interests of the movement. And when it came to fustigating the 'foreigners' party', well I can't say I was in favour of that. My relations with Chirac are very open, sincere and direct, but there were times when

really I was thoroughly unhappy.²⁰

Likewise his avant-garde ideas about decentralization made him in his own words something of a 'lonely pilgrim' in the party. The occasional support of Guichard and Chaban did nothing to recommend his views to the Chiraquian leadership.

There were times when I suffered, because I was a decentralizer before it was fashionable, because, well... sometimes they made fun of me in the central committee, saying I wanted to break up the state.²¹

Like other Gaullists before him, then, and long before the Socialists' victory in 1981, Michel Giraud had raised the question of excessive deference to the State in French political culture, and the imbalance in institutional power between the centre and the periphery.

Two of his fellow-thinkers, Chaban Delmas and Peyrefitte, were deliberately excluded from the party leadership by Jacques Chirac. Giraud himself probably did as much as anyone in France, both before and after 1981, to awaken and sustain grass-roots political activity, but he was regarded with suspicion by the leadership. Giraud's activities were carried on as much outside as within the RPR, and although in 1984 the party adopted positions which were close to his own, there is no sense in which he, any more than Peyrefitte or Chaban Delmas, swung the party to his own way of thinking.

Mayors: a new generation?

Given the poor reception reserved by the RPR for the decentralizing and participatory ideas of Peyrefitte and Giraud, it was not surprising that journalists and political scientists seized with interest on evidence that technocratic training and dirigist ideas were less widespread among

the younger generation who spearheaded the Right's come-back in the 1983 local elections than among the Gaullist elders. There is no doubt that there was a certain renewal of local political leaders, and that it was much more marked in the RPR than in the constituent parts of the UDF. But we argue here that this renewal has been both quantitatively exaggerated and politically misinterpreted. Generational renewal cannot be counted a major cause of the RPR's turn to liberalism.

Within the overall swing to the right, the RPR made vastly more gains than the UDF. A centralized party, mobilizing the mass of their members around national political leaders and issues, the Gaullists had always been underrepresented in provincial town halls in comparison with their UDF colleagues whose traditional loyalty to local notables was frequently handed on, along with their local mandates, from father to son. Precise comparisons are difficult because mayors who nationally identify with the UDF contest local elections under a variety of different labels. However, a detailed study of local politics completed in 1987 gives an idea of the orders of magnitude; the total of Radical, Christian Democrat and Independent mayors in towns with a population of 15,000 or more in 1977 was 106 to the RPR's 49; in 1983 it was 112 to the RPR's 98.²²

The closing of such a large gap implies that the RPR provided the largest share of the 118 right-wing mayors elected in 1983 who had not previously held such a mandate; 48, against 38 UDF, and 32 independent conservatives (*divers droite*). The RPR newcomers were also on average younger than their conservative colleagues; 23 of the 48 RPR newcomers (47.9%) were born after January 1st 1940, compared to 11 UDF (28.9%), and 6 *divers droite* (18.75%).²³ According to Ysmal²⁴ 30 of the 47 RPR mayors of 'big' towns (over 30,000 population) in 1983 were newcomers, (63.8%),

compared to 9 out of 17 (52.9%) for the *Parti Républicain* and 5 of 15 for the *Centre des Démocrates Sociaux*.

Having established that there was a high rate of replacement among the RPR local elite in 1983, one author went on to claim that this was a qualitative as well as a quantitative renewal. In a 1983 study devoted to the RPR he stressed the business background of nearly 40% of a sample of young RPR deputies and mayors, and concluded that he was observing "a profound sociopolitical mutation; the progressive take-over of local power by the private sector."²⁵ In 1984 the same author, Jacques Frémontier, published the findings of a series of in-depth interviews with all 33 right-wing deputies born after 1940, and 28 of the 40 right-wing mayors in larger towns elected for the first time in 1983 who fell into the same age-group. Finding that 34.4% of his entire sample (38.2% of the RPR sub-sample) either owned their own firms or worked in managerial grades in business, he concluded that;

this massive breakthrough by the business world cannot but transform the younger generation's relationship to politics. A whole statist ideology which was rife among the Gaullists at a time when senior civil servants had everything their own way, is beginning gradually to look like a kind of "socialist" antiquity. The macroscopic vision of society is giving way to an obsession with everyday matters, to a philosophy of the concrete which stresses the micro-social at the expense of the grand design.²⁶

These judgements were echoed, almost in the same words, though with a good deal more value-loading, by the political scientist, Colette Ysmal;

The rise of liberal thinking and liberal solutions, along with authoritarian, anti-cultural and anti-social practices, is being consolidated by the employers' gradual take-over of local power, giving a foretaste of what may soon be in store at national and state level.²⁷

We deal later with the mistaken notion, explicit in Ysmal, and

implicit in Frémontier, that ideas and attitudes developed in a local context could or did easily become guides to national political action.

It is more urgent to demonstrate that Frémontier's suggestion of a "massive breakthrough" by the business world is an exaggeration not justified either by his own sample, or by other available research.²⁸ Firstly, Frémontier's own sample of RPR interviewees (34 in total) counts 17 who work in the public sector (50%), 4 professionals (11.76%) and 13 who work in business (38.2%), of whom 7 own their own firms and 6 are managers. It follows that mayors or deputies with business backgrounds are not a majority even in the younger generation, or even when amalgamated with the professionals. No matter what "massive" progress they may have made in 1983, the business elements had hardly become a dominant force in the party by 1984.²⁹

Other research has shown, furthermore, that local notables with a business background had not in fact become very much more numerous in Gaullist ranks since the early 1970s. From 1968 to 1981 the proportion of owners and managers amongst Gaullist deputies was consistently around 29-30%, while the liberal professions contributed around 25%.³⁰ The latter group, as Frémontier himself concedes, seems to be on the retreat in his own sample.³¹

In other words, in 1978 business already accounted for just under one-third of Gaullist deputies. Its progress to 38.2% among a specifically young sample in 1984 seems to have been at the expense of the liberal professions, while the public sector maintained its dominance. It is very hard to see how this change deserves to be called a "massive breakthrough of the business world".

More grounds for scepticism are provided by research on the

occupational profile of all 49 Gaullist mayors elected in 1977 and all 98 elected in 1983 in towns with a population of 15,000 or more.³² In this study we do not have separate figures for those employed in managerial grades in the public and private sectors. We know that the category including all *cadres* increased in number from 22 (44.9% of the total) in 1977 to 54 (55.1%) in 1983, and within it there may well have been an increase in the proportion of private- relative to public-sector managers. But we know equally that both the other private-sector categories declined in importance; owners from 16.32% to 14.28%, and the professions from 28.6% to 23.5%. Interestingly not a single Gaullist categorized as *commerçant* or *artisan* was elected mayor in a town of more than 15,000 either in 1977 or in 1983. There is little comfort here either, then, for the thesis that developments in grass-roots politics were producing a massive change in the occupational profile of Gaullist notables in favour of managers and *patrons*, whether large or small.

If Frémontier's quantitative statements are unsound, his conclusions are further undermined by the heterogeneity and small size of his sample.³³ Both Frémontier and Ysmal have explicitly presumed a link between private-sector employment and the breakdown of previously dominant dirigist ideas. However, when the actual cases which Frémontier has classified as the "business" element are examined, we find that important differences between them preclude such a sweeping generalization.

The sample includes Michel Noir (born 1945, RPR deputy for Lyon since 1978) Alain Carignon (b 1949, RPR mayor of Grenoble since 1983) Odile Proust (b 1941, RPR mayor of Louviers since 1983) Christian Bergelin, (b 1945 RPR deputy for Haute-Saône) Charles Hochart (b 1944, RPR mayor of Nemours) and Jacques Godfrain (b 1943, RPR deputy for Aveyron since 1978)

It is true that before becoming a full-time politician Michel Noir ran a business consultancy, yet he is probably one of the most eclectic intellectuals among the generation of RPR young turks, whose interests range far beyond those referred to by Frémontier and Ysmal.³⁴ When Carignon ran for mayor of Grenoble in 1983, the other candidates on his list included half a dozen colleagues from the local Chamber of Commerce and Industry, of which he was deputy-director. But his election hardly inaugurated a régime of antisocial, anticultural and authoritarian practices. On the contrary, after holding a local referendum the new mayor carried on many of the projects begun by his Socialist predecessor.³⁵

Like Carignon, Odile Proust who formerly worked for one of the research groups attached to the CNPF, the main French employers' federation was obliged *in her professional activity* to take a wider view of things than Bergelin or Hochart who inherited their haulage and antique businesses from their fathers; yet all four are lumped together with Noir in Frémontier's business category.

Godfrain, an even more revealing case, sold aero-engines for SNECMA, and later travelled the world for the privately-owned French airline, UTA³⁶ but that did not make him a carrier of new ideas into the Gaullist movement. In fact, like many of Frémontier's young generation, he had been around long enough to have fought two parliamentary seats, in 1968 and 1973, before his safe landing in 1978. That he had fully absorbed the then dirigist orthodoxies was soon shown by his demands that the state should take a leading role in organizing pork production and the pigmeat market and that it should subsidize the merchant navy.³⁷ It was only later, after the Socialists' 1981 victory that Godfrain came out as defender of free-market principles. He explicitly acknowledged his "conversion" from

dirigism to liberalism, and publicly attributed it to a spell of "work-experience" in an ICI research laboratory organized for him by *Entreprise et Progrès*, an offshoot of the employers' movement.³⁹ Given that he was already an experienced industrial salesman, it is more likely that his views had been changing gradually, with the transformation completed in order to suit the new political situation which required that the RPR attack the Socialists, even if the latter were in some areas applying the policies which the Gaullists themselves had operated when in power.⁴⁰

This heterogeneity of outlook among the new mayors, obscured by Frémontier's and Ysmal's generalizations, is illustrated by my own interviews with a trio of the younger generation, whom I asked directly if their choice of liberalism or interventionism in local management was linked to their own ideological convictions. The interest of the replies given by this micro-sample lies in the fact that one is a would-be pragmatist, one calls himself an "old Gaullist", while the third is a long-standing liberal. All three had no difficulty in drawing "liberal" lessons which matched the party line from their own experience of public office, yet one has been a professional politician since his early twenties, one is a technocrat, and the third a barrister.

François Fillon, deputy for the Sarthe since 1981 and mayor of Sablé-sur-Sarthe since 1983, claims that no particular credo or worked-out view of the world governs his political choices - which is entirely appropriate in view of the way he drifted into politics following the premature death of the sitting deputy.⁴⁰ His management of Sablé is therefore a prudent mixture of economies which helped him keep down the rate of local taxation - essential to attract new businesses - although he was one of the first RPR mayors to introduce a local income supplement, and chooses himself the

adjective 'interventionist' to describe the commune's involvement with cultural and sports facilities.

Despite all this, Fillon has no difficulty in drawing from his own experience two anecdotes which justify his adhesion to the de-regulatory programme developed by the party nationally.

Le Mans, a large city not far from Sablé, is home to important production units of the state-owned car-giant, Renault. Fillon sent to Renault a list of local firms anxious to do sub-contracting work for them. He attributes the fact that he has never had a satisfactory response to the dead weight of Renault's bureaucracy and its remote, centralized management.

The second example is drawn from Fillon's role as parliamentary spokesman on defence; a French aircraft producer was ready to export twenty or so machines to the kingdom of Jordan. The French ministry of Finance, sceptical of Jordan's ability to pay, limited the number to eight; enough to convince Fillon and the industrialists involved of the superfluous and harmful character of a lot of the ministry's regulations.⁴¹

If Fillon, the pragmatist, does not even try to fit his local policies into an ideological mould, Jean-François Mancel, an active and rather statist Gaullist already in 1968, when he was twenty, believes that his ideas were changed by his local experience;

At first I was rather hesitant, since I was an old Gaullist militant, and, for example, planning is something very important to me... Incontestably, I had a rather statist outlook on politics, and I was a bit shocked when liberal ideas first started to make their appearance. I used to say 'Can't we reconcile the two? See if they can work together somehow?', and in the end my ideas changed quite a bit, through contact with the real world. I noticed that, the more responsibilities I took on, the more I realized that the administration's grip was too tight, and in the end it wasn't the state which was in charge, but without question the

bureaucracy, and I think it was that which made me realize that the Gaullist conception of the state had been perverted to a large degree by the development of a suffocating bureaucracy, and therefore we should not hesitate, if we wanted to loosen up French society, to go in a more liberal direction, which, after all, didn't really go against de Gaulle's ideas, since he wasn't a great fan of bureaucracy.

These convictions became even stronger after Mancel took over as president of the *conseil général* of the Oise in 1985, although ironically, like some of his colleagues, he was demanding liberalism nationally in order that he himself could practise interventionism locally;

It's staggering, for example, that in order to fight effectively against unemployment I had to set up an association, not an arm of the *conseil général*, but an independent association, to have a bit more expertise, a bit more flexibility... that it was impossible for me to do a certain number of things and stay within the existing laws and regulations, that if I wanted to make it possible for a firm to come and set up in our department by giving it an inducement, I had to dress up this inducement in a variety of arguments, to avoid being dragged up before the administrative courts, effectively by the prefect, because it contravened the laws and regulations.....⁴²

While Fillon came to local office as an agnostic, and Mancel as a "statist", Patrick Devedjian already regarded himself in 1983 as one of the most liberal and one of the most pan-European members of what he saw as a new generation with less of the traditional Gaullist complexes regarding the unique legitimacy of the state and the grandeur of France. In his commune of Antony (*Hauts-de-Seine*) he rapidly closed a health centre and family planning clinic and two cultural centres, privatized the school meals service, and managed, "by a devious method, because it is against the law", to convert his staff's traditional thirteenth month of salary into a performance bonus. But like many of his more right-wing

colleagues he found that his most popular measure was not disengaging the local state from the lives of his constituents, but rather the reverse - the creation of a small communal police force. The new mayor also found that there were problems he had wanted to resolve by privatization, but to which, despite his efforts, the private sector offered no solution. One of these was the poor quality of local public transport. Another was a scheme, advertised in his manifesto, to privatize the municipal garages, responsible for maintaining the commune's modest fleet of vehicles;

We planned to privatize it, and we studied the thing very carefully, and, bearing in mind what French dealers, French garagists are, they are often behind with the work, it wasn't worth it. Because, for example, I discovered, to my great surprise, that French garages don't have spare parts. If you take them a broken-down car, they say, 'Right, we'll order the part, we'll have it in a day or so,' but they don't have the part to do... On this point, we're ahead of them, we have a stock of spare parts.... That represents an immobilization of capital, and perhaps the private sector can't afford it.⁴³

This episode is trivial in itself, but interesting in that it reveals a degree of realism in even the most enthusiastic of the RPR's young liberals, especially in view of later laments, after the defeats of 1988, that the party in power had sacrificed its social image to its economic dogma. It was not enough to dent Devedjian's ideologically grounded liberal convictions. For the mayor of Antony, the great reform which the 1986-88 government shied away from was that of the regulations governing employment in the civil service, which "have been re-written twice in our country by the Communists; once in 1946 by Maurice Thorez, and once in 1982 by Anicet le Pors."

The civil servants' special status, which Peyrefitte had proposed to reform back in the 1970s, had also become a major target for Mancel; And for me, the dead weight of the bureaucracy is also bound up with my civil servants' contracts. When

I see how I am tied, bound hand and foot, if I want to recruit, to reward, to compensate, I think it's absolutely mind-boggling, and I'm campaigning more and more for the terms and conditions of civil servants in France to be completely re-written. It's an aberration, the system is completely crazy.⁴⁴

We can now summarize our interpretation of the 1983 municipal elections as follows; the results marked a sharp swing in favour of the parties of the Right, with the largest share of younger mayors and of mayors elected for the first time going to the RPR. Contrary to what some have argued, however, the new generation of RPR mayors did not dramatically shift the numerical balance among all RPR local politicians in favour of representatives of business. An examination of the history and activities of a sample of younger business representatives made clear that not all of the group shared a common outlook moulded by their business associations, nor did they all adopt an aggressively liberal style in their management of local affairs. Finally, interviews with a microsample of younger RPR local politicians showed that all had a general hostility to the excessively powerful central civil service, which fitted well with the party's new attitude to the state, despite a variety of professional backgrounds and loyalty to different ideological traditions.

The Communicators

Having rejected the notion of generational renewal as an explanation of the RPR's conversion to liberalism, we next turn to evidence that some RPR local politicians - both old and young - responded with modest success to mounting citizen dissatisfaction with authoritarian and bureaucratic politics. Some exploited new techniques of political communication in order to listen to and to win over their constituents. Others tried to

stimulate or at least join in the expansion of interest in non-party means of political expression and mobilisation. However, the party's failure to halt the decline of citizen interest and involvement in conventional politics, or even to turn dissatisfaction with the Socialists to their own account, is a sign of the limited spread of this type of "grass roots liberalism" within their ranks.

One aspect of political communication at local level has been simply the adoption by local politicians of the same *electioneering* techniques pioneered in the USA and progressively transferred to national European politics during the 1960s and 1970s; panel surveys, in-depth interviews, frequent opinion polling aimed at carefully identified segments of the population, followed by telephoning and direct mail-shots.⁴⁵

The use of these techniques at national level is occasionally the subject of heart-searching by commentators, political advisers and politicians themselves, who realize that democracy degenerates into demagoguery when the outcome of elections hinges on the spending of huge sums of money to get the candidate's message across, or when the message itself seems too closely tailored to what the voters want to hear.⁴⁶

Such guilt feelings are less acute at local level where decisions have more direct and palpable effects on voters' lives than those taken at national level, and local politicians use the communications industry to engage in direct two-way communication with their constituents in order to test opinion and explain or justify their actions. One French pundit has coined the term *equilogue* to use in place of *dialogue*, in order to stress the equal status of citizens and politicians in this process.⁴⁷

It is common for a municipal council to consult the local population when deciding whether to build, with the same money, a swimming-pool or a

car-park, a sports centre or an old persons' home. The consultation may be purely informal, using radio 'phone-ins' and public meetings, or conducted more formally through an opinion poll, in which case the council must decide whether to regard the outcome as advisory, or to accept it as binding, thus turning the consultation into a local referendum.⁴⁸

Among a few RPR mayors, there is an honourable tradition of consultation of their citizens' wishes between elections, headed by one of the older generation, the former environment minister Robert Poujade. During the 1980s there have been many examples of RPR mayors using the opportunities offered by the new technology of communications in order to get their messages across, but very few have been willing to empower their citizens directly through local referenda.

As Robert Poujade, mayor of Dijon since 1971, progressively endowed the city with 300 hectares of public gardens, a public meeting was organized to explain and get residents' opinions on each new project as it was begun, and grass roots democracy included asking local children to lay out the games. Each time a piece of urban development was undertaken, an office near the building-site was turned into an annex of the town hall, with an elected councillor on hand to deal with citizens' enquiries.⁴⁹ Like Poujade, Michel Hannoun, mayor of Voreppe (Isère, population 8,000) since 1975, built his political base on strong contacts with local community groups, believing it is the commune's job to help them stimulate local social life. He himself was first elected to the council on the strength of his position as the local doctor and founder of the rugby club. In 1980 he invented the *états-généraux de la commune*, a week-long conference open to all citizens, with discussions devoted to local finance, the environment, and "miscellaneous questions."⁵⁰

Extending this tradition, Alain Carignon used the procedure of a local referendum in deciding whether to continue a transport system begun by his Socialist predecessor as mayor of Grenoble. In April 1984 he hosted a gathering of mayors of towns won from the left the year before and allowed the liberal economist Guy Sorman to outline his ideas on the place of liberal management in local government. A measure of agreement was established on privatization and non-interventionism in the local economy but, to Sorman's chagrin, only Carignon committed himself to the principle of direct democracy with citizens themselves able to call for referenda on topics which concerned them.⁵¹

Outside Paris, the man most responsible for popularizing sophisticated communications techniques within the RPR was probably Thierry Saussez, a political communications consultant and himself an RPR councillor in Rueil-Malmaison (*Hauts-de-Seine*). Shortly before the 1983 local elections he was contacted by a senior conservative mayor who informed him that his latest six-monthly poll showed a loss of 3% of favourable voting intentions amongst women. Saussez immediately organized an *enquête de motivation*, that is, a series of open-ended in-depth interviews with 30 local women, conducted by a psychologist. From these it was discovered that the mayor was considered a good manager, but rather predictable, and was thought to spend insufficient time among his constituents; the female electors apparently felt a certain cooling in his ardour. This disenchantment was quickly remedied by an expansion of the resources going into the campaign, more visits and walkabouts, and the projection of a warmer image, with more appearances by the mayor's wife and family.⁵²

Saussez further recounts how he was able to organize an opinion poll

which confirmed another conservative client's determination to bid for leadership of the right-wing lists, in spite of doubts associated with his *piéd noir* and Jewish origins. He went on to become mayor of Mulhouse. In another case clever tactics allied to efficient technique helped the RPR candidate Raymond Lamontagne to capture the Communist town hall in Sarcelles, a working-class suburb of Paris. Helped by the fact that the election was re-run in the autumn in a less political atmosphere than that surrounding the nation-wide contests in the spring, Saussez eased his man home with a telephone campaign among the existing conservative supporters and a series of personalized letters which won over the floating pensioners' vote.⁵³

The pundits of political communication stress that their methods differ from simple electioneering in that they are *global* and *ongoing*. A successful campaign must be a whole in which each element, a single coherent message, an active candidate, teams of helpers, a newspaper, posters and personalized letters, are all equally important and interdependent.⁵⁴ Once elected, the mayor uses a variety of techniques to carry on the campaign between elections. The citizens' letter-boxes are regularly stuffed with the colourful free-sheets with titles like *Vivre à Antony*, *Notre Quartier*, etc. Their texts are scanned by computer to eliminate words which are not part of the stock of basic everyday French, and they carry a blank page in which readers can inscribe their reactions to the message, or express their own concerns. Prominent photographs show the mayor opening the latest crèche or meeting one or the other of the local community groups. A classic of the genre is the monthly *Ville de Paris*, set up in 1980, the 200,000 print-run distributed via the *mairies d'arrondissement*. Between March 1986 and June 1988, while Chirac was prime

minister, an increase in paid advertising allowed it to expand from 6 pages to 41, and a few weeks before the first round of voting in the Presidential election a six-page spread celebrating 'Paris, international capital' featured twenty photographs of the mayor greeting foreign leaders. ⁵⁵

Besides the printed word, many municipalities have adapted their messages to more avant-garde technology, such as television screens installed in the local buses, the luminous electronic signs which have taken their places alongside the familiar billboards, and telematic information systems with terminals in public places from which citizens can inquire about the council's achievements and intentions. ⁵⁶

It is local radio, however, which is perhaps the most prized means of two-way communication between citizens and local government. Indeed, during the last four years of the Giscard presidency, the government's repressive attitude to the largely illegal flowering of commercial radio was an important dimension of the would-be liberal President's slide into authoritarian isolation. This was highlighted by the Socialist party's broadcasts from a Paris flat which led to a famous incident in which Mitterrand and other party leaders were confronted by the police. ⁵⁷ Even after the Socialists came to power, however, they were slow to liberalize the system, and the right-wing parties in turn took up the agitation demanding that the government abandon its paternalistic restrictions and allow French broadcasting to grow up.

Local radio was used effectively by Dominique Perben, one of the stars of the 1983 local elections, who captured for the RPR by 102 votes the former Socialist bastion of Chalon-sur-Saône. His victory, aided by the depressed state of the local textile and iron industries, and by the

Socialists' clumsy ditching of their sitting mayor, could justifiably be regarded as "marginal".

After the election Perben continued to hold every month, in each of the town's 12 wards in turn, a public meeting at which his constituents were encouraged to air their complaints, criticisms and suggestions. He booked a monthly slot on the local commercial radio and for an hour replied live to questions put to him over the telephone by the citizens of Chalon. This apparently proved effective in encouraging the town-hall staff to avoid the kind of dismissive behaviour towards users of the local services which might end up being discussed over the air-waves. The new mayor ran in the departmental elections in March 1985 with the slogan, "He does what he says", and was elected with 53% of the vote in a part of Chalon where he had managed 40% two years earlier.⁵⁹ Having entered parliament at the top of the RPR's list in the election run under the proportional system in 1986, he sailed in again two years later, and in 1989 was re-elected mayor, running up a 59.32% score for his list on the first and decisive round of voting.

By 1983, RPR-controlled councils were working a variation on Perben's strategy by operating their own radios stations in Aix-les-Bains, Saint-Germain-en-Laye, and Digne; in Evry and Bourg-en-Bresse RPR municipalities were active partners in broadcasting ventures, and the technique was copied by conservative colleagues in a dozen other towns.⁶⁰ Paris naturally has its own municipal radio, *Radio Tour Eiffel*, but it is not a great commercial success, and its sloppy financing at one moment led to rows among the members of Chirac's entourage.⁶¹

Cable television is the latest technical development with potentially enormous consequences for grass roots political communication. Although an

arm of the civil service, the *Direction Générale des Télécommunications* is responsible for supplying and fitting the cable, the town halls will have a key role in deciding whether to have cable, and in running and paying for local systems.⁵¹ Paris launched an ambitious plan to connect every household by 1992, a target which had to be abandoned because of technical difficulties.⁵² Despite this flop, the parties of the Left have continued to stress the democratic potential of a publicly funded system open to locally-made programmes and available free to all households.⁵³ For the Gaullists, Lyonnaise Communication run by Chirac's old friend Jérôme Monod, has joined local councils in cable ventures in the Paris suburbs of Boulogne-Billancourt, Neuilly, Levallois, Saint-Germain-en-Laye and Vincennes, as well as in Cannes, Dijon, Bordeaux, Saint-Mandé, Chambéry, Epinal and Tours. In each of these cases except Tours the council is controlled by the RPR.⁵⁴

As well as attempting, through their mayors, to become a more "listening" party, the RPR during the early 1980s began to look more favourably than formerly on the activities of non-political community associations. Good grass-roots politicians had always known how to build and use personal contacts in the local community. Before Michel Giraud became mayor of Le Perreux in 1971 he had assembled a local team who eschewed the RPR label, calling themselves CERES.⁵⁵ They organized themselves into a series of work-groups each of which systematically built contacts with different categories of residents, in due course producing reports of their studies on different local questions, such as the sports and cultural facilities, the means of attracting industry to the area, and environmental protection.⁵⁶ If a party does not set up its own 'front organization' of this type to cultivate the grass roots, it must fall back

on its links with local associations. Giraud himself had no doubt that the Right's defeat in 1981 was due in large measure to the tendency of both Gaullists and Giscardians to abandon to the left this potentially valuable electoral terrain.⁶⁷

Opinion polls taken in the late 1970s showed that younger voters in France believed participation in consumer organizations, tenants associations, environmental groups and so on was a more meaningful form of direct democracy than voting in national referenda. A majority of all voters, but especially those on the left, thought that this type of association did not play a big enough role in French life. RPR sympathizers were the *only* politically identified group amongst whom a relative majority thought such associations played just about the right role.⁶⁸

By 1983 there were signs that others had come round to Giraud's point of view. Alain Juppé wrote that the annual rate of creation of new associations in France had increased from 30,000 in 1977 to over 40,000 in 1982, reaching a total of half a million, covering some twenty million members. He believed that, by 1983, 47% of the population were involved in such groups, compared to 28% in 1967.⁶⁹

In contrast to this, the standing of political parties in public opinion declined steadily during the period 1977-84. Whereas in 1977 53% of those asked had a globally favourable view of politicians, by 1985, a clear majority thought they were liars who didn't care about ordinary people.⁷⁰

Once the Socialists were in power, many commentators noted signs that the Right had rediscovered the value of community activism. In June 1982 the RPR organized a series of workshops (*carrefours*) for liberty and

progress in each department, and launched themselves into a range of new organizations, including local radios, consumer and professional organizations and the more overtly political clubs, all of which were to act as transmission belts between party and society.⁷¹

One of the longer-standing enthusiasts for this type of grass-roots politics was Jacques Baumel, a former general secretary of the party. Rueil-Malmaison, of which he is deputy and mayor, figures frequently in the programme of the *Institut du Citoyen* as a venue for the training of would-be mayors; it counts the publicist Thierry Saussez among the mayor's *adjoints*, and is associated in a local radio station with neighbouring Saint-Germain-en-Laye. Baumel's *Association pour une télévision de libre expression* (ATELE) was founded in an attempt to canalize widespread conservative outrage at the new government's re-allocation of the top television jobs in the state system it had inherited from Giscard. In association with *Solidarité et Libertés*, a grouping of conservative parliamentarians headed by Charles Pasqua, ATELE organized a study group of media workers to keep a close watch on programme content.⁷² Aside from his specific interest in broadcasting, Baumel sees an important general role for community groups in local politics;

It's the end of the reign of the notables. From now on, politicians will not be able to function without the support of associations which constitute irreplaceable links with public opinion.⁷³

Bernard Debré, son of Michel, who himself became an RPR deputy in 1986, founded *Solidarité Médicale* in November 1981, to campaign against the Communist health minister's threat to end private practice in public hospitals. The organization fused with the *Union National pour l'Avenir de la Médecine* to form *Avenir et Liberté* in January 1982, which was intended

to help service and organize any profession which felt itself to be under threat.⁷⁴ The doctors' defence organizations rapidly hit the headlines with noisy demonstrations and sit-downs on the railway lines. They also formed an effective transmission-belt for the mobilization of the immense demonstration against the Socialists' education reforms in June 1984.

Also present on that day was UNIR, the *Union Nationale pour l'Initiative et la Responsabilité*, founded in May 1982 by Jean-Maxime Lévêque, the former managing director of a recently nationalized bank, the *Credit Commercial de France*. Lévêque aimed to organize a coalition of businessmen, farmers, managers, professionals and investors which would make its presence felt in local institutions like the chambers of commerce, and the *conseils de prud'hommes*,⁷⁵ as well as in the municipal and cantonal elections. By October 1982 UNIR claimed 11,000 members and the affiliation of a number of representative organizations.⁷⁶

Meanwhile the indefatigable Michel Giraud had joined Alain Chevalier and others in trying to bring together each week some 50 or so fellow members of the same economic elites addressed by Lévêque, in order to outline the avenues of participation in public life, and to encourage them to consider standing for their local council. Yet another such transmission belt between politicians and the business class was *Oxygène*, formed in September 1981 by 20 or so Parisian young *patrons* with no previous strong attachment either to the RPR or the UDF. Their aim was to drum up support among their fellow employers for right-wing candidates at election times - a role they performed successfully on behalf of Alain Peyrefitte, whose narrow parliamentary defeat in June 1981 was annulled on a technicality and refought in January '82. The following March *Oxygène* campaigned for four candidates in the Val d'Oise. In between elections

they intended to meet monthly to dream up new political themes.⁷⁷

Some of what the press called the opposition's "new circuits"⁷⁸ were especially concerned with ideas and programmes, and were set up in an attempt to re-invigorate the parties rather than by-pass them. Devaquet founded *Science et Société*, Juppé and Michel Aurillac founded the *Club '89*; a UDF politician, Georges Mesmin, became the president of GRALL (*Groupe de Réflexion, d'Animation et de Liaison des Libéraux*) These organizations completed a range of right-wing think-tanks already in existence, of which the most influential were GRECE (*Groupement de Recherches et d'Etudes pour la Civilisation Européennes*), the *Club de l'Horloge*, CIEL (*Comité des Intellectuels pour l'Europe des Libertés*), and the Giscardian *Clubs Perspectives et Réalités*. The *Cercles Universitaires* aimed at the "rehabilitation of the intellectual's status as an academic", which was allegedly threatened by the fashion for political commitment.⁷⁹ More than a hundred of the *Cercles'* members planned to be candidates at the March 1983 local elections.

Despite the efforts of Baumel and Giraud, however, and despite the party's official recognition of citizens' growing demands to be involved in decisions which concern them, by 1984 the RPR was not using associations to build bridges between itself and the voters any more than it had in the past. While 54% of delegates to its 1978 congress were members of associations, only 41% of delegates to the 1984 congress were.⁸⁰ One reason could be that the 1978 congress was a special one, called at short notice, and contained a larger proportion of higher level party officials than the 1984 congress; the 1984 study itself found that association membership was higher (at 48%) among those holding public elected posts and national or departmental responsibilities in the party

than the average for the whole sample.⁸¹ The party leadership ought perhaps to have been worried, however, by another finding that, among delegates to the 1984 congress, the rate of association membership was between 45% and 53% for those who had joined the Gaullist movement before 1976, whereas the rate was at 40-41% among those who had joined since 1976.⁸²

There are other signs of the party's inability to tap into a new layer of supporters at grass-roots level. The new think tanks were often limited to a narrow circle of Parisians, many of whom held joint membership in several of them. Corporatist organizations like *Solidarité Médicale* inevitably evoked no long-term sympathy or support outside the ranks of the doctors themselves. Most significantly of all, as the result of the 1986 legislative elections showed, grass-roots disenchantment with "official" politics worked to the advantage of the *Front National*, rather than that of the established Right. Jean-Marie Le Pen and his friends not only picked up the protest vote, but also achieved a genuine federation of diverse political forces, including catholic integrists, and one or two of the leaders of the Paris-based clubs, such as Jean-Yves Le Gallou, of the *Club de l'Horloge*, who figured among the speakers called on by the Giraud-Chevalier circle. Significantly, however, Le Pen also drew recruits from the ranks of the RPR itself.

At the beginning of 1986, he announced an alliance with the CAR (*Comités d'Action Républicaine*), led by Bruno Mégret, who had been an RPR candidate in the legislative elections of 1978 and 1981.⁸³ The CAR claimed to be neither a party nor a study circle, but adopted a genuine grass-roots strategy, each local group being supposed to develop into a *contre-pouvoir*, the nucleus of popular opposition to the Socialists. In the

autumn of 1982, Mégret claimed 100 committees and some 4,000 members.²⁴ Whatever the truth of this, or of the CAR's potential ability to channel local discontents, during 1986 it was effectively swallowed by the FN, while Mégret himself emerged as a ubiquitous and effective television performer for his new party, especially during the two election campaigns of 1988. As an *ingénieur des ponts et chaussées*, he was one of the narrow circle of top civil servants who have dominated political life in the 5th Republic, and had been in the ministerial *cabinet* of the Gaullist minister Robert Galley in the late 1970s. His career is an eloquent symbol of the RPR's difficulties. Far from expanding its audience among new activists in grass-roots politics, the party was unable to hang on to some of those who were its classic source of leadership recruitment.

By writing in favour of greater citizen participation in local politics, we may say in conclusion, RPR intellectuals like Alain Juppé and Michel Noir have followed the modest lead of party mayors such as Robert Poujade and Michel Hannoun. This tradition has been taken up and amplified in practice in different ways by people like Carignon, Perben, Baumel and Bernard Debré, supported by the activities of the publicist Thierry Saussez. But this current remains a minority within the RPR. Only Carignon deliberately bound himself in advance to the verdict of a local referendum on a major issue.

Meanwhile, citizen discontent with establishment politics has spawned a variety of new community and interest groups, and a new party, the *Front National*. This, and the RPR's lack of success in turning anti-Socialist sentiment to its own advantage, is a sign of the relative weakness of the party's swing in favour of decentralisation and communicative politics.

It follows that, if citizen rebellion against the over-mighty state played a role in provoking the RPR leadership to attack what it had previously revered, this should not be seen as their response to an impulse citizen responsibility and participation as reasons for the turn against the state, and although these were serious concerns for some in the party, they should be seen as minor contributions to a transformation brought about largely by other causes.

The Managers

In France, as in Britain, collective public services in towns and villages have been made available over the years by both public intervention and private enterprise; often by the two together. In Britain in the 1980s central government has striven to swing the balance in favour of the private sector for two reasons; firstly there ought to be a global reduction in public spending, because it is inflationary; secondly, local government ought only to provide the services which citizens are willing to pay for, preferably at the point of distribution - failing that, by means of a flat-rate local tax.

In France the context has been completely different. Socialist central government did cut back on subsidies to local government for budgetary reasons from 1982-86, but this was not accompanied by a strongly anti-interventionist message, and indeed the government was probably only too glad when some local authorities did their best to fill the gap and maintain existing services. In towns where they held power, RPR mayors were able, if they wished, to test liberal and privatizing policies in practice before they returned to central government in 1986. The decentralization laws passed in 1982 and 1983 provided a new insitutional framework in which

the application of modern management techniques in local government could flourish - irrespective of the political colour of the local council.

In this last part of the chapter we first outline the new institutional framework of local government, and then show that the RPR nationally apparently made no allowance for this in the limited preparations made for the 1983 local elections. The readiness of some mayors, consciously or unconsciously, to adopt a liberal rhetoric at national level at the same time as interventionist behaviour at local level, indicates that there has been little attempt by the party to co-ordinate the two, and no obvious impetus given by the grass roots to national policy formation. In Paris a swing towards privatisation, already discernible as early as 1972, was accelerated after 1981 alongside continuing interventionism in some policy areas. The Paris policy has not been slavishly imitated by other RPR mayors, some of whom believe that it was based on unique circumstances not easily reproduced elsewhere.

A large part of the insitutional entanglements which had hitherto kept local government in thrall to the centre were swept away by the first Socialist decentralization law of 2nd March 1982. From that moment the mayors and presidents of the departmental and regional councils each became the effective executive officers of their respective tiers of government. They could borrow, make loans or grants to local firms, and sign contracts with other public or private economic actors without the prior permission of the prefects which had always been necessary previously. In future, the appropriateness of their action would be judged by their electors, its legality by the courts.⁸⁵

There is plenty of evidence that the new freedoms and responsibilities

have led to a change in style in local government, for so long symbolic of the unchanging parochialism of the French provinces. Change has been actively sponsored by the *Association des Maires de France*, which in 1984 inaugurated an annual week-long trade-fair aiming to bring some of France's 36,000 mayors into contact with a large number of public and private agencies from which they could buy hardware or hire expertise, or to whom they could sell the franchise on any public services they no longer wished to run directly. The titles of some of the seminars on offer at the 1985 *Mairie-Expo* give an idea of its ambiance; "Office automation for the town hall: how to choose what's best for you", "Cost control: new accounting methods for everyone."⁶⁶ Naturally these subjects are of interest to mayors of all political persuasions. In similar vein are the activities of the *Fondation pour la gestion des villes*, set up in 1983, and run jointly by businessmen and mayors or councillors of both Right and Left.⁶⁷

One way to improve the commune's performance is to call in outside help. Christian Dupuy, RPR mayor of Suresnes, (Hauts-de-Seine) is one who ordered an independent audit from a firm of consultants soon after taking over in 1983, and he would do the same again if re-elected in 1989.⁶⁸ The mayors also call on experts in money management to help them raise loans for new projects, or, more frequently, re-negotiate uncomfortable existing debts contracted at high rates during an inflationary period at a time when the communes were more or less obliged to borrow their money from para-state organizations like the *Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations*. Ironically, the relatively sudden freeing of local authorities from the state's financial *tutelle* turned them into potential gold-mines for private (including foreign) banks which competed furiously to win a share of this lucrative and safe market, with the result that the town halls found

themselves in a borrowers' market.²⁰

Although mayors may hire business expertise from time to time, their major challenge has been to inculcate in the municipal workforce itself the understanding that its job is to provide the best services at the lowest prices. This could lead to pruning, but equally, to a search for more and better qualified staff whose tasks would include devolving decision-making to the lowest possible levels, isolating cost centres, managing the debt, making sure that contracts with local firms are agreed at a time when their order-books are depleted, and avoiding paying taxes and bills before it is necessary.²⁰ This is reflected in demands for on-the-job training. In 1987, 130,000 of the 800,000 strong municipal work-force took courses of one kind or another at the *Centre de Formation des Personnels Communaux* (CFPC). Of the 35,000 highest grade staff, 10,000 applied to do courses for which 6,000 places were available. In 1984 the CFPC had tried to fill the gap by opening the *Institut des Hautes Etudes Territoriales* at Fontainebleau. The 45-day courses spread over 6 months were besieged by the town halls' chief-executives, the *secrétaires généraux*, who had arrived at the summit of a career traditionally considered secure and unexciting, demanding with one voice training in *le management*.²¹

After the removal of prefectoral interference in their decisions, a second institutional reform which helped forward the communes' ability to streamline their budgets and 'improve' their provision of local services, at the same time strengthening co-operation with private industry, concerned the regulations governing *Sociétés d'Economie Mixte*. (SEM) Literally, 'mixed economy company', the SEM is a commercial and legal framework which covered the partnership between local authorities, the state and private industry in the massive construction and development effort of

the 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s, when France underwent a rapid industrialization accompanied by a shift of population from the countryside to the towns.

The status of the SEMs, altered in piecemeal fashion since they were created in 1926, was given a new dimension by the law of 7th July 1983, deliberately conceived to fit in with the ongoing decentralization process. Before, they had been forbidden to distribute profits, and their activities had been limited strictly to the construction of roads, bridges, and other transport facilities, the building and servicing of factory and housing estates, or the management of such completed installations. After 1983 they could be set up without the prior permission of the state, were free to involve themselves in a much bigger range of economic activities, and could decide whether to redistribute the benefits of collective activity to their constituent partners.²²

The result was a flowering of new types of SEM concerned with a new range of activities, such as the installation and/or management of car-parks, municipal computer and cable networks, transport systems, concert halls, exhibition sites and sports complexes.²³ During the 1980s the number of SEMs in existence, which had stagnated during the 1970s economic slump, grew rapidly to reach 925 in 1987; meanwhile the proportion of management-only SEMs increased from 19% of the total (in 1980) to 32%.²⁴

The rebirth of the SEM represents an addition to the range of models which a local authority can choose from in deciding how to run its local services or develop the local environment. It takes its place alongside the *régie*, which means simply direct ownership and control by the local authority; the *concession*, whereby the franchise on a formerly municipal operation, such as the school dinners service, is sold to a private firm which is itself

responsible for the capital investments necessary to keep the operation profitable; and *affermage* which is similar, but the local authority guarantees the investments.

The popularity of the SEM is due to several advantages; it allows a number of communes to associate together or with the department as well as with a private partner, thus allowing them to undertake fairly large projects; since the SEM operates according to financial and legal rules similar to those governing the private sector, the commune can get round the regulations governing its own employees' conditions of service; but since, by law, the local authority is obliged to contribute between 50% and 80% of the SEM's funding, control of decision-making rests with elected officials.

Politically, the use of the SEM highlights the convergence of attitudes of both Right and Left to relations between the commune and the local economy. The creation of a SEM to take over previously fully municipal services is a useful option, short of full privatization, which could enable an aggressively liberal mayor to reduce the commune's wage bill and rate of indebtedness, and subject local services to the discipline of the market place. Such an interpretation could be put on Chirac's decision to create a SEM to run the Eiffel Tower; full privatization was not an option because no private company was willing or able to meet the large investments needed to turn it into a profitable operation.

But the SEM formula in another situation looks different; the management of the Paris underground car-parks, which could have been completely privatized, was given to a SEM because it was felt that the questions of public safety involved required the city to retain the deciding voice.²⁵ On the other hand, when Communist-run La Ciotat, uses a

SEM to manage the local water supply, and another to set up business parks⁹⁶ this can be seen either as a 20% privatisation, or alternatively as the council fulfilling, by up-to-date means, the traditional Communist policy of public intervention in the economy.

The use of the same interventionist tools by authorities of different political complexion, and the spread of a "management culture" in local government has inevitably blurred differences between party policies. A Socialist mayor, Jacques Chantrot of Poitiers, could tell *Le Monde* in 1988 that it was perfectly acceptable to run public transport according to market principles, and even to privatize it;⁹⁷ Jacques Boyon, RPR president of the *conseil général* of the department of Ain, believes that, since public transport always runs at a loss, it belongs in the public sector.⁹⁸ With this thought, we turn to Jacques Chirac's activities as mayor of Paris.

The commune of Paris in its present form dates only from 1977. It was therefore the state itself, in the shape of the prefect, who authorized the council to give permission to the firm of Decaux to supply and erect 1,800 bus shelters in the city in 1972, followed by 1,200 information boards in 1976. The town paid and received nothing; Decaux took his profit from the commercial advertising sold on the installations which he maintained himself. In 1981 private enterprise began to cater for even more vital needs of the people of Paris with the first 400 fully automatic public conveniences, complemented by 78 motor-cycles and riders ready to clear up after the city's dogs. Maintenance, as before, was guaranteed by Decaux, but this time, the city had to pay.⁹⁹

In 1975 the city and the prefect decided, against the advice of the prime minister of the day, Jacques Chirac, to begin the payment of a

supplement to Paris pensioners to ensure that all had an income at least equal to the state-decreed minimum wage. When Chirac left Matignon and arrived at the town hall, the pensioners looked less like an administrative anomaly and more like 30% of the electorate. He increased the number of old persons' homes and instituted a means-tested free-travel entitlement for senior citizens. The city's supplementary family allowance to non-working mothers of three or more children, begun in 1980, was followed in 1986 by a housing benefit, payable to families of four children or more, which was meant to defray part of the increase in rents produced by the Chirac government's own new housing law.¹⁰⁰

As these examples demonstrate, when Chirac became mayor in 1977 he inherited a tradition in the management of Paris which combined paternalistic and electorally useful interventionism with a willingness to turn progressively to the private sector when it was enterprising enough - as it was in the person of Decaux - to anticipate new needs. This incrementalism was evident in the other 'privatizations' of the period 1981-83. In line with the 'less-state' platform on which he had contested the 1981 presidential election Chirac encouraged his staff to turn more and more to the private sector as opportunities arose.¹⁰¹

When he ran for mayor the second time in 1983, however, on a platform which praised the efficiency of the town hall staff, his expansion of their number by 6,000 (21%), and the important investments undertaken by the city,¹⁰² this was consistent with the modest extension of the private domain up until then. Likewise, interventionism was not limited to a rather grubby scrabbling for votes. The city's public housing budget was tripled during the first mandate, and Chirac complained of not being able to build more houses because of a fall-off in government subsidy. The city gave a

subsidy to the Orchestre de Paris, created a new chamber ensemble, and 300 new studios for art and dance, as well as 16 special workshops where young people could practise a range of activities from computing through motorcycle maintenance to kayaking. In the six years from 1977 to 1983 five of the twenty planned *arrondissement* theatres were opened, along with ten conservatoires for music, dance and acting. The number of municipal crèches was doubled, and seventeen municipal short-stay child-minding centres opened, along with a dozen assorted private child-care centres subsidized by the city.¹⁰²

Despite his election platform, however, the beginning of Chirac's second mandate as mayor marked the rapid acceleration of the privatization programme. In 1984-5 the municipal undertaking service was scrapped following a fire and a corruption scandal; maintenance of the cemeteries and the Père-Lachaise crematorium went in 1986; by the end of 1987 refuse collection was 20% private, with the final target given as 50%. In 1985 the incinerator plants were handed over by *Electricité de France* to a joint venture of public and private shareholders. The biggest and most lucrative contract of all was also signed in 1985; the transfer of the revenue from the distribution of the Paris water supply to two private firms for 25 years in exchange for their promise to make whatever investments would be required. Two years later the same companies got a second bite - 15% each of the joint venture which the city created for the purification plants, despite an earlier decision to keep them in public ownership.

Altogether some 27 of the city's departments and workshops were affected by the privatization programme¹⁰⁴ which ended, logically, with the closure of the city's department of "commercial and industrial services" and the retirement of its head in 1987. The only group of workers to mount

a half-serious protest against this vast programme were the dustbin-men; the size of the Paris work-force - about 37,000 - and the legal protection afforded workers by their status as public servants meant that it was neither necessary nor legally possible to sack them. Some 2-3,000 jobs were shed by natural wastage, the rest of those affected by the closures re-deployed within Paris.¹²⁵

Though defended by the mayor and his team on the ground of prudent management, the acceleration of privatisation in Paris was motivated by a mixture of ideology, political strategy and clientelism. The firm which benefitted most from the process was Lyonnaise des Eaux, run by Chirac's old friend Jérôme Monod. The water privatization seemed particularly gratuitous; though old, Paris' water pipes were in good condition, having been the object of a complete overhaul in 1965, and, uniquely, were 95% accessible through the wide drains built during Haussmann's redevelopment of Paris in the 19th century. The price paid for their water by the consumers rose steeply by one-third between 1984 and 1987, and was expected to rise overall by 50% by 1990. The city budget gained little,¹²⁶ and the winners were the companies, but the affair did not lead to any serious political protest probably because of its technical nature.

The same was not true of the closure, from 1983 to 1988, of half of the health centres run by city's *Bureau d'Aide Sociale*, which the tiny opposition in the town hall alleged was inspired by a doctors' campaign against "unfair" competition. The clinics' traditional role was to cater for that part of the city's population not covered by the social security system, and therefore not able to secure reimbursement of the fees charged by a GP. They were also resorted to by poorer citizens unable to pay the one-third of GP's fees required of those in work. The centres represented

expenditure of the tax-payers' money within the Paris system of "municipal socialism", analagous to the income supplements already mentioned. The council argued that the clinics were no longer needed since the whole population and the majority of GP's were now *conventionnés*, that is registered with the social security system. The opposition replied that in the 1980s a significant and growing minority of Parisians were not registered, and could not be because they had never worked; as fast as the centres were closed, the gap in provision was filled by clinics opened by two voluntary organizations called *Remède* and *Médecins du Monde*.¹⁰⁷

Whatever the true extent of the doctors' influence on the mayor's policy, the authors of two rather different studies of Chirac's Paris detected an ideological-political impetus in the timing of the privatisation programme; the idea was to get rid of part of the city's investment budget, reduce running costs, and make it possible to cut local taxation while maintaining services intact. Then Chirac would be able to present himself to the country in 1986 with the argument - 'What I have done for Paris, I can do for France.'¹⁰⁸

In the event, Chirac did keep the rise in local taxation below the rate of inflation in his second mandate, (it had risen faster than inflation in his interventionist first mandate) but it was meaningless to use this as an argument in national politics. Paris is by far the wealthiest city in France, deriving a large income from the hundreds of company headquarters and international agencies which it shelters, and has always, with or without Chirac, enjoyed an extremely low rate of local taxation.¹⁰⁹ ✓

From this follows a double conclusion; firstly, Chirac would find it hard to do for the country what he had apparently "done" for the city;

secondly, viewed strictly from the point of view of providing good-quality services from a balanced budget, the privatizations were unnecessary. Except when it represented a potential market coveted by private lobbies, the city's social programme has not suffered from budgetary constraint. Apart from the introduction of private capital into its construction programme, the council did not seek to privatize public housing, either by the sale of individual flats or by the signing over of entire blocks to new landlords, as in the UK. The only time it attempted to reduce payment of its income supplements, it was in order to withdraw the third-child allowance from immigrant families, a move which was annulled by the courts in 1984.¹¹² In short, the management of the capital - as we discover next - had no compelling lessons for RPR mayors in the rest of the country.

The difficulty of comparing the political choices made in Paris and in other towns, given the discrepancy in their means, is increased by the territorial ramifications of French local government. In many of the larger French cities, as in the capital, the extent of the commune which gives its name to the whole is often quite small. Paris itself is confined to the relatively small area bounded by the *boulevard périphérique* and containing a mere two million residents - small for a capital city. In the same way, the communes of Lyon, Lille, Bordeaux, and Strasbourg cover only part of the areas to which they give their names; neighbouring former villages enclosed by urbanization have kept their independence and identity as separate communes. In these cities, but not in Paris, a special tier of local government was invented in 1966 to deal with problems affecting the whole urban area and best dealt with jointly - the *communauté urbaine*. These bodies can raise their own taxes, and they have wide powers in the areas of

town planning and industrial development.''' Although these larger units have their own councils, in which the participant communes are represented proportionately to their population, the decisions which they arrive at are often the result of complex bargains in which communal loyalties may cut across political affiliation. In the mid-1980s, conservative Strasbourg had to co-operate with socialist Schiltigheim, conservative Lyon with socialist Villeurbanne; in 1983 socialist Lille was faced, unusually, by conservative Roubaix and Tourcoing. Because of these configurations it is impossible to read off from say Strasbourg's or Lille's record on any one subject what attitude has been taken by the local councillors of different parties.

With this proviso entered, it is clear the RPR did not fight the 1983 local elections on a liberal platform. Jacques Boyon, *Délegué national* for local government at the *rue de Lille* from 1981 to 1984, had prime responsibility for preparing the party for this contest. He is less of an ideologue than a cautious technocrat, an exact contemporary of Chirac's at the *Ecole Nationale d'Administration*, who was sufficiently in his leader's confidence to have been a member of his election campaign committee in 1981, and to have worked, as we have seen, in an unofficial capacity at the town hall as well as in an official one at party headquarters.

In the run-up to the elections Boyon organized the production of a popularly written book, *Un Homme et sa Ville*, containing interviews with a varied selection of some 14 RPR mayors, together with some background information about their achievements in their communes, varying in size from Boyon's own *bourg* to Chirac's Paris.''' The images given priority are reassurance and continuity rather than rupture and reform; the local state is pictured as protective as well as efficient, the mayors avuncular rather than thrusting and dynamic. There is hardly a mention of privatizations or

streamlining of town-hall budgets in the entire book, except perhaps for Chirac's plans for private co-operation in providing more crèches in Paris during his next mandate.¹¹³

Boyon's choice of the candidates who would speak for the party in *Un Homme et sa Ville*, was clearly guided by their interventionist records as much as by the representativity of their communes. In Boulogne-Billancourt, the old left Gaullist Georges Gorse, prides himself on two minibus services paid for by the commune and provided free to 2,000 residents making daily north-south trips not covered by Paris transport's normal services. Boulogne fully funds the municipal theatre and runs a cultural centre which, in addition to the usual conference halls and exhibitions, houses a conservatoire where 30 disciplines are taught to 1,500 students. Inside the town hall there is a kind of mini-university where every day 50 to 200 people receive free lessons in subjects such as English, law and literature.¹¹⁴

Saint-Germain-en-Laye, another of the urban communes ringing Paris, has a social programme rivalling that of its large neighbour, with a pensioners' income supplement, municipal transport services after 9.00 p.m., and a special minibus for the taxi-ing of handicapped people.¹¹⁵ Like Paris, Boulogne, and Valenciennes (RPR mayor; Pierre Carous) Saint-Germain has not been afraid to spend public money on cultural projects, despite the generally austere economic situation of the early eighties. Michel Péricard, RPR mayor since 1977, a former broadcaster, promised a municipal museum and a theatre for his next mandate, if re-elected in 1983;

I think that in a period of economic crisis, everything which seems superfluous becomes even more indispensable. The more fraught life is, the more ardent is the need for cultural activities.¹¹⁶

The commune of Digne, (Alpes-de-Haute-Provence) not only took over a moribund thermal spa with the help of government subsidies, turning it into a going concern attracting 4,000 visitors a year, but bought, renovated and for three years managed directly a local hotel. According to the RPR mayor, Pierre Rinaldi;

The communes are being brought more and more often to intervene in the economy; it's not their main role, but there are opportunities which shouldn't be missed.¹¹⁷

Without the advantages of alpine scenery, mayors recognize that one of their essential tasks is to attract industry to their commune. This can involve quite a degree of interventionism even when the commune is not itself aiming to manage anything. In the planning of a new industrial estate, the commune of Joigny (Yonne, population 12,000, RPR mayor, Philippe Auberger) buys the necessary land, chooses the architect together with prospective firms, and finances the necessary construction; the firms lease or buy back the completed sites over fifteen years.¹¹⁸

If, for one reason or another, a commune can't pay its way, there is always subsidy. By 1983 some RPR mayors had not sufficiently absorbed the new liberal orthodoxy to hide their tendency to view the central government budget as a bottomless gold-mine. Paul Kauss, RPR Senator and mayor of Bischwiller (Vosges, population 10,843) engineered a *syndicat intercommunal*, a grouping of his own commune with neighbouring smaller ones, which helped win exceptionally high 50% subsidies from the state and the department for the cost of a stadium and sports centre, cultural projects and road improvements.¹¹⁹ Péricard claimed that attention to all possible opportunities enabled him to multiply several times the total of subsidies which Saint-Germain was able to obtain from the state, the region and the department.¹²⁰ Hector Rolland, RPR mayor of Moulins, (Allier,

population 26,906) has endowed his modest town with an immense sports centre allowing it to stage European basket-ball matches, international table-tennis and the world trampoline championships. The secret?

I am one of the mayors who has got the most subsidies for his town, but I never gave them any peace, so to get rid of me, they finish by giving me what I'm asking for.¹²¹

These were the reflections on management style in local government which the RPR leaders wished to place before the electorate in 1983; my own interviews carried out since then confirm that a pragmatic blend of interventionism and liberalism is still followed by Gaullist mayors of different generations, while there has been a mixed reception for the Paris experiment which was then getting under way.

Philippe Auberger, the young mayor of Joigny, and André Fanton, *adjoint* to the mayor of Lisieux from 1983 to 1989, both believe that successful privatization depends on size. Fanton, though in favour of the communes shedding some of their managerial functions, thought that it was too difficult to redeploy locally the staff displaced by the transfer of their work to the private sector. He believed that Paris, where the workforce numbered over 30,000, had an exceptional advantage. Auberger's objection is based more on the 'personal' character of many of the services performed by the communal workforce. Confounding them both, Jacques Boyon, mayor of Pont d'Ain, (*Ain*, population in 1983, 2,266) believes that Paris has "not gone very far", since the city's household rubbish is still collected by the municipality, while in Pont d'Ain it has been handed over to a private firm,

which picks up all the rubbish in two hours with two people, (whereas before) ...it took four hours and three people, which goes to show that even in a small commune it's not always best to do everything yourself.¹²²

The privatizing trail has been followed avidly by a number of RPR communes which have conceded their school meals' services to private operators, and closed down cultural and health centres which were regarded as loss-making. In some respects, one or two mayors have wanted to go further than Paris. Patrick Devedjian, elected mayor of Antony (Hauts-de-Seine) in 1983, hoped to sell off during his second mandate, beginning in 1989, 500 of his commune's 7,000 public housing units.¹²³

In the case of health or family planning clinics, closed in Antony and in Noisy-le-Grand (Seine-Saint-Denis), the argument usually deployed has been that there is no reason why the commune should finance something which is available through local doctors registered with the social security system.¹²⁴ In the case of cultural centres the budgetary argument is deployed in conjunction with the suggestion that they would make money if they stopped showing communist propaganda and started putting on things which people wanted to see. Some closures therefore excited sharp protests and were given wide publicity, as was the case in Saumur and Chalon-sur-Saône.¹²⁵

These attitudes of younger RPR mayors elected for the first time in 1983, contrast with the more pragmatic approach still followed by more experienced figures. Dinard, in Brittany, has had a privately run water system for 60 years, but the commune has a stake in the local casino, and in 1976 did not demur at buying a large hotel which came on to the market, and turning over its management to a mixed public-private company. In 1989 Yvon Bourges, the mayor for 26 years, still saw no reason to privatize the school meals service, since it was managed competently by a man 'himself risen from the ranks.'¹²⁶

As we argued at the start of this chapter, however, it would be a

mistake to attribute too much importance to generational renewal. François Fillon in Sablé-sur-Sarthe, and Alain Carignon in Grenoble were among those instituting municipal income supplements when they took over in 1983. Furthermore, even those concerned above all with prudent management did not set out to achieve their aims with wholesale cuts.¹²⁷

Belying the RPR's image as a centralized party, the *rue de Lille* made no attempt to orient the programmes presented by the candidates locally. An association for local politicians, (the *Association des élus locaux adhérents du RPR et sympathisants*) which might have played a role in harmonizing approaches across the country, was founded only in May 1983, too late to influence that year's campaign. As Boyon put it;

...we don't intervene much at national level. The municipal elections are local elections, and anyway, since the lists were nearly all joint ones at that time, between the RPR and the UDF...Let's say the lists are hardly supported at all from Paris. If you like, an RPR mayor who had UDF people on his list didn't especially want to label himself RPR at municipal level, given that everyone had their own campaigns in their own towns or departments.¹²⁸

Even amongst the most enthusiastic privatizers there was apparently no attempt to work out a national strategy for the party. Devedjian admits to preparing a liberal manifesto with the colleagues who shared his municipal list, but was not at all involved in discussions with RPR members from elsewhere concerning the content of local manifestos. He had looked around 'a bit' in France for examples of successful local privatizations, but not abroad; his was more or less an 'individual initiative' (*démarche individuelle*). Asked to name other RPR communes which had privatized, he could think only of Nîmes, which had privatised the school canteens, (and which had attracted national attention, because the new mayor was a local employer who had defeated a Communist incumbent.)

In the Hauts-de-Seine department, where Devedjian's victory in Antony coincided with those of Sarkozy in Neuilly, Dupuy in Suresnes and Balkany in Levallois, all RPR members of his own generation, their "natural affinity" did not involve them in discussions of an ideological nature, but were purely tactical, related - for a while in conjunction with Pasqua - to the means by which they would conquer public office or positions of responsibility in the party.¹³⁹

Even in Paris itself, Chirac and his closest advisers tended to play down the element of choice in the post-1983 privatizations, stressing the continuity with the incrementalism that had gone before. Others, more convincingly, emphasize the rupture and the acceleration of the programme after the election.¹⁴⁰

At the *rue de Lille*, as part of his coaching of new candidates in how to present themselves and how to campaign in 1983, Boyon wrote a number of short notices on the different practical problems a mayor could expect to encounter in the exercise of his mandate, but these appeared to have almost no ideological content. Pressed on this, Boyon explained that his advice to mayors not to undertake expenditure resulting in an increase in local taxation, and not to hand over parts of their responsibilities to local associations, served to distinguish his party's positions from those of the Socialists ✓

Given this only moderate interest in the degree of interventionism or disengagement which might be practised by the party's local representatives, Boyon readily admitted that the mayor's personal choices could lead them into contradiction with the orientations contained in the party's programme for national government. More, he believes that mayors often contradict themselves;

It's true that a mayor in his commune, or a president of the *conseil général* in his department, sometimes tends to indulge in public interventionism And it's true that I was often one of the first to criticize, to say that... we had a critique of what I call municipal socialism, but that many, at the same time as they put forward this critique, were acting in their own local authority in a way which was not coherent with that message, its true. Its true!'²¹

Our conclusion must be that the managerial aspects of local government experience did not contribute significantly to the RPR's programmatic development. As a result of institutional reforms in the early 1980s local government executives were given more freedom from the state, while mixed public-private companies were allowed to undertake a wider range of functions, and to make a profit for the first time. There is evidence that these changes fostered the growth of a management culture in local government, whether of the Right or of the Left. Privatization of local services was pushed energetically in Paris after 1983 for a variety of reasons. This example was followed by some provincial mayors, but others retained a mixture of interventionist and liberal attitudes, and there was disagreement about the conditions required for successful privatization. In any case, the party did not deliberately fight the 1983 elections on a liberal platform, and there is no clear pattern either of liberal management precepts adopted nationally and recommended for local application, or of lessons learned locally which fed into programme formation at national level.

A similar conclusion emerges from our consideration of grass roots politics as a whole. During the 1970s two Gaullists, Peyrefitte and Giraud made outstanding theoretical and practical contributions to the debate on the balance of power between centre and periphery in French institutions. But neither held a strong position in the party, so the national

leadership's unprecedented championing of local and personal responsibility in the early 1980s cannot be attributed directly to their influence.

Nor should the reason for the transformation of the party programme be sought in the coming of age of a new generation of local activists, allegedly impregnated with business values. While there was considerable generational renewal during the period, its political significance has been misinterpreted.

There is some evidence that both new and established local party leaders tried to adapt their style of political communication to less hierarchical relations between government and citizens, but as this current was rather weak in the party as a whole, it is unlikely that they had much impact on national policy.

Finally, some RPR-led councils, notably Paris, introduced private-sector management techniques into local government and began to privatize local services both before the 1984 party programme was published and before the wave of privatization at national level which began in 1986. Again it is difficult to see in this a major factor in the transformation of policy at national level, for a variety of interventionist attitudes and practices persisted in local government, and even the most enthusiastic liberals did not act in concert with like-minded colleagues.

Necessarily, the reform of the institutional framework of local government and the appearance of new community and interest associations, expressing rising citizen demands for consultation, participation and autonomy, affected the party's work in ways which this chapter has recorded. But within the RPR these demands were not strong enough or consistent enough to reveal a pattern of influence emanating from the

grass-roots to the national leadership. Therefore we must look elsewhere for more decisive causes of the leadership's transformation of the party's traditional attitude to the state.

Notes to Chapter 5

1. This view was defended by Yvan Blot and the *Club de l'Horloge*, who viewed Charles Pasqua as one of their fellow-thinkers. Their views are discussed in detail in chapter 7. cf. Jean-Yves Le Gallou et Le Club de l'Horloge, *Les Racines du Futur*, Paris, Albatros 1984; Yvan Blot, *Les Racines de la Liberté*, Paris, Albin Michel 1985
2. *Libres et Responsables*, RPR - Projet Pour la France, Flammarion, Paris 1984 pp 15-16. "Le Français d'aujourd'hui est devenu plus riche, plus conscient, plus libre de son temps, donc plus avide d'autonomie et de participation que celui d'hier. Il aspire de ce fait à des relations transformées avec l'Etat protecteur. Sa critique s'exerce à trois niveaux; il dénonce d'abord le coût dévorant d'une protection sociale et d'un service public qui ne sont plus financés par les surplus d'une expansion évanouie, Nos concitoyens s'inquiètent en deuxième lieu de la qualité souvent défaillante des prestations publiques qui leur sont offertes en matière de santé, de recherche d'un emploi ou de l'éducation, par exemple. Ils s'irritent enfin de la persistance de comportements autoritaires et bureaucratiques qui leur interdisent de participer à la gestion des affaires et à la solution des problèmes qui les concernent, Comme le client, c'est l'usager qui veut être roi!"
3. *Libres et Responsables* p 41; Although unsigned, the final version of the 1984 programme was in fact written by Jean-Louis Bourlanges, a young militant from Normandy who worked for a while for Chirac at the Paris town hall. After the election defeats of 1988 he published a book highly critical of the Gaullists' liberal "deviation", and regretting the exaggerated attacks on the State. (Jean-Louis Bourlanges, *Droite, Année Zéro*, Paris, Flammarion, 1988) He claimed that he had tried in vain to persuade Chirac to allow greater democracy in the RPR, and later stood on the independent list of Right-wing "renovators" led by Simone Veil at the 1989 European elections. I am grateful to André Fanton, Bourlanges' colleague in the Seine-Maritime, for the information as to authorship of *Libres et Responsables*. (Interview with André Fanton 21-4-89)
4. *Libres et Responsables*, p 42. "Là où une France impatiente attendait l'avènement d'une société de responsabilité devait au contraire s'imposer un centralisme bureaucratique, archaïque et moralisateur, revanche morose d'une France figée et sans imagination sur l'ambition créatrice d'une société nouvelle."
5. Alain Juppé, *La Double Rupture*, Paris, Economica, 1983, pp 136-7; Michel Noir, 1988, *Le Grand Rendez-Vous*, Paris, Jean-Claude Lattès, 1984 pp 145-8 and p 165. See also the "Programme for Government" published by the RPR's Club '89, in 1985, which recommends local referenda, systematic dialogue with constituents, and institutional reforms to encourage the growth of non-party associations. (Club'89, *Une Stratégie de Gouvernement* Paris, Albatros 1985, p 58)
6. Jacques Frémontier, *Les Cadets de la Droite*, Paris, Seuil, pp 84-5; Colette Ysmal, *Demain la Droite*, Paris, Grasset, 1984 p 88; see also Jacques Frémontier, "Les Jeunes Elus du RPR; des héritiers ou des parricides?", in *Pouvoirs* no 28 1984, pp 67-74.
7. Hervé Liffran, *Les Paris de Chirac*, Paris, Ramsay, 1988 pp 175-187
8. Alain Peyrefitte, *Le Mal Français*, Paris, Plon, 1976, pp 233-247. These, the most moving pages of *Le Mal Français* were unaccountably excised from the English version.
9. *ibidem* pp 248-265.

10. *ibidem* pp 476-7
11. Pierre Birnbaum, *Les Sommets de l'Etat, Essai sur l'élite du pouvoir en France*, Paris, Seuil, 1977
- ✓ 12. Peyrefitte himself believes that *La lueur de l'espérance* was written by Juppé and signed by Chirac, as an attack on *Le Mal Français*, (Interview with Peyrefitte 6-12-88)
13. Michel Giraud, *Nous Tous la France*, Paris, Jean-Claude Lattès, 1983, pp 169-171 (See Appendix 1.)
14. *ibidem* pp 11-41
15. Michel Giraud, *Notre Ile de France, Région Capitale*, Paris, Lattès, 1985
16. Interview with Michel Giraud, 10-1-89
17. Two years later he resigned both his Senate mandate and the regional presidency he had held for 12 years. He had become a deputy after a successful contest against a Socialist candidate Giraud feared might be elected in his own home constituency after a boundary revision.
18. *Institut* hand-out.
19. Interview with Michel Giraud, 10-1-89
20. Interview with Michel Giraud, 10-1-89, "*J'ai eu des moments difficiles. Vous savez, on a parfois dit ici et là que j'étais un ventre mou, que j'étais un centriste déguisé, que j'étais un cheval de Troies, que je faisais passer l'union avant de faire passer l'intérêt du mouvement. Et quand il s'agissait de fustiger le parti de l'étranger, bon, bien, je ne peux pas vous dire que je l'approuvais. Mes relations sont très confiantes, très sincères, très directes avec Chirac, mais il a eu des moments où vraiment j'ai été tout à fait malheureux.*"
21. Interview with Michel Giraud, 10-1-89, "*Il y a eu des jours où j'ai souffert, parce que j'étais décentralisateur avant l'heure, parce que, bon, on m'a parfois en comité central un peu brocardé en disant que j'étais un casseur de l'état,...*"
22. Philippe Garraud *Intégration et Différentiation dans le Personnel Politique Français; l'exemple des maires urbains, (1945-84)* Thèse d'Etat, Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Bordeaux, (I) 1987
23. Frémontier *loc cit*, "Les Jeunes Elus,...." pp 67-8
24. Ysmal *op cit*, *Demain la Droite,....* p 92-3
25. Frémontier *loc cit* "Les Jeunes Elus,...." p 70, ("*...une mutation sociopolitique fondamentale; la mainmise progressive du secteur privé sur le pouvoir local.*")
26. Frémontier, *op cit*, *Les Cadets,....* pp 84-5 "*...cette irruption massive du monde de l'entreprise ne peut pas ne pas transformer le rapport des cadets à la politique. Toute une idéologie de l'Etat, qui a fait fureur chez les gaullistes au temps où les hauts fonctionnaires étaient seuls - ou presque seuls - à parler haut et fort, prend peu à peu les apparences d'une 'viellerie socialiste'. La vision macroscopique de la société*

cède la place à une obsession du quotidien, à une philosophie du concret, qui privilègient le microsociale aux dépens des grands desseins,"

27. Ysmal, *op cit*, *Demain la Droite*,...., p 88, "A travers la mainmise progressive des patrons sur le pouvoir local, prémices de ce qui pourrait arriver demain au niveau national et étatique, s'affirme la montée du discours et des solutions libérales, des pratiques autoritaires, anticulturelles et antisociales."
28. Ysmal's book, though apparently based on her own interviews as well as Frémontier's data, is in any case bereft of source references.
29. Among the UDF interviewees, the business element is even weaker. Frémontier *op cit*, *Les Cadets*,...., Annexe 5 - no page number.
30. Annie Collovald, *Histoire Sociale d'un Poste; le Secrétariat Général de l'UDR et du RPR, 1968-85*, Mémoire de DEA d'Histoire du 20^e Siècle, Paris, Institut d'Etudes Politiques, année 1984-5, sous la direction de René Rémond; annexe 1 p.102
31. Frémontier, *loc cit* "Les Jeunes Elus,...." p70
32. Garraud, *op cit*.
33. Ironically, his painstaking documentation of this heterogeneity is the book's chief recommendation. A wealth of different reference points, apart from their own occupations, help to identify patterns of shared ideas among the young conservatives; from the father's profession, through type of studies and religious practice to positioning in a number of 'semantic fields' expressive of different French political traditions. The segmentation produces a series of micro-samples whose members, different in many respects, sometimes share a single characteristic which potentially explains their near-identity of views. For example, Alain Devaquet, Louis Dole, Jean-Pierre Hugot, and Michel Prats, are all RPR, all Chiracian, all madly patriotic, all against abortion and for the death penalty. Three of the four send their children to catholic schools. Yet two are university teachers and two failed their *baccalauréat*; one works in business (banking), and the others for the state. What unites them? All their fathers were non-commissioned officers. (Frémontier *op cit*, *Les Cadets*,... p 31)
34. *Réussir une campagne électorale; suivre l'exemple américain?*, Paris, Editions d'Organisation, 1977; *1988 Le Grand Rendez-Vous*, Paris Jean-Claude Lattès, 1984; *La Chasse au Mammoth*, Paris, Robert Laffont 1989
35. *Le Monde* 19-2-83 and 4-9-87
36. Thierry Desjardins, *Les Chiracians*, Paris, La Table Ronde 1986 pp 197-212
37. On pork, cf his speech in the National Assembly, 8th November 1978, *Journal Officiel* 9-11-78, p 7238; on the merchant navy, the speech of 8th November, *Journal Officiel* 10-11-78, p 7378
38. *Le Monde* 24-10-86
39. This was the impression which I gained from a short interview with Jacques Godfrain, on 22-12-88. The statement to *Le Monde* was clearly disingenuous, and probably motivated by his desire to publicize the programme of placements which *Entreprise et Progrès* had organized for other deputies, including a number of Socialists.

40. Desjardins *op cit*, *Les Chiraquiens*,.... pp 231-242
41. Interview with François Fillon, 5-1-89
42. Interview with Jean-François Mancel, 20-4-89, "...au début j'étais un peu hésitant, dans la mesure où j'étais un vieux militant gaulliste, et par exemple, la planification, c'est quelque chose de très important pour moi,, j'avais une culture incontestablement assez étatique sur le plan politique et l'avènement des idées libérales m'a un peu choqué au départ, et j'avais un peu tendance à dire, - Est-ce qu'on peut concilier les deux, regarder comment les deux peuvent marcher ensemble? - Et puis finalement j'ai assez évolué, au contact des réalités, Je ne suis aperçu que, plus je prenais des responsabilités, plus je constatais que l'emprise de l'administration était trop grande, et que finalement ce n'était plus l'état qui régnait, mais c'était quand même finalement la bureaucratie, et c'est ça, je crois, qui m'a incité à considérer que la conception gaulliste de l'état avait été en grande partie transformée par le développement d'une bureaucratie très pesante, et que donc il ne fallait pas hésiter, si on voulait alléger la société française, à aller dans un sens plus libéral qui finalement n'allait pas véritablement à l'encontre des idées développées par le général, qui n'était pas un fou de la bureaucratie,....."
 "Je suis effaré de voir par exemple que pour lutter efficacement contre le chômage j'ai dû créer une association, pas une filiale du conseil-général, mais une association indépendante, pour avoir un peu plus de savoir, un peu plus de souplesse, qu'il était impossible que je mène un certain nombre d'actions dans le cadre des lois et des règlements existants, que si je voulais permettre à une entreprise de venir s'installer chez moi, donc, en lui donnant une aide, il fallait que j'habille cette aide sous le couvert de multiples arguments pour arriver à ne pas être traduit devant le tribunal administratif par l'autorité dite de contrôle de légalité, donc le préfet, parce que ce n'était pas conforme aux lois et aux règlements,....."
43. Interview with Patrick Devedjian, 9-1-89; *On a prévu la privatisation, et on a étudié les choses de très près, et compte tenu de ce que sont les concessionnaires français, les garagistes français, ils sont souvent assez en retard, ce n'était pas rentable, Puisque, par exemple, j'ai découvert, à ma grande surprise, que les garagistes français n'ont pas les pièces détachées, Quand la voiture arrive, et qu'elle est cassée, ils disent - Bombé on va commander la pièce, on l'aura dans un jour ou dans deux jours - mais ils n'ont pas la pièce pour faire,... Là, sur ce plan-là, nous sommes en avance sur eux, nous avons un stock de pièces détachées, Question; Ca, c'est un domaine où le collectivisme est en avance sur le privé? Oui, pour la qualité du service, mais certes, ça correspond à une immobilisation de capitaux et peut-être le privé ne peut pas se le permettre,*
44. Interview with Jean-François Mancel, 20-4-89, "Et les pesanteurs administratives je les mesure aussi en matière du statut de mes fonctionnaires, Quand je vois la manière dont je suis lié, ligoté, pour recruter, pour rémunérer, pour récompenser, moi, je trouve ça complètement effarant, et je milite de plus en plus pour qu'on fasse sauter complètement le statut de la fonction publique en France, C'est une aberration, c'est un système qui est complètement délirant,"
45. On the range of techniques available; Michel Noir, *Réussir une Campagne Electorale; suivre l'exemple américain?* Editions d'Organisation, Paris 1977, Michel Noir, "L'Utilisation des techniques de marketing dans une campagne présidentielle", in *Pouvoirs* no 14, 1980, pp 67-80; *Revue Française de Marketing* special issue on political marketing, no 50, 1974.
 On their transfer to France; Roland Cayrol, *La Nouvelle Communication Politique*, Paris,

Larousse, 1986; Jean-Paul Bobin, *Le Marketing Politique*, Paris, Economica 1988; Sophie Huet et Philippe Langenieux-Villard, *La Communication Politique*, Paris PUF 1982; Thierry Saussez, *Politique Séduction; comment les hommes politiques réussissent à vous plaire*, Paris, Jean-Claude Lattès, 1986. The last two works mentioned are the most useful for the adaptation of modern communication techniques to local politics.

46. Saussez *op cit* p 69; Cayrol *op cit* pp 129-158; Dominique David, "Marketing Politique et Démocratie", in *Revue Française de Marketing* 1978/1 pp 71-8; Noir *op cit*, *Réussir une campagne...* pp 228-34
47. Jean-Pierre Raffarin, the *chargé de l'animation* in the *Parti Républicain* in the early 1980s, when he also worked professionally in the communications department of the Bernard Krief consultancy, cf Huet et Langenieux-Villard *op cit* pp 96-99
48. Cayrol *op cit* p 96; Huet et Langenieux-Villard *op cit* p 121
49. Monique Caralli, *Un Homme et sa Ville, quatorze maires RPR racontent*, Paris, Flammarion 1983 p 181-2
50. Caralli *op cit* pp 123-135
51. Guy Sorban, *La Solution Libérale*, Paris, Fayard/Pluriel 1984 (2nd edition, revised and expanded) p 248 note 2
52. Saussez *op cit* p 126
53. *ibidem* pp 127-132
54. *ibidem* p 142.
55. Liffraan *op cit* pp 103-104
56. Huet et Langenieux-Villard, *op cit* pp 139-46.
57. *ibidem* pp 176-182
58. These details of Perben's career at Chalon are taken from Desjardins, *op cit*, *Les Chiraquiens...* pp 255-260
59. Alain Houlou, "Jalons pour une Anatomie de la Droite", in *Nouvelle Revue Socialiste*, no 64, June-July 1983 pp 21-26
60. Liffraan *op cit* p 105
61. Cayrol *op cit*, pp 207-8
62. *ibidem*, Worse still, by the spring of 1988 the 110,000 reception points achieved had resulted in only 6,500 subscribers. By January 1988 the initial investors (the City, the *Caisse des Dépôts* and Lyonnaise Communication) had laid out 35 million francs for no return and the bulk of the output on the seventeen available channels was limited to foreign imports and material already shown in France, with only one town hall news service, broadcasting for three hours per day.
63. Liffraan *op cit* p 106; Cayrol *op cit*, pp 207-8

64. Liffra *op cit* p193
65. *Centre d'Etudes et de Rénovation économique et sociale*, Not to be confused with the other CERES, a grouping within the Socialist party
66. Giraud *op cit*, *Nous Tous, . . .*, pp 11-21
67. *ibidem* pp 41-59
68. SOFRES, *Opinion Publique*, Paris, Gallimard, 1977 p 232 tables 16 and 17.
69. Alain Juppé, *La Double Rupture*, Paris, Economica, for the Club '89, 1983 pp 136-7. Juppé gives no source for his figures; in his case, what is important is that he *thought* association membership was on the increase. Other estimates differ, doubtless because of different criteria for counting, such as whether to include football or fishing clubs. A 1977 survey found that association membership in the population as a whole stood at 52% (SOFRES *L'Opinion Française en 1977*, Paris, Presses de la Fondation Nationale de Sciences Politiques, 1978 p 169.) Another in 1982 put the figure at 32% (Ministère de la Culture *Pratiques culturelles des Français*, Paris, Dalloz, 1982 pp 177-9, cited by Pierre Brechon, Jacques Derville et Patrick Lecomte, *Les cadres du RPR*, Paris, Economica, 1987 p 71) Discounting this latter figure, the authors of a 1984 study of RPR activists noted that from 1973-81 associative activity seemed to be increasing in France. (Brechon, Derville et Lecomte *op cit* p 71)
70. A poll carried out for a group of provincial newspapers; SOFRES *Opinion Publique*, Paris, Gallimard 1986
71. Huet et Langenieux-Villard *op cit* 186-94; *Le Monde* 19th, 20th 21st, 22nd October 1982; Pascal Sigoda, "Les Cercles Extérieurs du RPR", in *Pouvoirs* no 28 1984, pp 143-158; Daniel Colard, "Réflexions sur le Renouveau des Clubs Politiques après l'alternance du 10 mai 1981", in *Pouvoirs* no 25 1983 pp 157-170; Serge Bauman, "Le Renouveau des Clubs?", in *Revue Politique et Parlementaire* no 898, May-June 1982 pp 63-79
72. *Le Monde* 21-10-82
73. "C'est la fin du règne des notables, Désormais les hommes politiques ne peuvent plus travailler sans le concours des associations qui constituent des relais d'opinion irremplaçables," (Huet et Langenieux-Villard, *op cit*, p 186. The two authors who interviewed Baumei (Philippe Langenieux-Villard himself an RPR regional councillor) give an idea of the scope of the new movements which he had in mind; among youth organizations there were the *Union des Jeunes Libéraux* of Reims and *Espoir Jeunesse* in the Oise. There were organizations with consumerist strategies called *Cinquante-cinq millions d'administrés* and *SOS Citoyen*. An *Association pour le Développement de l'Engagement Politique* aimed to offer one-off services to independent candidates. In January 1982 a newspaper was founded calling itself *Tribune des nouveaux politiques*, intending to open its columns to the grass roots associations. (*ibidem* p 186-91)
74. SEDEIPES (1982) *Grandes Formations Politiques, Clubs Politiques, Groupes de Défense et d'Amitié Parlementaires*
75. They have certain arbitration duties in localized industrial disputes
76. *Le Monde* 20-10-82

77. *Le Monde* 20-10-82
78. *Le Monde* 19-10-82
79. Statement by group's leader, Michel Frigent, in *Le Monde* 21-10-82
80. Brechon, Derville, Lecomte, *op cit*, p 71
81. *ibidem* p 72
82. *ibidem*
83. *Le Monde* 16-1-86
84. On the CAR and its activities generally, see *Le Monde* 24/5-1-82; *Figaro Magazine* 9-10-82; *Le Monde* 21-10-82.
85. Freeing the grass roots from control by the centre was only the first part of the decentralization process. The second, which began with a separate law enacted in January 1983 and continued with a subsequent flow of decrees of application lasting two years, was the articulation of fields of competence between the three levels of commune, department, region. This proved to be a source of much discussion and disagreement. Two other outstanding problems have been how to ensure that the new legal powers enjoyed by the grass roots were backed by adequate financial resources, and the development of a competent and neutral local civil service to staff the new executive offices at departmental and regional level.
86. *Le Monde* 27-9-85
87. The City-Management Foundation's periodic seminars have titles like; "Management and the search for optimisation.", "Projects, resources and methods.", "Awareness of cost prices." *Le Monde Affaires*, 14-11-87
88. *ibidem*
89. *ibidem*
90. *ibidem*
91. I am grateful to Jacques Lagroye, professor at the *Université de Paris I*, who has taught at Fontainebleau, for this anecdote.
92. *40 Ans des Sociétés d'Economie Mixte*, Paris, Economica 1986, p 189-90
93. *ibidem* p 304
94. *ibidem*, p 300
95. *ibidem* p 303
96. *Le Monde Affaires*, 14-11-87
97. *Le Monde* 26/27-6-88

98. Interview with Jacques Boyon, 27-4-89
99. Marc Ambroise-Rendu, *Paris-Chirac*, Paris, Plon, 1987 pp 351-353
100. *ibidem* 93; Liffraan *op cit* p 137-138
101. The contracts farmed out in this period involved the heating of public buildings, the collection and clearing of rubble and glass, the management of skips, and the unsticking of unwanted posters, (Liffraan *op cit* p 176; Ambroise-Rendu *op cit* p 353.
102. Liffraan *op cit* p 175 and p 180
103. Caralli, *op cit* pp 18-25
104. The programme took in along the way the closure of the municipal printing works, the management of the (thirteen) covered markets, some of the school canteens (formerly managed by the *arrondissements*), tree-pruning, and the home-helps.
105. The main lines of the privatization programme are found in Liffraan, *op cit* p 177-8 and Ambroise-Rendu *op cit* pp 352-356
106. The franchise signed by the new contractors exonerated them from repairs to pipes above 130mm diameter, for which the city was to remain responsible, levying for this purpose a special tax worth 54 million francs a year. On top of this, the fact that one company took the whole of southern Paris, and the other the part north of the Seine meant that, to get the new system under way, it was necessary to install a score or more large meters around the perimeter of the city and on the Seine bridges, to separate their accounts; the 10 million franc bill for this was ultimately passed on to the users. Liffraan *op cit*, pp 178-81; Ambroise-Rendu, *op cit*, p 358)
107. Meanwhile, pressure from dentists led to the gradual run-down of the George Eastman Institute, originally a charitable foundation, which in 1947 had been given the job, in fulfilment of the city's legal obligations, of carrying out preventive dental screening for the poorer Paris school-children. From 100,000 children checked in 1980, the number fell to a yearly average of 13-14,000 by 1988; despite a deal signed between the city and the federation of private dentists, there is inevitably a risk that thousands of working-class children will escape the preventive net. (Liffraan *op cit* pp 142-149)
108. Liffraan *op cit* p 176 and p 178; Ambroise-Rendu *op cit*, p 358. Ambroise-Rendu is on the whole much less critical of Chirac than Liffraan; he accepts at face-value for instance the claim that the pre-privatized water system was badly in need of repair, but in the end he uses exactly the same phrase as Liffraan to summarize what Paris meant for Chirac's governmental hopes; "*le meilleur banc d'essai que l'on puisse imaginer.*" (The best test-bench imaginable)
109. Ambroise-Rendu *op cit*, p 159-179
110. *ibidem*, p 91. In 1987 the Paris allowance ceased to exist when the mayor and prime minister extended the third-child benefit to the whole of France.
111. Françoise Dreyfus and François Darcy, *Les Institutions Politiques et Administratives de la France*, Paris, Economica, 1987 (2nd edition) p 295
112. Caralli *op cit*

- 113 *ibidem*, p 24
- 114 *ibidem*, pp 109-115
- 115 *ibidem*, p 163
- 116 *ibidem*, p 165, "Je crois qu'en période de crise tout ce qui est superflu devient encore plus indispensable. Plus la vie est tendue, plus le besoin d'avoir des activités culturelles devient ardent."
- 117 "De plus en plus les communes sont amenées à intervenir dans la vie économique; ce n'est pas leur rôle fondamental, mais il y a des opportunités qu'il faut saisir." (Caralli 1983 p 193)
- 118 Auberger, mayor since 1977, had performed this operation twice by 1983, once with the chamber of commerce, once with his local council alone. As a graduate of both ENA and the Polytechnique, he possesses the necessary expertise to assess the technical problems and line up the necessary loans. (Caralli, *op cit*, p 41)
- 119 *ibidem*, p 150
- 120 *ibidem*, p 161
- 121 *ibidem* p 207 "Je suis l'un des maires qui a obtenu le plus de subventions pour sa ville, mais je ne les laissais jamais tranquilles, alors pour se débarrasser de moi, ils finissent par me donner ce que je réclamais!"
- 122 Interviews with Philippe Auberger, 6-1-89; André Fanton, 21-4-89; Jacques Boyon, 27-4-89
- 123 Interview with Patrick Devedjian, 9-1-89
- 124 Interview with Patrick Devedjian, mayor of Antony, 9-1-89; for Noisy, see M-J Chombart de Lauwe, "La Droite à l'oeuvre dans les communes reconquises depuis 1983 en France", in *La Nouvelle Revue Socialiste*, no 78- 79, January-February 1986 pp 47-52
- 125 On Saumur, see Frémontier *op cit*, *Les Cadets*,.... pp 237-40; on Chalon, Desjardins, *op cit*, *Les Chiraquiens*,.... pp 255-60. The left also complained of similar cases in Antony, Brest, Nantes, Autun, St. Jean d'Angély, Tourcoing and Poissy. (M-J Chombart de Lauwe, *loc cit*)
- 126 Interview with Yvon Bourges 11-1-89. Municipal management is discussed in almost identical terms by a Gaullist of the same generation in charge of a vastly different commune, Asnières, (Hauts-de-Seine, population 80,000) part of the Paris industrial belt. (Interview with Michel Maurice-Bokanowski, mayor of Asnières 14-12-88)
- 127 "Peut-être faut-il moins de personnel d'exécution, ... je ne dois pas hésiter à embaucher des ingénieurs ou des juristes, ou un type qui sort d'HEC ou d'ESSEC pour monter un service d'accueil des entreprises." Christian Dupuy, RPR mayor of Suresnes, quoted in *Le Monde Affaires*, 14-11-87
- 128 Interview with Boyon, 27-4-89; "...on intervient pas beaucoup du plan national. Les élections municipales sont des élections locales, et en plus, comme presque toujours les listes étaient des listes d'union associant à l'époque le RPR et puis

l'UDF, ... Disons que les listes ... c'est pratiquement pas soutenues depuis Paris. Si vous voulez, un maire RPR par exemple qui tenait sur sa liste des gens de l'UDF, ne souhaitait pas tellement se marquer du côté RPR au plan des municipales. Donc on est peu intervenu dans les municipales, d'autant que chacun avait sa propre campagne dans sa propre ville, dans son propre département."

129 Interview with Devedjian 9-1-89

130 Liffra *op cit*, pp 176-7

131 Interview with Boyon, 27-4-89, *"C'est vrai que, un maire dans sa commune, un président du conseil général dans son département, il a quelquefois tendance à faire de l'interventionnisme ... public, ... Et c'est vrai que j'ai souvent été l'un des premiers à critiquer, à dire que, ... on tenait un langage critiquant ce que j'appelle le socialisme municipal, mais que beaucoup, en même temps qu'ils tenaient ce discours, avaient, dans leur propre collectivité, un comportement qui n'étaient pas cohérent avec ce langage, c'est vrai. C'est vrai!"*

Chapter 6 The Market

This chapter is about the influence on programme-making of the competition for votes. Vote-winning is so crucial an activity for parties that it seems reasonable to assume that it must, sooner or later, override all the other factors which influence programme content.

However, the theory and practice of modern political communications shows that a party's ability to attract votes through its programme and leadership statements is not straightforward. It is structured by three variables, which can have an independent or cumulative influence on programme content. First, there is the question of what is on offer from the competition. A party *could* choose to draw up its programme solely, or at least mainly, with a view to what the other party or parties are saying. Alternatively, it could decide to ignore other parties, and concentrate solely on what it believes to be the aspirations of the electorate - matching its own programme to the known opinions of a possible winning coalition of voters. Thirdly, ignoring both other parties and known opinions, the party could concentrate its strategy not on the *content* of its programme, but on *the way it puts the message across*. In so doing, it stakes its chances not on a correct reading of voters' opinions, but on insight into their *attitudes*, moulding the message according to whether it thinks key groups of voters appreciate masculinity, optimism, selfish, and so on.

A party may choose any one or a combination of these approaches, according to the context it is working in, or the preferences of its leaders or professional advisers. This points to the limitations of statements like - 'He's only saying that because he wants to win votes.'

If a party leader has concentrated his strategy on the 'attitude' variable, he may indeed say anything at all, believing that people vote for him on account of his image, rather than his programme.

As political scientists have absorbed insights from other branches of knowledge, such as social psychology, they have adapted their understanding of the party-voter-programme relationship, moving from an initial 'party-competition' explanation through an emphasis on 'opinion-voting', to the most recent accounts which stress parties' relative freedom of manoeuvre and ability to manipulate the electorate.

In the 1950s, 1960s, and early 1970s, the most popular view of the way that vote-winning affected programmes was that most voters effectively *identified* with one party or another, often because loyalties reflecting long-standing social or cultural cleavages were passed on from one generation to the next.¹ It followed that the only available reserves of votes belonged to those with no strong party-identifications, who voted rarely or not at all, or floated from one party to another at succeeding elections. Their median position was thought to reflect their political *moderation*, and commentators concluded that parties would have to blunt the edges of their own ideologies, positioning themselves in the centre, in order to shut out their competitors hunting in the same area for extra votes.² This version of party competition, which came to be called the 'catch-all' thesis, viewed party behaviour as responding to long-term social changes; as social cleavages blurred, so would party identities, and this in turn would reinforce their propensity to search for supporters among *all* sections of the population.

The return of economic difficulties in the 1970s, suggested that these earlier commentators had been premature in hailing the end of

ideology and progress towards a seamless consensus.³ When attention was turned to less socially homogeneous societies than the USA, the U.K. and West Germany, which had been the subjects of the earlier studies, some commentators invented broadly 'system-determined' models of party behaviour in which social conditions were all but ignored,⁴ while others turned away from the 'identification' explanation of voting, towards a stress on voters' individual opinions on particular *issues*. In the low countries or Northern Ireland, traditional cleavages were found to be just as persistent as ever,⁵ and to these were added newly perceived sources of cleavage, such as unusually salient single issues, like NATO or EEC membership, new religious movements, and attitudes to the environment, to the social position of women, and to taxes and public spending. ✓

These developments led to a new burst of theorizing about the party-voter-programme relationship. On the one hand it was felt that a process of "realignment" was under way - a change in the shape of the party system resulting from the substitution of new for old cleavages.⁶ But going beyond this, some pointed to a number of long-term social changes causing what they called "dealignment", the erosion of traditional party-identification. This is consistent with the blurring of existing social cleavages, but implies that these will not be replaced by new ones; instead, individuals rarely belong to a single identifiable group, as they did in the past, but are now more likely to be involved in several social networks simultaneously. Furthermore, the general improvement in education, together with the continual multiplication of alternative sources of information by the mass media, allows individuals to make up their own minds about political issues, dispensing with and even contradicting parties' traditional linkage of potentially discrete issues ✓

to a common programmatic or ideological thread.⁷

These conclusions about the erosion of party-identification were paralleled by the rise of the 'issue-voting' school, which explains voting behaviour by the aggregation of voters' opinions about party stances on the issues which particularly concern them.⁸ Does this mean that successful parties will in the future be bound to adapt their programmes to what they believe to be most citizens' opinions on certain issues?

Not necessarily, for some voters are clearly less informed than others; and even amongst the best-informed, it is not certain that their vote is determined by rational appraisal rather than prejudice or traditional allegiance. Furthermore, there are ways in which parties can resist the trend which threatens to deprive them of their traditional role of agenda-setting and the explanation of issues. They can refuse to debate issues on which their positions do not accord with public opinion, by 'talking past them', and concentrating on issues on which they do well.⁹ In some cases they can resort to clientelism, or they can even provoke or invent issues and exploit them in a way which they hope will win favour with certain voters, and generally exploit state or sub-state resources in order to weaken their opponents.¹⁰ Political scientists have, then, developed a variety of explanations for what political parties were trying to achieve. Often, however, the models have relied heavily on mathematical aggregates, such as the sum of changes in party voting strengths (electoral volatility), or the number of times an issue is mentioned in party programmes. All too rarely have they been supported by hard empirical evidence.

Yet, to each of these models corresponds a particular type of empirically verifiable behaviour which a party could adopt. If competition

with other parties is thought to be the key variable determining programme design, a comparison of the sociological profiles of support for rival parties will reveal to party leaders and to observers the degree to which parties are competing for the same electorate. If citizen opinions on given issues are what counts, opinion surveys will reveal the gap between party positions and public opinion; it is for the party, then, to decide whether and how to close the gap. Underlying citizen attitudes, which structure opinions and ultimately voting behaviour, can also be gauged, thanks to techniques borrowed from commercial marketing, and which reveal voters' response to qualities which politicians try to project, like strength, openness, caring about the family, etc.

In the next three sections we tackle each of these questions in turn. It is argued firstly that *party* competition appears to provide no incentive whatever for the RPR's liberal turn. Secondly, it is shown that RPR leaders were slow to accept the usefulness of opinion surveys, and survey evidence was ultimately ignored both in deciding strategy and in writing the programme. Thirdly, the party's political communications advisers attached excessive importance to the question of image, basing their strategy on 'sociological' evidence of doubtful validity.

Votes

It is tempting, when dealing with multi-party systems, to assume that each party occupies a certain political space within a 'spectrum' ranging from one extreme to another, so that parties always compete directly for votes with those placed on either side of them in the spectrum. This is broadly the view elaborated by Sartori, who consequently concludes that party competition consists of continuous 'positional' adjustments at the margin;

the competitive preoccupation of party leaders bears precisely on the position manoeuvrings that are believed not to disturb the party's identifiers and, at the same time, to attract new voters, (or to retain potential defectors.)¹¹

Popular accounts of the French party system nearly always follow this line of analysis, usually referring to the UDF as 'centre-right', and the RPR as their 'conservative allies.'¹² An explicit link between position in the spectrum and competitive strategy is made by the Ella Searls;

In 1981 the Gaullists, with a vague set of doctrines, found themselves sandwiched within an opposition right part of which were already committed to many of the tenets of *libéralisme*, and flanked by an Extreme Right which was pressing for hard-line policies to maintain social order and security. The options for the party were either to move towards the Centre to capture some of the Centrist votes or to adopt a more distinctive right-wing package of policies in order to win votes from those who were alienated from the experience of the Socialist government, whilst at the same time trying to stop the seepage of votes to the Extreme Right. Chirac chose the latter option.¹³ Because of

the use of the 'sandwich' metaphor, this passage seems to imply that the choice for the RPR was between competing with the UDF on the one hand (that part of the right already committed to liberalism), and the *Front National* on the other. In fact, as Searls made clear earlier in her article, the fact that the RPR took liberalism to its bosom in the period 1981-3, was *part of*, not an alternative to, the party's shift to the right. Furthermore, accommodation to the FN's anti-immigrant platform did no violence to the convictions of many supporters, members and leaders of the RPR. The FN's basic ideas are shared equally by many in the UDF, and economic liberalism has supporters and opponents among all parties and tendencies on the right, including the CDS, so that a 'spectrum' view of the right-wing part of the French party system serves only to confuse the issue. These parties are better seen as different branches of the same

family, separated by history, personal antagonisms and opportunism rather than by ideological boundaries. If there was any move towards the centre to be made, this would involve - as Searls does not make clear - competition not with the UDF, but with the Socialist party.

This is an important passage, however, for Searls regards 'electioneering rhetoric' as the 'most important' of four factors which contributed to the RPR's liberal turn. The other three were the activities of the clubs and think tanks, the experience of the Socialist government, and the opportunity for reflection afforded by a period of opposition. Here it will be argued that, on the contrary, there are no grounds for thinking that a search for votes under the pressure of party competition with its right-wing cousins was an important factor in the RPR's programmatic development.

✓
✓
} certainly supported by PP.
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The argument involves three propositions. First, the unique institutional structure of the Fifth Republic means that party stances are influenced by presidential as well as party competition, and since victory in the presidential election requires an absolute majority of votes cast, a move *to the right* cannot possibly be recommended for electoral reasons. Secondly, at the turn of the 1980s, the RPR and UDF electorates were broadly similar both in sociology and in values, and the two parties deliberately *avoided* competing with each other in most of the non-presidential elections between 1976 and 1986. Thirdly, the electoral threat represented by the FN was neither clear-cut nor consistent; it was complicated by the FN's appeal to the protest vote, and in consequence the RPR leaders' attitude to the FN swung in one direction and then another during the whole period 1981-86.

The most important feature of the entire period 1981-6, however, was

that the unique target for the RPR's most hostile and consistent criticism was the left government. We link this to the question of opinion research in the second part of this chapter.

The American researcher Kay Lawson has produced perhaps the most subtle synthesis of political and institutional factors structuring the French party system at the turn of the 1980s.¹⁴ In a *quasi*-presidential system, parties were obliged to combine with each other in order to produce a coalition leader, yet the prime minister and the government retained enough power independently of the President for it to be worthwhile for parties to seek to maximize their own party strength in parliament. At the same time, according to Lawson, the divided French political culture implied an incentive to maintain ideological purity, while the two-ballot electoral system put a premium on vote maximization at the first ballot, in order to be the coalition's candidate at the second. There was a built-in pressure on parties to re-organize themselves in order to pursue the presidency most effectively; as all parties became more and more centralized, with a single pre-eminent leader, so did alliances become more brittle, and their construction fraught with increasing distrust. In short, the combination of peculiarly hybrid institutions with a divided political culture moulded a system marked, for the parties, by conflicting centripetal and centrifugal forces.¹⁵

The difficulties experienced by the RPR in presidential elections illustrate marvellously Lawson's thesis. In 1981 the opinion polls implied that in no possible scenario could Chirac be ahead of Giscard on either the first or second rounds. As we saw in chapter 4, many of Chirac's entourage were fully aware of this, and so wary of splitting the right-

wing camp that they opposed their leader's candidature. But the struggle for hegemony between the right-wing parties came into play; supported by those most closely bound to the party, Chirac entered the race in order to keep alive his own and, indirectly, the party's future Presidential pretentions.

Both Gaullist orthodoxy and the custom and practice of the Fifth Republic, however, implied that a candidate for the highest office need not be bound by his party's programme. Chirac in any case did not take the drafting of programmes very seriously, believing that they were a superficiality, necessary for purposes of presentation, but committing nobody.¹⁶ These factors, together with the almost non-existent chance of victory, explains a certain ambiguity, or perhaps coyness, among senior party members about what the candidature was trying to achieve.

Some believed that Giscard had disappointed his potential supporters on both left and right. The Chirac team's idea was to find an angle which distinguished the RPR leader from both Giscard and Mitterrand, fighting them both for the centre ground, and to this end they borrowed ideas fairly freely from Ronald Reagan's successful first campaign for the US Presidency.¹⁷ ^{in 1976?}
^{1980?}

The suggestion that there was a strong American influence on the choice of themes is disputed by others who were close to the campaign. For Jacques Boyon, Chirac stood 'because he had the feeling that the policies being followed ignored the real problems of our electorate,' which, according to him, was made up of business, and the self-employed, especially farmers, small-scale retailers and artisans.

So it wasn't at all a campaign on the theme of liberalism. It was a campaign based on the theme, "The economic strength of France must be rebuilt, certain traditional values have to be restored... we must

think of France before thinking of Europe." It was themes like that.¹⁸ ✓

There is some evidence that a "liberal" turn was spotted by the television-viewing public¹⁹ and that it was linked to "Reaganism" by academic commentators²⁰, but a full discussion of the American influence on the RPR's programmes is reserved for chapter 8. As for the electorate mentioned by Boyon, poll evidence showed that when the campaign began Chirac was certainly more strongly supported by them than were the left candidates, but not significantly more so than Giscard.²¹ In October 1980 46% of small shopkeepers and artisans and 38% of a group containing higher-grade managers, industrialists, professionals and large-scale retailers expressed their intention of voting for the sitting President if he was a candidate in the forthcoming election. Thirteen and 12% respectively of the same groups opted for Chirac, at a time when his average support was hovering around 9%. He thus had above-average support among the urban petty-bourgeois, but the bulk of them were lined up massively behind Giscard, and their support for Chirac was at nowhere near the same level as among farmers, of whom 23% were supporting him already in October 1980.²²

However, there was considerable evolution of voting intentions right up until polling day. Support for Chirac among farmers moved up from 23% to a massive 36% when the votes were cast on 26th April; 26% of small shopkeepers and artisans were intending to vote for him by mid-April, and 29% actually did so on the day. Progress was most rapid of all among higher-grade managers, businessmen and the professions; from 12% in October Chirac's support grew to 20% by mid-April and reached 36% by polling day. If one remembers that Chirac's overall vote was just under

18%, these figures show that his personal electorate had become massively concentrated among particular social groups. He polled more than any other candidate among farmers, executives and professionals, and only Giscard, with 35%, scored more among shopkeepers and artisans. Even more striking, Chirac was the only candidate who scored significantly better among the wealthiest fifth of the population than among the less well-off.²³

If Chirac went into the 1981 election without a specific electorate, he certainly had one at the end of it. This was not lost on French commentators, who speculated on the in-built weakness of such restricted support; a return to power depended on the conquest of blue- and white-collar workers, who constitute 'the immense majority of the electorate', and who were not at all impressed by the liberal message.²⁴ Worse, if the attack on state interference in the economy, understandably popular with the poorer parts of the small business fraternity who hated struggling with their tax-returns, were to develop into the dropping of all constraints on market forces, then those who would suffer most in the long term would be the same small shopkeepers which had become the bedrock of Chirac's support. The RPR and its leader were beginning to look distinctly like giants with feet of clay.²⁵

These fears and predictions were strikingly vindicated in 1988. In the first round of voting Mitterrand held his own or progressed in all categories except farmers. Chirac's overall score was up by a meagre two percentage points. He scored the same share of the vote among farmers as he had in 1981 (36%), the same 36% among professionals, and 27% among executives, well above his average share. He had once again polled more than any other candidate among professionals and farmers. Among executives he was outdistanced only by Mitterrand. But among small shopkeepers and

artisans his vote fell back from 29% to 23%, (now only 3 points ahead of his average score, instead of 11, as it was seven years previously) on a par with Barre, and way behind Le Pen, who, with 31%, scored more votes than any other candidate in this category.²⁶

Viewed as a vote-winning strategy, then, Chirac's programmatic stance from 1981 through to 1988 must be counted as stunningly inept. Why did he do it? No doubt on both occasions, once he had entered the fray he and his closest advisers managed to convince themselves that they were running to win. Chirac said as much even in 1981,²⁷ and shortly before the 1981 poll Pasqua began to put it about that private surveys showed the RPR leader running four points ahead of the real figure, in a last-ditch attempt to make believe that he was rivalling Mitterrand for a place in the second round.²⁸ Chirac's worst Giscardian enemies suggested that he always hoped Mitterrand would be elected, leaving himself as the rallying point for the future opposition. Others were simply baffled.²⁹

We are left with two other hypotheses; either Chirac's 1981 platform was simply a shopping-list of opening demands to be deployed in a bargaining session with the sitting President, or a variety of different influences not directly connected with elections combined to convince the RPR leadership that liberal economics formed a coherent set of ideas which would be of benefit to the French people. ✓

The first suggestion fits in with Lawson's account of the French party system which we outlined above, and there is some evidence for it,³⁰ ✓ but if this was the strategy, it was a rather forlorn one, inspired more by a noble sense of duty than any hope of success. It required a lot of faith in Giscard's willingness to compromise for he had already spurned the opportunity to change his line in similar circumstances after the 1978

elections. Furthermore, even after its failure in 1981, the RPR continued down the liberal road. It is therefore towards the second hypothesis - that, irrespective of electoral considerations, most of the party turned to liberalism out of conviction - that we address ourselves later in chapters 7 and 8. But first we turn to the non-competition between the RPR and the UDF.

The *Rassemblement pour la République* and the *Union pour la Démocratie Française*, the allies which have represented the 'respectable Right' in all the electoral contests since 1978, were both formed relatively recently. The RPR was founded in 1976, while the UDF was born in February 1978 of the union of a collection of disparate forces. These were the *Parti Républicain* (PR), formerly a parliamentary group, the Independent Republicans, led by Giscard himself in the 1960s, when it habitually formed a pre-electoral pact with the gaullist UDR; the *Centre des Démocrates Sociaux* (CDS), an indirect but not too distant descendant of the MRP, the great social Christian party of the Fourth Republic; the Radical party, a meagre remnant of the once dominant party of the Third Republic; the *Clubs Perspectives et Réalités*, which were more interested in reflection than action, and finally the tiny so-called *Parti Social Démocrate*, originally a split from the Socialist party in 1972.

Despite these different traditional loyalties, throughout the 1970s and the first half of the 1980s, there were hardly any ideological differences within the respectable Right's electorate, not many between their leaders, and even when a modest degree of sociological differentiation between RPR and UDF supporters emerged in the early 1980s, party leaders consistently avoided a real contest for votes.

That there was no such thing as a 'Gaullist' electorate was shown by

the remarkable variations in the votes cast for Gaullist candidates at different times in the same constituency, depending on the nature of the election. In March 1973 Olivier Guichard was elected deputy on the first round in the Loire Atlantique with an absolute majority; after resigning to take a short-lived cabinet post, he was re-elected with a similar score in a by-election in September 1974. In between these two dates his Gaullist colleague and close friend Jacques Chaban Delmas won only 17.8% of the vote in the first round of the Presidential election. Despite the same *party* label, Guichard had the benefit of endorsement by a 'majority' alliance, while Chaban did not.

In 1973, the UDR went into the parliamentary elections in alliance with the *Centre Démocratie et Progrès* (CDP, a link in the genealogical chain uniting the MRP with the CDS) and the *Républicains Indépendents*. Electoral competition was somewhat limited by the fact that in 87% of constituencies there was no CDP candidate and in 76% of constituencies there was no RI candidate. Between the rounds of the election, President Georges Pompidou summarized what was at stake - "On the one hand, Communism and its allies, on the other hand, all the rest." Right wing electors were not supposed to be too bothered about the identity of the particular representative of the "rest" for whom they were called upon to vote.

The power of this reductionist alliance system was further emphasized by the results of the odd by-elections which took place in the mid-1970s in which an independent Gaullist stood without the alliance's backing. In November 1976, in the Allier, a Gaullist candidate gained 5.4% of the vote in a contest led on the first round with 46.2% by Gabriel Péronnet, a Radical, whose party nationally represented almost nothing. On the same

day in the Yvelines a Gaullist candidate won 4.4% in similar circumstances.²¹

The same researcher who unearthed these facts, the author of a monumental thesis on electoral Gaullism since 1958,²² had the curiosity to study the turn-out in all 1,800 cantonal elections which took place in 1976, in every parliamentary constituency contested in 1973, and in all 17 of the parliamentary by-elections fought from 1974 to 1977. There was no significant variation between turn-outs in the contests in which Gaullist candidates were present, and in the 1300 cantons, the 27% of parliamentary seats and the 8 out of 17 by-elections from which they were absent. Conclusion; there was no such thing as a structured Gaullist electorate loyal only to its own candidates.²³

In 1977, the newly formed RPR seemed to go over on to the attack against their traditional allies. Jacques Chirac fought the President's nominee for the Paris town hall, and a year later followed up by running more than 400 candidates for the 491 seats in the National Assembly. Whereas ever since 1962 separate candidates in the first round had been the exception and not the rule, in 1978, only 118 seats, or 24% of the total, offered no choice to the right-wing electorate. In 1979 rival Chiraquian and Giscardian lists confronted each other head-on in the proportional European elections.

One should beware of exaggerating the political character of these contests, however. In March 1977, 44% of a sample of those who voted the Chirac list in the Paris election said they were principally motivated by its leader's personality, while only 17% attributed their vote to attachment to his political ideas, in a contest where not only the Giscardians, but also the *left* were present.²⁴ Ironically, 1977 was also

the first year in which systematic pacts were made between the Gaullists and the rest of the right in the local elections. In previous years they had been held at arm's length by centrists and independents who preferred local alliances with the Socialists, a hang-over from the 'social centrism' of the Fourth Republic.²⁵

In the parliamentary elections, a confrontational debate of issues was necessarily constrained by the parties' prior agreement that, in each constituency, whichever candidate came out in front on the first round would be supported on the second by his erstwhile rival. It would have been hard to have an ideological contest, in any case, with a President who deliberately eschewed ideology, believing there were no conflicting social interests in society, only 'problems' to solve.²⁶ In 1977 Giscard's own *Parti Républicain* gave itself a thoroughly undemocratic set of statutes which ensured that it would rely for electoral mobilization on a traditional network of local notables rather than an organized membership. To one observer, this meant that it had already given up the attempt to compete for members with the RPR.²⁷ To another it was clear that the PR never campaigned on its programme, but concentrated on supporting the President.²⁸

The Gaullists' critiques of the Giscardians in government were mainly concentrated on 'managerial' questions, such as how to deal with the economic crisis and fight unemployment. In 1979, however, at least as far as the leadership was concerned, more political questions seemed to be raised. In the campaign for the European elections the RPR generally fulminated about the sell-out of French interests, denouncing the UDF's federal aims, the (extremely modest) powers of the parliamentary assembly, and the putative entry of Spain into the Community. This programme, as we

see below, failed to identify a distinctively nationalistic electorate.

The 1978 parliamentary contest made possible the carrying out of detailed opinion surveys which confirmed that the right-wing electorate had become homogenised by being accustomed to cast their votes indiscriminately for Gaullist, centrist or 'independent' candidates, depending on how the share-out had affected their particular constituency. A poll of 4,500 people carried out in the days just after the second round revealed that, of the two, the UDF electorate was slightly older, with correspondingly more retired people (25% of their electorate to 22% of the RPR's), and slightly more catholic (54% practising regularly or irregularly to the RPR's 50%.) Among occupational groups, both parties performed well among housewives (25% of the RPR electorate, 23% of the UDF), badly amongst workers (8% and 7%), with the biggest gap appearing in the UDF's "success" among white-collar workers (17% to the RPR's 11%).³⁹

If, as other studies confirmed, there was "no real difference" between UDF and RPR in terms of sociological support, and the two parties were "hunting the same electorate",⁴⁰ there seemed also to be a convergence in terms of ideology and values. RPR supporters were slightly more to the right than those of the UDF in their attitudes to the Socialist party, the right to strike, and left-wing leaders, but the two electorates shared a common hostility to the extension of nationalization, to the Communist party, and to free contraception for teenagers.⁴¹ They also gave similar replies to questions on the functioning of political institutions, their attitudes to work, nuclear power, and the education of children, but the UDF sympathizers were less keen on the continuation of the death penalty (59% in favour) than those of the RPR (75% in favour.)⁴² One of the discoveries which most surprised commentators at the beginning

of 1979, was the convergence in views between RPR and UDF supporters on questions concerning foreign policy, and especially Europe. While a large minority of RPR sympathizers (37%, to the UDF's 23%) thought that French prestige had declined in recent years, yet they were not nearly so many as sympathizers of the left, where a majority of each party's supporters held this view. A quarter of the friends of the RPR thought that France should be absolutely neutral in military affairs, (UDF 18%), but as many as 32% of Socialist and 47% of Communist supporters thought the same. More remarkable still, 76% of RPR supporters declared themselves in favour of "building Europe", (UDF 79%), while 44% thought the abolition of the EEC would be a bad thing (UDF 54%); 41% of the RPR sample would be willing to pay slightly higher taxes for the sake of building Europe, rather less than the friends of the UDF (51%), but still considerably more than Socialist and Communist supporters, (31% and 10%). Finally, the RPR supporters were not unduly worried by possible Spanish entry into the EEC. (56% in favour, compared to 61% of UDF supporters, 59% of Socialists and 38% of Communists.¹³

These figures, collected within two months of the infamous *Appel de Cochin*, go a long way to explaining the RPR's disastrous performance in the European election on 10th June 1979. The leaders were playing to an electorate which didn't exist. They were also out of step with the voters in respect of their attacks on Giscard. A poll in January 1979 showed that 74% of RPR sympathizers had confidence in the President.¹⁴

Despite the heightened competition between the two parties in the years 1977-9, then, there was little evidence at that time of the existence of distinctive electorates favouring either the RPR or the UDF. This picture seemed to change in the early 1980s, in line with the

Up's last attacks had occurred prior to 1979 + look at the RPR's success in '78.

increased differentiation induced, as we saw, by Chirac's 1981 Presidential campaign. An exit poll carried out as people voted in the first ballot of the June 1981 legislative election showed that, sociologically, the RPR electorate appeared to resemble Chirac's personal electorate. The RPR had gained a slight advantage among the retired; the UDF held their stronger position among white-collar workers, with 18% support (compared to an average vote of 19%) to the RPR's 14%, (against 21% of the overall popular vote), but the RPR were way ahead amongst shopkeepers and artisans (winning 31% of their votes to the UDF's 19%), and amongst business, executives, professionals and large-scale retailers (28% to 19%).⁴⁵ This pattern was repeated in a poll carried out in urban areas during the municipal elections of 1983.⁴⁶

The evidence of neither of these polls can be taken as conclusive, although they point to the same orders of magnitude, because in the legislative elections of 1981 and the municipals of 1983 the right-wing parties had once again resorted to the tactic of joint first-round candidatures, in which the bulk of the electorate was given no opportunity to prefer one to the other.

We saw in the chapter on grass roots politics how senior RPR leaders avoided central interference which might disrupt the important business of constructing local lists. As for the parliamentary elections, whereas there had been well over 300 'primaries' between the components of the right-wing coalition in 1978, in 1981 there were only 86, and the voters in 385 constituencies in metropolitan France were offered only one conservative candidate on the first round.

In these circumstances the great majority of voters would have had to rely almost completely on messages diffused nationally, principally via

the television, in deciding which party had earned their 'sympathy'. This has important consequences for the notion of 'party competition'. If a party relies on passing its message via the television, then its content may be obscured, or at least denatured by the panoply of techniques used to wrap it up, with hours of thought devoted to lighting, clothing, the tone of voice, and so on.⁴⁷

For the grass roots voter the confrontation of rival candidates in his or her own locality provides the best, usually the only, opportunity to witness and take part in organized debates in which the airy television pronouncements are given a more down-to-earth interpretation. When such local confrontation does not take place, it makes no sense to pretend that programmes are constructed with the aim of winning votes. If the RPR and UDF do compete with each other, the competition is not for votes, but for investitures.

This takes place at centrally organized negotiating sessions which take some account of the national political conjuncture, but much more of the potential supply of local candidates and the minute details of local rivalries which allow a trade-off here in exchange for consideration there - a parliamentary investiture today in exchange for a free run at the town hall tomorrow.

There were only 67 seats in which the UDF and the RPR opposed each other in primaries both in 1978 and in 1981. The RPR had been in the lead in 42 of these in 1978, and took the lead in 46 of them in 1981.⁴⁸ Clearly the sample is too small for any conclusions about the attractiveness of rival programmes to be based on it. The parliamentary election in any case took place far too soon after Chirac had first articulated his new liberal programme for it to have been absorbed and reproduced by the party

candidates with a suitable local veneer.

Most other commentators have endorsed the view that in 1981, as in 1978, the votes cast for the anti-left candidates were distributed according to the local celebrity and the implantation of the individual candidates, whatever their partisan label. These same criteria, allied to pragmatic trade-offs, decided which seats in 1981 were to have RPR candidates, and which UDF.⁴⁹ The same story was repeated five years later.

The 1986 parliamentary election, fought under proportional rules with departmental lists, could in theory have provided some room for open and honest RPR-UDF competition. This was again avoided, for a number of reasons. The most obvious was that, even before a vote was cast, the two parties had signed and sealed a common programme of government. Whichever of the conservative lists the voter opted for, the result would be the same. Secondly, in 60 of the 96 departments, the RPR and UDF presented joint lists whose composition was worked out in national negotiating sessions. In 33 departments there were rival lists, and in 3 more there were official 'joint' lists rivalled by dissident lists in which UDF members took some of the places.⁵⁰

It is true that these figures could seem to understate the degree of competition, since the joint lists were run in smaller departments with not more than four or five seats each, where proportionality did not work very effectively, while the rival lists were run in 30-odd heavily populated departments which together provided more than half of all seats.

But here again appearances are misleading, for most of the RPR-UDF contests were won by large margins by the party already dominant locally. In 22 of the 35 clean-cut contests, one of the parties was ahead of the other by at least 10 percentage points, (the RPR in 14 and the UDF in 8).

In a further 8 cases the winning margin was between 5 and 10 points. In some areas not much effort was made to get out the 'party' vote. In the Bouches du Rhône, where the RPR party centre had made no effort to groom a local leader who could challenge the UDF 'boss', Jean-Claude Gaudin, the RPR vote collapsed to 9.47%, only just over half the combined scores of Chirac, Debré and Garaud in the 1981 presidential election.⁵¹ In Paris and the surrounding region, the RPR lists scored 27.32% of the vote to the UDF's 12.96%.⁵²

The parties had once again ensured that the cream of the local elites would get home safely, irrespective of any developing sociological or ideological differentiation between the national parties' electorates. In the 60 departments where joint lists were run, the most common tactic for ensuring amicable relations was for one party to head the slate for the legislative elections, and the other to take first place on the lists for the regional elections which were held on the same day. A total of 418 UDF candidates (including 56 of their 63 incumbent deputies) were offered 163 safe or winnable seats, while the 424 RPR candidates (including 69 of their 88 incumbent deputies) were offered 169 safe or winnable seats. In the event the RPR won 145 and the UDF 129. The difference was almost entirely accounted for by RPR dominance in the Paris region, where it had netted 31 seats to the UDF's 14. In 25 contested provincial departments, the score worked out fairly evenly, as planned; RPR 19.83% of the vote and 40 seats; UDF 20.85% and 42 seats.⁵³

Throughout the 5th Republic, with the partial exception of the period 1977-81, the main families of the French Right have usually avoided direct electoral competition with each other. On the one occasion when the Gaullists launched a clear-cut ideological contest, they met with disaster

because their ideas were not shared by a corresponding and identifiable ✓
group of voters. In the 1980s, when a new RPR programme seemed to attract
interest from a potentially distinctive electorate, the party deliberately
avoided using the programme for direct open competition with the UDF. It
follows that, while electoral motives could be held responsible for the
dropping of a strident anti-European plank from the RPR's platform, the
adoption of the new liberal economic programme cannot be attributed to ✓
competition for votes with the UDF. There was no decisive evidence that
the programme was a vote-winner, and the RPR in any case avoided competing
with the UDF except in Presidential elections.

It has already been suggested that it is a mistake to imagine the RPR
as somehow sandwiched between rival forces on its right and left. Within
the French Right, the values of leaders and supporters have for a long
time varied within a range common to all the parties. As the 1980s
progressed, however, many within the RPR, the FN, and the UDF frequently
expressed their views on the role of the state in economy and society in a
single reactionary proposition; in the past the state has intervened too
much in the economy and not enough in repression of crime; it ought to
redress the balance and concentrate on what it is good at, and what, in
reality, is its true vocation; less nationalization, less social security,
and more policemen!

How it was that all three parties came to endorse the formula of less
welfare and more social control is discussed in chapter 7. But that this
consensus certainly represented a rightward drift is a good reason why we
should examine the electoral impact of the *Front National*. Here it will be
argued that it is inappropriate to define the RPR's response to the FN, as

Searls does, as a 'choice' made mainly for electoral reasons. On the key social issues, concerning immigrants and law and order, the RPR leaders leaned towards the repressive measures which were already part of their repertoire, but stopped short of some of the FN's demands. On economic issues, although both parties developed similar policies, the new RPR programme owed nothing to electoral competition with the FN. The new key ideas on the role of the state in the economy were first clearly articulated by Chirac in the 1981 Presidential election campaign, at a time when the FN was so irrelevant to national politics that Jean-Marie Le Pen could not even secure enough official endorsements to mount his own candidature.

On the RPR leaders' approach to the FN itself, both their assessment of FN values and the FN contribution to French politics, and in particular on the question whether the RPR ought to make alliances with them, it is clear that there was never a "choice", but rather a refusal to choose. They swung first in one direction, and then in another. In 1983 Chirac defended the RPR's alliance with the FN in a local election at Dreux. In 1985 he insisted that there must be no local deals with the FN in the cantonal elections. In 1986, because of the proportional system, he was spared having to make an announcement before the elections, but made no objection afterwards when the respectable right was helped to the presidencies of at least five regions by agreements with the FN. In the run up to the Presidential election, he alternately denounced the FN's policies and said that he 'understood' the concerns of those who voted for them. In the 1988 legislative elections, deals with the FN were banned everywhere except in Marseille, where they were strong. This was not a choice, but a refusal to choose.⁵⁴

The party leadership's balancing act reflected the uneven pressure of FN electoral competition. There was occasionally a serious threat to RPR candidates in parliamentary and especially in local elections, but Chirac could not forget that Presidential elections are won in the *centre*, not on the right or the left.

The governmental programme and the record in office were subject to the same cross pressures. The 'respectable' conservatives promised to tighten immigration controls and to deport more 'troublemakers', but they stopped short of promising the restoration of the death penalty or the deportation of unemployed foreigners, as Le Pen demanded. In office, they duly restored the judicial situation of illegal immigrants to what it had been before the Socialists repealed the *loi Peyrefitte* of 1980, and made a great show of deporting several hundreds of mainly African workers, not all of them clandestine, but this repressive drive was slowed when public opinion was outraged by the death of a student demonstrator at the hands of riot police, and public sector workers went on the offensive with a series of strikes. The government abandoned a planned special session of parliament which was to have considered a reform of the nationality law, and effectively buried this issue by handing it over to the deliberations of a committee of experts.⁵⁵

The parameters of competition for votes between the RPR and the FN, are complicated by the fact that the FN's electorate demonstrably evolved during the period in question. In late 1983 and at the start of 1984, FN support seemed to be concentrated among the young and was fairly working-class and petty-bourgeois.⁵⁶ At this stage there was not much for the RPR leaders to worry about, but four months later, the sociological structure of FN support had shifted dramatically so that it now resembled much more

closely that of the respectable Right, being more concentrated among the old than the young, and among the self-employed than among workers.⁵⁷ Three more years passed before the same researcher, Jérôme Jaffré found that it had changed yet again, with the under-35s now making up 43% of Le Pen's support, (against 31% in 1984), while the poorer social categories now made up 63% (37% in 1984). If the FN had at one time threatened to win away RPR voters, this was no longer true;

It is no longer a case of "lost sheep", but of an electorate which is young, proletarian, and fairly apolitical, with a variety of previous political sympathies. It is not easily winnable by the RPR or UDF, whose sociological make-up is strictly the opposite.⁵⁸

If this sociological fluidity made it difficult for the RPR leaders to gauge the true electoral threat to their positions which the FN represented, the evidence was no easier to interpret when one turned to the attitudes and ideology of FN supporters. On the one hand there was clear evidence of shared opinions among supporters of the "respectable" and "extreme" branches of the Right, on such issues as the death penalty and the repatriation of immigrants,⁵⁹ but on the other, FN supporters were much more hostile to the existing political establishment, so that, irrespective of its sociological profile, a large part of the FN vote could be characterized as a "protest" vote, difficult for one of the established parties to recapture, even by means of an opportunistic switch of policies.⁶⁰ Furthermore, contrary to popular assumptions, FN voters are not motivated exclusively by anti-immigrant feeling. A study of the FN electorate in the 1984 European election found that only 40% gave immigration as the sole motivation for their vote, while 28% did not mention immigration at all, but cited economic reasons as decisive.⁶¹

Clearly, in assessing and countering the electoral challenge of the FN, RPR analysts would have found a mass of confusing and potentially contradictory evidence to choose from, and they would not have found it easy to make recommendations to the party leaders as to how to combat the influence of Jean-Marie Le Pen and his friends.

Opinions

A detailed case has been made to support the suggestion that programmatic change in the RPR during the period 1981-8 owed something to Chirac's positioning in relation to Giscard in the presidential election of 1981, but little or nothing to competition for votes at other elections between the RPR on the one hand and the UDF or the *Front National* on the other. ✓

In this section attention is turned to the Socialist party, where it is again argued that the economic and social parts of the programme cannot be attributed to competition for votes between this party and the RPR. In consequence, we examine the possibility that the programme content was determined by an attempt to align party policy with voters' opinions, irrespective of what other parties were doing. After a brief survey of the importance attributed to this sort of opinion research by political scientists, it is shown that, firstly, the Gaullists were for a long time very suspicious of opinion research techniques, beginning to make systematic use of them only after their debacle in 1979, but, secondly, even when they did carry out such research, they took hardly any notice of the results when drawing up their programme.

After a brief honeymoon period the Socialist-Communist government soon ran into public opposition. Trade unionists struck against the loss of pay implied by the shortening of the working week, doctors demonstrated against a feared attack on private medicine, while proposed educational reforms mobilized a vast coalition of opposition including teachers' unions, parents and the church. Many policies were either reversed or abandoned, while international constraints soon turned the reflationary economic policy into the kind of 'austerity' more usually associated with the Right, accompanied by a string of devaluations. From simply abandoning their own leftward drive, the Socialists seemed to begin a charge to the right after the summer of 1984 when the massive demonstration against the educational reform forced the replacement of prime minister Mauroy by Fabius, and the Communists' departure from office. The new government set about decontrolling the banking industry, re-introducing the share-capital principle into the nationalized industries, and making working hours more flexible to suit the needs of the employers.⁶¹

In these circumstances, with public opinion apparently on their side and the Socialists rapidly moving to the right, it seemed that, to be returned to power, the right-wing parties had only to stand firm, say 'we-told-you-so', and aim to pick up from where they had left off in 1981. With the Socialists apparently now committed to managing capitalism rather than overthrowing it, this would have meant an electoral battle for the centre ground, with both left and right wooing the same voters in an attempt to convince them of the superiority of their management skills.⁶²

Far from preparing for such a battle, the Gaullists *abandoned* the centre ground and themselves moved to the right. Their speeches, articles and books attacked the nationalizations, bitterly denounced the breakdown

of law and order, and warned of certain disaster resulting from the mistaken economic policies and the regimentation of social life implied by reforms in education and in workplace relations. The party continued to attack the Socialists even after the advent of Fabius, and gained ample space in the media to debate the extent (not the principle) of the liberal reforms which they hoped to implement when the Right returned to power.⁶³

The RPR's own *Club '89* rapidly produced a stream of booklets each devoted to a separate area of policy such as public ownership, education, social security and immigration. As early as 1983, one of these, written by Alain Juppé and prefaced by Jacques Chirac, openly announced a 'double break' with the past, not only undoing the work of the Socialists, but also going back on the policies followed during what was seen as the period of 'creeping socialism' in the second half of the 1970s.⁶⁴

Socialist sympathizers had no difficulty in polarizing political life by mounting a counter-attack on elements of the various drafts put forward during the public debate which culminated in the RPR-UDF joint programme of government. Privatization was to go beyond the enterprises nationalized since 1981, to include some of those which had been publicly owned since 1945; repeal of Socialist legislation, would include the *loi Quilliot*, the first measure since 1948 to control rents, the *lois Auroux* on workplace relations, and a law which had given workers seats on the boards of the nationalized industries; 'flexibility' in the definition of the working week would be taken even further, along with part-time and temporary contracts, and wage-scales would be amended to take account of personal 'merit'; the wealth tax would be abolished, there would be an amnesty for those who had fallen foul of the Socialists' exchange-control rules, and anonymity in the gold market would be restored, while social security

reform threatened to extend the use of personal pension plans.⁶⁵

Although some of these projects were jettisoned when the Right faced the test of office⁶⁶ the RPR's *promise* to do so much that was further to the right than what the Socialists were doing shows that they did not design their programme in an attempt to engage in direct competition with the Socialists for the votes of citizens who were uncommitted or occupied the centre ground. Nor does it make any sense to suggest that the programme intended to appeal to those who were disappointed by the Socialists' record - anyone who was 'disillusioned' with their efforts must have had aspirations which were at the antipodes of those articulated by the Right.

This is not necessarily to say that the RPR had given up all hope of competing for votes which might go to the Socialists, for they might hope to win them not by the actual *content* of their programme, but by the way they would present it, appealing not to the voters' opinions, but to their attitudes. We address this question in 6.3.

It could be, however, that the RPR had deliberately decided to discount the appeal of all other parties, and concentrate on aligning their own programme with what they thought were the opinions of a majority of voters. In doing so they would have needed the services of a professional marketing organization. As the man who was then officially in charge of RPR campaigns wrote in 1980;

Since 1965 in France, there has been a general move towards reliance on these firms of specialists for the conduct of campaigns and the work of analysis.... It can be taken as given that 99.9% of the important decisions taken during the pre-campaign are only arrived at after research has confirmed their correctness and their coherence with the overall strategy.⁶⁷

Belief that such research techniques were widely employed is reflected

in a journalist's suggestion that it was "political marketing men" who, in the two days before the first press conference of Chirac's 1981 campaign, persuaded him to adopt the liberal platform which contradicted the party's official programme. ⁶⁸ [see p. 110 + p. 140 fn 53] ✓

There is a certain diversity of opinion among those involved about what is the true influence of marketing techniques both on the content of programmes and on the outcome of elections. These are in fact two distinct questions, to which two different sets of activities correspond; in the first phase, detailed studies of the 'market', to see which issues are most important to the voters, and what their opinions on them are; in the second phase, the elaboration of a global strategy which involves the identification of a 'target' audience, and a choice between different ways of contacting and convincing the target. The research phase and the persuasion phase are now accepted as forming two halves of the same discipline practised by professionals in all parliamentary democracies - "political communications."

Observation of the use of marketing techniques in the USA, convinced Michel Noir that "the analogy is total" in the relationship between product and market in the commercial sphere and between candidate and voter in politics. ⁶⁹ In the French context, this is certainly an exaggeration. Although it is generally agreed that political marketing made its *début* in France in the Presidential campaign of 1965, when opinion polls and television broadcasts were used for the first time, nevertheless, the French have only reluctantly moved to *systematic* use of political marketing, ⁷⁰ and more recent studies have contested the 'total analogy'. ⁷¹

Among politicians, Michel Noir is full of enthusiasm for the techniques which will allow his colleagues to see the voters' point of

view, and become less *dominants* and more *communiquants*.⁷² In this he is supported by the PR's Jean-Pierre Raffarin, for whom human sciences and marketing are 'indispensable' for the phase of analysis and research, while politics governs the strategy, and "communications and advertising transmit the messages to the their targets."⁷³

A very low-key evaluation of their own worth is given by two successful French communications consultants, Jacques Séguéla, author of Mitterrand's winning *force tranquille* slogan in 1981, and Thierry Saussez, who has done a lot of work with right-wing local politicians, and handled the RPR's 1983 Paris campaign. According to Séguéla,

An advertiser has no power to transform anybody, whoever it is. Our friends call us creators, our enemies, mystifiers; in fact, all we do is reveal what exists.⁷⁴

For Saussez, in politics, as opposed to commercial marketing,

.. the product is not created according to the needs of the market. Made up of the man and his ideas, it is imposed on the communications specialists. We can only improve the wrapping, give it a pretty ribbon and multiply the selling points.⁷⁵

A certain scepticism is in order in reading these excessively modest evaluations of the communicators' own roles. What more natural for them but to polish the image of their clients at the expense of their own, which could be tarnished by the suspicion that these unelected advisers played an important role in decisions which affect thousands of lives? At least one member of the profession, Gérard Demuth, of COFREMCA, a research institute which produces sociological analyses for both political and commercial clients, admits that in his work he sometimes has to solve the problem of a disjunction between political supply and social demand;

In order to succeed, a political idea must be in phase with a number of elements forming a synergy...we have to find points of adjustment, which could include

modification of doctrine...this idea, in the stock of ideas in the programme, is at the moment in 25th position, it ought to be in the front rank.⁷⁶

Such an admission evokes concern in those who approve of politicians using opinion surveys to inform themselves more accurately than they would by talking to family, friends, and café acquaintances, but believe that they must not give up their role as inventors of new ideas for future social development.⁷⁷

What can the RPR's experience tell us about French politicians' reliance on opinion surveys? In an earlier chapter we described how in 1974, after the death of President Pompidou, the UDR general secretary Alexandre Sanguinetti had organized an unprecedented (for the Gaullists) opinion survey which revealed that the party was suffering badly from not having a recognized leader. Ironically, in 'correctly' applying the message of this poll, by resigning and making way for Chirac, Sanguinetti ensured that his initial work would not be continued, for Chirac and his closest advisers were irremediably hostile to opinion polling. One of the few leading members who believed that systematic polling was indispensable for a modern political party, the deputy and central committee member André Fanton, claimed that the atmosphere in the prime minister's office around 1974-5, was such that to read opinion polls was regarded as "like reading a pornographic magazine."⁷⁸

Rather than give their trust, and their money, to charlatans, the RPR leadership for the rest of the 1970s adopted the solution of Marie-France Garaud who, notoriously, had said in a press interview that she had no need of opinion polls, because if she wanted to know how people were thinking she had only to ask the gardener who looked after the grounds of her provincial chateau. Chirac's theory was that;
if you put 100,000 francs on the desk in a polling

organization, you get an extra point in the popularity ratings.. (And if you offer 200,000..) you get two points.⁷³

It was uphill work convincing Chirac of the value of polling, especially as all except one of the French polling organizations had wrongly predicted he would lose the 1977 Paris council election. Fanton had to explain "twenty times" that they had mistakenly run only a single Paris-wide survey comparing Chirac with d'Ornano, his main rival, instead of a ward-by-ward survey which would have revealed RPR support among the councillors actually charged with electing the mayor.

I explained to him a hundred and fifty times that polling institutes don't make a living out of politics, as he seemed to think, but they lived from commercial work, and if their polls were not very good, well that cost them a lot of money. And you wouldn't make them change their mind by giving them 100,000 francs extra, because the 100,000 he kept on about would make them lose 10 million.⁸⁰

A change came in 1979, however, when Fanton half-convincing Chirac that if opinion surveys and a gentler style of presentation had been used, the party would not have developed a policy and strategy for the European elections which so lamentably missed its mark and left them languishing at the bottom of the poll. Aided by the passing disgruntlement of rank and file deputies fearful for their seats and annoyed by the high-handed behaviour of Pasqua within the party, Fanton persuaded Chirac to appoint him as *délégué national* at the *rue de Lille*, in charge of party communications;

The 'communications' title was the first time that we adopted a policy tending to put over an image either of the movement or of its president which would be improved in so far as possible. And in 'communications', according to me - that's what I said, anyway, and he accepted it - naturally, there was opinion polling.⁸¹

Fanton never forced his way into the leadership inner circle, and failed to endear himself to certain of its members, such as Pasqua and Boyon, by advising Chirac not to stand in the 1981 presidential election, eventually announcing his own support for Debré.²² At the 1981 legislative election he stood as a candidate in the Calvados, having already in 1978 renounced his seat in Paris, in response to the allure of the provinces. Unsuccessful, he nevertheless made his home and his political base in Normandy, where he was *adjoint* to the mayor of Lisieux from 1983 to 1989. Because of this move, Fanton scaled down his Parisian commitment. Elie Crespi was appointed to a position over him with the title of *secrétaire national* for communications, but Fanton remained as *délégué* until early 1985, responsible solely for opinion polling.

Thus from the autumn of 1979 to the autumn of 1981 Fanton was the senior official at party headquarters responsible for the whole of the party's communications effort, and afterwards he continued to carry out opinion surveys for the party, communicating their results to Chirac, during the entire period in which the party transformed its approach to the role of the state in the economy. Undoubtedly, he has a unique insight into the degree to which survey findings influenced or failed to influence the party's new thinking.

Fanton brought to his work a very clear idea of what polling can tell the politician, and what the politician has to decide for himself;

There's a limit, you can't follow the polls. Just now I said that de Gaulle created the French nuclear deterrent. If he had taken a poll, there would have been no chance of it being accepted - none whatsoever. It's just the same as when Mitterrand abolished the death penalty.....So, as for me, I don't criticize a politician; I would even say that I prefer a politician not to follow the polls. But, if you like, the point of a poll is that it reveals the disjunction which exists in public

opinion, between what you are going to say and what people want. So, that means that you have to put a bit of pedagogy into the ideas you believe in.⁸³ As

délégué national from 1979, in association with Denis Baudoin, the town hall press chief who largely shared his ideas, and was a public relations professional, Fanton subjected Chirac to a number of practice sessions in front of television cameras with the aim of adapting his appearance and body language in such a way as to get rid of the image of aggressive agitator which still clung to him. Recorded cassettes of the sessions were shown to selected audiences who were invited to write down their impressions of the man and his performance.

More importantly, throughout 1980, in preparation for the Presidential election, he commissioned one opinion poll per month, in an effort to cover a large number of issues, and discover the themes likely to be popular with the voters.⁸⁴ They were devoted in turn to a different general topic, beginning with reactions to some of Giscard's reforms, such as votes at 18 and abortion rights, and moving on to themes like education/training, housing and the world of work. From the end of September, when Chirac decided (but did not yet announce) that he would be a candidate, a second series of polls was added, in which the bulk of the questions remained the same, relating to opinions on the various candidates and their chances of being elected, along with a few which varied according to the topical items of the moment.

The view of polling as a scientific and neutral tool, potentially useful in showing the areas of policy where a degree of persuasive power needed to be applied, had still not fully penetrated the candidate's entourage, however. On the eve of the vote, Charles Pasqua told the press of the 'results' of some imaginary private polls, hoping to create a

bandwagon effect by convincing the public that the RPR leader was running four points ahead of his actual score.⁸⁵ Not only did the tactic fail, but Fanton found himself after the election yet again having to convince Chirac that the *real* polls had accurately predicted his score, and that he wouldn't have been disappointed if he had not listened to made-up stories.

The results of his in-depth polls, duly evaluated, convinced Fanton that Chirac was mistaken in running against Giscard, and especially in running with the liberal platform which he had chosen for himself;

I told him so all the time. I told him afterwards, right up until 1986, and especially in the period 1983-4, when we were trying to develop a platform. Er...I said to him, "Everything shows that the French are people..." - you can't say that they are not 'liberal', because when we asked them the question just like that, they all say that they are liberal - but, deep down, they are not.⁸⁶ ✓

On certain questions this conclusion was not immediately obvious. For example, the idea of being able to live in one's own house was very popular, and by association, the proposal to sell off public housing, but this attachment to home ownership was nothing new, and had been known since opinion polling began in France, in the 1950s. But on certain topical political issues the message was inescapable;

I mentioned the wealth tax because it was clear. We did some polls on the wealth tax. We asked the question. Always, always, always, people, the French people replied; "It should be kept!" Always!..... But, in 1986, we couldn't abolish it fast enough, when it was the *opposite* of what French people wanted. In all the opinion polls which have been done, private or public, the French people said that the wealth tax was a good thing.⁸⁷

As some commentators had foreseen, among the most hostile to the liberal programme as it developed were the self-employed craftsmen and traders who had hitherto been solid supporters of the RPR; ✓

When you're on an election campaign, and you go to see the shopkeepers, what do the shopkeepers tell you? The shopkeepers never tell you that there's not enough freedom. They always tell you there is too much. They ask you, all the butchers who are already set up, all the hairdressers, the bakers...they don't want any more butchers, bakers or hairdressers to exist. They tell you there should be a diploma. Their dream is to run a chemist's shop, that is, one for every three thousand people, end of story. ②②

The surveys also predicted that Balladur's scheme to encourage personal pension plans would be the failure which it was. The idea was to draw more private savings into the stock exchange, at the same time relieving pressure on the social security budgets. But, according to Fanton, those who bought shares for the first time in the privatization programme were not concerned about retirement, for most people expect and want the state to take care of their pension. Rather, as in Britain, they were attracted by the thought that they could make a killing, and buy themselves a new car. As for the social security system, the verdict both of opinion surveys, and the *états-généraux de la sécurité sociale* organized by the Gaullist social affairs minister Philippe Séguin was blindingly clear;

It was "hands off!", and all the ideas which had been put about such as "The French people will have to pay for a part of their sickness benefits," were swept aside. From the most liberal of employers to the poorest sweeper, the ambition of all the farmers and shopkeepers who are not already covered by the social security system, is to be in the social security system. ②③ ✓

Similar results from opinion polls on the social security system were made public by other organizations from time to time. Philippe Auberger, the party's tax expert cited them in justification of his prudent reform proposals, ②④ and Gaullists other than he and Fanton must have been well aware of them. ✓

Yet in the preparation of Chirac's 1981 Presidential candidature, and during the re-writing of their programme after the Socialists came to power, the RPR as a party had placed little priority on opinion surveys. The person in charge of this activity was not a member of the inner circle of leaders. He warned that the themes which were part of a coherent 'liberal' programme for the transformation of the relationship between citizens, state and the economy, were not popular with public opinion, which remained attached to progressive taxation and a comprehensive social security system. The party leadership took no account of these warnings in drawing up the programme, and they very definitely did not try to align it closely with what seemed to be the preoccupations of public opinion. In fact, as we show in 6.3, in so far as they tried to find out what the public was thinking, this was with the intention of reforming their leader's image, rather than meeting voters' aspirations.

Attitudes

In the construction and marketing of an image, whether commercial or political, marketing professionals usually delve deeper into the buyer (voter)'s subconscious than is implied by answers to a number of programmatic questions on the size of the minimum wage, or the number of nuclear submarines a country ought to have. One marketing manual's definition of image is;

a complex of emotional and rational representations resulting from the confrontation of causative events (demonstration of the brand, personal experience, rumour) with pre-existing dispositions, and which is spontaneously associated with the brand as soon as it is evoked.³¹

These pre-existing dispositions, or "motivations", which form the

buyer's psychological frame of reference, have been categorized by marketing into 'positive' and 'negative' impulses. Among positive impulses - those which incite to purchase - are the hedonistic impulse, the oblation (the desire to give), and the desire for self-expression. Among negative impulses are fear (the fear of being robbed), and inhibitions of the kind which are expressed by the thought, 'this product is not for people like us.' It is this battery of socio-psychological concepts which communications advisers, assisted by psychologists, make use of when they organize games among a panel of party supporters or group discussions about their client-politician.⁹²

These techniques are especially suitable for leader-dominated campaigning, and their prevalence is unsurprising in American politics, where argumentation is regarded as useless; the important thing is to know how to manipulate symbols, key-words and key-images.⁹³ The UDR had discovered already in 1974 that a party's following was apt to suffer if it did not have a recognized and authoritative leader. A decade later, more poll evidence revealed the continuing close link between a party's popularity and its leader's standing. In the regular *SOFRES-Figaro Magazine* barometer, the gap between the average 'good opinion' rating of the RPR and the average of positive responses to the question whether Chirac ought to play a role in the future in French politics was always less than three points, except during 1985, when Chirac stood at 36.5% and his party at 41%. Significantly, when Chirac's rating jumped 11 points during 1986, the year in which he was appointed prime minister, the party moved up in his wake, achieving a surplus of good opinions over bad (46% to 40.6%) for the first time since 1981. When Chirac's stock plummeted after his government's Christmas crisis, the party's popularity fell once again, although not by

so much.⁹⁴ Even in a political system without presidential elections the leader's image is often important for party success; in the presidential 5th Republic it is crucial.

These considerations no doubt weighed a lot in Chirac's decision, shortly after the 1981 elections, to appoint a communications specialist with the specific task of fashioning an image 'for the 1990s'. The choice fell on 59 year old Elie Crespi, a stranger to politics, who had won prizes from his professional colleagues for his work in advertising the *Club Méditerranée*. As we saw earlier, with Fanton's retreat to the provinces, Crespi was soon given the formal title of *secrétaire national* for communications, and took his place on the RPR executive committee alongside the other key party officials. He retained this position after Toubon succeeded Pons in the general secretary's job in November 1984.

Crespi's research methods did involve in-depth analysis of the subconscious attitudes of individuals, correlating them with their responses to the Chirac persona,⁹⁵ following the pattern established in American politics, and recommended by Michel Noir among others, but deprecated by Fanton, who preferred to work "99% with opinion polls".⁹⁶

But Crespi was chiefly influenced by another methodology originating in the USA, which was transferred to France at the start of the the 1970s by a commercial market research organization called the *Centre de Communication Avancé*, (CCA) and elevated into a quasi-intellectual school of thought in a number of works by its director, Bernard Cathelat. This was the so-called sociology of life-styles, premised on rejection of the 'traditional' classification of social attitudes within a familiar left-right continuum.

Cathelat claims that the double axes of a more accurate map of social

attitudes oppose change and stability on the one hand, and pleasure and asceticism (*rigueur*) on the other.⁹⁷ He distinguishes four or five large "mentalities" or "sociotypes" within the population, depending on whether individuals are drawn to one or the other of these "horizons", and claims that most individuals can be assigned to groups which are called "adventurist", "utilitarian", "withdrawn" (*recentré*) etc. Each mentality in turn can be broken down into two or three sociostyles, or "micro-climates", constructed by computer treatment of the answers to hundreds of thousands of questions aimed at cross-referencing objective sociological data about respondents' material circumstances with their secret motivations, ambitions and patterns of consumption, leisure and family life.⁹⁸

The CCA, which is part of Havas, one of the largest European communications groups, earns its living by making its data and analyses available to those engaged in commercial marketing, and refuses on grounds of professional secrecy to make even old data available for inspection by academic sociologists, who consequently regard the 'findings' of the life-style school as of rather dubious intellectual status.⁹⁹

The validity or otherwise of the "lifestyle" conclusions concerns us less than the use to which they were put in French politics. The election of François Mitterrand in 1981 gave a great boost to the life-style approach to political communication since the architect of his advertising campaign, Jacques Séguéla, was known to have used it to adjust Mitterrand's speeches to the 'mentality' of the target groups among whom he needed to increase his share of the vote.¹⁰⁰ The success of the 1981 slogan *la force tranquille* (quiet strength), deployed on a background of sleepy provincial village with church steeple, and designed to convert the weak points of the candidate's image into his strengths - age into wisdom, powerlessness into

sympathy with the grass roots - seemed to show that a majority of French people subconsciously yearned for a return to the security of the 'deep heart of France', and feared the openness to the world urged by Giscard and Chirac.

This interpretation fitted that of the CCA, which already by 1977 had suggested that the 'adventurist' cultural model, dominant in the media and with a relative majority of French people in the 1960s and early 1970s, was on the decline, under threat from a wave of retreat or withdrawal (*recentrage*), a mentality which was neither radically progressive nor radically conservative, but was "balanced, calm, prudent, patient", longing for communities "on a human scale", in which they could "participate, but not lose themselves."¹⁰¹ Whereas the CCA's 'map' of lifestyles in 1977 had shown 42% of the French people to be withdrawn (*recentrés*) as against 38% adventurers, the map for 1980-83 showed the *recentrés* at between 49 and 52%, covering an absolute majority of all French people, while the adventurist current had broken up, with 20-22% of French people becoming "alienated" (*décalés*), leaving only 14-15% faithful to the outward-looking spirit of the sixties.¹⁰²

A vital problem for campaign strategists concerns the answer to the questions - "Where do 'sociotypes' come from? What causes one or another to become dominant at any particular time?" One of the mentalities in the original model - the utilitarian - seemed to have been formed since time immemorial by the struggle for existence in a closed, usually rural subsistence economy, in which neither social structure nor the boundaries of the imagination were disturbed by shocks coming from outside. The shrinking of its natural habitat could adequately explain its declining hold on the French people.¹⁰³ Other sociostyles, however, are subject to

the buffeting of *flux culturels*, whose action can be compared to that of a "social wind";

it's a current, a gust of public opinion, "a fashion" (in the noblest sense of the term), often cyclical, which influences society for a few years or decades before weakening or reversing direction.¹⁰⁴

Several cultural fluxes can blow in the same society during the same period; by their actions on sociostyles they are regarded as components of lifestyles;

in this way they compose a compass card of winds which disperse the different sociostyles and mentalities to the four corners of the social horizon, according to their predispositions.¹⁰⁵

Cathelat's sustained metereological metaphor neatly avoids the question of identifying the particular combination of elements to which the winds in turn owe their origin. In this passage, they appear to be autonomous, whipped up by forces which, if they exist at all, are invisible to the self-styled cartographer's telescope. Elsewhere, however, he suggests that the wave of tremulous insecurity on which Mitterrand rode to power was fed by unemployment, the dangers of nuclear technology and the crowded, noisy, polluted atmosphere of modern life.¹⁰⁶

In either case, for the RPR to espouse lifestyle sociology amounted to something of a paradox. For whether the mood of retreat and retrenchment to which their opponent allegedly owed his success was a nebulous symptom of unplumbable planetary forces, or whether it was set in material conditions which remained all too concrete, how could Chirac and his friends, whose economic programme stressed activity, risk and self-reliance, possibly hope to reconquer power? Crespi sought refuge in the metereological reading of long-term cultural cycles;

... the change of majority which took place on 10th May (1981) did not come about suddenly. The election

campaign could do nothing to change the course of events. The change is the result of long-term causes. 107 ✓

He pinned his faith on the evolution of the political market. In six or seven years people would be fed up with Socialism, so there was no need to tinker with the product he had to sell. Eventually Chirac's faults would appear as virtues. 108 In the meantime, the important thing was simply to "make known the RPR's choices for society" and to stress Chirac's national stature. 109

Crespi's attitude might have seemed extraordinarily complacent for the man charged with fashioning the image of the hyperdynamic RPR leader, but before discussing the influence of his lifestyle sociology on the RPR's self portrayal, a word ought to be said about the objective limits within which he had to work. ✓

In general, any politician's rating in the polls depends far more on the position he occupies on the political stage than on the efforts of his advisers to touch up his image, and Chirac was no exception. As prime minister from 1974-6, the evolution of his popularity followed (at a distance) that of Giscard, the President who appointed him. From the moment he left Matignon until the end of 1979, his rating was characterized by plateaux of stability punctuated by sharp falls which corresponded to his challenges to the sitting President. His image improved somewhat during 1980 when Pons took the bigger share of confrontations with the UDF, and in April 1981, on the eve of the Presidential election Chirac stood as high as he ever had in a poll asking respondents if they wished him to have a future role in politics. 110

During 1982-3, his rating profited from his position as *de facto* 'leader of the opposition', 111 but sank again when he appeared to abandon

this role by agreeing to run a joint list with the UDF in the 1984 European election.¹¹² His rating shot up again when he became prime minister for the second time in March 1986, and profited from the mood of national unity created by the struggle against the September terror-bombing campaign in Paris.

As well as being subject to the same pressures as other leaders, however, Chirac's image also had some permanent features of its own. Already in 1975, the two qualities which respondents thought best described him were stubbornness (65%), and toughness (64%); in the early 1980s, determination and energy¹¹³ were still ahead of competence and honesty in citizens' images of him. Furthermore, he was seen as cold, and distant from everyday problems.¹¹⁴ A certain aggressiveness was sometimes attributed to the unsettling attention of the media¹¹⁵, but it seems to lie deeper than that. Once, for a debate on one of Barre's budgets, Chirac's staff prepared him a speech which was agreed should be balanced and statesmanlike, if critical. Afterwards, all the press found Barre's speech constructive, and Chirac's polemical. In preparing to deliver it, Chirac had subconsciously added words and phrases here and there, in all amounting to no more than a page, but consisting almost entirely of negative adjectives or adjectival phrases.¹¹⁶ Another communications adviser bemoaned the fact that it was impossible to control his client;

We have made a tremendous effort to rid him of his image of ultradynamic, almost fascistic action-man. We have given him stature and a degree of serenity. And every time we are really on the right path, and the opinion polls start to swing our way, bang!, he makes some earth-shattering declaration without warning us in advance.¹¹⁷

Crespi's attempt to file off Chirac's rough edges began with recommendations for different suits and ties, an experiment which was

"neither successful nor prolonged" according to one Chirac admirer.¹¹⁹ It provoked a sharp polemic inside the party between those who were for "gentle Jacques" with a new image tailored by Crespi, and admirers of the old "macho Jacques" and denied that any changes were necessary. Pons and the parliamentary leader, Claude Labbé, were hostile to Crespi's insistence that Chirac needed to cultivate a more youthful "look".¹¹⁹

In June 1984, worried about his dive in the polls, Chirac asked Pons to sack some of his national secretaries and replace them with younger people. But Pons refused, contrasting Chirac's rating with the superior performance of the party, which at the time had a 'tougher' image than its president. Fuelled doubtless by the ambitions of the younger members in question, as well as by the emergence of Fabius and the PR's Léotard in national politics, the argument dragged on until November, when Pons himself offered his resignation, and left the way open for Toubon to introduce the changes Chirac wanted.¹²⁰

Even Fanton and Baudoin thought that it had been a mistake to appoint Crespi, mainly because of the difficulty of transferring to politics experience gained in the commercial use of marketing techniques. For Fanton this view was confirmed when he encountered Crespi's methods, which he recalls memorably;

He thought it was wonderful...he would gather together 23 people...I myself read, I don't know where I've put it, an extraordinary document...He..he asked people that he chose at random, in Orléans or some such place, he asked them, "Who is Chirac?" So the answers were something like, "Chirac is a polytechnician", "His son is a polytechnician..."

Chirac hasn't got a son, but Crespi would say, "Ah, its interesting, you see; people think he's got a son!" That was Crespi for you!

And I said, "That means what, exactly? What political conclusion do you draw from that?"

But he would say, "It's interesting, that's his image!".....

Crespi's panels, it was all Cathelat. He was thrilled because there was a *décentré*, there was a *recentré*, etc. It was just a fashion, because nobody talks about Cathelat any more today, except in the sociology faculties.¹²¹

Conclusions

The market approach to political behaviour cannot help us to understand the RPR's abandonment of traditional Gaullist interventionism. The party had not been used to competing electorally with the other main French conservative party, the UDF, before Chirac began the programmatic transformation in 1981, and - until the 1988 presidential election - did not do so again afterwards. Surveys of the similar sociological and value profiles of the two parties' supporters show that they had not much incentive to do so.

Rather than contesting the middle ground with the Socialist party in the 1980s, the RPR incontestably moved to the right, a process which was under way *before* the *Front National* emerged as an important electoral rival. Analyses of the support going to the latter party showed that it was initially unstable and eventually concentrated in sociological groups which had not traditionally voted for the mainstream Right, so that there was no *market* logic in any RPR move to cover FN policies. In any case, on economic issues, the two parties offered a similar programme, and the FN had no strong profile in this area.

The party leadership made only halting use of modern political communications, of which they were suspicious. They ignored the advice of their specialist opinion researchers, and put most of their effort into constructing a sympathetic image for the party leader. The person in charge of this work was a stranger to politics whose understanding of the way

cultural or political ideas are changed led him to interpret very
fatalistically the chances of influencing election outcomes by
communications techniques. His methods were treated with frank scepticism
by party communications colleagues, his client's personality was
particularly unamenable to his efforts, and his one successful initiative -
the rejuvenation of the executive committee - was operated at the cost of a
row in the party.

Notes to Chapter 6

1. S.M. Lipset, and S. Rokkan, "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems and Voter Alignment: an Introduction," in S.M. Lipset and S. Rokkan, (eds) *Party Systems and Voter Alignments, Cross-National Perspectives*, New York, the Free Press, 1967, pp 1-64; David Butler and Donald Stokes, *Political Change in Britain*, London, Macmillan 1974
2. Anthony Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy*, New York, Harper and Row, 1957; Otto Kircheimer, "The Transformation of Western European Party Systems," in J. La Palombara and M. Weiner, (eds) *Political Parties and Political Development*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1966, pp 177-200, Applied to France, this view of the party system has been defended by J. Charlot, *Le Phénomène Gaulliste*, Paris, Fayard 1970; Patrick Lecomte, "The Political Forces of French Conservatism: Chirac's Rassemblement and the President's Party", in Zig Layton-Henry, (ed) *Conservative Politics in Western Europe*, Macmillan, London 1982 pp 236-263
3. In Britain, a bastardized version of the catch-all thesis was developed, known as the 'adversary politics' model. Party leaders might still be tempted towards the centre, but they were held back by the vociferations of the extreme wings of their parties, who demanded remedies to the economic crisis based on 'old fashioned' class politics. Party leaders therefore tended to align their statements and programmes with the views of 'median' party activists, trying to conciliate what was thought to be the opposite pulls of moderate or non-aligned voters in the centre, and the preoccupations of existing party-identifiers. (A.M. Gamble and S.A. Walkland, *The British Party System and Economic Policy, 1945-83*, Oxford, the Clarendon Press, 1984)
4. The doyen of the 'systems' school is Giovanni Sartori - *Parties and Party Systems, a framework for analysis*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1976 - but as his model makes little but passing reference to the Fifth French Republic, it will not be developed here.
5. Steven B. Wolinetz, "The Transformation of Western European Party Systems Revisited", in *West European Politics*, vol 2 no 1 January 1979, pp 2-28
6. In Britain, for example, P. Husbands and C.T. Dunleavy - *British Democracy at the Crossroads: voting and party competition in the 1980s*, London, Allen and Unwin, 1985 - have suggested that the new significant cleavage is whether citizens work and/or consume mainly in the public or the private sector.
7. S.C. Flanagan, and R.J. Dalton, "Parties under Stress: Realignment and Dealignment in Advanced Industrial Societies", in *West European Politics*, vol 7, no 1, January 1984 pp 7-23
8. A. Crewe (ed), *Electoral Change in Western Democracies, Patterns and Sources of Electoral Volatility*, Beckenham, Croom Helm, 1985
9. Ian Budge and Dennis Fairlie, "Party Competition - Selective Emphasis or Direct Confrontation? An alternative view with data", in H. Daalder and P. Mair (eds) *West European Party Systems: Continuity and Change*, London, Sage, 1983, pp 267 -305
10. Two self-styled radical British authors believe that this strategy is now dominant, citing as examples of issue-creation Edward Heath's 3-day week and Margaret Thatcher's war in the South Atlantic, and as an example of the manipulation of state resources, the privatization programme. (Husbands and Dunleavy, *op cit*, *British Democracy*,)

11. Sartori *op cit* p 342
12. Similar assumptions, with a different account of the positions, are at work in Edouard Balladur's claim that, as far as economic policy was concerned, the RPR in the early 1980s occupied a position which was mid-way between two of the constituent groups of the UDF - the "ultra" liberal *Parti Républicain*, and the "interventionist" *Centre des Démocrates Sociaux*, Edouard Balladur, *Passion et Longueur de Temps*, Paris, Fayard, 1989, pp 36-7.
13. Ella Searls, "The French Right in Opposition, 1981-6", in *Parliamentary Affairs* 39/4 October 1986 pp 463-476 - p 471
14. Kay Lawson, "The Impact of Party Reform on Party Systems; the case of the RPR in France", in *Comparative Politics*, vol 13 no 4 July 1981 pp 401-19
15. The decline of the Communist Party during the 1980s means that this model seems less appropriate now than it did at the time of Chirac's first presidential campaign in 1981.
16. Interview with André Fanton, 21-4-89
17. *ibidem*
18. Interview with Jacques Boyon, 27-4-89, "Donc ça n'a pas été du tout une campagne sur le thème du libéralisme, c'était une campagne qui était faite sur le thème, 'Il faut restaurer la solidité économique de la France, il faut restaurer un certain nombre de valeurs traditionnelles, . . . il faut penser à la France avant de penser à l'Europe.' C'étaient ces thèmes-là."
19. Sophie Huet et Philippe Langenieux-Villard, *La Communication Politique*, Paris, PUF, 1982, p 152
20. Jean Charlot, "Les consultations d'avril-juin 1981 et Jacques Chirac", in *Pouvoirs* no 20 1982, pp 36-44
21. Jérôme Jaffré, "L'Opinion Publique et le Giscardisme. Y-a-t-il un électorat giscardien?", in *Pouvoirs* no 9 1979 pp 37-47; C. Ysmal et Gérard Grunberg, "Les Terrains de Chasse de la Droite", in *Faire* no 65, March 1981 pp 45-50.
22. Olivier Duhamel et Jean-Luc Parodi, "L'Evolution des Intentions de Vote, contribution à l'explication de l'élection présidentielle de 1981", in *Pouvoirs* no 18 1981 pp 159-174
23. The support of both Giscard and Mitterrand was evenly spread among income bands, and of the other candidates, only Marchais showed similar differential support - inversed naturally. (Duhamel and Parodi, *loc cit*; Vincent Wright, *The Government and Politics of France*, London, Hutchinson, 1984, 2nd edition, appendix 8.)
24. Charlot, *loc cit*, "Les consultations," p 43
25. Colette Ysmal, "Un Colosse aux Pieds d'Argile, le RPR", in *Les Temps Modernes*, April 1985, 41/465 pp 1872-1892
26. *Le Monde*, *Dossiers et Documents* special issue, Paris, May 1988, *L'Élection Présidentielle, le nouveau contrat de François Mitterrand*, p 41

27. *Le Monde* 28-10-80 and 23-3-81
28. Interview with André Fanton, 21-4-89
29. Charlot *loc cit*, "Les consultations," p 37-8
30. Michel Noir later told a French journalist that the candidature was a bargaining chip, intended to keep in the right-wing camp the support that was ebbing away from Giscard among certain social groups, and to prove to him yet again that he ought to incorporate RPR suggestions into his government policies in order to win their full-hearted support, and so secure his own re-election, (Desjardins, *op cit*, *Les Chiracziens, . . .*, p193) In private meetings with party workers, Pasqua also implied that the aim was to force Giscard to change his policies, not outright victory, (*Figaro Magazine*, 6-12-80)
31. These and the above examples are from Robert Ponceyri, "A la Recherche du gaullisme - électeurs et militants depuis 1974", in *Projet*, 118 September-October 1977 pp 929-944
32. Robert Ponceyri, *Gaullisme Electorale et Cinquième République; analyse d'une mutation politique, 1958-81*, Thèse pour l'obtention du doctorat d'Etat en Sciences Politiques, soutenue 12-1-84, Institut d'Etudes Politiques, Paris. Under the direction of Jean Charlot
33. Ponceyri, *loc cit*, "A la recherche, . . ."
34. *L'Express*, 14th March 1977, cited in *ibidem*.
35. Robert Ponceyri, "Le RPR et l'achèvement de la banalisation électorale du gaullisme", in *Pouvoirs* no 28 1983 pp 123-138
36. Marc Riglet, "La Droite, ses Soutiens, et comment ne pas s'en servir", in *Etudes*, July 1974
37. Colette Ysmal, "Le Difficile Chemin du Parti Républicain", in *Projet* no 118 Sept-Oct 1977 pp 945-952
38. Jean-Claude Colliard, "The Giscardians," in Zig Layton-Henry, (ed) *Conservative Politics in Western Europe*, Macmillan, London 1982 pp 204-235
39. Colette Ysmal, Gérard Grunberg, *loc cit*, "Les Terrains de Chasse . . ." pp 45-50
40. Jérôme Jaffré, *loc cit*, "L'Opinion Publique . . ." pp 37-47
41. Ysmal et Grunberg, *loc cit*
42. Jaffré, *loc cit*
43. There was only one question in the whole survey on which the RPR respondents gave an answer matching the preoccupations of the left rather than of their allies; 41% of RPR supporters feared German domination of Europe, as did 41% of Socialists and 57% of Communists, but only 27% of UDF sympathizers. Figures taken from polls carried out by Louis Harris France and SÔPRES in January and February 1979, cited in Jaffré, *loc cit*.
44. *ibidem*. It is interesting to note, however, that the "fault" lay not only with the top leadership, but also with the party's most active members. An EEC sponsored survey

- conducted among delegates to the RPR extraordinary conference in the autumn of 1978 (and among other political activists in nine European countries) showed that they were much closer to the orientations of the campaign shortly to be launched, than they were to the preoccupations of their own electorate or to the views of UDF activists. They were more hostile than the latter to multinational firms, more militaristic, and hostile to acceleration of European integration, whereas UDF activists were very much in favour. (Colette Ysmal, "L'Impossible Accord PS-RPR", in *Faire* no 64, February 1981, pp 60-62)
45. Poll published in *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 4-7-81, reprinted in D. Hanley, P. Kerr and N. Waites, *Contemporary France, Politics and Society since 1945*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1984 (2nd edition) table 4.4 page 180
 46. IFOP exit poll carried out on both rounds of the 1983 municipal elections; respondents were classified according to the job of the head of the family and asked to state to which party they were sympathetic. No size of sample given, but the poll did not claim to be nationally representative, since it related to predominantly urban areas. Cited in Colette Ysmal, "La Résistible Ascension du RPR", in *Projet*, no 178 Sept-Oct 1983 pp 805-813
 47. Cayrol, *op cit*, pp 137-158
 48. Charlot, *loc cit* "Les consultations,"
 49. Ponceyri, *loc cit*, "Le RPR et l'achèvement," p 135; Colliard *loc cit*, "The Giscardians," p 230
 50. Andrew Knapp, "Proportional but Bipolar, France's electoral system in 1986", in *West European Politics* 10/1, January 1987, pp 89-114
 51. David B. Goldey and R.W. Johnson, "The French General Election of 16th March 1986", in *Electoral Studies*, vol 5 no 3, December 1986, pp 229-253; Interview with Jean-François Mancel, 20-4-87
 52. Knapp *loc cit*
 53. *ibidem*
 54. Martin Schain, *Racial Politics in France; the National Front and the Construction of Political Legitimacy*; paper delivered to the annual meeting of the UK Political Science Association, Nottingham, April 1986; a version of this paper was later published as "The National Front and the Construction of Political Legitimacy", in *West European Politics*, vol 10 no 2, April 1987, pp 229-252; Peter Fysh, "Defeat and Reconstruction; the RPR in 1988", in *Modern and Contemporary France*, no 35, October 1988, pp 15-25
 55. Peter Fysh, "Government Policy and the Challenge of the National Front - the first 12 months", in *Modern and Contemporary France*, no 31 October 1987, pp 9-20
 56. *Le Monde* 14-2-84
 57. *Le Monde* 6-6-84
 58. "Il ne s'agit plus de 'brébis égarées', mais d'un électorat jeune, populaire, peu politisé, et dont l'origine politique est très diverse." Jérôme Jaffré, in *Le Monde*, 26-5-87

59. C. Ysmal, "Le RPR et l'UDF face au Front National; Concurrence et Connivences", in *Revue Politique et Parlementaire*, Nov-Dec 1984 pp 6-20
60. Schain, *op cit*; for a fuller discussion of the parameters of electoral competition between the FN and the respectable Right see Peter Fysh, *The National Front and the Political Agenda of the Right in France*, unpublished M.Sc. dissertation submitted to the department of Government, London School of Economics and Political Science, September 1986.
61. Peter Holmes, "Broken Dreams: Economic Policy in Mitterrand's France", in Sonia Mazey and Michael Newman (eds) *Mitterrand's France*, Croom Helm, London 1987; Howard Machin and Vincent Wright (eds), *Economic Policy and Policy-Making under the Mitterrand Presidency*, London, Frances Pinter 1985.
62. On the possible sources of left-right consensus, see Laurent Joffrin, "Economie; à l'assaut de portes ouvertes", in *Intervention*, no 15 Jan-Feb-March 1986 pp 7-11, and Pierre Briancon, *À droite, en sortant de la gauche?* Paris, Grasset, 1986
63. The most virulent critics of the Socialists were Alain Peyrefitte, *Quand la Rose se Fanera, du malentendu à l'espoir*, Paris, Plon, 1983; Yvan Blot, *Les Racines de la Liberté*, Paris, Albin Michel 1985; Charles Pasqua, *Une Ardeur Nouvelle*, Paris, Albin Michel 1985; Michel Noir, *1988, Le Grand Rendez-Vous*, Paris, J-C Lattès, 1984. More measured in tone, but implacably opposed to the Socialists were Michel Debré, *Peut-on Lutter Contre le Chmage?*, Paris, Fayard, 1982, and Albin Chalandon, *Quitte ou Double*, Paris, Grasset, 1986. Two who warned against the polarization of political life, but nonetheless criticized the Socialists' economic policies, were Philippe Séguin, *Réussir l'Alternance, contre l'esprit de revanche*, Paris, Robert Laffont, 1985; and Jean Charbonnel, *Comment peut-on être Opposant?*, Paris, Robert Laffont, 1983. For a selection of Chirac's speeches, reported in the press, (some of them from television and radio) see, *Le Monde*, 19-7-81, 7-5-82, 19-10-82, 7-10-84, 4-11-84, 5-11-84, 16-11-84, 17-12-85; For articles reporting RPR congress resolutions and programme drafts; *Le Monde* 21-1-83, 23/24-1-83, 6-5-85, 3-6-85; *Le Nouvel Observateur* 31-1-85; articles by Chirac, *Le Monde* 17-4-85; by Juppé, *Le Monde*, 1-10-83. See also the letter from Michel Noir to *Le Monde*, 24-12-85. Some of these and others are referred to by Jean Charlot in "Tactique et Stratégie du RPR dans l'opposition", in *Pouvoirs* no 28, 1984 pp 35-46.
64. Alain Juppé, *La Double Rupture* Paris, Economica 1983; see also, Michel Guilleuchmidt, *Dénationaliser*, Paris, Economica, 1983.
65. Colette Ysmal, "Les Programmes Economiques des partis de droite", in *Critiques de l'Economie Politique*, April-June 1985, pp 63-76; Françoise Baroché, "Social: un programme écrit avec une gomme", in *Intervention* no 15, Jan-Feb-March 1986, pp 12-16; Jean Baudoin, "L'évolution idéologique du RPR depuis 1981", in *Nouvelle Revue Socialiste* nos 78/9, Jan-Feb 1986, pp 89-94; Jean Jaulain, "Qu'a fait la droite du libéralisme économique?", in *Critique Socialiste* no 51, 1^{er} trimestre 1986, pp 18-20; Gérard Oubron, "RPR-UDF, Questions sur une Plateforme", in *Revue Politique et Parlementaire*, Jan-Feb 1986, no 921, pp 14-20.
66. The enthusiastic attempt to reform the wage-scale in the state-owned rail network ran foul of a wave of public-sector strikes. The *Lois Auroux* were left intact because the provisions for the "right of expression" in the workplace had been monopolized by junior management, which suited the employers quite well. On the other hand, prices, rents, and

the foreign exchanges were decontrolled, a new law on flexibility of labour was passed, and the state's right of review over redundancies was scrapped; the privatization programme was largely achieved before the stock market crashed in October '87, and it did include firms nationalized at the Liberation,

67. Michel Noir, "L'utilisation des techniques de marketing dans une campagne présidentielle", in *Pouvoirs* no 14 1980, pp 67-80, "*Depuis 1965 en France, le recours à ces cabinets spécialisés s'est généralisé pour la conduite des campagnes et les travaux d'analyse. La plupart des grandes sociétés d'études ou des agences de publicité ont créé des départements spécialisés, . . . On peut considérer pour acquis que la quasi-totalité des décisions importantes d'une précampagne ne sont prises qu'après vérification par une étude de leur validité et de leur cohérence avec la stratégie globale.*"
68. Roger Priouret, "Haro sur l'étatisme" in *Le Nouvel Observateur* 23-2-81 "*La petite histoire veut que ce soient les hommes de marketing électoral qui, dans les deux jours qui ont précédé la conférence de presse du 10 février, aient fait adopter au candidat du RPR cette position inattendue, qui contredit la position officielle du parti exposée dans le livre 'Atout France'.*"
69. The RPR's Michel Noir has argued that the candidate's distinct characteristics correspond to the product's special colour, shape, etc; each has a 'programme', in the sense of the promise or guarantee of certain future actions or advantages; they both resort to advertising and promotion at the point of sale, both have to meet competition, and in each case the budget has to be matched to the expected profit. In the actual marketing effort, a politician's team of helpers corresponds to the commercial sales force; if the candidate cannot be present at every sales point, at least his or her poster should be; in each case a big promotional campaign makes use of the same array of give-away gadgets carrying the brand name - tee-shirts, badges, pencils etc. Furthermore, political and commercial marketers make use of exactly the same range of concepts to establish the target group's degree of familiarity with the product, starting from simple awareness of its existence, through attention, recollection, identification, to opinion formation and ready agreement with the product's key slogans. Finally, both political and commercial marketing rely on the same discoveries made by social psychology about the socio-cultural or psychological 'frames of reference' used by individuals to make sense of the world; they use the same battery of techniques to decipher what is latent and unexpressed in an individual's psychology, behind the overt and spoken - in-depth interviews and 'motivation studies' as well as panels and questionnaires, (Michel Noir, *Réussir une campagne électorale; suivre l'exemple américain?* Editions d'Organisation, Paris 1977, pp 28-32)
70. *ibidem* pp 238
71. In French law, commercial advertisers are forbidden to compare their products with another, while politicians are not. Commercial distribution points are the result of negotiation, whereas the local strength of a political 'sales force' is linked to the changing number of party activists in this or that constituency. In commercial marketing, geographical 'strongholds' have nothing to do with the place of manufacture, whereas in French politics, Chirac for example in 1981 won 18.2% of the vote nationally, 27% in Paris, and 51.9% in his Corrèze heartland. In politics, to vote is to exclude; a voter will choose Dupont to keep out Durand, but not Coca-Cola to keep out Pepsi. In advertising, the commercial bill-sticker doesn't tear down Citroën while he is placarding Renault - indeed he probably works for both firms, but in France election campaigns wouldn't be the same without fist-fights between poster teams. In a commercial transaction, the purchaser is influenced by habit, for he buys the same product often,

whereas the casting of a vote is less frequent. The commercial product is always new, whereas some politicians have been in the market longer than others; sometimes the sitting candidate has an advantage, but he could also be handicapped by obvious wear and tear, (Sophie Huet et Philippe Langenieux-Villard; *La Communication Politique* Paris, PUF, 1982, pp 43-65)

72. Noir *op cit* p 233-4
73. Cited by Daniel Boy, Elisabeth Dupoirier, Hélène-Y Meynaud; "Le Marketing Politique; de la conviction à la séduction", in *Pouvoirs* no 33 1985, pp 121-129
74. Cited in *ibidem*, p 127-8. "*Un publicitaire n'a pas le pouvoir de transformer qui que ce soit. Nos amis nous disent créateurs, nos ennemis mystificateurs; nous ne sommes en fait que des révélateurs.*"
75. Thierry Saussez, *Politique Séduction; Comment les Hommes Politiques Réussissent à Vous Flaire*, Paris, Jean-Claude Lattès, 1986, p69. "*Contrairement au marketing commercial, le produit n'est pas créé en fonction des besoins du marché. Composé de l'homme et de ses idées, il est imposé aux professionnels de la communication. Nous ne pouvons qu'améliorer l'emballage, rendre le ruban plus joli, multiplier les occasions d'achat.*"
76. Cited in Boy, Dupoirier, Meynaud, *loc cit*, pp 126-7. "*Une conception politique pour réussir doit se trouver en phase avec des choses en train de faire une synergie... il faut trouver des points d'ajustements qui peuvent aller jusqu'à des inflexions de doctrines... cette idée-là - dans le stock programmatique - on la met au vingt-cinquième rang, il faudrait la mettre au premier rang.*"
77. "accoucheur de projets de développement pour la société," Roland Cayrol, *La Nouvelle Communication Politique* Paris, Larousse, 1986, p 124
78. Interview with André Fanton, 21-4-89, Fanton was so concerned that the party was not properly organized in this respect that he was the only person ever to stand - unsuccessfully, because independently of the ruling clique - in the 'election' for general secretary under the old UDR rules.
79. "*Il avait une théorie, en disant, 'On met 100,000 francs sur un bureau devant l'institut de sondages, et ils augmentent votre côte d'un point,'... (Et si on mettait 200,000?)... 'On a deux points, etc, etc.'*" Interview with André Fanton, 21-4-89
80. Interview with André Fanton, 21-4-89. "*Je lui ai expliqué cent cinquante fois que les instituts de sondage ne vivaient pas de la politique, ce qu'il avait l'air de croire, qu'ils vivaient du commerce, et si leurs sondages n'étaient pas très bons, eh bien, ça leur coûtait très cher sur le plan commercial. Et ce n'était pas avec 100,000 francs qu'on les faisait changer d'avis, parce que les 100,000 francs dont il parlait, ça leur faisait perdre dix millions.*"
81. Interview with André Fanton, "*La communication, c'était la première fois qu'on imaginait une politique tendant à faire passer une image, soit du mouvement, soit de son président, si possible amélioré. Et dans la communication selon moi - c'est ce que, en tout cas, j'avais dit, et il l'a accepté - il y avait naturellement, les études d'opinion.*"
82. Interview with Jacques Boyon, 27-4-89

83. Interview with André Fanton, 21-4-89; *"Il y a une mesure, on ne peut pas suivre les sondages. Tout à l'heure, j'ai dit que le général de Gaulle a fait la force de dissuasion française. S'il avait fait un sondage, il n'y aurait eu aucune chance que ce soit accepté, aucune. C'est exactement comme quand Mitterrand a supprimé la peine de mort, . . . Donc, moi, je ne critique pas un homme politique; je dirais même que je souhaite qu'un homme politique ne suive pas les sondages. Mais, si vous voulez, l'intérêt du sondage, c'est de faire apparaître le décalage qui existe dans l'opinion, entre ce que vous allez dire, et ce que l'opinion croit. Donc, ça veut dire qu'il faut un peu de pédagogie dans ce que vous défendez,"*
84. *"Nous avons essayé de balayer un petit peu l'ensemble du terrain pour voir les thèmes qui étaient les plus porteurs,"* (Interview with André Fanton, 21-4-89)
85. The incident is recounted in Philippe Boggio and Alain Rollat, *Ce Terrible Monsieur Fasqua*, Paris, Olivier Orban 1988, p 170, and confirmed by André Fanton, (Interview of 21-4-89)
86. Interview with André Fanton, 21-4-89; *"Je le lui ai dit tout le temps. Je le lui ai dit après, notamment jusqu'en '86, notamment dans les années '83-84, quand on essayait de mettre en place une plateforme. Ah, . . . je lui ai dit, "Tout montre que les français, . . ." - on ne peut pas dire qu'ils ne sont pas libéraux, parce que, si on leur pose la question comme ça, ils répondent tous qu'ils sont libéraux, mais que, au fond des choses, ils ne le sont pas,"*
87. Interview with André Fanton, 21-4-89; *"J'ai parlé de l'impôt sur les grandes fortunes, parce que c'était clair. On a fait des sondages, là, avec l'impôt sur les grandes fortunes. On a posé la question. Toujours, toujours, toujours, les gens, les français répondaient, "Il faut le garder!" Toujours! . . . Mais en '86 on s'est précipité pour l'abroger, alors, c'était contraire à ce que pensaient les français. Dans tous les sondages d'opinion publique qu'on a faits, privés ou publics, les français considéraient que l'impôt sur les grandes fortunes était bon,"*
88. Interview with André Fanton, 21-4-89. *"Quand vous faites un campagne électorale, et vous allez chez les commerçants, que vous disent les commerçants? Les commerçants vous disent jamais qu'il n'y a pas assez de liberté. Ils vous disent toujours qu'il y en a trop. Il vous demandent, tous les bouchers qui sont en place, les coiffeurs, les boulangers, . . . ils veulent qu'il n'y a pas plus de boulangers, de bouchers, de coiffeurs qui existent, Ils vous disent qu'il faut un diplôme. Leur rêve, c'est d'être des pharmaciens, c'est-à-dire un pour trois mille habitants, point final,"*
89. Interview with André Fanton, 21-4-89. *"La conclusion a été éclatante; qu'on ne touche pas à ça! Et toutes les idées qu'on pouvait avoir sur, "Il faut que les français paient une partie de leur maladie," ont été balayées. Alors là, du patron le plus libéral jusqu'au balayeur le moins fortuné, l'ambition de tous les agriculteurs et de tous les commerçants qui ne sont pas à la sécurité sociale, c'est d'être à la sécurité sociale,"*
90. Philippe Auberger, *L'Allergie Fiscale*, Paris, Calmann-Lévy 1984, p 128
91. *Noir op cit, Réussir une campagne, . . .* p 40. *" . . . une complexe de représentations affectives et rationnelles résultant de la confrontation de causes génératrices (manifestations de la marque, expérience propre, rumeur) avec motivations pré-existantes, et qu'on associe spontanément à la marque dès l'évocation de celle-ci."*
92. *ibidem*, pp 33-9

93. In the USA, the absence of an ideological element in party traditions has led to candidate-centred campaigning which both reinforces citizens' tendency to determine their vote according to candidate rather than party label, and induces campaign strategists to devote vast resources to studying the components of 'image' in the hope of reproducing them to order, Noir, *op cit*, pp 73-83 and 121
94. *Le Monde* 24/5-5-87
95. Huet et Langenieux-Villard *op cit*, p 41
96. Interview with André Fanton, 21-4-89
97. Bernard Cathelat, *Styles de Vie*, vol 1, *Cartes et Portraits*, Paris, Editions d'Organisation, 1985, pp 34-37. For Crespi's adhesion to lifestyle sociology, see Boy, Dupoirier et Meynaud, *loc cit* p 127
98. In the mid-1980s this information was drawn from a panel of 3,500 people interviewed six times a year, backed up by a one-off sample of 4,000 every two years. Another French organization using the same methods, COFREMCA, uses an annual poll of 2,500 people. As the CCA's data bank has grown, the separation of the population into identifiable sociostyles has become progressively more sophisticated. In 1972, they claimed to distinguish three mentalities and nine sociostyles, five years later the sociostyles had expanded to 11, and by 1984 there were five recorded mentalities and 14 corresponding sociostyles. Cathelat *op cit*, pp 18-21; Boy, Dupoirier et Meynaud, *loc cit* p 125
99. They have also condemned the lack of any methodological commentary to justify lumping together the result of different types of research - including interviews and auto-administered questionnaires - and demanded details of the method of interpretation which allows Cathelat and his friends to go from raw facts to their colourful 'maps'. See for example Nicholas Herpin, "Socio-style", in *Revue Française de Sociologie*, XXVII 1986 pp 265-272
100. J-P Bobin, *Le Marketing Politique, vendre l'homme et l'idée*, Paris, Milan Midia, 1988 pp 75-6
101. Cathelat *op cit* p 75
102. *ibidem* pp 71-79; in this passage we have left out of the account the "utilitarian" mentality, corresponding largely to the low incomes and organicist conservatism of isolated rural areas; these represented 20% of French people in 1977, according to the CCA, and 14-15% in 1982-3
103. *ibidem* pp 64-7
104. *ibidem* p 19 "...c'est un courant, une poussée d'opinion publique, une 'mode', (au plus noble sens du terme), souvent cyclique, qui influence la société pendant quelques années ou dizaines d'années avant de s'étaler ou de s'inverser."
105. *ibidem* p 20, "...ils composent ainsi une rose des vents qui dispersent les différents sociostyles et mentalités aux quatre coins de l'horizon social, selon leurs sensibilités".
106. *ibidem* p 78

107. Cited in Huet et Langenieux-Villard, *op cit*, p 40, "... le changement de majorité qui est intervenu le 10 mai ne s'est pas produit brusquement. La campagne électorale ne pouvait pas modifier le cours des choses. Le changement vient de loin."
108. Crespi cited in Saussez, *op cit*, p 198
109. Huet et Langenieux-Villard, *op cit*, p 41
110. Jean-Luc Parodi, "Jacques Chirac devant l'opinion (1970-85)", in *Pouvoirs* 34, 1985 pp 157-165.
111. That is, between the moments when Giscard sank without trace and Barre made his breakthrough as a potential winner against the left; Colette Ysmal, *loc cit*, "La Résistible Ascension,..."; Charlot *loc cit* "Les consultations,....."
112. Parodi *loc cit*
113. *ibidem*. But there was ambiguity here: a private poll run by Saussez in 1984 found that in Paris energy was a quality which made Chirac a good mayor, while in the provinces it was seen as a negative quality. (Saussez *op cit*, p 192)
114. Despite the advantage he enjoyed during the "leader of the opposition" period, an average of the monthly "good opinion" scores recorded between June 1981 and March 1986 gave Chirac 36%, less than all of his main rivals, (Giscard 40%, Barre 44% and Veil 48%) (Philippe Habert, "Jacques Chirac à l'épreuve du pouvoir", in *Pouvoirs* 41 1987, pp 185-200)
115. Ironically, while Barre is often thought of as testy and schoolmasterish, Chirac is a relaxed and unceremonious personality who, by his own admission, has not learnt to perform well with the media, becoming tense and aggressive when the microphones are switched on. (Liffran *op cit* p 100; Saussez *op cit* p 191)
116. Saussez *op cit* p 195
117. Cited in Cayrol *op cit* p 88; "On a fait un effort formidable pour lui faire perdre son image de fonceur ultradynamique et presque facho. On lui a donné du poids, de la sérénité. Et, chaque fois qu'on est vraiment sur la bonne voie, que les sondages commencent à bouger, bang!, il fait une déclaration à l'emporte-pièce sans nous prévenir."
118. Thierry Desjardins, *Un Inconnu Nommé Chirac*, Paris, La Table Ronde, 1983 p 440.
119. Thierry Desjardins *op cit*, *Les Chiraquiens,.....* p 145-6. Saussez argued that it was possible to make strong declarations, reflecting Chirac's temperament, in a "warm and effective" communication style, so that the polemic was a "false debate", (Saussez, *op cit*, pp 194-5)
120. Desjardins *op cit*, *Les Chiraquiens,.....* pp 128-9
121. Interview with André Fanton, 21-4-89; "Il trouvait que c'était extraordinaire,... Il réunissait 23 personnes,... moi, j'ai lu, je ne sais pas où je l'ai, je l'ai gardé,... un document extraordinaire. On... on demandait aux gens qu'on réunissait comme ça par le tirage au sort, à Orléans où je ne sais pas où, en disant, "Qui est Chirac?" Alors il y a eu des réponses; "Chirac, c'est un polytechnicien", "Son fils est polytechnicien,..."

Il n'a pas de fils, mais Crespi disait, "Ah, c'est intéressant, vous comprenez; on croit qu'il a un fils!" Lui alors! Et je disais, "Ça veut dire quoi? Vous en tirez quoi comme conclusion politique?" Mais il disait, "C'est intéressant, c'est l'image!"
.....les panels de Crespi, c'était Cathelat, il été ravi parce qu'il y avait un décentré, il y avait un recentré, etc. Alors ça a été un mode, parce que M. Cathelat, aujourd'hui, plus personne n'en parle, sauf dans les universités de sociologie."

Chapter 7 The Sources of Ideas

If there was a debate on ideas within the RPR elites, it was not cast in terms of the defence or adulteration of an ideological inheritance. In the early 1980s the party did not debate ideas through the clash of rival factions and the presentation of motions at party congresses. Rather, change resulted from the the way in which outside events affected different groups within the party. In this and the next chapter, we describe the key changes in the intellectual environment at the turn of the 1980s and trace the way in which they led to the abandonment or modification of existing ideas, producing a new amalgam of conservatism and liberalism which won widespread acceptance throughout the party.

In the first section of this chapter we examine the influence of GRECE, (*Groupement de Recherche et d'Etudes sur la Civilisation Européenne*) a shadowy extreme-right organization which set itself as early as 1968 the task of capturing the ideological and cultural domination which GRECE believed the Left had exercised since 1945. Since few influential Gaullists had any connection with GRECE, the group's significance lies not in what it was able to achieve inside the party, but in its contribution to a climate of opinion, especially through what many saw as its "infiltration" of the mass-circulation right-wing press.

In the following section we contrast GRECE ideas with those of the self-styled "new economists", a group of young intellectuals who consciously set out in 1975 to expound to the French people the ideas of a "new generation" of American economic and political theorists, which had helped fuel the Republican revival in the United States and which they had fervently adopted as their own. These two schools of thought represented

opposite poles of French conservative ideology in the 1980s, the ultra-authoritarian and the ultra-liberal. We leave until chapter 8 a full consideration of how each was interpreted, accepted or rejected within the RPR.

GRECE and the *Nouvelle Droite*

There were several reasons why right-wing extremism was going through a bad patch in France at the end of the 1960s. The return to power of de Gaulle had symbolically sealed the moral and political bankruptcy of Vichy and collaboration; in 1962 the victory of the Algerian liberation struggle deprived the nostalgics of imperialism of their last hope of preserving French rule over a substantial foreign territory; in 1965 de Gaulle humiliated Jean-Louis Tixier-Vignancour, carrier of the extremists' hopes, in the first Presidential election held under universal suffrage, and in the 1967 legislative elections, votes cast for extreme-right candidates amounted to no more than 0.8% of the total.

These were hardly propitious circumstances for the launch of a new extreme-right movement. Inevitably the duplicated first number of a magazine called "*Nouvelle Ecole*", dated February-March 1968, passed almost unnoticed amid the tumults and moods of May. In the August-September number it published the names of the 40 founder members of the 'Group for Research and Study on European Civilization' (GRECE), which was officially registered as an association in Nice in January 1969. By the 1980s GRECE and *Nouvelle Ecole* were more or less synonymous with what had come to be called the *Nouvelle Droite*. Most of the 40 were known to each other through their participation in extreme-right politics, and the first two or three years of GRECE's existence were a rather uncertain period during

which little seemed to distinguish either the politics, the contributors, or indeed the prospects of *Nouvelle Ecole*, from those of two recently extinct predecessors.²

However, Alain de Benoist, the new magazine's editor-in-chief, adopted the successful strategy - christened *métapolitique*, and provocatively attributed to the Italian Communist Antonio Gramsci - of abandoning the traditional political arena, with its round of elections, campaigns and demonstrations, in favour of a "cultural struggle" aimed at the "winning of minds."³ Once the early difficulties were surmounted, GRECE emerged as an innovative force propagating themes some of which differed sharply from those of traditional French conservatism. By 1979, an influential right-wing editor, Louis Pauwels, could claim;

My ideas are those of what could be called the "*Nouvelle Droite*", which has got nothing to do with the bourgeois, conservative and reactionary right.⁴

Alain de Benoist, the undisputed intellectual leader of GRECE, has defended the novelty of his right-wing ideology as neither traditional, nor fascist, nor Christian.⁵ Certainly, GRECE's keenness to address contemporary social issues, such as the role of women, urban planning, administrative devolution, and educational philosophy has sometimes seemed to bring them closer to the Left than to the traditional Right.⁶ Likewise, their general cultural criticism derived a "modern" feeling from their willingness to discuss cinema and cartoon books as well as more traditional art-forms.⁷

If not traditional, is the *Nouvelle Droite* fascist? De Benoist's brand of aristocratic elitism allows him to claim that he has "nothing but contempt for Hitler", the contempt, that is, of the aesthete who places culture ahead of race as the decisive factor in history.⁸ Furthermore, the

"Gramscian" strategy of cultural encirclement and infiltration of the decision-making elite - to which the original GRECE leaders have faithfully adhered - has little in common with the fascism of the 1930s, which relied on brute power and manipulation of the masses by a group of plebian, if heroic, upstarts.¹⁰

In terms of public impact, however, the fascist reference is less important than the attack on Christianity, which is arguably the most fundamental, as it is the most disconcerting of *Nouvelle Droite* themes. GRECE wants to put the clock back not just to before 1945, but to before Christ.

At its simplest, GRECE doctrine amounts to a denunciation of contemporary decadence, the identification of the roots of this decadence in the judeo-christian tradition, and the necessity to return to pre-christian values and social forms.¹¹ The signs of decadence, first, are all around; litter on the beaches, informality in dress, bad teaching, hypocrisy in sexual behaviour, the mediocrity of politicians, vacuous consumerism, the reign of the market, the cultural hegemony of Marxism, the breakdown of homogeneous societies.¹² Christian responsibility for this state of affairs follows from its two principal vices, monotheism, (which it shared with Judaism and Islam) and egalitarianism. Both helped on the fall of the Roman Empire, and in this respect GRECE writers came to see Christianity as the "bolshevism of antiquity", undermining the structures of the family and the polity.¹³ Subsequently, Christianity contributed little of value to European culture; as Europe emerged from the middle ages, the most important achievements in science and art occurred "not within Christianity, but rather in most cases *against* it."¹⁴

In the modern era monotheism is said to be at the root of imperialist drives, which were legitimized by the conquerors' conviction of possessing the truth. The *Nouvelle Droite* joins the left, therefore, in condemning colonialism.¹⁴

But the adherents of "totalitarian" religions, while regarding themselves as superior to unbelievers, are equal to each other, to the disgust of GRECE, which shares the classic conservative organicist view of people in society, in which a person's true nature is fulfilled only when s/he feels at one within a community in which everyone has an allotted place,

a society which the European tradition regarded as *integrating* the individual, (in the sense in which an organism *integrates* the organs which compose it within a higher order....)¹⁵

The *Nouvelle Droite* clings more tenaciously than mainstream conservatism to the belief that, today as in pre-christian times, the members of the national community should be linked by a common attachment to the land, by ties of blood and tradition, and by the cult of heroic deeds.¹⁶ Both bourgeois and workers make the mistake of being more concerned with *owning* than with *being*, so that those most likely to defend the community's interests are the aristocracy, defined in the words of Pierre Vial, GRECE general secretary, by

A very simple distinction; aristocrats attempt to preserve what they are, bourgeois endeavour to preserve what they have.¹⁷

On this reading, elites are as likely to be defined by self-selection in Nietzschean fashion, through the quality of their actions,¹⁸ as by their noble birth. Political democracy is rejected because it is neither in touch with national identity, nor likely to produce appropriate rulers.

Indeed contemporary western society, more than any other, has degenerated to become no more than the sum of the individuals composing it.

The *nation* is henceforth nothing but the sum of its *inhabitants* at any one time.... Political sovereignty itself is reduced to the level of individuals. Since there is no principle of authority which is aloof and transcendental, power is no more than a *delegation* by individuals, whose votes are *added together* whenever elections come around. The "sovereignty of the people" has nothing whatsoever to do with the *people as a people*, but is the indecisive, contradictory and manipulable sovereignty of the individuals who compose the people.¹⁹

On one level, the *Nouvelle Droite's* call for the defence of cultural continuity was cutting with the grain of contemporary right-wing politics. Since the return of de Gaulle, it had become habitual for at least a part of the French Right to launch attacks against American culture and American economic power. Some items on GRECE's list of afflictions, such as Hollywood, alleged American financial backing for French ecologists, and US refusal to sell uranium for the French nuclear programme, have a Gaullist ring to them.²⁰ But the denunciation of the destruction of national cultures goes beyond the mere supplanting of French interests or the stealing of French markets by a more powerful rival.

The sale to foreign buyers of national art treasures, the interpretation of "usefulness" in terms of short-term commercial profitability, the dispersion of populations and the systematic organization of migrations, the handing-over to "multinational" companies of the ownership or management of entire sectors of national economies or technologies, the unfettered spread of exotic cultural fashions, the subjection of the media to modes of thought and speech linked to the momentary development of certain political or ideological superpowers, etc. -

- all this is not, could not be, the fault of the Americans alone -

- all these characteristics of contemporary western societies derive logically from putting into practice the principal postulates of liberal doctrine.²¹

GRECE ideology, in short, contains a powerful critique of liberalism.

It deplores the way in which, armed with the liberal philosophy, industrialism spread itself all over the globe, everywhere extinguishing local and ancient cultures in its path. It complains that the liberal conception of political rights destroys the cohesion of nations, while its conception of human nature substitutes quantity for quality of satisfactions and imposes a "bourgeois" obsession with money-making - the key symptom of the ritually denounced *société marchande*. In so doing Liberalism is responsible for Communism itself, thanks to the influence of the classical economists on Marx;

The conception of man as an economic animal/being, (the *Homo oeconomicus* of Adam Smith and his school) is the symbol, the very *sign* which connotes *at the same time* bourgeois capitalism and marxist socialism...

Defined essentially as an economic actor, man is considered as always able to behave in his own "best" (economic) "interests".²²

Rejecting the optimistic and rationalist liberal model of "economic man", de Benoist asks the questions which liberalism has never satisfactorily answered;

As for the *advantage* and the *interest* which the individual is supposed to seek, they remain ill-defined. What *kind* of interest is in question? In relation to what *value-system* is the advantage to be judged?²³

According to the *Nouvelle Droite*, neither the bourgeois conception of material benefit, nor the Marxist idea of class interest are properly grounded in convincing value-systems; these can only be provided by national culture.

Naturally, the attack on liberalism is shared by other right-wing extremists with organicist convictions, like the members of the *Club de l'Horloge*, despite their differences on other points such as the new Right's paganism and alleged racism.²⁴ In dealing, however, with the

challenge represented by the "rebirth" of liberalism in French political thought in the 1980s, the various families of the extreme Right responded differently. It was not the "pure" *Nouvelle Droite* of de Benoist but the branch represented by the *Club de l'Horloge* which was more willing to colour its discourse with liberal overtones and, indeed, to try to integrate liberalism into its conservative doctrine. To see how this was done we need to explain what the *Grécistes* actually mean when they demand the return to pre-christian forms of social organization.

In this respect, *Nouvelle Droite* ideas are based on research into Indo-European languages and religions carried out by a distinguished French historian and linguist, Georges Dumézil. GRECE has adopted and popularized Dumézil's focus on the tripartite classification of social functions in any society into those which possess a sacred character, those concerned with warfare, and those concerned with economic activity. More particularly, Dumézil theorized that only peoples who spoke Indo-European languages developed an ideology in which the functional separation became codified to the extent that the personnel concerned with religious, military or economic affairs were not to step outside their own domain, and that a hierarchy was established between the different functions, with the sacred at the top and the economic at the bottom.

For GRECE, the tripartite division of social functions was more than just a key to political organization. It was "the web of the Indo-European conception of man and of the world, of nature and of the universe."²⁵ *Club de l'Horloge* authors likewise justified the division of fundamental social functions into law-giving, defence and consumption by stressing their correspondance to the three organs of the individual man - brain, muscles, and mouth.²⁶

In the *Nouvelle Droite* interpretation of Dumézil, the definitions of the military and economic spheres in society remain what they have always been; the sacred functions, however, are not only religious but concern the demarcation and celebration of national identity and national sovereignty.²⁷ These tasks are - or should be - the responsibility of the state, and consequently state officials ought to be at the pinnacle of the hierarchy of functions.

By and large, the *Nouvelle Droite* are agreed that western society is fatally unbalanced in that there is a confusion between the economic and the sovereign functions. But there are different ways of depicting this confusion and proposed solutions carry different emphases. For Alain de Benoist, the economic function has come to dominate all others, and its personnel continually interfere in domains which do not concern them;

Liberalism has a two-fold attitude to the state. On the one hand it subjects it to virulent *criticism*, referring to its "inefficiency", and denouncing the "dangers of power". On the other hand, later on, it tries to drag the state into the economic sphere, in order to *depoliticize* it and reverse the ancient hierarchy of functions. As it grows in strength, the economic cast brings within its own sphere the substance of the state, gradually subordinating political decisions to economic imperatives.... Henceforward, the state should be *as little political as possible*. Nor should it substitute itself for the centres of economic decision-making. Its only task is to maintain order and security.... to protect the money-men at the same time as leaving them complete freedom of action - in short, it is no longer to be the *master*, but the very *slave* of those who, understanding better "economic laws" are precisely better placed to organize the world in their own "best interests".²⁸

It is clear from this that for the chief *Gréciste* the disequilibrium between the state and the economy in modern society was mainly to the disadvantage of the state, which appeared in danger of being colonised by private business. In the late 1970s this view seemed odd to most political commentators, for at that time France was usually held up (approvingly or

disapprovingly) as a model of planning and interventionism.

Jean-Yves le Gallou and the *Club de l'Horloge* analysed the separation of economic and sovereign functions in a more subtle fashion which opened up room for attacking the State instead of unconditionally defending it as de Benoist appeared to do. Le Gallou began by arguing that *laissez-faire* is a distortion of the necessary relationship between the three functions - the abandonment of the productive sphere to its own devices, with no incentives or checks organized by the sovereign power, led directly to the inter-war crises and the demise of "classic liberalism". One attempt to reforge the links between State and economy was fascism, equally an aberration since it subordinated the two other functions to the military one.²⁹ Another attempt was Keynesianism, a partial solution based on the idea "in itself justified" of general regulation of the economy by the political sphere. But this empirical approach, which had no overall grasp of the relations between the sovereign and productive functions, necessarily degenerated into "Statism";

This results in a society which is at the same time mercantile and bureaucratic; dominated by economic concerns and commercial values, in which the economy is put under direct control, and the State substitutes itself for private actors.³⁰

For the state to take on economic functions means, among other things, that it has to lower itself to negotiate with its own employees, and that the special status previously reserved for the armed forces and civil servants is extended to the directors of nationalized firms and various other hangers-on. In both cases the result is a dilution of the State's authority. The confusion of roles thus leads to a double drawback - the State's loss of authority is matched by the citizen's loss of freedom.³¹ Le Gallou's formulation left room for the *Club de l'Horloge* to

participate in, and indeed advance, the emerging "liberal" critique of past political practice. From it followed a two-fold political task identified by the liberal revival in France in the early 1980s; the State's sovereign functions should be restored and the authority of its agents strengthened at the same time as the *extent* of its authority should be rolled back to allow economic actors greater freedom.

De Benoist and his friends, in contrast, were increasingly isolated. Although a later formulation made concessions to the newly fashionable liberal language, they still clung to the statist core of their doctrine. When the 1983 GRECE annual congress passed a resolution on the economy which demanded;

very powerful internal competition, an economy made up of private companies, desocialised and freed from the burdens of taxation, but at the same time a national economy, subordinated to politics and directed by a State which is streamlined yet strong, a State which plans, which does not intervene in the economy, but directs it.³²

the deliberate choice of the terms "planning" and "dirigism" underlined GRECE's idiosyncratic determination to row against the current wherever they could.

Another aspect of Dumézil's theorizing proved useful to an extreme-right trying to come to terms with post-imperialism. Since the tri-functional model of social organization seemed to have been codified in an ideology only in Indo-European cultures, the way was open to argue that today's European nations, despite their different history and institutions, had in fact the one, the great, the only civilizing idea in common. Dumézil had provided, for those who wanted to use it, like Le Pen's *Front National*, a simple but prestigious and semi-mythical

justification for switching the centre of their political enthusiasm from the unique historic mission of French or German or British culture to a pan-Europeanism which would celebrate and integrate the most reactionary elements of their existing creeds.

All in all, the idea of the three functions (as we shall see in chapter 8) proved extraordinarily easy to grasp and to manipulate, and was effectively relayed into the RPR by the *Club de l'Horloge* in the 1980s. Meanwhile, as a proselytizing organization, GRECE itself had a rather chequered career, as we now show.

The founders of GRECE never intended to build a mass organization, but had set themselves the task of recruiting, or at least influencing

those few thousand people who make a country what it is. At this moment, France is nothing without thinkers, the leaders of cultural, sports and workers' associations, scientists, publicists and administrators who control, influence, and direct the activities of millions of individuals. A few thousand is not many in absolute terms, but a few thousand such important people, sharing the same ideas and the same methods, could cause a revolution.³³

By 1976-7 the group claimed 1,000 to 1,200 members, but had apparently failed to recruit or to spread its influence among the layer of private-sector managers which it had identified as the key 'deciders' in French society.³⁴ In building the group, quality was so much more important than quantity that would-be members were filtered by means of a questionnaire which tested their academic and literary achievements, their current reading, and their cultural interests. Commitment to the group's ideas and activities was also expected to be demonstrated by hefty financial contributions.³⁵

Nevertheless, GRECE was successful in spreading its influence through

journalism, especially towards the end of the 1970s. Assiduously applying his strategy of cultural encirclement, de Benoist went in search of endorsements by reputable figures in the intellectual and cultural world, and by 1973 had built up a credible *comité de patronage* for *Nouvelle Ecole*. From the autumn of 1973 the general public were able to read regularly for the first time *Eléments de la Civilisation Européenne*, which had previously been published only as an internal bulletin, and this was followed in 1974 by the theoretical review, *Etudes et Recherches*. In 1976 the group began its own publishing operation, *Editions Copernic*.

As well as editing *Nouvelle Ecole*, Alain de Benoist had throughout the 1970s a column in *Valeurs Actuelles*, a weekly news magazine edited by an old extreme-right colleague, François d'Orcival; in addition he wrote for the monthly *Spectacle du Monde*, along with other *grécistes*, Michel Marmin, Michel Mourlet and Loius Rougier. The group also had access to the publications of the press-group *Média*, including titles such as *Jacinte*, *Enfants-magazine*, *Vingt-Ans* and *Biba* (launched in 1980), as well as to *Question de* (edited by Louis Pauwels), and *Item*, founded in 1976 by Philippe Héduy.³⁶ In 1978, however, occurred an event which was probably as significant as all these minor conquests put together; Robert Hersant, the press millionaire who had bought *Le Figaro* in 1975, decided, in an effort to boost its circulation and advertising revenue, to remodel his Sunday colour supplement and switch it to Saturday, under a new title, *Figaro-Magazine*. By 1981, *Fig-Mag* was selling just over half a million copies weekly.³⁷ Its editor, Louis Pauwels, whose interests included magic, astrology and paganism, and who had dabbled in right-wing nationalism in the 1950s, lost no time in recruiting his friend de Benoist and half a dozen of his closest GRECE collaborators to write for the new

magazine. Relayed by the powerful *Figaro* group, GRECE ideas appeared to have reached the peak of their possible influence at the turn of the 1980s.³⁸

In the summer of 1979, however, a nationally-known left-inclined journalist, launching a highly public counter-attack, branded Pauwels as a *Nouvelle Droite* sympathizer, alleged that the elaborately constructed *comité de patronage* of *Nouvelle Ecole* was intended to obscure its position as organ of a tightly-knit group, denounced the translation by *Editions Copernic* of the elitist psychological and biological theories of Eysenck and Jensen, and "revealed" the behind-the-scenes influence of young GRECE members employed as researchers by prominent right-wing politicians wanting to "pass themselves off as theorists."³⁹ Thierry Pfister, author of this *exposé* probably over-stated his case on the degree of direct GRECE influence on establishment politicians. He pointed to GRECE involvement in the writing, within a two or three year period, of Jacques Médecin's *Le Terreau de la Liberté*, Philippe Malaud's *La Révolution Libérale*, and Michel Poniatowski's *L'avenir n'est écrit nulle part*.⁴⁰ Not one of these works could be described, at the time or indeed retrospectively, as making a significant impact on the development of right-wing ideas.

Of the authors in question, Philippe Malaud, was for a long time president of the *Centre National des Indépendants et Paysans*, a kind of half-way house between the respectable and the extreme Right, but his role dwindled into insignificance with the emergence of le Pen's *Front National* in the 1980s. Jacques Médecin's greatest achievement in politics was to become under-secretary for tourism in the mid-seventies, but his chief preoccupation has undoubtedly been to remain mayor of Nice for two decades, a task which did not require him to play a major role in the

RPR's programmatic renewal. Of the three, Poniatoski rose to the greatest heights, as Giscard's righthand man and Minister of the Interior. As such he played no role at all inside the RPR, and after 1978 became just another ex-minister when Giscard was forced to sacrifice him.

Exaggerated or not, Pfister's accusations provoked a flood of denunciations and denials which showed how far GRECE was from conquering the hearts and minds of other mainstream Rightwingers. For the UDF, Raffarin, Bussereau and Maigrat warned pragmatically against *Nouvelle Droite* attempts to pull the Giscardian majority towards the right, while Stasi, Stoléru and Lecanuet on doctrinal grounds denounced elitism and the threat to civil liberties. For the RPR, Debré denounced *en bloc* GRECE's attacks on Christianity and liberal political philosophy along with their abandonment of the great idea of the French nation.⁴¹

Pfister was right, however, to warn about one young RPR man largely unknown to the public, who had already worked in the *cabinets* of the Giscardian ministers, Poniatoski and Christian Bonnet, who was thoroughly imbued with GRECE ideas, and whose influence in the RPR was still growing. This was Yvan Blot, founder and leader of the *Club de l'Horloge*, whose influence we discuss in the next chapter.

The Left's "exposure" of GRECE did not seem to do the group any immediate harm. Twenty new names were added to the *comité de patronage* in 1979, including those of Arthur Koestler and Konrad Lorenz, their first Nobel prize winner.⁴² In the spring of 1981 the group claimed 4,500 members, while *Eléments*, which was now openly the *revue de la Nouvelle Droite*, claimed 6,000 subscribers, against 2,000 only 2 years previously.⁴³ At the end of the year 1,000 people turned up to the GRECE annual colloquium.

Nevertheless the 1979 debate had succeeded in opening a rift between GRECE and the Right-wing mainstream. In a bid to underline their independence and their radical identity, and perhaps irked by the attacks to which they had been subjected, the group announced in 1981 that they would endorse no candidate in the forthcoming Presidential election, denounced the exploitation of their "antilegalitarian" message both by the *Club de l'Horloge* and by Giscardian education ministers who simply wanted to defend existing privileges, and refused the role of ideological think-tank for the right.⁴⁴ They greeted Mitterrand's election as a vindication of their own "Gramscian" interpretation of the relationship between culture and politics which confirmed that "objectively speaking" the Right had not deserved to remain in power. Serving notice that they would not systematically oppose the government, they gave grudging approval to the anti-Americanism of the new minister for culture, Jacques Lang.⁴⁵ De Benoist followed this up in the spring of 1982 with an article stating his belief that the Soviet Union was "more Russian than Marxist", and less imbued with universalism, egalitarianism and cosmopolitanism than its superpower rival.⁴⁶ Two years later he announced his intention to vote Communist in the 1984 European elections⁴⁷ and likened the established Right to *Versillais* (the liquidators of the Paris Commune). Pierre Vial, the GRECE secretary-general, regretted his mockery of Che Guevara 20 years previously, and expressed sympathy for the Baader-Meinhoff gang and the Italian red brigades.⁴⁸

By this time the two GRECE leaders seemed to have crossed the line separating iconoclasm from phrase-mongering, and were on terrain where the respectable Right had no desire to follow them. As the 1980s progressed, the concentrated GRECE presence in the mass-circulation press was steadily

diluted,⁴⁹ and the group fell into a certain ideological and organizational disarray. No issue of *Nouvelle Ecole* appeared between the end of 1979 and the summer of 1981, after which the frequency was reduced to one per year, for financial reasons. In 1981, *Editions Copernic* was taken over by Albatros-Valmonde; 1982 was a year with no "annual colloquium", and the 1983 meeting was devoted to the sketchy elaboration of a so-called "third way" which was not well received by all GRECE stalwarts. Disagreements surfaced as to whether the leadership of a united and nuclear-capable Europe belonged to France or to Germany, and the commitment to regionalism was dropped, causing the disaffection of Jean Mabire, one of the founding members.⁵⁰

Most important of all, however, GRECE's natural supporters, disenchanted by the group's refusal to campaign actively against the Socialist government, drifted increasingly towards the *Front National*, which succeeded in winning over 10-12 key second-rank Grécists and was denounced unambiguously by de Benoist for its racism and Atlanticism as well as for Le Pen's attack on the 5th Republic's institutions.⁵¹ In 1985, de Benoist set the seal on his rejection of the more pragmatic and "liberal" branches of the Right-wing family by negotiating a *rapprochement* with an insignificant extreme-Right groupuscule, the *Mouvement Nationaliste Révolutionnaire*. This action made it clear that, after years of patient efforts which for a while had seemed crowned with remarkable success, GRECE had missed its rendez-vous with history. It had opted definitively for the nationalist and "revolutionary" camp of Right-wing extremism, as opposed to the "national-liberal" camp in which the FN was rivalled intermittently by the RPR.⁵²

By withdrawing the support of *Figaro-Magazine*, Louis Pauwels played

an important role in steering GRECE into this political backwater, just as he had in lifting them from obscurity in the first place. In 1984 he told a French researcher that his unexpected conversion to catholicism was only one of four reasons for the break. The others were the Grécists attempts to impose their own group's views, Pauwels' adherence to "the fundamental theses of liberalism", and his belief that the political success of Ronald Reagan signalled the "renewal of American civilization".⁵³ The last two reasons, cited by a man in Pauwels' position, give an indication of the tremendous impact of the Reagan revolution on the development of French political thinking. We turn now to that revolution's chief apologists, the self-styled "New Economists."

The "New Economists"

It would be impossible to overstate the key role which Henri Lepage's book played in our country from 1978 onwards in making the French people aware of the radical intellectual changes taking place across the Atlantic..... (Its appearance was) without doubt the starting point for the creation of the New Economists' group in France.⁵⁴

There are good reasons for accepting at face value this tribute to Lepage's book, *Demain le Capitalisme*⁵⁵, which became a best-seller in France and was later translated into English.⁵⁶ Its author, Jacques Garelo, is himself an economics teacher, and one of the self-styled new economists, a group whose most obvious quality is not modesty. Nevertheless, although Lepage's proselytising style, and the manner in which his book was marketed, rightly made it the *référence obligée* for later discussion, the 'new economics' was already in its infancy during the two or three years before 1978.

Parts of the book were prefigured in articles which Lepage himself wrote in the magazine *Réalités* during 1977,⁵⁷ which in turn followed seminars held by a group of academic economists in Paris during 1975 and 1976. Shortly before the appearance of *Demain le Capitalisme*, the contributions to one of these seminars were collected in a work which covered much the same ground, entitled *L'Economique Retrouvée*.⁵⁸ The contributors to this volume can justifiably claim to be the founding members of the new economists' group.⁵⁹

Unlike the *Nouvelle Droite*, the new economists arrived with a bang; journalists were soon extolling the freshness of their ideas both on the political scene, and in academic life, where older representatives of the liberal tradition had all but disappeared from view.⁶⁰ One even suggested that they had prepared the ground for a change of tack in government economic policy which occurred after the 1978 elections.⁶¹ Their impact was probably due as much to their self-advertisement as to the quality of their ideas. The group deliberately launched itself in the media, a few months before the parliamentary elections held in the spring of 1978, with a manifesto in the form of a display advertisement - paid for by a supporting *Association Pour la Démocratie* - which appeared in one of the Paris dailies and several times on television.⁶² Counting on extra pre-election sales, their publishers seized the moment to bring out Maurice Roy's *Vive le Capitalisme* and *L'Occident en désarroi* edited by Pascal Salin and other group members.⁶³ But the biggest effort was reserved for *Demain le Capitalisme*, with the advertisements being paid for partly by Livre de Poche and partly by Lepage himself waiving a fraction of his royalties.⁶⁴

The group did not try to spread the message simply by writing their

own books. The first of what became the annual sessions of the *Université d'Eté de la Nouvelle Economie* was hosted in 1978 (as every year subsequently) by Jacques Garelo at the university of Aix. Here French liberal economists were regularly joined by fellow-thinkers from abroad as well as by politicians or their advisers, such as Philippe Auberger, the RPR's tax-expert.⁶⁵ Garelo has also sought to carry the liberal message outside academic circles through the publications, seminars and other activities organized by the *Association Pour la Liberté Economique et le Progrès Social* (ALEPS) which he has presided since 1979. In parallel fashion, Pascal Salin founded the *Institut Economique de Paris* (IEP) which has published the works of revered liberal ancestors such as Bastiat and von Mises, while Aftalion has used his position at the *Presses Universitaires de France* to publish Hayek.⁶⁶

Henri Lepage and the Defence of Liberal Theory

Henri Lepage consciously set out to expound for French readers what he called "one of the great intellectual events of the century", the "discoveries" of the Chicago school of economists and their refinement and application by a generation of American scholars to a number of unsolved "problems" during the 1960s and 1970s.⁶⁷ These efforts, says Lepage, have served to rescue classical economics from long-standing doubts about its intellectual coherence, especially its central proposition that the pursuit of individual self-interest inevitably produces the greatest common good, thanks to the invisible operation of the market, which automatically matches supply and demand. Assembled in one volume, these vindications of classical liberal theory provided, on a number of points, the "intellectual" justification for the attacks on state intervention in the economy which were soon to be launched in France and elsewhere.

Lepage begins by dismissing the argument that the unfettered development of capitalism produced giant trusts which strangled the automatic compensating mechanisms assumed by classical theory. *Laissez-faire* has never really existed, he says; in 19th century America, the railroad bosses were only corrupt because the state was there to be bought.⁶⁹ Likewise government policy, - Rothbard and Friedman have proved it - and not capitalism's inability to match supply and demand, were responsible for the crash of 1929 and the subsequent depression.⁶⁹

Against the idea that states can organize the economic life of nations in order to create wealth, Lepage brings to bear the "property rights" theory of Douglas North,⁷⁰ whose research into the origins of capitalism "revealed" that economic growth only took off when legal changes (the enclosures) enshrined the state's role as that of protecting the right of private entrepreneurs to make a profit - the latter being the chief motivating force in economic activity.⁷¹

Pigou's concept of "market failure",⁷² which justifies state involvement in welfare, is rejected in favour of James M Buchanan and his "Public Choice" school, who theorize that state bureaucracies do not exist for the public good, but in order to maximize the private advantages of their own members. This explains their apparently unstoppable expansion (paid for by other people), and underlines the need for taxpayers to find ways of introducing "market" principles into the work performance and rewards of bureaucrats. In the longer term, says Lepage, a reform of the entire political system is needed in order to roll back the bureaucracy, for at present public money is allocated as a result of deals made among powerful lobbies (not least the bureaucrats themselves), which effectively shut out the ordinary citizen.⁷³

Next Lepage argues that welfare systems are an illogical and inefficient way of achieving the aim of providing a decent level of existence for all human beings. Closely following Milton Friedman, he charts the unplanned consequences of the regulation of American industries, both public and private, and demonstrates that minimum wage and social security regulations induce a "dependence mentality" of demoralization and laziness among citizens who would have become self-reliant individuals and valuable members of society if welfare legislation had never existed.⁷⁴

Finally, the theories of human capital and of consumer behaviour, elaborated by Gary Becker, produce the clinching argument for rolling back the welfare state, and in so doing, vindicate classical theory's assumption of rationalizing and maximizing "economic man". Lower taxes mean increased individual income, and with a higher income, individuals will expand consumption of everything, including the consumption of esteem through donations to charity. Therefore, the authorities should cut taxes and welfare programmes, and the shortfall in public solidarity will be made up by private charity.⁷⁵

As our summary is intended to show, Lepage's scientific pretensions were cast in a pedagogic style. Early in *Demain le Capitalisme* he left the reader in no doubt as to what he saw as its political message.

anything reinforcing the scientific validity of this analytical instrument, the economic model of the human being, consolidates the edifice of political doctrine favouring economic freedom, and, of course, the whole theory of the *market*, which rests on the key concept of exchange between rational individuals.⁷⁶

In interpreting his chosen authors, Lepage clearly endorsed their prescriptions for the economic and social reform of American capitalism;

replacing welfare hand-outs by a negative income-tax system, cutting taxes, abandoning or cutting back state regulation of industries such as food, drugs, transport and posts, breaking up or privatizing state monopolies, replacing universal compulsory secondary education by a state-funded voucher system, and abandoning most of the minimum wage and anti-discrimination legislation on the statute book.

Today, that list of remedies looks decidedly reactionary, thanks to its association with the successful conservative politicians, Reagan and Thatcher. But it is likely that there was a genuine tension between liberal and conservative elements in Lepage's theorizing. He was attempting to revive liberal theory *before* it was taken up and popularized by the so-called "Reagan revolution." Therefore when he wrote, (in a judgement which disturbed James Buchanan, the prestigious sponsor of his book);

"The philosophy of economic and social freedom is neither right-wing nor left-wing, it is beyond politics."⁷⁷

it was a claim which perhaps seemed less bizarre then than it did later. Not only did he believe that liberal remedies were compatible with an extension of personal freedom and higher living standards for all citizens, but he argued that the liberal crusade must enlist the support of those who think they are on the "left" because they reject the inhumanities of capitalism as it functions at present;

.....economic freedom will have no chance of being put into effect unless it demonstrates there is a wide gulf between it and conservatism.⁷⁸

Lepage is closer than some of the other new economists to the branch of the American liberal family calling themselves "libertarians", who wish to abandon altogether state regulation of private affairs such as sexual

relations or the sale and use of drugs, and favour the privatization of justice, the police and defence.⁷⁹ In his next book, *Autogestion et Capitalisme*, he argued that the existing level of economic development adequately provided for all material needs, which were now giving way, in the scale of human priorities, before the need for more humane and communicative satisfactions summarized by the term "conviviality". In the not too distant future, the decentralized use of new technology would lead to the development of "anarcho-capitalism", a form of society in which everyone leads their own life, and may be members of groups practising capitalism, socialism, communism or some other form of mutually agreed interaction. Necessarily, the state as we now know it would cease to exist.⁸⁰

The other new economists share Lepage's claim to be "beyond politics", if not his anarchist tendencies. Jean-Jacques Rosa and his colleagues like to stress the scientific character of their work, and disclaim any political engagement, but the French journalistic and political elite had no trouble placing the group on the right of the political spectrum. Some left-wing critics were quick to leap to the defence of the welfare state, and even Keynesian theory, while others bracketed the group with the advisers of Pinochet;⁸¹ a glowing welcome came from at least part of the extreme Right⁸², and an only slightly lesser one from *Contrepoint* a right-wing liberal literary-political magazine not yet taken over by the *Club de l'Horloge*, but run by the former extremist street-fighter and future RPR deputy, Patrick Devedjian.⁸³

All the new economists particularly resented being amalgamated with the *Nouvelle Droite*. Jean-Jacques Rosa attacked the latter's ignorance of

economics, and what he took to be their defence of the nation state, which he contrasted with the economists' "mondialism".⁸⁴ Garello has been even more forthright;

The *Nouvelle Droite* has such a horror of the market and of individual freedom, and harbours such a passion for the prerogatives of the state, that it is now revealed for what it has always been; a hankering for right-wing statism, almost a national socialism.⁸⁵

The *Nouvelle Droite* gave as good as they got. GRECE responded to Lepage's book and to the new economists' media success by devoting their 13th annual colloquium to a detailed refutation of liberal theory.⁸⁶ In defending his own idea of *enracinement* ("rootedness") de Benoist characterized the economists' modern version of *laisser-faire laisser-passer* as "permissive nomadism", a phrase which eloquently combines his sense of moral outrage and injured patriotism.⁸⁷

At the end of the 1970s the *Nouvelle Droite* and the new economists were both fresh intellectual forces, both broadly situated on the Right, both seeking to affect the course of events, both gaining in influence, and they were mutually hostile. This was logical, for even if not all the new economists were as libertarian as Lepage, and not all conservatives were as fanatically organicist as de Benoist, still there is a contradiction between conservative and liberal thought. Conservatism celebrates the social, historical and moral continuity of communities, while liberalism seeks to unchain the forces which destroy it.

In 1980 an unexpected event drew a new audience for the debate. Ronald Reagan's election as President of the United States, on a pledge to cut taxes, deregulate industry and roll back the American version of the welfare state, shed new light on the potential for conservative-liberal collaboration. In France, as elsewhere, the Left denounced what they saw

as a new and virulent combination of the two philosophies,²² but French liberals took Reagan's victory as a sign that their ideas could be put into practice with popular support. The most successful apologist for the "American Conservative Revolution", Guy Sorman, drafted a liberal programme for France which drew its inspiration directly from across the Atlantic.

Sorman is not exactly a new economist, in the sense in which we used that term above, although he is an ENA graduate and teaches from time to time at Paris' prestigious *Institut d'Etudes Politiques*. He is rather a professional pundit of liberalism who in successive years produced an on-the-spot reportage of the political sources of Reagan's success,²³ and a blue-print liberal solution to French economic and social problems,²⁰ both of which were rapidly given paperback second editions. Ambiguous politically, eclectic in theory, dismissed as unrealistic by politicians, Sorman is nevertheless useful to us for two reasons. Firstly, his work illustrates the near unanimous approval given to Reaganism by a certain layer of potentially influential French intellectuals. Secondly, his liberal programme is a yardstick against which we can judge how far RPR writers were prepared to follow him in his adulation.

In his tour of the USA, Sorman cast his net wider than Lepage, interviewing not only distinguished academics but also politicians, business and union leaders, and grass-roots activists in a variety of campaigns. Like his predecessor, and for the same reasons, he dismissed social-democracy as a failed system and unions as a failing but still dangerous force,²¹ attacked the federal civil service as a "new class",²² and denounced civil rights, minimum wages and welfare.²³ He went about this with all the more confidence in that he believed all these features

of social democracy to be irrevocably condemned by technological change and the end of what he called "the era of the masses".⁹⁴

Much of his first book is devoted to the conservative activists who helped build the successful Reagan coalition by campaigning amongst their friends and neighbours about the things which most concerned them. They liked very much the right to life, prayers in school and the death penalty; they intensely disliked taxes, feminism, atheism, the left-wing bias of the media and the "lay humanist" bias of school-books. We can deduce Sorman's globally positive view of what he took to be a challenge to the status quo from his assertion that politicians have accompanied, but not themselves led, this "revolution from below", which is due above all to the

extraordinary democratic and religious vitality of the American people.⁹⁵

Later, however, he seemed to have toned down his admiration for these qualities. In *La Solution Libérale*, he takes a swipe at the "artificial" enthusiasm for liberalism of the "new Left" and the "old Right" in France and doesn't forget to denounce the *Nouvelle Droite* for good measure.⁹⁶ In October 1984 he spoke of his fear that liberalism was being hi-jacked by the employers and the political establishment; if this happened, liberalism would become no more than "a conservative reaction with no future."⁹⁷ In another interview about the same time, he even seemed to adopt Lepage's anarchistic vision of liberalism which

has nothing to do with the repressive bourgeois order. It can be libertarian, include a certain creative and permissive and social spontaneity. It can include as well some of the ideals of May '68⁹⁸

If he had no very consistent view of the political implications of liberalism, Sorman was equally vague in his theoretical borrowings from

the USA. During the early eighties the economist Arthur Laffer, author of the "Laffer curve"¹⁰⁰ which purports to prove that cutting taxes is an appropriate remedy for a budget deficit, was joined by Irving Kristol and George Gilder in developing so-called "supply-side" theory in opposition to Milton Friedman's monetarism, hitherto the liberal orthodoxy.¹⁰⁰ For the two anxious years during which Reagan had been in power and cutting taxes with no pick-up in the American economy - which did not occur until the end of 1982 - the supply-siders excused the failure of their remedy by blaming the monetarists in charge of the Federal Reserve, whose high interest-rate policies allegedly neutralized the effects of the tax-cuts.¹⁰¹

Sorman himself declined to choose either camp, observing somewhat unconvincingly¹⁰² that the greatest contribution of supply-side theory has been the defeat of Keynesianism, and that it recommended itself more because of its appeal to common sense and the experience of nations, than for its actual effectiveness.¹⁰³ Later, he would claim that monetarism does work if it is given a chance, but that both Thatcher and Reagan used it in a stop-go fashion which did not amount to a fair trial.¹⁰⁴

However blurred in theoretical inspiration and political consequences, Sorman produced a liberal programme of great clarity which listed the essential features of a liberal society, and outlined the political steps needed to achieve them.¹⁰⁵ Some of its content, summarised in table 7.1, recalls the ideas put forward by Lepage. The notion of direct democracy and that of the workplace charter have particular resonances for Gaullism which need a note of explanation.

Sorman's workplace charter is a synthesis of the Gaullist ideal of *participation* and of ideas picked up during his observation of changing

Table 7.1 The Liberal Programme of Guy Sorman.

(page numbers refer to Sorman *op cit*, *La Solution..*)

Public Ownership (pp 197-201)

Public and Private Monopolies to be suppressed

Welfare

Citizens should be encouraged to make private insurance arrangements for health and social security (pp 218-226)

The unemployed should be obliged to carry out socially useful work in exchange for their benefits (pp 189-93)

Education (pp 229-241)

State education to be thrown open to parental control, through a voucher system

Privately run and funded universities.

Taxation (pp 124-5)

Retention of top-rate 50%

Abolition of all taxes on savings¹⁰⁷

Industry (pp 179-189)

Workplace charters to be signed in each firm by bosses and workers. No union involvement.

Wage cuts in exchange for *participation* and a job for life.

Institutions

Amend the constitution to require balanced budget (p IV-V)

Give central bank independence from government in controlling money supply. Public to supervise money supply figures. (pp III and 134-7)

Direct Democracy, Swiss-style. Citizens free to take the initiative in changing laws or setting constitutional limits to the actions of legislators. (pp 243-249)

working practices in the USA, Japan, Spain and even the UK. In all major Japanese firms, and some successful American ones which had followed the Japanese example, only basic wages are guaranteed, with a bonus - which can amount to as much as 50% of annual earnings - dependent on the firm's performance. Sorman noted that the US' return to employment growth at the

end of 1982 followed a decade in which average wages had fallen overall, and the bulk of new jobs created were often only part-time, and usually in low-wage, low-productivity sectors.¹⁰⁶ If French workers wanted to see renewed growth, they ought to sacrifice part of their wages in bad years, as Japanese and American workers did. The charter would offer them a double-compensation; firstly *participation*, the Gaullists' term for a say in the running of the firm, and a share of the profits - more familiarly known to up-to-date western managements as the Japanese system of "quality circles", where the emphasis is on discussion of the way each individual's work is organized. The second element of compensation was the promise of a "job for life", traditionally guaranteed by the big Japanese firms since the 1950's. Sorman recommended his scheme in terms which could be expected to appeal to the RPR especially;

it is quite astonishing that general de Gaulle's most modern and most fertile idea, *participation*, has been the least understood and the easiest forgotten by all French people.¹⁰⁷

but he felt obliged to spell out that;

There is no question here of creeping socialism, but of real popular capitalism: the rights of the worker and the shareholder remain distinct, management's powers intact.¹⁰⁸

If he was apparently cutting with the grain on workplace charters, Sorman's advocacy of direct democracy, ran counter to the traditional Gaullist idea of plebiscitary democracy. When the general organized referenda to endorse his own decisions, it was always assumed that there ought not to be any intermediary bodies between the State and the individual. De Gaulle himself habitually dismissed the claims of protest groups such as parents, wine-producers, or lorry-drivers, as

unrepresentative *corporatismes*. Drawing on his American experience, Sorman took a different view;

It's impossible not to notice that grass-roots demands are cast more and more often in corporatist form.....

For the Americans these intermediate bodies are a fundamental part of the vitality of their democracy..... they simply look after the concrete interests of each citizen, and counter-balance the power of the bureaucrats.....

Naturally, the liberal solution involves excluding no corporatist group. On the contrary, they should be multiplied, for all special demands are acceptable within the play of a democratic system when they are counter-balanced by a thousand others.¹¹⁰

Conclusions

The term *Nouvelle Droite* refers to those intellectuals associated with a body of doctrine which identifies the genius of European civilization in the habit of keeping separate the social institutions dealing with the sovereign, military and economic functions in society. Tracing this arrangement to the pre-Christian era of European history, the doctrine's chief organized representatives, the *Groupement de Recherche et d'Etudes sur la Civilisation Européenne (GRECE)* and the *Club de l'Horloge*, are highly critical of what they see as the excessive power of the bourgeoisie and the weakness of the state in contemporary European society, and of Europe's subjugation by the superpowers. For a while GRECE enjoyed an important platform in the mass circulation press, but at the end of the 1970s an effective "exposure" of the pagan and semi-fascist aspects of their theory and practice mounted by the Left, and soon followed by the traditional Right, contributed to the decline of their influence.

Another reason for GRECE's fall from grace was the revival in the popularity of American capitalism among French elites. This reached a height probably unknown since the 1940s thanks to Ronald Reagan's electoral victory in 1980, which seemed to be based on a renewal of optimism, democratic activism and the spirit of enterprise. The virtues of the US system were popularized in France by a group of young academics, attached to classical liberal theory and grass-roots democracy, who called themselves the "new economists".

Traditional Gaullism would have been sympathetic to the *Nouvelle Droite's* defence of the sovereign functions of the state, and to the cult of national traditions, but repelled by their paganism and extreme anti-egalitarianism. On the other hand Gaullism found nothing to admire in American society, traditionally rejected the new economists' *laissez-faire liberalism* in favour of a "third way" between it and collectivism, and embraced a version of direct democracy founded on the direct relationship between the leader and the people, from which intermediate "lobbies" were absent.

Nevertheless the *Nouvelle Droite* and the new economists were the most active forces on the French Right, and Gaullists were bound to be subjected to their influence. Representing the opposite poles of contemporary conservatism, the ultra-authoritarian and the ultra-liberal, they polemicised against each other, but there were signs that the *Club de l'Horloge* might be able to fabricate an amalgam from both doctrines which would be useful to the parties of the French Right. To that possibility, our next chapter is chiefly addressed.

Notes to Chapter 7

1. Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol, *Visages de la Nouvelle Droite, Le G.R.E.C.E et son Histoire* Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, Paris 1988, pp 19-30
2. The term *Nouvelle Droite* is preferred throughout to "New Right", which is generally used in English to refer to a group of thinkers who are probably closer to the French "new economists" than to GRECE and their colleagues.
Nouvelle Ecole's predecessors were *Europe Action*, which tried in 1963 to assumed the mantle of the dying, formerly powerful inter-war movement, *Action Française* but had folded in turn by December 1966, and the *Cahiers Universitaires*, published by the *Fédération des Etudiants Nationalistes* since 1960, which appeared for the last time in January 1967.
3. Duranton-Crabol *op cit*, p 96, and pp 116-7
4. France-Soir 29-3-79, *Mes positions sont celles de ce qu'on pourrait appeler la nouvelle droite, et qui n'a rien à voir avec la droite bourgeoise, conservatrice et réactionnaire.*
5. Duranton-Crabol *op cit*, p 71
6. *ibidem* p 100-3 and 108-9
7. *ibidem* p 84
8. Michalina Vaughan "'Nouvelle Droite'; Cultural Power and Political Influence", in David S. Bell (ed) *Contemporary French Political Parties*, London, Croom Helm, 1982, pp 52-66 (p53-4)
9. These two comments of course fall far short of a full discussion of whether the new right ought to be characterized as fascist. One of the problems in this area is the possibility that de Benoist and his friends have deliberately used "codes and euphemisms" which make their fascist lineage clear to fellow thinkers while shielding their texts from close critical examination. Thus it is suggested by Duranton-Crabol that de Benoist uses the concept of "culture" as a substitute for "heredity", "ethnie" for "race", and so on, (Duranton-Crabol, *op cit* pp 58-66)
10. *ibidem* p 72
11. *ibidem* p 72
12. Pierre Vial (ed), *Pour Une Renaissance Culturelle*, Paris 1979, p 208, cited in Vaughan, *loc cit* p 63
13. *ibidem*
14. Guillaume Faye, "Pour en finir avec la civilisation occidentale", in *Eléments* no 34, April-May 1980 p 5; cited in Vaughan, *loc cit* p 62
15. Alain de Benoist, "L'Erreur du Libéralisme", in *Eléments pour la civilisation européenne*, March 1979 nos 28-9; reprinted in annex to Henri Lepage, *Demain le Libéralisme*, Paris, Hachette/Pluriel 1980 p 572; *La société, que la tradition européenne*

regardait comme intégrant l'individu (au sens où un organisme intègre les organes qui le composent dans un ordre supérieur,....

- 16, Vaughan *loc cit* p 61
- 17, Vial *op cit* p 25, cited in Vaughan *loc cit* p60
- 18, *ibidem* p 64
- 19, De Benoist reprinted in Lepage *op cit*, *Demain le Libéralisme* p 572; *La nation n'est plus rien d'autre que l'addition de ses habitants à un moment donné,....La souveraineté politique est elle-même ramenée au niveau individuel, Toute transcendance du principe d'autorité étant bannie, le pouvoir n'est plus qu'une délégation faite par des individus, dont les voix s'additionnent à l'occasion des scrutins,.... La "souveraineté du peuple" n'est nullement celle du peuple en tant que peuple, mais celle, indécise, contradictoire et manipulable, des individus qui composent ce peuple,*
- 20, Duranton-Crabol *op cit* p 105-6
- 21, De Benoist reprinted in Lepage *op cit* p 573; *La vente à l'étranger des richesses artistiques nationales, l'interprétation de l' "utilité" en termes de rentabilité commerciale à court terme, la dispersion des populations et l'organisation systématique des migrations, la cession à des sociétés "multinationales" de la propriété ou de la gestion de secteurs entiers des économies ou des technologies nationales, la libre diffusion des modes culturelles exotiques, l'assujettissement des media à des façons de conception et de parler liées au développement des superpuissances politiques ou idéologiques du moment, etc. - toutes ces caractéristiques des sociétés occidentales actuelles dérivent logiquement de la mise en oeuvre des principaux postulats de la doctrine libérale,*
- 22, *ibidem* p 569, *La conception de l'homme comme "animal/être économique" (l'Homo oeconomicus d'Adam Smith et de son école) est le symbole, le signe même qui connote à la fois le capitalisme bourgeois et le socialisme marxiste,....Essentiellement définis comme des agents économiques, les hommes sont censés être toujours capables d'agir selon leur "meilleur intérêt" (économique)*
- 23, *ibidem* p 570; *Quant à l'avantage et à l'intérêt que l'individu est censé rechercher, ils restent mal définis, De quel type d' "intérêt" s'agit-il? Par rapport à quel système de valeurs faut-il apprécier l' "avantage"?*
- 24, For an expression of these differences by the *Club de l'Horloge*, see *Le Monde* 7-11-82,
- 25, J-C Rivière, "Pour une lecture de Dumézil, Introduction à son oeuvre", in *Nouvelle Ecole* 21-2, winter 1972-3, p 30, Cited in Vaughan, *loc cit* p 61
- 26, Jean-Yves le Gallou and the *Club de l'Horloge*, *Les Racines du Futur*, Paris, Albatros 1984 (2nd edition) p 94-5; Yvan Blot, *Les Racines de la Liberté*, Paris, Albin Michel 1985, p 144
- 27, Blot *op cit* p 201
- 28, De Benoist, reprinted in Lepage *op cit* p 571; *Vis-à-vis de l'Etat, le libéralisme se manifeste d'une double façon, D'une part, il en fait une critique violente, en glosant sur son "inefficacité" et en dénonçant les dangers du pouvoir", D'autre part, et dans un*

second temps, il s'efforce de le faire basculer dans la sphere économique, de façon à le dépolitiser et à renverser l'ancienne hiérarchie des fonctions. Au fur et à mesure qu'elle se développe, la caste économique attire à elle la substance de l'Etat, subordonnant peu à peu la décision politique aux impératifs économiques,..... L'Etat, dès lors, doit faire le moins de politique possible. Il ne doit pas non plus se substituer aux centres de décisions économiques. Sa seule tâche est de maintenir l'ordre et la sécurité,..... protéger les marchands en leur laissant toute liberté d'agir - bref, ne plus être le maître, mais bien l'esclave de ceux qui, mieux informés que lui des "lois de l'économie",... sont également mieux placés pour organiser le monde selon leur "meilleur intérêt",

29. Le Gallou *op cit* p 153
30. *ibidem* p 154 Elle (la confusion des fonctions) conduit à une société marchande et bureaucratique à la fois; dominée par les préoccupations économiques et les valeurs marchandes, dans laquelle l'économie est mise en régie direct et l'Etat se substitue aux particuliers,
31. *ibidem* p 155
32. *Le Monde* 7-12-83, ...une très puissante concurrence intérieure, une économie formée d'entreprises privées, défiscalisées et désocialisées, mais en même temps une économie nationale, subordonnée au politique, et dirigée par un Etat léger mais fort, planificateur, qui n'intervient pas dans l'économie, mais qui la dirige,
33. "... ces quelques milliers de personnes qui font marcher un pays. A l'heure actuelle, la France tient sur des penseurs, des cadres d'organisations syndicales, culturelles, sportives, etc., des scientifiques, des publicistes, des administrateurs, qui contrôlent, influencent, encadrent des millions d'individus. Quelques milliers, c'est peu dans l'absolu, mais quelques milliers de cette importance ayant une unité de pensée et de méthode, c'est la possibilité d'une révolution." (*Eléments*, ronéoed version, May 1969 p 16, cited by Duranton-Crabol, *op cit* pp 141-2.)
34. An analysis of readers' letters and of the composition of the *Comité de patronage of Nouvelle Ecole* showed an organization dominated by (university) teachers and students. In 1978, a poll of its subscribers carried out by *Eléments* revealed 21% teachers, 18% students, 17% doctors, and 17% other professionals. Meanwhile the progressive disappearance of students from the *Nouvelle Ecole* editorial board indicated that the ageing founding members were slow to find disciples among the generation following them. The paucity of women members and supporters was hardly compensated by the assumption of female *noms de plume* by certain members of the group's editorial boards. (Duranton-Crabol *op cit* pp 142-5)
35. *ibidem* pp 41-44. Recruits were sought through the building of a militant/sympathizer type of relationship between group members and their contacts. To help this work, two front organizations were created, one for reserve soldiers, and one for school-teachers, (CLOSOR, the *Comité de Liaison des Officiers et Sous-officiers de Réserve*, and GENE, the *Groupe d'Etudes pour une Nouvelle Education* which published its own magazine, *Nouvelle Education*. More generally, members were encouraged to get to know each other and to draw their friends and colleagues into a warm and mutually supportive community of fellow-thinkers. They often participated in common activities, including the celebration of the autumn and winter solstices, the collection and veneration of the symbols or artefacts of pre-

Christian civilization, and the honouring of "the dead and those yet to be born". It was in this spirit that, in 1979, thirty GRECE members joined European fellow-thinkers at Delphi, in Greece, to swear a common oath to work for the renaissance of European culture. (*ibidem* pp 47-54)

36. *ibidem* p 188
37. *ibidem*, p 190
38. *ibidem* pp 191-2
39. *Le Monde* 22-6-79
40. Philippe Malaud, *La révolution libérale*, Paris, Masson, 1976; Jacques Médecin, *Le Terreau de la Liberté*, Paris, 1977; Michel Poniowski, *L'avenir n'est écrit nulle part*, Paris, Albin Michel, 1978
41. Duranton-Crabol, *op cit* pp 130-131)
42. *ibidem* pp 200-201
43. *Le Monde* 24-3-81
44. *Le Monde* 24-3-81
45. *Le Monde* 1-12-81
46. Alain de Benoist, "L'ennemi principal" in *Eléments* 41, mars-avril 1982, cited in Duranton-Crabol *op cit* p 209
47. *ibidem* p 212
48. *Le Monde* 17-11-84
49. Louis Pauwels' unexpected conversion to catholicism was a contributory cause of the clear-out at *Figaro-Magazine* which reduced de Benoist's role to that of reviewing videos. Of the other GRECE writers, only Yves Christen remained in a prominent position with responsibility for science features, Patrice de Plunkett remained as cultural editor, but chose to renounce his membership of the editorial board of *Nouvelle Ecole*, *Valmonde*, the owners of *Valeurs Actuelles* and *Spectacle du Monde* sacked de Benoist in 1982 for his philo-communism, and Michel Marmin in 1983, later telling Duranton-Crabol that they would have got rid of the Grécists earlier, but did not want to seem to be giving in to pressure from the left. Meanwhile *Magazine-Hebdo* a new weekly launched in 1983 with a massive GRECE presence (not including de Benoist), folded due to lack of support from advertisers. (Duranton-Crabol *op cit* pp 223-7; *Article 31* no 16, 1986)
50. Duranton-Crabol *op cit* pp 219-222
51. *ibidem* pp 216-7
52. *ibidem* p 218; *Article 31* no 16, February 1986)
53. Duranton-Crabol *op cit* pp 228-9

54. Jacques Garello, "Une Détermination Libérale" in *Contrepoint*, no. 48, 1984 pp 155-161; *On ne dira jamais assez le rôle déclencheur joué dans notre pays par l'ouvrage d'Henri Lepage qui, dès 1978, faisait connaître aux Français que les esprits changeaient radicalement outre-atlantique, . . . , sans doute à l'origine de la création du groupe des Nouveaux Economistes en France.*)
55. Henri Lepage, *Demain le Capitalisme*, Paris, Livre de Poche, 1978
56. Henri Lepage, *Tomorrow Capitalism*, Open Court Publishing Co., La Salle, Illinois, and London, 1982, Translated from the French by Sheilagh C. Ogilvie
57. As he notes in the Introduction to *Tomorrow Capitalism op cit*, pp vii-xi
58. Jean-Jacques Rosa et Frank Aftalion, eds, *L'Economique Retrouvée, vieilles critiques et nouvelles analyses*, Economica 1977
59. Apart from the two editors, they were A. Fourçans, F. Hernandez-Iglesias, F. Jenny, Christian Morrisson, M. Riboud, Pascal Salin, F. Seurot, Y. Simon, and A. Wofelsperger; some of these were teachers at three centres which became strongholds of the new economics - the universities of Paris-Dauphine and Aix-en-Provence, and the Paris business school, ESSEC. For a fuller list of fellow-thinkers, see Garello, *loc cit*
60. See the article by René Berger-Perrin, syndicated in the *Quotidien Rhône-Alpes*, *La Dépêche de Saint-Etienne*, and *La Liberté*, on 14-3-78, reproduced in Lepage, *Demain le Libéralisme* Paris, Hachette/Livre de Poche 1980, pp 540-542
61. François-Henri de Virieu, *Le Matin de Paris*, 31-7-79
62. Berger-Perrin *loc cit*, see also France Nouvelle 10-7-78
63. Maurice Roy, *Vive le Capitalisme* Paris, Plon 1978; P. Salin et al (eds) *L'Occident en Désarroi* Paris, Dunod 1978
64. Lepage *op cit*, *Demain le Libéralisme, . . . ,* p547, note 2.
65. Garello *loc cit* p 157; Interview with Philippe Auberger 6-1-89
66. Garello *loc cit* p 156
67. Lepage *op cit*, *Tomorrow Capitalism, . . . ,* p 18
68. *ibidem* pp 30-35
69. Murray Rothbard, one of the new generation of American "libertarian" economists, argues that government policy was responsible for the crash, as it was for those of 1837, 1873, and 1892. (Murray Rothbard, *America's Great Depression*, cited in Lepage *op cit*, *Tomorrow Capitalism, . . . ,* p 40) For Milton Friedman, the Chicago economist and originator of monetarism, the immediate cause of the great depression was state interference in banking; if no Federal Reserve system had existed a few (incompetent) banks would have gone bankrupt, or refused to honour their debts to depositors, (or both), but the reserves of sound banks would not have been drained to prop up the unsound, as they were throughout 1930, 1931 and 1932. A few thousand innocents would have been sacrificed for the greater benefit of the millions. (Rose and Milton Friedman, *Free to Choose*, London, Pelican, 1980 pp 108-9)

70. Douglas North and R.P. Thomas, *The Rise of the Western World* 1973
71. Lepage *op cit*, *Tomorrow Capitalism*, , pp 53-80
72. Charles Pigou, *The Economics of Welfare*, 1920
73. Lepage *op cit*, *Tomorrow Capitalism*, , pp 82-105 and 134-39
74. Lepage *op cit*, *Tomorrow Capitalism*, , pp 107-131; Friedman and Friedman *op cit*, pp 227-290
75. Gary Becker, "Social Interaction", in *Journal of Political Economy* no 82, 1974; Lepage *op cit*, *Tomorrow Capitalism*, , pp 161-184 *see appendix 2.*
76. Lepage *op cit*, *Tomorrow Capitalism*, , p 21
77. *ibidem* p 212, and for Buchanan's comment, see his introduction, pp vii to xi
78. *ibidem* p 205
79. One of the group's leading figures is David Friedman, son of Milton; see his *The Machinery of Freedom; a guide to radical capitalism*, New Rochelle, New York, Arlington House, 1973,
80. Henri Lepage, *Autogestion et Capitalisme* Paris, Masson, for the *Institut de l'Entreprise* 1978
81. François-Henri de Virieu; "Les Nouveaux Economistes; malgré leurs divergences avec la GRECE et le Club de l'Horloge, ils sont eux aussidu côté des conservateurs," (The new economists; despite their divergences with GRECE and the Club de l'Horloge, they too are on the side of the conservatives), in *Le Matin de Paris* 31-7-79, On Keynesian theory; Serge Barthélemy, "Le très ancien débat des nouveaux économistes", in *Projet* no 145, May 1980, pp 581-594, On Pinochet; Roger Priouret in *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 17-4-78; Pierre Drouin in *Le Monde*, 13-5-78
82. *Minute*, 26-4-78
83. *Contrepoint* no 27, 1978/3, pp 150-154
84. *Le Monde*, 31-7-79
85. Jacques Garello *loc cit*, p 158; *La "Nouvelle Droite" a tellement horreur du marché, de la liberté individuelle, et cultive un tel amour pour la raison d'état, qu'elle apparaît aujourd'hui pour ce qu'elle a toujours été; la nostalgie d'un étatisme de droite, un socialisme national en quelque sorte,*
86. The results were published under the title, "L'Economie Totalitaire," as a special double issue of *Eléments*, (March 1979, nos 28-9) It was from Alain de Benoist's contribution to that issue that we quoted earlier in summarizing GRECE's view of "the Liberal Error"
87. Alain de Benoist, *loc cit*, "L'Erreur du Libéralisme,"

88. Colette Ysmal, "Les programmes économiques des partis de droite", in *Critiques de l'Economie Politique*, avril-juin 1985, pp 63-76; Bruno Théret, "'Vices publics, bénéfiques privés', les propositions économiques électorales des néo-libéraux français," in *Critiques de l'Economie Politique*, avril-juin 1985, pp 77-134,
89. Guy Sorman, *La Revolution Conservatrice Américaine*, Paris, Fayard 1983
90. Guy Sorman, *La Solution Libérale*, Fayard 1984 (2nd edition, revised and enlarged)
91. Sorman *op cit*, *La Révolution*, pp 56-65 and 79-81
92. *ibidem* p 35-6
93. *ibidem* pp 67-83 and 213-223
94. *ibidem* p 127
95. *ibidem* p 128, . . . , *l'extraordinaire vitalité démocratique et religieuse du peuple américain*,
96. Sorman *op cit*, *La Solution*, pp 63 and 39
97. Interview with *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 5-10-84; reprinted in Sorman, *op cit*, *La Solution*, . . . p 300-1
98. Interview with Magazine-Hebdo, September 1984, reprinted in Sorman, *op cit*, *La Solution*, . . . p 303; *(Le Libéralisme) n'est pas solidaire de l'ordre bourgeois répressif, Il peut être libertaire, intégrer un certain spontanéisme social créateur et permissif, Intégrer aussi des idéaux de mai '68*, From religious fundamentalism to the ideals of '68 is quite a leap which we will leave it to Sorman to explain. He seems to have reserved the leftist gloss on his liberalism for certain special occasions. It is absent, for example, from his contribution to *Contrepoint* no 47, pp 53-59 - also called "La Révolution Conservatrice Américaine" - which appeared in early 1984, and in which he rubbed shoulders with American Congressman Jack Kemp. Nor were many of the ideals of '68 expressed at a seminar on privatization, organized by Edouard Balladur's *Association pour le Libéralisme Populaire*, which I attended in Paris on 15th December 1988, and in which Guy Sorman took the chair
99. Inspired by the spread of populist movements exercising their rights to invoke State-wide referenda on local tax levels, the famous curve putatively showing that if taxes rise above a certain proportion of income, yield actually falls, because of the dampening effect on economic activity. Conversely, when taxes are cut, the potential fall in yield will be made up by an expansion of activity, the hiring of new workers and start-ups of new businesses. Liberal economists had always argued that high taxation strangles enterprise, but it was the first time that tax-cuts had been proposed as the solution to a government budget deficit. (Sorman, *op cit*, *La Révolution*, . . pp 171-183)
100. In theory the two are not incompatible, as the first simply stresses that economic growth depends above all on the efforts of entrepreneurs - market suppliers - so that everything must be done to ensure that market conditions are favourable to them, while the latter is mainly concerned with the causes and cures of inflation,
101. Sorman *op cit*, *La Révolution*, p 209-10

- 102 See Appendix 3
- 103 Sorman *op cit*, *La Révolution*,... p 211; see also Sorman, *op cit*, *La Solution* ,... pp 143-4 and 154-7
- 104 Sorman *op cit*, *La Solution*,... p 130-134)
- 105 The second edition of Sorman, *op cit* *La Solution* ,... carried, inserted before the main text, pp I - XVII a preface entitled *Le Projet Libéral*
- 106 Even in Japan, the sector with the biggest employment growth since 1980 was bars and restaurants. (Sorman, *op cit*, *La Solution*,... p 182-3
- 107 In support of this Sorman cites a report by the UK economist James Meade; *The Structure and Reform of Direct Taxation*, London, Allen and Unwin, 1978, Cited in Sorman, *op cit*, *La Solution*,... p 125
- 108 *ibidem* p 176 note 1, *il est tout à fait étonnant que l'idée la plus moderne et la plus féconde du général de Gaulle, la participation, ait été la moins bien comprise et la mieux oubliée de tous les français.*
- 109 *ibidem* p 188; *Il ne s'agit pas là d'un socialisme rampant, mais bien d'un capitalisme populaire; les droits du salarié et de l'actionnaire restent distincts, les pouvoirs du mangagement intacts.*
- 110 *ibidem* p 93-4; *Comment ne pas constater que c'est de plus en plus sous la forme du corporatisme que se manifeste aujourd'hui les revendications populaires?..... Pour les Américains, les corps intermédiaires sont un élément fondamental de la vitalité de la démocratie,... ils veillent seulement aux intérêts concrets de chaque citoyen, et font équilibre au pouvoir des bureaucrates,..... La solution libérale est naturellement de n'exclure aucun corporatisme. Au contraire, il convient de les multiplier, Car toute revendication particulière devient acceptable dans le jeu démocratique lorsqu'elle se trouve équilibrée par mille autres.*

Chapter 8 The Use of Ideas

Before we attempt to trace the "ideological" development of influential RPR members during the late 1970s and early 1980s we must stress that most Gaullist deputies usually paid little attention to doctrine, instead pragmatically defending constituents' interests with whatever ideas came to hand. In the first part of this chapter we show how, within the parliamentary party, instinctive recourse to the state as protector combined with impatience with bureaucratic red-tape to form the irregular ground in which liberal ideas were later to take root. At the same time, one or two deputies contributed original ideas which helped to shape the liberal revival.

Next, we follow up our earlier suggestion that the party's programmatic development cannot be read as a battle of ideas from which one group or another emerged victorious. We show that senior Gaullists such as Peyrefitte, Bourges and Guichard who had thrown in their lot with Giscard and formed the "liberal" (in economic terms) wing of the RPR, made no co-ordinated attempt to convert the party to their views, even though these were later adopted by the Chiraquian leadership. Their defeat and isolation were seen both by themselves and by the Chiraquians as a simple question of power rather than a battle of ideas.

The rest of Chapter 8 is devoted to the way in which different individuals and groups within the party contested, conciliated or borrowed from the *Nouvelle Droite*, the new economists, and the Reagan revolution. Paradoxically, as we show in the third section, it was one of the older generation, Albin Chalandon, whose arguments for liberalism most closely resembled those advanced by the new economists. A number of influential

younger party members made the pilgrimage to the USA between 1978 and 1983, returning with renewed faith in grass roots democracy but most were sceptical about the relevance of both monetarism and supply-side economics to French economic problems.

In the fourth part of the chapter we turn to the role of the right-wing political clubs and think tanks in mediating the implicit conflict between US-style liberalism and the anti-capitalist pan-European elitism of the *Nouvelle Droite*. A study of the texts reveals the creeping influence of the new economists on the *Club de l'Horloge*. In the first half of the 1980s the Club, which had been founded with a strong GRECE presence, took an increasing interest in liberal economic doctrine, and through its publications and seminars helped to attenuate the hostility to American-style capitalism which it had earlier propagated. At the same time the Club modified its view of the unique legitimacy of the state by making concessions to the idea of direct democracy. In the development of the Club's doctrine and the spread of its influence in the RPR, a pivotal role was played by Yvan Blot, assistant to the RPR general secretary.

The RPR's own *Club '89* was founded in September 1981 with the aim of developing a corpus of doctrine for use by the party president. A late-comer to the scene, it could do no more than re-work, in eclectic fashion, themes already elaborated by its longer-established rivals. Its programme, which appeared in 1985, reads like a fragile and internally contradictory compromise between the rival positions of the *Club de l'Horloge* and the new economists.

If the new economists, the American example and the *Club de l'Horloge* all joined the Gallo-Giscardians in promoting liberalism within the RPR, was there any group in the party willing to stand in defence of the

statist tradition? In the fifth and final part of the chapter we show that the so-called "left-Gaullists" were weak and divided; some were induced to recast their own most distinctive programmatic trade-mark - *participation* - in liberal form, some took refuge in purely formal opposition, while others eventually left the party in disgust.

Pragmatism and dogma

The Gaullists' halting steps towards open endorsement of the principle of free competition are illustrated by the gradual adjustment of the ideas of a former industry minister under the impact of changing economic circumstances. In 1979 a parliamentary debate on unemployment demanded by the RPR in response to the crisis in the steel-producing regions, showed that the state-market dilemma then evoked an uncertain response among Gaullist deputies. National ambitions remained, but the halting of dynamic growth fed doubts about the efficacy of all-round intervention in the economy, and about the state budget's ability to finance rising transfer payments. This disenchantment with the state was reflected in swelling complaints about the social security contributions levied on businesses, about bureaucratic interference which falsified the laws of the market, and about slow and cumbersome procedures which held back the creation of new wealth and new jobs.

A fine example of the pragmatic and piece-meal adjustment of doctrine to circumstances is given by the long career of Michel Maurice-Bokanowski. Born in 1912, a pre-war colleague of André Citroën in the motor industry, he first entered Parliament for the RPF in 1951, was de Gaulle's Minister for industry 1962-66, and was still mayor and Senator for Asnières, a working-class suburb of Paris, when I interviewed him in 1988.

In the 1960s, gearing public investment to regional policy and the balance of planned output², he affirmed the government's intention to use, as often as possible, big industrial firms, especially the nationalized industries, as "instruments of industrial expansion" in the developing regions, with the aim of making France "a great industrial nation",³ even going so far as to accept that it was the state's job to plan and finance the production of a high-performance racing-car.⁴

In response to the first signs of the economic downturn, in 1973, he introduced, from the Senate back benches, a debate on the difficulties of the French aircraft industry, during which he demanded continued state aid and state-organized rationalization, suggesting for the first time that this could be carried out on a European scale (military planes excepted). In case the administration should find itself not powerful enough to deal with all the issues involved, he recommended "a ministry of aviation with the authority required by all its enormous responsibilities."⁵ Two years later the ex-minister called for state stimulation of investment in new forms of energy production "which industry does not seem very enthusiastic about at present". Drawing attention to the inconvenience of bankruptcies, he called for stricter control of the setting up of small firms, by means of a permit to be issued by the Chambers of Commerce.⁶

By 1977, however, in response to the rise of unemployment, he had turned his fire *against* the "slowness of administrative procedures" in the job-placement service, called for "more humane" relations between the administration in general and the people, and drew applause from the RPR benches for his criticism of the control exercised by the Ministry of Finance over all the other ministries. While this attack on red tape prefigured one of the main lines of the general assault on the state soon

to be mounted by Chirac, Bokanowski's call for tax reform took a different direction from that of the American liberals; he wanted exemption for the poorest, especially the old, and for young couples, who would be encouraged, as a result, to start families.⁷

A 1980 debate on the motor industry revealed, however, how the ex-Minister, so interventionist twenty years earlier, had gone a stage further in his conversion to liberalism;

I think, for my part, that it would be deplorable if we were brought to subsidize, more or less directly, in one form another, this great sector of our industry, as some people propose. This would be a renunciation of the rules of liberalism and competition which we have set for ourselves. . . . Neither should we give advice or poke our noses into the strategy of the big firms, Renault as well as Peugeot, who manage their own business very well.⁸

Maurice-Bokanowski's conversion, completed *before* Chirac unveiled his liberal platform for the 1981 election, cannot be read as an attempt to align himself with his leader's position (a move for which the veteran Senator-Mayor would have no motive), nor did the ex-Minister, despite his string of company directorships figure among Chirac's private advisers.⁹ Rather, the revision of his views on the role of the state in the economy came about imperceptibly, probably unconsciously,¹⁰ in response to the more and more detailed daily interventionism with which the Giscard-Barre governments responded to the economic difficulties of the late 1970s.

The National Assembly debate on unemployment of March 1979 gives evidence of other Gaullist parliamentarians' indiscriminate recourse to both liberal and interventionist remedies in order to protect their constituents from the worst effects of the slump. One wanted the government to ask Peugeot to open a new motor-cycle factory.¹¹ Many demanded state aid for the local economy¹², but, whereas the left Gaullist

Jean de Lipkowski (Charente-Maritime) backed his appeals with a doctrinaire defence of planning and regional development, Lucien Neuwirth (St. Etienne) called at the same time for the relaxation of price controls and the lowering of employers' social security contributions.¹³ Hélène Missoffe, deputy for Paris, joined Lipkowski in stressing the state's role as planner and co-ordinator, and proposed to use the construction industry as a possible pump-primer for a new upturn, but she also called for simplification of administrative formalities "so cumbersome and paralysing that they discourage initiative"¹⁴ On this ground she was joined by Daniel Goulet, who made no particular demands for Basse-Normandie, but urged greater freedom of action for the various ministries' field services, a more flexible attitude from bank managers, and changes in the regulations governing hiring and firing.¹⁵

Michel Debré, in the ideological set-piece of the debate, produced an even longer list than usual of "essential" sectors of industry, and called for protectionism organized at EEC level, (while rejecting Brussels' claim to fix the level of French steel output) but he also turned his fire on fiddling bureaucratic regulations

Our France is like a bird prevented from flying by too many ties....They must be reduced, rapidly and considerably.¹⁶

Debré was joined by Michel Noir in condemning as counter-productive the various schemes for work-sharing, early retirement and longer holidays put forward in the same debate by Philippe Séguin, among others. Noir also endorsed Debré's concept of the "economic war", calling for a European external tariff and "community preference". Signs of his later enthusiastic liberalism were his stress on training, re-training and research as responses to technological change, and his critique of the

idea of "economies of scale", over which he favoured small business. A positive reference to planning did not reappear in his subsequent writings.¹⁷

A less prominent deputy, Jaques Sourdille of the Ardennes, deduced a general lesson from the particular situation of his constituency. His region was in decline because its crude steel was too dear, but some of his constituents also produced high-quality steel products which were competitive on the world market. In future, French competitiveness was likely to depend on the exploitation of such skilled labour, and the "*savoir-faire et savoir-vendre*" of a mature economy. It was therefore important generally, argued Sourdille, to invest in hi-tec industries, potentially rich sources of added-value.¹⁸

Only a handful of very senior figures, including the Gallo-Giscardian ministers, translated the misgivings about interventionism aired in the 1979 debate into a coherent challenge to traditional Gaullist doctrine, but they made no serious attempt to win the party to their views, as we now show.

The Gallo-Giscardians

After resigning as prime minister in 1976, Chirac, had announced a "permanent war" against the Giscard-Barre strategy of gentle growth, moderate inflation and creeping unemployment.¹⁹ In Parliament a continual series of RPR amendments to government projects obliged Barre to make one after another an issue of confidence; outside Chirac devoted a series of press interviews to explaining the case for a Keynesian-type reflation, import controls and government direction of investment funds.²⁰

But his approach was contested in the press by two former Gaullist ministers: Olivier Guichard, and Albin Chalandon, who had by turns been a

successful banker and industrialist. Chalandon's front page article in *le Monde* on 2nd October 1979 opened with an undisguised critique of the policies currently being pressed by his leader. He argued that a durable solution to economic difficulties could not come from "autonomy within closed frontiers", or from

...ill-judged guidance or paralysing state controls, the protection of inefficient activities, or global reflation of the economy....²¹

Chalandon went on to list what he saw as the real weaknesses of the French economy; a lack of raw materials, agriculture the least efficient in Europe, industry too small, of indifferent quality apart from one or two sectors, and with the habit of trying to solve problems by raising prices rather than reducing costs, unions which were anachronistic and malthusian, an education system in which the *grandes écoles* sterilized initiative and which produced young people unsuitable for available jobs. He attacked the civil service,

for whom interventionism has become second nature, and who have never been able to adjust themselves to the way a competitive economy works.²²

and ended with a dismissal of twenty years of Gaullist practice, which had sought to impose more or less unreal plans on market forces, judged investment by the criteria of prestige instead of profitability, and fixed prices without regard to costs, all of which led to unsaleable excess production.

Like Chalandon, Guichard²³ expressed his respect for Prime Minister Barre's "tenacity, clarity, and spirit of responsibility", and his own conviction that no other course was possible. In general he made a plea for a balanced approach which would be neither "all-public" nor "all-

private", but a mixture of both. He made a more measured critique of the "global reflation" strategy;

As for public investment, it is unwise to justify a general increase by referring to the absolute sums involved. Public investment should be judged less by its money value than by the job it does for the economy.²⁴

Guichard and Chalandon were of course not the only long-serving Gaullists who expressed disagreements with Chirac's policy at this time,²⁵ yet there was no serious collective effort to push the party into a change of line mainly because they believed Chirac's attacks on Giscard derived from political rivalry and not from serious ideological differences.

Despite having been a convinced liberal since a visit to the USA in 1965,²⁶ Albin Chalandon claims no credit for provoking the RPR's liberal turn in the 1980s. As a close political ally of Chaban Delmas he was out of government after 1972. Yet he remained friendly enough with Chirac to secure his help in getting appointed boss of Elf-Aquitaine in 1977. At the end of the 1970s he was therefore officially outside politics. In May 1979 he felt involved enough to sign "because the others asked me to" the letter addressed by the party's previous general secretaries which warned Chirac against repeated attacks on the state President. But he and Guichard did not co-ordinate the appearance of their two similar critiques of RPR policy in *Le Monde* within the same month.²⁷

Having resigned from Parliament to take his Elf job, Chalandon did not stand again in 1981. He was "not at all" consulted by Chirac about the platform on which he ran for President in 1981 and, perhaps more remarkably, was ignored by Balladur when the privatization plans were being drawn up, even though he had published his own suggested schema for ensuring that the allocation of shares was carried out openly and

fairly,²⁸ and at various times sent Balladur three draft bills on the subject.²⁹

Although ministerial solidarity, as we saw in chapter 4, had obliged them to make periodic statements of their identity of views with Giscard and Barre, the "Gallo-Giscardians" had diverse attitudes to their own party and played different roles in the inner-party struggle at the end of the 1970s. Robert Galley, who had been venomously denounced by Pons when he was Giscard's minister of posts, mended his fences with the Chirac camp well enough to become RPR national treasurer by 1984. Yvon Bourges was the most senior of the handful of ministers who served from 1974-6 with Chirac, for whom, like Chalandon, he retained a personal regard, and subsequently with Barre. After the Socialists' victory in 1981, he took a seat in the Senate and became a full member of the RPR group after spending a token six months as an *apparenté* more for form's sake than for any other reason.³⁰

Frequently on the receiving end of RPR attacks, Bourges attributed them more to party political rivalry, stirred up by Poniatoski's manoeuvring during Chirac's tenure as prime minister, than to serious policy or ideological differences. For him, the Gaullists' economic policies, including those of Debré and de Gaulle, had always been a judicious mixture of liberalism and pragmatism. Therefore he had no difficulty in defending the similar policies of Giscard and Barre, did not take Chirac's posturing seriously, and saw no particular need to join in a debate on ideas within the party.³¹ From this it followed that Bourges did not experience Chirac's conversion in 1981 as a *ralliement* to his own position, unlike Chalandon and Peyrefitte, who had both written books and articles setting out their views.

Peyrefitte furthermore, as we saw in chapter 4, made a serious attempt behind the scenes to undermine Chirac as party leader. When asked what he had done to change Chirac's mind up to the time of the 1981 elections, he preferred to draw a veil over those efforts and instead said, "I wrote some books."³² Influential as his books may have been, however, their composition amounted to a rather unfocussed way of winning over party opinion, the effectiveness of which proved difficult to quantify.³³ Furthermore, Peyrefitte himself modestly suggested that books were less important in changing minds or in educating the "new generation" of young RPR liberals than were the facts of life, in particular the poor economic performances of the eastern bloc countries, and the lacklustre records of politicians such as Harold Wilson and Jimmy Carter when compared to Thatcher and Reagan.³⁴

This essentially "political" rather than "ideological" reading of the RPR-UDF conflict at the end of the 1970s is echoed by those of today's younger deputies who were involved in it. François Fillon observed the struggle at first hand, as parliamentary assistant to Gaston le Theule, the Gallo-Giscardian transport minister in 1979-80. He is convinced that the conflicts were essentially "false quarrels" engendered because "if Giscard was for one thing, Chirac had to be for something else, and vice versa."³⁵ Patrick Devedjian was in 1979 the chairman of the party disputes commission which had the task of suspending Peyrefitte's party membership. A decade later he was willing to accept that the Barre government's economic policies were close to those he himself wished to see adopted, (though he was dissatisfied in other policy areas, such as education.) For him, the intra-RPR conflict was part of

a partisan conflict. It was a conflict between one lot of people who had power in a party, and another lot.

Giscard wanted to cut the RPR down to size, and in fact that is what led to his defeat. Giscard wanted to do down the RPR and a number of people in the RPR played the Giscard card.... to do down the RPR... that's what the conflict was about. Ideology was fairly absent really..... from this conflict. It was a pretext.

It is clear, then, that even those senior Gaullists who were at odds with Chirac over economic policy in the late 1970s seem neither to have tried hard nor to have had much effect in swinging the party to their point of view. It was striking that in conversations with Gaullists on both sides of the argument, and across the age-groups, there was little awareness of the sharpness of Chirac's "turn". Among those who were willing to accept that the RPR had shifted its official position, there was a tendency to attribute this to a general change in mentality brought about by the long-term "failure of socialism", the Thatcher-Reagan phenomenon, or the arrival of the French Socialists in power. When it was pointed out that Chirac had defended tax-cutting and anti-state policies in the 1981 election campaign, the response was very often - "As early as that?". These findings confirm the impression of unconscious absorption of liberal doctrine given by the career of the former industry minister, Michel Maurice-Bokanowski.

America

The Gaullists of the 1980s in general speak well of the United States. One describes the political qualities of Ronald Reagan - *audacieuse, musclée, patriotique*²⁷ - as just those which Gaullists have always admired; Another celebrates the *rassemblement* of the American people around the President who embodies their aspirations,²⁸ A third

welcomes the democratic potential inherent in modern American communications technology.³⁹ All and sundry - even still after the sobering defeat of 1988 - speak with pride of their multiple business trips to the USA.

In addition, an astonishing number of senior Gaullists have made special visits to the USA during the 1970s and 1980s in order to study the political system and talk to politicians, social scientists and journalists. Fanton and Noir, as we saw, travelled all over the country in 1975; Alain Juppé went to California in 1978, and Philippe Auberger in 1979, both meeting representatives of the anti-tax campaigners.⁴⁰ Philippe de Bausset, the *France-Soir* journalist who joined Chirac's campaign team in 1981, had spent some years on station in the US, and Jacques Toubon, who followed the 1980 election campaign in person, returned home with a copy of Reagan's campaign poster, which he stuck on his office wall.⁴¹ Yvan Blot kept in touch with the development of American political thought through contacts between his *Club de l'Horloge* and its homologues such as the Heritage Foundation of Washington. In 1983, with Jean-François Mancel, he took time off from his job in the RPR executive committee to spend three weeks studying American direct-mailing techniques and meeting more members of the various business-funded think-tanks which had manufactured the ideology of the conservative revival.⁴²

Not all these trans-Atlantic pilgrims had equal access to the RPR power-centre. Neither Fanton nor Mancel nor Noir had any official responsibility for doctrine, but Blot, Auberger and Juppé were well placed to get an audience for their ideas. The first of these, as we shall see later in the chapter, spent nearly ten years in or around the leadership. Auberger was less interested in working at party headquarters, and

actually turned down Chirac's offer to make him head of research at the end of the 1970s. But on his return from the USA he did transmit to the party leader directly the fruits of his experience, sending him, at his request, monthly briefing papers on economic questions;

...so those elements were used, if you like, in the platform (of 1981) in which Chirac began to say that we had to reduce taxes and that state expenditure was too high.⁴³

Auberger also played a significant role subsequently in the drafting of programmes and platforms. At the Grenoble congress in November 1984 he was the *rapporteur* of a commission which presented the economic part of the RPR programme subsequently published as *Le Renouveau*. Throughout 1985 he was a member of one of the joint-committees set up by the RPR and UDF to negotiate the platform of government signed in January 1986.⁴⁴

Juppé in turn, as we have seen, was held in such high regard by Chirac that he had an almost permanent place in the party leader's inner circle of helpers and advisers, even when his own electoral misfortunes tended to disqualify him from a senior party position. At the end of the 1970s his role was above all that of speech-writer, "a young assistant to his boss" rather than an independent adviser.⁴⁵ In 1981 he was made general-secretary of the party's semi-independent think-tank, the *Club '89*, for which he wrote a book on economic policy in 1983. But in the run-up to 1986 his role was even more important than that of Auberger, since he was in overall charge of the RPR side during the negotiation of the joint platform with the UDF.⁴⁶

The American experience of these key members was not transmitted uniformly to party programmes, however, and certainly not in the terms in which the new economists tried to sell American liberalism to the French

public. In his debates with the liberals both in California and the University of Aix-en-Provence Philippe Auberger remained faithful to the "social" preoccupations of traditional Gaullism. Juppé tried to effect a synthesis between liberalism and the technocratic outlook which had moulded so many Gaullists of his generation, while Michel Noir sought in "systems theory" the answers to the economic and social problems of the 1980s. Blot and the *Club de l'Horloge* tried to transmit to the party an ambitious synthesis of new right conservatism and economic liberalism. In the next few pages we compare the conclusions to which these approaches led, on certain key issues; the firm, planning, macro-economic theory, social policy and institutional reform.

Between 1980 and 1984 the RPR's official programmes abandoned State-defined sectoral policy in favour of a new emphasis on the autonomy of individual firms, a change of focus crucial to the intellectual acceptance of liberalism. The more fully party members wanted to embrace liberal theory, the more completely they would have to abandon the fate of the nation to market forces, a proposition expressed by Albin Chalandon in 1986 in terms which owe a lot to the new economics;

Statist economics conceives of demand as the basic premiss from which one can deduce the production necessary to satisfy needs. It is nothing of the sort. Supply, that is the production of goods and services, has a devastating effect on demand, thanks to its innovation and its ability to lower prices; at the same time it makes any attempt at planning an illusion.⁴⁷

He rejected "national independence" as a criterion by which the State should favour the development of one sector or another;

In a competitive economy who cares whether firms are making ball-point pens, trousers, cars or aeroplanes? The only criteria for their success is a high level of technique.⁴⁸

While Chalandon is very close to the American liberals and the French new economists both in ideas and in jargon, some of his younger colleagues, arrived at similar conclusions from a completely different direction and using a different method - systems theory. ✓

Originally derived from biology, and later applied to genetics and thermodynamics, systems theory has been progressively extended to organizations and to sociology by, among others, the RPR's Alain Devaquet, a university physics teacher.⁴⁹ A system, in this view, is conceived as a number of elements making up a closed circuit, without beginning or end, which is engaged in a process of exchange with its environment. It produces "outputs", in the form of decisions and actions, and receives "inputs" in the form of supports and demands. But inputs are partially conditioned by feedback, that is they are a response to outputs, which in turn involve the processing of inputs. The exchange between a system and its environment is thus circular, without beginning or end. The whole process, and systems themselves, are self-regulating; systems have a permanent tendency to re-establish (an unattainable) equilibrium in opposition to the events which transform them.⁵⁰

Michel Noir, a "systems" enthusiast, bases his rejection of both liberal and collectivist views of people in society on

the new paradigm (which) invites us to observe the way in which, at the same time, one evolves in relation to the other, thanks to, and in, the other, the unity and the totality.⁵¹

Noir asserts that ideologies which express the struggle for domination either of the individual over society, or society over the individual, being mere linear or binary conceptions, are necessarily defunct, while systems theory expresses perfectly the relationship between

the capitalist firm and its environment. The economic crisis is to be welcomed, for

Crisis is the normal state of all living systems, and the economic system is one.⁵²

Therefore, according to Noir, French unions should recognize, like their American colleagues, that the jobs lost in steel, cars, textiles and machine-tools are the price paid for adapting to new competitive conditions, and will never be recovered.⁵³ To adapt the whole economy, an immense effort of education and retraining is required, and this in turn means "glorifying risk and individual initiative."⁵⁴

Both Noir and Juppé propose a new partnership between bosses and workers at the level of the firm, but without Guy Sorman's compensating promise of a job for life. In Noir's view, if the workers are to have their say, and a share of the profits, (but not of the capital, apparently) it is the employers who should be compensated by the repeal of the Auroux laws and the ending of the rights currently enjoyed by the unions.⁵⁵ Like Sorman, both stress the limits of the proposed new arrangements. For Noir;

Every structure needs a chain of command: spontaneism and workers' control have not succeeded anywhere.⁵⁶

Regretting the poor results of previous Gaullist legislation on *participation*, Juppé paradoxically insists that the right to manage "cannot and should not be shared",⁵⁷ but is alone among his colleagues in arguing that, after privatization, the workers now owning 15-20% of the shares in their firm should elect their own representatives on to the board. The same would apply in private companies whose owners had decided to introduce worker-shareownership.⁵⁸ Given the insistence on management's right to manage, it is difficult to see what could be the

role of the worker-directors.

If Chalandon and Noir deduce the same conclusions from different premisses, Juppé seems to go backwards from where they end up. He starts out with a bald faith in the automatic compensating mechanisms of classical theory which is more than worthy of the new economists themselves;

The free market rests on a simple rule of responsibility; each individual, group or organization is free to use the information at their disposal in the pursuit of their own ends, with free competition acting to balance out all their projects and actions in the general interest.⁵⁹

According to Juppé, only the market is flexible and decentralized, it alone guarantees the optimum distribution of resources (if bankruptcies occur this can only be due to the incompetence of individuals), and it alone meets the requirements of social justice by ensuring that wages properly reflect social utility.⁶⁰ This leads straight to an enumeration of the familiar elements of the liberal programme; cuts in the income and expenditure of the state, cuts in transfer payments and social security contributions, and sweeping privatizations. But what comes next makes us sit up and rub our eyes;

.....at the same time we must redefine the positive role which an efficient state should play in emerging from the crisis in the best possible conditions.⁶¹

Tribute is paid to the usefulness of planning in meeting the challenges of the early years of the 5th Republic, and it is suggested that the state has a similar role to play in piloting France towards the so-called "third industrial revolution";

It is not enough, then, to look after in static fashion year after year the major indicators like inflation, unemployment and the balance of payments. Both fiscal and monetary policy, together with expenditure on infrastructure, utilities, education

and research must be integrated into an overall plan in order to ensure a coherent pattern of growth in the medium term. ⁶²

This is not the same, claims Juppé, as the detailed 5-year indicative forecasting which planning had involved in the past. But in the new version, the plan is still expected to provide "a clear frame of reference within which firms can make their investment decisions", and the state itself is to guarantee the achievement of a "hard-core" of prioritized targets. Planning was being pushed out of the door, only to come back in through the window! ⁶³

Juppé rounds off his discussion of the new role of the State with a call for a "commercial and diplomatic strategy", which appears to advocate a measure of protection for the French electronics industry, and aims to "give back to France a place in the front rank of nations in a changing world." ⁶⁴

In short, the man who would become party *secrétaire national* for economic revival in 1984 and general secretary in 1988, far from being part of the vanguard who sought to turn the party towards liberalism, found it very hard to break free from a dirigist frame of reference. This loyalty to ideas whose time seemed to have passed was noticed by some of his colleagues, and attributed as much to the technocratic training of the *Ecole Nationale d'Administration* (ENA), the elite civil servants' training school, as to Gaullist doctrine;

What you have to realize with ENA is that the training one is given is exclusively macro-economic. One receives no, or practically no training in micro-economics or commercial management. So one is deformed, if I can put it like that, by that training. ⁶⁵

By the time of the Grenoble congress in November 1984, Juppé had

apparently been left behind by the bulk of the delegates, and his speech against the stream on the necessary - albeit limited - role of the state was very badly received.⁶⁶

It is remarkable how uniformly sceptical RPR writers were about the value of the macro-economic "techniques" with which the Americans proposed to release pent-up market forces, and which some believed had stimulated the economic upturn which got under way in the USA at the end of 1982. "Intransigent monetarism" is damned by Juppé as a remedy worse than the evil it is meant to cure, for its failure to work on all the causes of inflation, and its tendency to provoke recession,⁶⁷ but his strongest invective is reserved for supply-side theory;

If the state does no more than reduce taxes without attacking the causes of its deficit, this will lead straight to bankruptcy.... The American experience of the Reagan administration serves as a striking example; the reduction of tax revenue caused the budget deficit to explode, fuelled the demands of the Treasury, pushed interest rates up and held back for at least two years the upturn in the economy. Laffer's theory, which predicted that cutting taxes would produce an almost instantaneous rise in national income, turned out to be nothing but pie in the sky.⁶⁸

In comparison, Noir sounds almost mild in dismissing in turn monetarism, (for the same reasons) Keynesianism - along with all other "full employment models" - and the supply-siders;

Nor is there anything to prove that the most recent theory, so dear to the Americans, of an upturn stimulated not by demand, but by supply, has an automatic effect on the level of activity....⁶⁹

Philippe Auberger has likewise deduced from the Reagan experiment that tax-cuts were not the "panacea", and could not produce the "magic effects" that some people liked to believe in.⁷⁰ The American revival was due to "the profound, rapid, and sometimes dramatic efforts at

restructuring" in sectors such as steel, cars, and chemicals, as well as the upturn in housing construction, restocking, and intangibles like changing economic behaviour and the climate of expectations.⁷¹

In explaining why it was impossible for France to imitate the American achievement, Auberger implicitly admitted what the Left had argued all along; far from being the fruit of liberal theory, the American upturn was based on classic Keynesian demand maintenance, in this case indirectly the result of a large military budget financed by borrowing from abroad;

...our situation is fundamentally different from that of the USA, in the sense that we have little or no chance of turning to foreign capital to finance our budget deficit; little footloose capital is likely to come into France, especially in view of the present exchange-rate risks.⁷²

In addition to these intellectual reservations, the social policy implications of American liberalism were difficult for some - but not all - Gaullists to swallow. For Philippe Séguin, who stands on the left of his party, Reagan's capacities as *rassembleur* had more to do with moral revival than with discoveries in economics. The President's all-class appeal was precisely what the RPR risked sacrificing by its over-concentration on economic issues.⁷³ Jacques Toubon was another who accepted some, but not all, of the Reaganite programme, describing himself as a "conservative", in American terms, on economic issues, but a "liberal" (still in American terms - that is, a "social democrat" in European terms) on social issues.⁷⁴

Auberger showed his freedom from the influence of the "public choice" school by attributing state expansion not to the activities of a self-seeking "new class" of bureaucrats, but to the fulfilment of necessary

tasks imposed by economic growth - urbanization, regional development, and the provision of transport and industrial infrastructure. He went further;

growth also leads to certain disparities of income which it is appropriate to correct by transfer mechanisms and redistribution.⁷⁵

With Albin Chalandon the social conscience is more subdued, though still present. He explicitly refers to the American debate in arguing that "excessive" unemployment benefits both stimulate unemployment, and increase rather than reduce inequality, but proposes no concrete remedy,⁷⁶ and he draws back from a fully privatized system of social insurance on grounds of the great inequalities this would entail.⁷⁷ Neither Auberger nor Chalandon are as radically "liberal" as Michel Noir, who cites the American workfare schemes in arguing that the unemployed must be made to give something in return for their benefit.⁷⁸

Juppé, for his part, proposes to diminish or cut off benefits in order to induce the unemployed to take jobs for which they were overqualified.⁷⁹ But Noir goes further still. He is willing to substitute private arrangements for publicly funded welfare, as recommended by Becker and Lepage;

The welfare-state in crisis will not be able to avoid the revival of private mutual-aid systems, and will not escape a reform of its present interventionist structures.⁸⁰

Michel Noir was also the RPR writer with the most radical ideas for institutional reforms leading to the sort of direct democracy which Sorman saw as essential for the achievement of the liberal utopia. He favoured Swiss-style referenda activated by grass-roots initiative,⁸¹ but went further than Sorman in proposing to shorten mandates for all elected offices, not just the presidency, and to limit consecutive terms to two

only, in order to end the concept of the "political career" as it is presently understood.⁸² Education should be decentralized and schools managed by bodies made up 50% by local councillors and 50% by parents, who were also to have a role in financing the school to which they chose to send their children, through a tax-credit system.⁸³

Auberger and Juppé are more lukewarm in embracing direct democracy, Auberger finding it "perfectly conceivable" to widen the range of issues on which referenda may be used, perhaps by popular initiative, while Juppé limits himself to proposing "consultative commissions" of taxpayers which would give their opinions to elected councillors at each level of local government.⁸⁴

On the other hand, Noir avoids the question of banning deficit budgeting, or fixing the share of state expenditure in GDP by institutional means. He suggests that this is a trap set by those opposed to reform, for the most important thing is not the figures involved, but to "revise profoundly the concept of the state."⁸⁵ More concretely, Auberger's analysis of the existing mechanisms of democratic control reveals that the *Cour des Comptes*, has only 7 full time officials for the 109 public enterprises whose accounts it is supposed to vet, and that its reports are poor and not adequately or regularly debated by Parliament. In consequence, it is necessary to *increase* the resources of the *Cour des*

Comptes and extend its responsibilities.²⁶

Both Juppé and Auberger agree that the demand for legal prohibition of deficit budgeting at a stroke is probably unrealistic, given the size of the deficit.²⁷ For Auberger, moreover, a budget deficit is not in itself to be condemned outright. The size of a deficit is not a good guide to a budget's usefulness;

one would have to examine the structure of expenditure, separating current from capital, and deciding whether in each case it is likely to create wealth... Equally, the methods of financing a budget deficit should be examined, because these can vary considerably. If one is wise enough to finance it through savings, deficit is acceptable, especially if it concerns capital expenditure likely to generate wealth in the future.

But deficits financed by printing money are inflationary and to be condemned.²⁸

Auberger approves the idea of limiting the growth of state expenditure to the growth of GDP, but believes that to elevate it into a principle enshrined in a special law is undesirable, since policy is better made for a number of years together rather than year-on-year.²⁹ Juppé strikes a more energetic note, with a demand to freeze the number of civil service posts, and a list of urgent measures to keep spending down, including legislation to change the way the budget is presented to Parliament.³⁰ The two also took a different view of the urgency of privatization. Auberger advocates;

progressive denationalization of enterprises for which public status is not at all appropriate... Naturally, such a process of denationalization will be slow...³¹

whereas Juppé put it like this;

...the first priority is to announce **the immediate denationalization** of most public enterprises in the competitive sector, should the opposition win (the elections). No time must be lost, for whatever is not

done in the first flush of victory will be frittered away by quibbling and delaying tactics.⁹²

As these excerpts show, the lengthy policy proposals put forward by influential party figures during the early 1980s were as likely to be the products of individuals working alone as of co-ordinated efforts. The ideas of an Auberger or a Juppé, as we have seen, resulted from the clash of their own social democratic or technocratic frames of reference with the liberalism they had encountered in the USA. Within the party, these individual efforts had to contend with the coherent doctrine of an organized group whose inspiration was rather different. From the mid-1970s, Yvan Blot and the *Club de l'Horloge* had been among the principle defenders of the ideas of the *Nouvelle Droite*, and their dialogue with liberalism reflected this different starting point.

The *Club de l'Horloge* and Club '89

Yvan Blot differed from his RPR colleagues in that for him party took second place to ideology, as shown by his overriding commitment to the inter-party *Club de l'Horloge*, by his fortuitous infiltration of the RPR leadership and subsequent desertion to the *Front National*. The early association with GRECE of a number of the *Club de l'Horloge*'s leaders has led some to suppose that the Club has never been more than a GRECE front. However, an analysis of articles appearing in the Club's review, *Contrepoint*, shows that, despite sharing identical concepts and analyses, GRECE and the Club moved in different directions after the significant conjuncture represented by the victories of Reagan in the USA and Mitterrand in France. Alain de Benoist led GRECE in opposition to the

reinvigorated US liberalism, as we saw, while Blot tried to use *Contrepoint* as a platform both for the reactionary American supporters of the Reagan revolution, and for a concerted "liberal" onslaught on the newly-elected French Socialists.

Meanwhile Blot himself held a succession of key auxiliary positions within the RPR leadership which gave him daily opportunities to spread his ideas in the general secretary's office and among party workers throughout the country. Although *Contrepoint* probably had little influence within France as a whole, Blot was able to draw into collaboration some important supporters of Jacques Chirac, as well as the self-avowed conservatives within the party. He was not the key figure in pushing Chirac himself towards liberalism, but he played a crucial role in conciliating conservative and liberal ideas in the party and channelling them into what he called "national liberalism", in a way which helps explain the near unanimity with which the party fell into line behind the 1986 programme of government.

Born in 1948, Parisian *lycée*, *Sciences Politiques*, and ENA, Blot followed the classic administrative career of many of his Gaullist contemporaries. As an *administrateur civil* working for the ministry of the Interior he had already, in his twenties, worked in the *cabinets* of succeeding heavyweight Giscardian politicians, Marcellin and Poniatoski. But he appeared in no hurry to come from behind the scenes into the limelight. It was not until after he had rather fortuitously achieved an important position in a party machine - the RPR - that he first won elective office as a modest town councillor in Calais in 1979. He did not become *conseiller général* (county councillor) until 1985, and was *député* for Calais only from 1986 to 1988.

Blot did not come to Gaullism during one of the critical moments of the 5th Republic - not in 1958 when he was ten, like Mancel, and not in 1968 when he was twenty, as others such as Noir and Godfrain had done. He joined the RPR in 1978 when discord within Chirac's entourage led to the resignation of the general secretary, Jérôme Monod, and his replacement by Alain Devaquet. Himself a newcomer, Devaquet had to rely on those who had ousted Monod for help in setting up his office. As Blot puts it;

No, I didn't know M. Devaquet, but he had been... or rather, I had been recommended to him by several members of Chirac's entourage, and that is how he asked me if I would be his *directeur du cabinet*. So we met, and we got on well together, and he hired me.²³

He remained in the job of director of the general-secretary's office, serving first Devaquet and then Bernard Pons for more than six years, sharing the day-to-day running of the party as a member of the Executive Committee. During this period Blot estimates that he must have written for Chirac 40 or 50 papers concerning "ideological orientation", each of between 2 and five pages in length, and he gave scores of lectures on various subjects to provincial party officials, as part of the training courses organized by Mancel.²⁴ ✓

But Blot's influence within the party leadership did not come to an end in 1984. From the general-secretary's office he switched to the *cabinet* of Charles Pasqua, by then president of the RPR group in the Senate. Here he joined Devedjian, Marleix and others in a "think-tank" whose task was to develop ideas which Pasqua would use in his bid to make the transition from the role of Chirac's "Mr Fix-it" to that of a serious politician in his own right.²⁵ At the same time - until his election as *député* in March 1986 - Blot held down the job of co-ordinator of "legislative studies", which involved a three-way liaison between Senate,

Assemblée and the general-secretary's office to ensure that the parliamentarians' votes and legislative proposals were in tune with party policy.²⁶

During his years in the leadership of the RPR Blot worked in accordance with an ideology to which he was already fully committed before he even joined the party, and of which the main lines remained intact when he left to join the *Front National* in 1989. The *Club de l'Horloge*, founded at his home in 1974, - its name is taken from his own grandfather clock - was throughout the main vehicle for his ideas and the key focus of his activity. He was its first president, is the permanent honorary president, and has edited the review, *Contrepoint* since the Club took it over in early 1980.

Blot's fellow founding members were nearly all students of the elite civil service training schools, ENA and the *Polytechnique*. They included Jean-Yves le Gallou, later secretary-general of the *Front National's* parliamentary group, Michel Leroy, of the Giscardian *Parti Républicain*, later a close collaborator of Alain Madelin, one of the party's rising stars, and Henri de Lesquen of the RPR, whose job in the city housing authority later made him a link in the chain of Chirac's Paris power system. All would remain leading Club members for the next decade. ✓

The founders shared the belief that there was "a lack of doctrinal density" among the ruling parties of the period, and hence an "unconscious deviation towards socialist ideas" which they wanted to combat,²⁷ but they did not set out to create a mass movement. Two hundred and fifty members were admitted after undergoing two interviews, and their subscriptions were fixed at 200 francs (roughly £20) per month, as a test of seriousness.²⁸ In common with the plethora of other intellectual

societies and political front organizations which exist among *énarques* and *polytechniciens* in Paris, the *Club de l'Horloge's* early activities were those of the dining and debating club. By 1981, the average seminar audience was up from 200 to around 800-900,⁹⁹ an achievement which clearly marked the *Club de l'Horloge* out from its rivals.

Apart from the energy and organizational skills of its leaders, the reason for the Club's success may have been, as Blot claimed, that it was distinguished from the other technocrats' clubs of the mid-1970s by its scepticism about the virtues of state intervention in the economy. Although the Club remained "for a very long time" the preserve of *hautes fonctionnaires*, who in 1989 still made up more than half of its board, Blot built up a clientele amongst businessmen by calling himself an *énarque défroqué*, and outdoing them in his scorn for the maze of interventionist bureaucracy. His own work had required him to represent the ministry of the Interior at the planning commissariat on questions concerning local government finance. Here,

...I saw how useless the Plan was. It absolutely failed to work, it was a catastrophe. I have never seen a branch of the administration as badly organized and as useless, really.¹⁰⁰

The decision to set up an organization outside but astride existing parties probably owed something to the ramshackle organization of the French Right, which would have made it difficult to prefer any one party to another,¹⁰¹ but it also reflected the founders' endorsement of de Benoist's concept of *métapolitique*,¹⁰² used both to elucidate the "domination" of the Marxists, and to sketch the Right's own circuitous approach to power, concentrating on the battle of ideas rather than conventional politics. As Blot put it later;

The ten years' experience I have had of the RPR has convinced me that it is very difficult to ask political parties, which are electoral machines, to go in for deep thinking. They are not the sort of bodies equipped for that. Every attempt at serious ideological production in a political party has generally resulted in nothing. I'm very sceptical. I think, as far as political thinking is concerned, it is better to do it in organizations which are completely independent, like clubs and foundations.¹⁰³

The importance of this work was confirmed for him by his study of history (in this case the French revolution);

One should always study the actual organizations whose aim it was to spread ideas... Ideas do not speak for themselves, they are spread, they are effective only to the extent that people work for them, that men help them along, particularly in influential circles.¹⁰⁴

The similar strategies adopted by the two organizations, and the leading Clubmen's early links with GRECE led some observers to wonder whether the Club was no more than a front established by GRECE to act as a pole of attraction for its sympathizers in political circles.¹⁰⁵ Blot himself was said to have taken part in GRECE seminars, in which he justified slavery and racial differentiation, in 1972 and 1974.¹⁰⁶ Le Gallou worked on the distribution of de Benoist's *Nouvelle Ecole*, to which he contributed an article, and Leroy wrote regularly for *Eléments* up until 1976-7.¹⁰⁷ It was hinted that the attenuation of these personal links over time, the denial of all organizational ties between the two groups, and even the Club's official rejection (in 1982) of the label *Nouvelle Droite* and "notions which are foreign to us",¹⁰⁸ could have been part of a devious attempt to obscure the Club's real origins.¹⁰⁹ Certainly these suspicions tended to be confirmed by a comparison of the two organizations' shared ideas.

The Club's members form a series of commissions each of which studies

certain intellectual or social questions with the aim of publishing a book when their work is completed, after which the commissions are dissolved and new ones formed.¹¹⁰ The first work produced in this way, written over the years 1974-6 and appearing in 1977¹¹¹ was a founding statement which established the Club's general view on a number of topics, a "*Livre-Programme*" as Blot puts it.¹¹² It showed clearly the imprint of GRECE ideology, being built around Dumézil's notion of trifunctional social organization; his name is cited as early as page 14, the concept is referred to repeatedly¹¹³ and the book's central section is divided into three chapters of equal length, each one devoted in turn to problems of political sovereignty, defence and the economy. The theme of trifunctionality reappears constantly in other Club publications,¹¹⁴ as does *enracinement*,¹¹⁵ and the nostalgia for "heroic" values¹¹⁶ and the stress on the historic role of great leaders in embodying the aspirations of the nation.¹¹⁷ The references to the German anthropologist Arnold Gehlen are also there, with fascistic and social-Darwinist overtones,¹¹⁸ which are developed further in the Club's second book, *La Politique du Vivant*¹¹⁹ and elsewhere.¹²⁰

In dealing with the economy, finally, the Club and GRECE shared a basic frame of reference leading, until about 1980 at least, to identical conclusions which set them apart from the unconditional liberalism of the new economists. The Club blamed *laissez-faire* for the crash of 1929,¹²¹ while the new economists blamed the state. The Club called for political regulation of economic activity ("conjunctural", "structural" and "social"¹²²) and in certain cases justified state control, where the new economists wanted to privatize and deregulate. The Club blamed immigrants for holding down wages, and called for a graduated minimum wage which

would allow manual workers to improve their position,¹²³ where Lepage and his friends regarded immigrants as victims of such schemes and called for their abolition. The Club reserved "family policy" for the state¹²⁴, while some of the new economists evoked the libertarian spirit of 1968. The Club shared with GRECE a distaste for the acquisitive values fostered by contemporary capitalism, typically denounced as *la société marchande*,¹²⁵ and in 1980 Michel Leroy published an article in the Club's review, *Contrepoint*, in which he attacked the fundamental tenet of liberalism, the concept of *homo oeconomicus*.¹²⁶

However, as we argued above in chapter 7, the Club's interpretation of the conflation of the sovereign and the economic functions in society provided them with a starting point from which they could integrate and develop later anti-state theorizing. They attacked price controls, lauded the spirit of enterprise,¹²⁷ demanded the substitution of private for public insurance¹²⁸ and tried to define which productive activities should and should not be part of the public sector.¹²⁹

After 1980, in solidarity with what he saw as the positive elements in the American Republican revival, and especially after 1981, in order to attack the newly-elected French Socialists, Blot deliberately focussed more closely on the conventional political battleground and was able to build on the Club's more sophisticated approach in order to swing it round in defence of some aspects of the liberal programme proposed by people like Lepage and Sorman.

The vehicle for this was the review *Contrepoint* which, throughout the 1970s had been a modest tribune for that mixture of conservative and liberal instincts represented in France by figures like Raymond Aron,¹³⁰ and which Blot claimed to admire in Georges Pompidou, Pierre Juillet and

the British Conservative party. Blot acquired control in 1980, and within a few issues had changed the journal's character completely.¹³¹ Literary and artistic reviews were abandoned in favour of an exclusive concern with politics, in which the publications of the *Club de l'Horloge* were given pride of place. The news section was turned into *politique actualité*, dominated by the RPR, and an entirely new rubric, *Economie-Entreprises* was introduced. In June 1981, the review moved its editorial address to the Club's own premises, and at the same time, significantly, an innocuously liberal quotation from de Tocqueville was removed from the mast-head and replaced by a stronger anti-socialist statement from Vladimir Bukovsky.¹³² These changes were justified by the new editor on the grounds of the Socialists' arrival in power,¹³³ The abrupt increase in the number of articles by known party members signalled an attempt to turn the review into a platform which would rally the opposition across party lines to launch concerted attacks on the government.¹³⁴ In this Blot was hardly successful, for the review soon began to appear in double issues, a sure sign of disorganization and inability to meet deadlines, and from no 41, which appeared sometime in 1982, no dates were printed on the cover or title page, while the general quality of the contributions was distinctly inferior to the standard of the old *Contrepoint*.

If all this meant that the Club's *Contrepoint* could not hope to build up a mass audience, nonetheless the participation of senior RPR figures was impressive. Yves Lancien, and Jean-Pierre Cassabel attacked the Socialists on defence and decentralization, the subjects for which they were the party spokesmen,¹³⁵ Jacques Godfrain, Jacques Toubon and Bruno Bourg-Broc, director of the party training school, contributed pieces on the "state of the struggle" in Parliament and the country,¹³⁶ while Godfrain and Daniel

Méraud (Bernard Pons' adviser on economic questions) set about demolishing the nationalizations and the Socialists' economic policy.¹³⁷ Michel Aurillac had a stab at a philosophical piece which was presumably included in order to demonstrate the warm relations between the *Club de l'Horloge* and the *Club '89* which had just been set up under Aurillac's presidency.¹³⁸ Some of these authors were no strangers to collaboration with the *Club de l'Horloge*, having contributed to the seminars which were later written up into Club publications.¹³⁹

Meanwhile the Club members, principally Blot, carried on a serious debate with the new economists, on certain of the themes raised by them, which ended with Blot's endorsement of the American "Republican Revolution".

In 1980 Blot and Leroy were still defending the idea of the nation and the great leader ("*l'homme illustre*") as the fount of values and focus for the ambitions of all citizens. They took a side-swipe at the "permissive and anarchistic bourgeois spirit of personal development" (of the sort defended by Lepage) and called for the cultivation, through state-controlled education, of the "republican type", the citizen proof against such corruption, and the only type fully compatible with the spirit of enterprise and efficiency.¹⁴⁰

At the same time, however, they invited Lepage to outline the public choice analysis of the bureaucracy and argue for constitutional reform which would introduce a measure of American-style direct democracy.¹⁴¹ Other Club members argued for the scrapping of minimum wage legislation and universal social benefits, in favour of a means-tested "safety-net".¹⁴² This was a distinct move towards the positions of the new economists and away from Le Gallou's 1977 proposal, as a means of

"*rééquilibrage social*", to offset the downward pressure on wages caused by immigration, by instituting a "manual minimum wage" growing faster than the ordinary one.¹⁴³ Soon the Club was debating economics and inequality with representatives of the new economists who were pumping the liberal orthodoxy into the universities.¹⁴⁴

Blot also produced an extremely lucid statement of his ideas on political strategy which showed how far he had advanced from the sterile oppositionism of de Benoist;

The essential act of politics is identification of the enemy...

necessarily, for Blot, the Socialists. Three mistakes were to be avoided, he argued; not to identify any enemy, and to claim to reduce politics to a question of simple management; to identify everybody as the enemy (the mistake made by extremists); and to be incapable of identifying one enemy at a time (the mistake of the centrists).¹⁴⁵

As well as collaborating with the new economists, as part of the anti-Socialist strategy, the Club regularly exchanged pamphlets, speakers and ideas with some of the American think-tanks, particularly the Heritage Foundation of Washington, which flooded political and business circles with intellectual ammunition in support of Ronald Reagan's Presidential campaign. Unhampered by GRECE's anti-Christian prejudice, Blot was also in intermittent contact with the American Enterprise Institute run by the Catholic intellectual Michael Novak who had deduced a moral defence of capitalism from his religious faith.¹⁴⁶

The *rapprochement* was sealed with issue 47 of *Contrepoint*, devoted to the Club's homage to the Reagan revolution, which Sorman was invited to summarize.¹⁴⁷ The transformation wrought by the Republicans' victorious

campaign had led the Club to revise both their earlier critique of American society

characterized by a one-dimensional ethic (primacy of money, homogenization of life-styles)...¹⁴⁸

and their condemnation of the United States' relationship with the rest of the world.¹⁴⁹ Now Blot personally translated four contributions from three Republican standard-bearers, including two by Congressman Jack Kemp which regretted that American influence in the third world had been undermined by the bad "Keynesian" advice handed out by successive Democrat Presidents, and looked forward to a new era of American leadership founded on rediscovered strength and self-confidence.¹⁵⁰

In his own contribution to the special issue, Blot took care to stress the moral and religious aspects of the populist revolt, warning against their reduction to "classical liberal doctrine *stricto sensu*", and emphasized the conservative elements in Hayek's thought;

The evolutionism of Hayek is not simply a belief in the benefits of freedom. It is also a belief in the benefits of tradition, which expresses the genius of a people making history. It is not an appeal to break with the past in order to construct a future dreamed up *a priori* by a few people, which is the way the constructivists look at things.¹⁵¹

Nevertheless he felt it necessary to address the demands for institutional reform raised by the American anti-tax campaigners, and implicit in Kemp's praise for direct democracy as practised in Switzerland.¹⁵² Despite his earlier dismissal as futile and dangerous of the "constructivist" ambitions of revolutionaries from Robespierre to Pol Pot,¹⁵³ he was now prepared to recognize that;

In certain situations of over-rigid societies, a rapid rearrangement of institutions, that is to say a sort of revolution, can be beneficial.... (In France)... a profound transformation of the state's activity is necessary in order to liberate the creative energies

of our citizens.¹⁵⁴

Blot, who had always looked to the state as the defender of hierarchy, duty and tradition, had deduced from his own reactionary and organicist premisses a slogan identical to that brandished at every opportunity by the most libertarian of the Chicago-inspired economists and by the most democratic of grass-roots politicians. By the mid-1980s he had embraced supply-side economics and accepted that the only necessary public guarantee of social solidarity was Kemp's "safety net".¹⁵⁵

Another of the new economists' ideas, that unelected citizens should exercise a measure of direct democracy, had been dismissed as a "Rousseauist fiction" by Le Gallou in 1977,¹⁵⁶ while *autogestion* was condemned as a confusion of the sovereign and economic functions by Leroy in 1980,¹⁵⁷ and Blot had later grappled again with the definition of "democracy", remaining reluctant to make any concessions to the idea of popular initiative.¹⁵⁸ In 1985, however, after examining the Swiss system, again following Kemp's lead, he allowed that French citizens might use referenda to veto laws but not to propose them, at least not until after a trial period.¹⁵⁹ At the same time he proposed a simple and effective amendment to the French constitution - a practical version of Sorman's utopian schemes - which would clarify the distribution of competence in economic affairs between the state and other actors.¹⁶⁰ By 1989 he had become an active advocate of direct democracy, through a new association founded by himself,¹⁶¹ a position enjoying less sympathy in the RPR than in the populist *Front National*, which Blot joined in June of that year.¹⁶²

Asked to recall the achievement of which he was proudest during his time with the RPR, Blot named the joint platform of government signed in

January 1986, which was "*totalement* conservative".¹⁶³ In support of this he cited his analysis of the platform in terms of 100 points, which revealed that there were 86 on which there was identity of views between the RPR, UDF and FN, and only 14 on which the FN differed from the RPR-UDF.¹⁶⁴

While believing that the party had adopted most of his own views by 1986, Blot does not overstate his own contribution to that outcome;

It is true that, during the period when the RPR found itself in opposition, public opinion moved very very sharply towards the right. Chirac wanted to take account of that, and then there were very very strong pressures also coming from business circles, which meant that the RPR programme did become quite liberal, in fact. That is certainly true.¹⁶⁵

Likewise, he downplays the American example;

The influence of the Reagan experience must have played a role, certainly. But there was also the shock, the shock of the Socialists' coming to power. For the first time for a very long time the Socialists were in power, and what's more, allied to the Communists.¹⁶⁶

Furthermore, the actions of different ministers when once the party was in power, showed that important figures remained hostile to the Club's "national liberalism". According to Blot, some applied the programme - Balladur on privatization, Pasqua on immigration; but others backed down on the campaign promises - Devaquet on the universities, but also Séguin, at social affairs and employment, who was "in total disagreement with the programme" which he "absolutely did not apply", even defending his civil servants against cuts.¹⁶⁷

Despite all this, Blot probably *underestimated* his role and that of the Club, in the transformation of the party's economic policy. It is true that the Socialist victory induced the Gaullists to redefine for

themselves rather abruptly the dividing lines between intervention and collectivism, between solidarity and egalitarianism, and that Chirac listened carefully to his businessmen friends, although, (as we saw in chapter 6) Blot exaggerates the degree to which public opinion endorsed the liberal programme. But the businessmen's demands, hostility to the Socialists and an appropriate response to the American events popularized by Sorman and others, all had to be articulated, conciliated as far as possible, and moulded into a form which could be readily absorbed by the membership and plausibly presented to the electorate. This was the service which the *Club de l'Horloge*, despite its quirkily mystical and fascistic pedigree, performed for a section of the RPR, and which Blot himself performed with his memos to Chirac and his lectures to the party workers. As Blot himself has reminded us, ideas are not spread on their own, they are spread by organized groups of people.

Of course the *Club de l'Horloge* was far from dominant within the party. Edouard Balladur had nothing to do with it, nor did the left or the Gallo-Giscardians, and some of these groupings had bulletins and newsletters of their own. But there were none - apart from the Club '89, formed only at the end of 1981 - which compared in financial backing or in prestige with the output of the *Club de l'Horloge*. Furthermore, the minority of party members who were members or sympathizers of the Club included loyal and influential Chiraquians such as Toubon, Godfrain and Aurillac, whose contributions to *Contrepoint* and participation in the Club's seminars helped provide a frame of reference for the inchoate instincts of the Chiraquian rank and file. Godfrain demonstrated this role perfectly when he wrote;

The state is a vital institution. Nevertheless, it should fulfil its own functions of sovereignty and law

and order. It is not its job to play at being a businessman on behalf of the people.¹⁶⁹

Only two years previously, as we showed in chapter 5, Godfrain was calling for state regulation of the price of pork. The abruptness of his conversion clearly owed much to the Socialists' victory; the form in which it was expressed owed everything to Blot, and to the adaptability of Dumézil's theory of the three social functions.

The Club '89

The Club '89 was founded by leading Chiraquians as a "think tank" for the RPR, which was effectively in control, though membership of the Club was open to non-party members. The Club's President, Michel Aurillac, believes that, although not carried through by the government, most of the 1986 joint platform was identical to the Club's own ideas. However, a reading of the Club's programme, published in 1985, shows it to be both internally inconsistent and rather eclectic - influenced by the conservatism of the *Club de l'Horloge*, the liberalism of the new economists, and the "techno-liberalism" of Alain Juppé, the Club's secretary-general. Accordingly, the Club's activities and findings should be seen as the reflection rather than as the motor of the RPR's programmatic development in the early 1980s.

The Club '89 was set up in the autumn of 1981 at the initiative of Alain Juppé, Michel Aurillac, and Nicole Catala, all loyal supporters of Jacques Chirac, and all at one time or another having worked at the *rue de Lille* or at the Paris town hall. All four believed, like Yvan Blot, that the independence and quality of their research would be enhanced if freed

from unconditional party loyalty. A second organization, occupying essentially the same space as and pursuing the same activities as the *Club de l'Horloge*, was justified by the founders on the ground that the latter was too "ultra-liberal", and "had links with certain ideas we don't approve of."¹⁶⁹

Unlike the *Club de l'Horloge*, however, whose restricted membership was devoted to the propagation of an ideology, the Club '89 claimed 100 local organizations by 1983, covering nearly 3,000 members (half outside Paris) and no less than 48 study groups,¹⁷⁰ and its aims were both to develop practical policies which could be put before the electorate by Chirac, and to help bring new activists into politics.¹⁷¹ Chirac made sure that the Club was able to pay the rent for its own headquarters and meeting rooms, and to produce 9 books of 150 pages or so, for which he on occasion himself signed the prefaces, before the Club's own programme was published in 1985.¹⁷² He also deliberately identified himself with the Club by making speeches at its annual conventions, and joint meetings with other clubs. In return, the Club provided him with one or two handy but not very original slogans, such as the juxtaposition of the *état gérant* (managerial state) with the *état garant* (the state which protects or guarantees)¹⁷³ and provided a forum in which RPR members could debate with each other.¹⁷⁴ Inevitably, however, the output of this amorphous organization was more diverse and less intellectually rigorous than that of the Club controlled by Blot, Leroy and Le Gallou.

Each chapter of the Club's programme is a synthesis by an individual author of the discussions of a particular working party. On the central question of the role of the state in economic policy, the tone is set by Juppé, whose half-liberal-half-technocratic work, which we discussed

above, was published under the Club imprint.¹⁷⁵ Edouard Balladur, on the other hand, the architect of the economic policy of the 1986-88 government, "never set foot" in the Club's rooms.¹⁷⁶

Juppé's technocratic temptation can be seen in the Club's preoccupation - absent from the new economists or the *Club de l'Horloge* - with "international competition", which justifies breaking up the civil service, sacking immigrants, and cutting company taxation.¹⁷⁷ Alongside this, however, and showing the influence of the new economists, there is a clear statement of faith in the automatic self-regulation of the capitalist system, defended on grounds of efficiency morality and democracy;

The market and free competition necessitate the continuous adaptation of ideas and methods. By these means, developed societies have found a way of subjecting individual activity to the countervailing power of others, and thus to the common good.¹⁷⁸

This in turn is rapidly contradicted by the observation that "*libéralisme intégral*" is not possible in the field of passenger transport, which is "*structurellement déficitaire*",¹⁷⁹ and by the defence of state hand-outs to "development programmes which are of strategic importance for the country".¹⁸⁰ Faced with the task of summarizing this message for the introductory chapter to the Club's programme, the *rapporteur général* plumped for a forthright attack on the very principle of *laissez-faire*;

At any rate, freedom does not mean *laissez-faire*. When the convergence of individual and collective interests is not organized, there is no dynamic of positive exchanges, but simply relations of domination.¹⁸¹

This eclecticism is reflected in other policy areas. There is a strong defence of the socializing role of the family, reminiscent of the *Club de l'Horloge*;

Indeed, the family represents the seat of memory and the transmission of a heritage; accordingly, it is indispensable for the training and education of young people.... It is within the bosom of the family that a nation's culture is protected and passed on...¹²²

but this impression is cancelled by the passage in the introduction which refers, in the manner of Lepage or Sorman, to;

archaic relationships in which forms of domination inherited from the past leave no room for new aspirations to autonomy and personal responsibility.¹²³

The theme of autonomy and responsibility in *Libres et Responsables*, the 1984 party programme, which we focussed on at the beginning of chapter 5, is aired further in the passage on *participation* in the workplace, which proposes a subdued version of Sorman's workplace charter,¹²⁴ and in the chapter on local government, where the Club strongly favours local referenda, freedom of information, and an active role for community associations,¹²⁵ following, in this respect the trail of direct democracy blazed by Giraud and subsequently followed by Carignon and the new economists.

This liberal posture was in sharp contrast, however, with the Club's positions on immigrants and immigration. With no more preamble than a reference to "the realities which worry French people",¹²⁶ immigrants are blamed for low wages and for discouraging employers from making needed investments. The notion of multicultural society is attacked in terms borrowed from the *Club de l'Horloge*,¹²⁷ but international competition is invoked, in technocratic fashion, to justify employers sacking "immigrants who are surplus to requirements"¹²⁸ The Club demands quotas in public housing, the deportation of immigrant unemployed, restriction of family allowances to natives only, abolition of the 10-year residence permit

recently introduced by the Socialists, refusal of naturalization through marriage, and a ban on the right of foreigners to form associations or take part in political activity in France.¹⁹⁹

In contrast with this one-dimensional catalogue of reaction, the Club's programme for education can be read as an attempt to conciliate conservatives and liberals without sacrificing the votes of the well-organized teachers. The state's involvement in the transmission of national culture which the conservatives were very reluctant to see reduced,²⁰⁰ is dismissed as a "wrong direction" by the Club in a way which seems to damn not just the Socialists, but 100 years of Republican practice.²⁰¹ This is followed, logically by a call for diversification in types of schooling on offer, among which parents should be free to choose,²⁰² At the same time the Club took some trouble to defend teachers' working conditions, denounced by the rest of the party as privileges extorted by the unionized and self-interested bureaucracy,²⁰³ but ended, after all, with the typical conservative demands for "history with dates" and quality control through frequent examinations, of which the content "of course" should be determined by the state.²⁰⁴

The success of the Club '89, founded and led by loyal Chiraquians, indicated that it responded to a widespread interest in discussion and programmatic development among the RPR's members and sympathizers. Yet the very diversity of the participants, and the eclecticism of their inspiration, led to a programme which combined technocratic, laissez-faire, and conservative ideologies, and occasionally reflected corporatist interests. This, together with the timing of its foundation - *after* Chirac had fought the 1981 election on a liberal platform - disqualifies the Club

from consideration as a serious force in the party's conversion to liberalism.

Left Gaullism; the end of an illusion

The "official" Gaullist party, the UDR, had been on bad terms with most of the so-called left ever since the retirement of de Gaulle and Pompidou's election as President in 1969,¹²⁵ and a further split occurred in 1976 when Jean Charbonnel formed the *Fédération des Républicains de Progrès* in protest at "the lack of a truly democratic structure" in the UDR.¹²⁶

In launching the RPR at the end of that year, however, Chirac secured the co-operation of Philippe Dechartre, who, unlike his leftist comrades, had remained in government after Pompidou's takeover of the UDR. As under-secretary for employment in Chaban Delmas' "New Society" cabinet, he shared the credit for reforming industrial relations in the public sector, upgrading the minimum wage and extending worker share-ownership.¹²⁷ A veteran of *résistance* Gaullism and co-founder with Capitant and Vallon of the UDT in 1958, he had been personally charged by de Gaulle both in 1959 and in 1967 with the task of holding together the leftist splinters in a series of umbrella organizations.¹²⁸

Dechartre's task in the RPR was to rebuild the *Action Ouvrière et Professionnelle* (AOP), a network of supporters organized in the workplaces, with the aim of winning back the two million workers who had voted for de Gaulle in 1958. With the 1978 elections in view, the AOP sections organized propaganda meetings, mirroring the work of the Communist and Socialist *sections d'entreprise*, in defence of the Gaullists' general record on issues like the nuclear deterrent, votes for

women, the social security system, and the progress so far made on *participation*.

Of all those who had ever held ministerial office, Dechartre probably had the most radical conception of this idea, first mooted by the RPF in 1950,¹⁹⁹ pulled out of the hat by de Gaulle after May '68,²⁰⁰ and revered by the Gaullist left as a test of loyalty and identity. Since leaving the government, he had devoted his free time to making speeches in its defence, on behalf of the *Mouvement pour le Socialisme par la Participation*, of which he had been general-secretary since its foundation in 1971.

In de Gaulle's definition of *participation* the workers should have a share of profits, capital and "responsibilities" in the firm, but the general ruled out collective decision-making,²⁰¹ as did Pompidou²⁰² and Debré.²⁰³ Dechartre insisted, however, that;

it would be an abuse of vocabulary to speak of participation if we did not mean by that that it should finish up as co-management²⁰⁴

Chirac himself was happy to endorse the idea that *participation* meant sharing responsibilities, though Dechartre did not manage to persuade the RPR leader to commit himself to co-management.²⁰⁵

Dechartre regarded the *Action Ouvrière et Professionnelle* as a genuine workers organization guaranteeing the party's populist orientation. The burst of enthusiasm stimulated by the launch of the RPR enabled him rapidly to build up 250 AOP groups in 80 departments, ten times the number of factory sections inherited from the UDR.²⁰⁶ In parallel *RPR Entreprises* was founded in order to conduct propaganda with big business, aimed at overcoming their considerable resistance to the whole idea of *participation*.²⁰⁷

The early progress reflected Chirac's personal support for the operation and the party's success in convincing a few thousand workers that they were actually going to fight against Giscard and his governments' unpopular policies. But the target audience was increasingly resistant to the AOP message, especially after the 1978 elections when the Gaullist deputies continued dutifully to vote for the policies which the shop-floor propagandists were attacking.²⁰⁸

With the 1978 elections out of the way, workers' votes were no longer the leadership's main preoccupation, and the AOP's stock in the party fell. Dechartre claims that the employers demanded his removal because too many workers were talking about *participation*, and that he was replaced by "people whose mission it was to sabotage what we had done, to go into reverse." At the beginning of 1980, "so as not to cause problems for Chirac" he abandoned his connection with the AOP and accepted the title of "adviser to the President of the RPR".²⁰⁹

Whatever the AOP's real ability to worry the employers, it is likely that Dechartre was kicked upstairs partly because his style of work did not suit the new party general secretary Bernard Pons, who took over in the autumn of 1979,²¹⁰ and partly because Chirac was preparing a rapprochement with another left Gaullist returning to the fold.

Jean Charbonnel's flirt with the opposition, during which he tried to negotiate an alliance with the Socialists for his *Fédération des Républicains de Progrès* came to an end when he almost lost his town hall at Brive in 1977, and came bottom of the poll in the Parliamentary elections of 1978. In March 1979 he seized on the chance to keep a Communist out of the presidency of the Corrèze *conseil général* by voting RPR, and in September Chirac charged him with the "mission" of persuading

all the other particles of the left Gaullist diaspora to return to some form of association with the *Rassemblement*.²¹¹

In this Charbonnel predictably failed, despite his own later claim to the contrary,²¹² for he had lost credit with the "exiles" by continuing to work with Pompidou after 1969.²¹³ Nevertheless, he was duly installed in Dechartre's old job, *Délégué à l'Action Ouvrière et Professionnelle* at the *rue de Lille* in January 1980.²¹⁴

His spell at head office, which lasted little more than a year, did nothing to revive the fortunes of the AOP and left no strong impression on his colleagues,²¹⁵ but it did help provide Chirac with something of a left face during 1980, the year in which he was trying to develop a strategy for the forthcoming presidential election. He and Pons gave a number of signs that they were sympathetic to Charbonnel's wish that the RPR should distance itself from Giscard and seek to construct a "new majority".²¹⁶ At the end of February Pons made a speech claiming that the "popular and national" Gaullist movement was close to non-Marxist socialism,²¹⁷ while Chirac and Charbonnel appeared together at a *dîner-débat* in Charbonnel's political base at Brive²¹⁸ and in April Charbonnel spoke for the party on *participation* at Toulouse.²¹⁹ In the autumn Chirac claimed that a Socialist admission of the definitive failure of their on-off unity with the Communists would create "a totally different context";²²⁰ soon afterwards Pons promised that the RPR would "attract votes from the left" at the next elections²²¹, while Chirac himself enumerated in public the points on which RPR and PS agreed and disagreed.²²² This hidden threat that the RPR would consider negotiating a "new majority" with the Socialist Party excited a degree of interest among socialist academics,²²³ but was soon revealed as a not very successful tactic intended to garner a

few votes and blackmail Giscard, when Chirac dismissed the whole idea as "ridiculous".²²⁴

Charbonnel decided in September 1980 to give up his position at head office, apparently not because of this abandonment of the putative anti-Giscard front, but because of the leadership's decision to withdraw the party's Bill on participation which had already begun its passage through Parliament.²²⁵ He was replaced as *Délégué* for the AOP the following March by Jean-Pierre Delalande, a young deputy who had specialized in debates on the subject of *participation* since entering Parliament in 1978.

Charbonnel did not return to his *Fédération des Républicains de Progrès* because they were Mitterrandiste, but remained within the RPR.²²⁶ In 1983 he published a long essay combining measured criticism of the Socialists' record with muted disavowal of the liberal revival, which avoided treating in concrete fashion any of the topical issues, such as privatization, tax-cuts, or the social security deficits, or even *participation*, on which many of his younger colleagues were contemporaneously rushing into print.²²⁷ On his own admission his opposition to the RPR's accelerating infatuation with liberalism was limited, to avoid embarrassing his party publicly, to occasional speeches at the Central Committee and other bodies of which he continued to be a member,²²⁸ and to his conversations with Chirac at the fortnightly meetings of the Corrèze *conseil-général*. Even when Balladur privatized the *Société Générale*, one of the banks nationalized by de Gaulle in 1945, which Charbonnel was "absolutely" against, he again did nothing because the Right had a majority of only one or two votes in the Assembly.²²⁹

Separated by his youth from the old left-Gaullist tradition rooted in the resistance, Jean-Pierre Delalande was nevertheless one of a small

collection of individuals in the parliamentary party who shared a fully-worked out social-catholic philosophy. His notion that the state ought to control the operation of the market economy on occasion - to ensure social solidarity, to guarantee competition, maintain strategic industries, and perhaps even to nationalize, - set him at odds with what he saw as the "liberal right", while his democratic ideas on party organization did not endear him to the generation of technocrats who had taken positions of power in the Gaullist movement during the Pompidou era.²²⁰

Although he remained with the AOP for an even shorter time than Charbonnel had,²²¹ Delalande's parliamentary interventions on *participation* showed a degree of expertise which indicated that he was no less influential within the party on the subject.²²² What is significant from the point of view of the RPR's programmatic development is that neither had a conception of *participation* which would require them or their supporters to make a serious stand against the expanding influence of the liberals. Charbonnel was on record as believing that de Gaulle had not intended

to challenge management's right to manage, which he absolutely wanted to keep intact.²²³

and Delalande explicitly refuted Dechartre by arguing

Participation is not co-management. In contrast to the latter, it does not challenge the authority of the head of the firm....²²⁴

On the other hand even Dechartre agreed with them that *participation* posed no threat to the operation of the market. He had written in 1975;

The present-day form of co-responsibility is co-management. Tomorrow it will be self-management, a system which, remember, is perfectly compatible with a market economy and represents the most highly developed form of participative society.²²⁵

while Delalande told Parliament in 1980,

Participation does not conflict with the market economy. It reinforces it... It will improve firms' competitiveness, since everyone will have a motive to contribute to it; so the firm will become really a team of people in competition with other teams.²³⁶

This approach was echoed by one of another group of young RPR deputies who entered Parliament for the first time either in 1978 or 1981. As parliamentary spokesman on employment policy in the late 1970s, when he advocated distinctly interventionist measures to offset the impact of the slump on the working class²³⁷, and later as a dissident over RPR policy towards the *Front National*²³⁸, Philippe Séguin for a while appeared set to take on the role of leader of a youthful "social" wing in the party. Almost alone among RPR notables who produced books in the early 1980s, he ironically dismissed the fashionable obsession with "liberalomania",²³⁹ warned that the bulk of the population was strongly attached to the existing social security system,²⁴⁰ and counselled the Right to avoid a "spirit of revenge" over the Socialists, which could only perpetuate a damaging polarization in French society. But his book was chiefly an essay on constitutional questions, ground on which he was later to conclude an unexpected alliance with the arch right-winger, Charles Pasqua.²⁴¹ In the early 1980s, furthermore, his energy, with that of colleagues like Michel Barnier and François Fillon, instead of being directed at a battle of ideas within the RPR, was diverted towards building an informal cross-party group with like-thinking younger deputies of the UDF, which they called the CERCLE.²⁴² This did nothing to endear them to the Chiraquian leadership, and was effectively another factor in the Left's failure to fight the national liberal ideas propagated by the Clubmen.

Delalande conceived his work with the AOP as supporting rather than challenging the party's elaboration of a new programme. Some of his work

on industrial relations, including studies of incentive techniques in use in the USA and of privatization in the UK, was done in co-operation with Octave Gelinier,²⁴³ whose work on Japan had helped popularize the notion of quality circles among French employers, and whose conclusions closely resembled those of the new economists Lepage and Sorman. When asked if the democratic and humanistic aims of *participation* were not jeopardized by the possibility that one firm or industry might at any one time be more profitable than another, subjecting workers' living standards to arbitrary variations, Charbonnel agreed that this was indeed a "problem" which needed working on.²⁴⁴ Delalande, in contrast, immediately came back with a classic "market" defence;

Yes, I mean, that's life, that's life. It's the same everywhere. It's up to you, if you think you are in an industry which is working badly, to try to get yourself together to go and work in an industry which is doing better, or to work like mad to make the one which is working badly work better, to adapt it...²⁴⁵

This attitude was far removed from that of Dechartre and the old left-Gaullists. For Dechartre, the AOP organized the Gaullist working-class electorate, and guaranteed the RPR's populist strategy; his successor's activity, on his own admission, was "more cultural than political", involving the elaboration and popularization of an "enterprise culture" among both employers and workers.²⁴⁶ When Delalande left to become Chirac's foreign affairs adviser, in October 1981, the burying of the AOP's working-class tradition was confirmed by its handing over to Georges Repezcky, whose working life had been spent as a manager in the steel industry, and Gérard Leban, who specialized in organising for the party amongst insurers, bankers, doctors and other professionals.²⁴⁷

This was an evolution which Dechartre ultimately could not stomach. By 1988 he had concluded that

The AOP, whatever anyone may tell you, has no longer anything to do with the working class. It's the world of the bosses, either capitalists, or simply technocrats....²⁴⁹

His political activity was reduced to inviting and being invited to a series of genteel seminars held in the sumptuous surroundings of the *faubourg St. Germain* where increasingly unreal speeches on familiar themes were made by the same dwindling band of left Gaullists like Charbonnel and Yves Guéna. Finally, the character of the personalities invited to Chirac's 1988 Presidential campaign meetings convinced Dechartre that he had reached the end of an illusion;

You'll never find a worker, you'll never find the son of an immigrant, or an artist or an intellectual. Just small shopkeepers, small bosses, big bosses...

and accordingly

Considering that the RPR has no longer anything to do with Gaullism, with the popular base of Gaullism, that its become a party of the Right like any other,²⁴⁹

he sent his resignation to the new general secretary of the RPR, Alain Juppé.²⁵⁰

Conclusions

We are now in a position to piece together the different intellectual processes and influences by which a layer of RPR first- and second-rank leaders were brought progressively to abandon traditional Gaullist reverence for the state and the instinct for economic interventionism. First, there was a general kind of osmosis, typified by the career of Maurice-Bokanowski, in which fundamentally pragmatic politicians imperceptibly changed their language, while believing that they remained true to their ideas.

Second, the *Club de l'Horloge* was originally founded as the vehicle which a group of young civil servants hoped to use to spread their nationalist, hierarchical and anti-collectivist ideas within the political and economic elite. Its early publications reproduced important parts of the ideology of the pagan and semi-fascist GRECE, but the Club's positions and those of GRECE diverged under the impact of the conservative-liberal revival in the USA, and the election of the Socialists in France. From 1980 onwards, the Club amended a number of its former positions, in particular its hostility to American society and America's world role, and joined the new economists in advocating some of the measures already on trial in the United States - supply side economic policy, minimum means' tested social benefits, constitutional reform to delineate precisely the state's competence in economic affairs and some element of direct democracy.

The Club was never a dominant force in the party, but it was the most efficient vehicle for a coherent set of ideas, and enjoyed the patronage of a number of important Chiracians, who helped to give credibility to the Club's brand of national liberalism. This, and the personal position of Yvan Blot in the party head office, helped the Club to play a crucial role in channelling and articulating the forces which led the RPR to transform its economic policy. Other groups, such as the Gallo-Giscardians or the younger generation around figures such as Séguin and Fillon, for whom the general outlook of the *Club de l'Horloge* was uncongenial, did not try to "capture" the RPR for a particular set of ideas because they were more interested in building bridges to fellow-thinkers in the UDF.

Finally, most of the "historic" generation of left Gaullists had already broken with the "official" party when the RPR was founded in 1976.

The efforts of one of the last of those remaining, Philippe Dechartre, to build up a working-class electorate through the *Action Ouvrière et Professionnelle* (AOP), were neutralized by the party's continued support for the Giscard-Barre governments up until 1981. In 1980 the AOP was handed over to Jean Charbonnel, a former Gaullist minister who had been outside the party since 1976, as the price of his role as conciliator between Chirac and other leftist dissidents. Unsuccessful in this effort, Charbonnel soon abandoned party responsibilities, and remained in the RPR as a "tame" leftist, increasingly at odds with the liberal revival, but doing virtually nothing inside or outside the party to impede it.

Under Jean-Pierre Delalande, Charbonnel's successor as AOP organizer, the former network for working-class voters, which had traditionally advocated a doctrine supposedly equally hostile to liberalism and collectivism, was converted into a forum for elaborating and propagandizing an "enterprise culture" which was perfectly compatible with the American liberal approaches to workplace relations popularized in France by new economists like Henri Lepage and Guy Sorman. With the capture of their organization and the perversion of their doctrine, the Left in the RPR was powerless to resist the liberal flood-tide.

Notes to Chapter 8

1. Club '89, *Une Stratégie de Gouvernement*, Paris, Albatros, 1985
2. Replying to the debate on the 1963 budget; *Journal Officiel, Débats, Assemblée Nationale*, January 1963, (10-1-63 pp 418-421)
3. *Journal Officiel, Débats, Assemblée Nationale*, Reply to an oral question 14-12-63 p 7931
4. *ibidem*, 14-12-63 p 7916
5. *Journal Officiel, Débats, Sénat*, June 1973, (19-6-73, pp 765-767)
6. *Journal Officiel, Débats, Sénat*, June 1975; preliminary debate on the 7th plan (21-6-75 p 1832)
7. *Journal Officiel, Débats, Sénat*, May 1977; *Discussion d'une déclaration de politique générale du gouvernement*, 6-5-77 pp 785-7
8. *Journal Officiel, Débats, Sénat*, November 1980, *Industrie automobile, discussion de questions orales avec débat*, 5-11-80, pp 4337-6 "Je pense, pour ma part, qu'il serait déplorable que nous arrivions à subventionner, comme certains le suggèrent, plus ou moins directement, sous une forme ou sous une autre, ce grand secteur de notre activité. Ce serait un renoncement aux règles du libéralisme et de la concurrence que nous nous sommes fixées,..... Nous n'avons pas non plus à donner de conseils ou à nous immiscer dans la stratégie des grands constructeurs, aussi bien Renault que PSA, qui gèrent très bien leurs propres affaires."
9. Interview with Michel Maurice-Bokanowski 14-12-88
10. Bokanowski himself told me "I have always been liberal." (Interview, 14-12-88)
11. This was Marcel Dassault, whose own aircraft empire was substantially propped up by the state, *Journal Officiel, Débats, Assemblée Nationale*, March 1979, (17-3-79 p 1792
12. including René la Combe (for the iron mines of Segré in the Maine-et-Loire), Jean Lipkowski (for the gradually depopulating Charente-Maritime) Charles Haby (for the potash and textile industries of Alsace) and Lucien Neuwirth (for Manufrance of St. Etienne
13. *Journal Officiel, Débats, Assemblée Nationale*, March 1979, 16-3-79 pp 1692
14. *ibidem*, "si pesantes et sclérosantes qu'ils découragent les bonnes volontés"
15. *Journal Officiel, Débats, Assemblée Nationale*, March 1979, (16-3-79 p 1683)
16. *ibidem* pp 1668-71), "Notre France est comme un oiseau qu'un excès de liens empêche de voler,..... Il faut...les diminuer rapidement et fortement."
17. *Journal Officiel, Débats, Assemblée Nationale*, 17-3-79 pp 1791-2
18. *Journal Officiel, Débats, Assemblée Nationale*, 16-3-79 p 1695

19. On Barre's policy, see Volkmar Lauber, *The Political Economy of France, from Pompidou to Mitterrand*, New York, Praeger, 1983 pp 91-109
20. Lauber *op cit* pp 113-4. See also Chirac's interview with *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 14-5-79
21. *Le Monde*, 2-10-79; "*Une solution durable à nos difficultés ne peut venir des pratiques traditionnelles; orientations inopportunes ou contrôles paralysants de l'Etat, protection des activités non performantes, relances globales de l'économie qui aggravent les relations avec les autres pays.*"
22. *Le Monde* 2-10-79; "...chez qui l'interventionnisme est devenu une seconde nature; qui n'a jamais su assimiler la règle du jeu d'une économie de concurrence..."
23. *Le Monde* 30-10-79. His article tried to get to grips with some more technical problems, and, unlike Chalandon, implicitly accepted the need for an industry policy, proposing a redefinition of the criteria which could justify investment incentives, namely the firm's or the sector's contribution to value added, to the external balance, and to the creation of employment.
24. *Le Monde* 30-10-79; "*Quant à l'investissement public, il est imprudent d'en parler globalement pour justifier une hausse générale. C'est moins par sa masse financière que dans le service rendu à l'économie que l'investissement public doit être jugé.*" Guichard also called for the reorganization of regulations governing saving and taxation, and a new flexibility in the workplace, affecting hours worked, the allocation of responsibility, and the optimum co-ordination of men and machines. A little over a year later Chirac would make these proposals his own in the 1981 Presidential election campaign.
25. As we saw in chapter 5 Peyrefitte and Giraud had already developed analyses critical of the omnipotence and untouchability of the state in French public life; as we saw in chapter 4 the Gallo-Giscardian ministers such as Bourges, Galley, Boulin and again Peyrefitte had openly and often expressed their full solidarity with Barre's liberalizing economic policies.
26. and responsible, as de Gaulle's minister, for introducing motorway tolls and for a state-private joint venture in the design and construction of low-cost housing,
27. Interview with Albin Chalandon, 2-12-88; Olivier Guichard did not respond to my request for an interview
28. Albin Chalandon, *Quitte ou Double*, Paris, Grasset, 1986 pp 260-270
29. Interview with Albin Chalandon 2-12-88. In the 1986-88 government, however, Chalandon took the Justice portfolio, while Balladur as finance minister introduced the system of "hard-core" shareholders which was to be so heavily criticized for its apparent favouritism,
30. Yvon Bourges, interview 11-1-89
31. *ibidem*
32. Interview with Alain Peyrefitte, 6-12-88. He recalled that his authorship of *Le Mal Français* (Plon, 1977) had marked him out as one of a select band of liberals in the party, and had provoked a direct and heavily statist rebuttal in a work entitled *La*

Lueur de l'Espérance (Paris, La Table Ronde, 1978) which carried Chirac's signature, but which Peyrefitte believed was probably written by Juppé.

33. Despite claiming that "many", indeed "the majority" of Gaullist deputies later recognized that he had been right about liberalism long before it was in vogue, when pressed to name names he could come up with only one, Pierre Godefroy, former deputy for the *Manche* department.
34. Interview with Alain Peyrefitte, 6-12-88
35. Interview with François Fillon 5-1-89
36. Interview with Patrick Devedjian, 9-1-89, "*C'était un conflit partisan, C'était un conflit entre une équipe au pouvoir dans un parti et une autre, C'est-à-dire que Giscard voulait réduire le RPR, c'est d'ailleurs ce qui l'a fait battre,..... Giscard voulait réduire le RPR, et un certain nombre de gens du RPR ont joué la carte Giscard pour réduire le RPR,.... C'était ça, ce conflit, L'idéologie était assez absente, fondamentalement, de ce conflit, C'était un prétexte,*"
37. Interview with Alain Peyrefitte, 6-12-88
38. Philippe Séguin, *Réussir l'Alternance*, Paris, Robert Laffont 1985, pp 102-7. This enthusiasm contrasts with more measured judgements of the the appeal of Mrs. Thatcher, (Interview with Georges Repeczky 6-12-88)
39. Michel Noir, *1988; le Grand Rendez-Vous*, Paris, Jean-Claude Lattès 1984 p 122
40. Interview with Philippe Auberge, 6-1-89
41. Interview with André Fanton, 21-4-89
42. Interview with Yvan Blot, 28-4-89
43. Interview with Philippe Auberge, 6-1-89; "*... donc ces éléments-là si vous voulez ont été utilisés dans la plateforme où Chirac a commencé à dire qu'il fallait diminuer les impôts et qu'on allait trop loin quant aux dépenses de l'état,*"
44. Interview with Philippe Auberge 6-1-89
45. The phrase is from Juppé's friend, François Fillon; interview with Fillon, 5-1-89
46. Information supplied by Hervé Fabre-Aubrespy, who was chosen by Juppé as his *directeur de cabinet* when he took over general-secretaryship of the RPR in the summer of 1988, (Interview with Fabre-Aubrespy, 24-4-89.)
47. Albin Chalandon, *op cit, Quitte ou Double,.....*, pp 120-121, "*L'économie étatique conçoit la demande comme la donnée de base dont on peut déduire les productions nécessaires pour satisfaire les besoins. Il n'en est rien, L'offre, c'est-à-dire la production des biens et des services, par son innovation, par l'abaissement des coûts qu'elle provoque, vient bouleverser la demande, rendant du même coup toute planification illusoire,*"
48. *ibidem* p121, "*Une économie de compétition,.... se moque de savoir si ses entreprises fabriquent des stylos à bille, des pantalons, des automobiles ou des avions, Le seul*

critère de leur réussite est un niveau technologique élevé," But abolition of French sectoral policy was a long-term rather than immediate goal. Instead, Chalandon recommended the West German system, which uses tax reliefs instead of subsidies, applies to successful or new firms, not lame-ducks, is horizontal rather than sector-specific, and is regionalized and thus able to help small and medium sized firms as well as the national champions. France could also reflect on the implications for national independence of the Japanese choice of priority sectors - photography, the cinema, hi-fi and videos! (*ibidem* pp 124-140.)

49. Alain Devaquet, "Les Sciences qui bouleversent la société", in *Perspectives*, December 1982 pp 47-51; and "Regard d'un physicien sur la crise", in *Perspectives*, March 1983 pp 57-61
50. For a fuller discussion of the interest of Devaquet and other young right-wingers in systems theory see Jacques Frémontier, *Les Cadets de la Droite*, Paris, Seuil, 1984, pp 133-5
51. Michel Noir, 1988, *Le Grand Rendez-Vous*, Paris, Lattès, 1984, p 110, "...le nouveau paradigme invite à regarder comment évolue en même temps, l'un par rapport à l'autre, l'un grâce à l'autre et dans l'autre, l'unité et la totalité."
52. *ibidem* p 25
53. *ibidem* p 60-1
54. *ibidem* p 25
55. *ibidem* pp 200-203
56. *ibidem* p 207, "Toute structure a besoin d'une hiérarchie de commandement; le spontanéisme ou l'autogestion n'ont nulle part fait leurs preuves."
57. Alain Juppé, *La Double Rupture*, Paris, Economica, 1983 p 143
58. *ibidem* p 150
59. *ibidem* p32, "Le marché libre repose sur une règle de responsabilité simple; chaque individu, groupe ou organisation est libre d'utiliser les informations dont il dispose pour la poursuite de ses propres fins, la libre concurrence venant équilibrer dans le sens de l'intérêt général l'ensemble des projets et des actions."
60. (sic) *ibidem* pp 42-46
61. *ibidem* p 52, "... Il conviendra en même temps de rédéfinir le rôle positif que doit jouer un Etat efficace pour sortir de la crise par le haut."
62. *ibidem* p 53, "Il ne suffit donc pas de maintenir chaque année, de façon statique, les grands équilibres fondamentaux. La politique fiscale et monétaire, les dépenses d'équipements collectifs, d'éducation et de recherche doivent s'intégrer dans un plan d'ensemble pour assurer la cohérence de la dynamique de croissance à moyen terme."
63. Juppé further illustrates this uneasy combination of liberal and technocratic recipes by explicitly rejecting sectoral policy, and suggesting that regional policy is "debatable", but urging state aid to industry in three areas; export assistance,

(because all countries do it!) energy saving, and research, (*ibidem* pp 76-7) His treatment of the last item is surprisingly sketchy, especially considering that both Noir and Chalandon make more of it, rehearsing France's lag in inventions, robotization, the training of engineers and so on. For Chalandon, public spending on research and development should be "maintained and increased", preferably through tax allowances, so that the share for which firms themselves are responsible will grow, (Chalandon *op cit*, pp 142-3) Noir prefers to pool the French state's interventionist powers with those of its European partners, (Noir *op cit*, pp 56-61 and 216-218)

64. Juppé, *op cit*, pp 54-5
65. Interview with Yvan Blot, 28-4-89, "Or, ce qu'il faut voir avec l'ENA, c'est que la formation que vous recevez, c'est une formation uniquement de macro-économique. Vous ne recevez aucune, ou pratiquement pas, de formation micro-économique et gestion d'entreprise. Donc, vous êtes déformé, si je puis dire, par cette-formation-là," Blot, who is also an ENA graduate, explains his scepticism about technocratic interventionism by his long service in the Ministry of the Interior, which is little concerned with economic issues.
66. Colette Ysmal, "Un Colosse aux pieds d'argile; le RPR", in *Les TempsModernes*, no 41 (465), April 1985, pp 1872-1892, (p. 1877)
67. Juppé *op cit*, p 33-5
68. *ibidem* p 65, "Si l'Etat se contente de diminuer les impôts sans s'attaquer aux causes du déficit, il va immédiatement à la faillite,.... Nous en avons un exemple frappant dans l'expérience américaine de l'Administration Reagan; la diminution des recettes fiscales a fait exploser le déficit budgétaire, attisé les besoins du Trésor, poussé à la hausse les taux d'intérêt et retardé d'au moins deux ans le redémarrage de l'économie. La théorie de Laffer qui pronostiquait une augmentation quasi instantanée du produit national du fait de l'abaissement des impôts, s'est révélée un miroir aux alouettes."
69. Noir *op cit* p 33, "Rien ne démontre non plus que la plus récente théorie de la relance, non par la demande, mais par l'offre, si chère aux Américains, ait un effet mécanique sur le niveau d'activité."
70. Philippe Auberger, *L'Allergie Fiscale*, Paris, Calman-Levy, 1984 pp 180-1
71. Furthermore, the upturn remained fragile because of the large budget deficit, (*ibidem* pp 179-80)
72. *ibidem* p 181, "...notre situation est fondamentalement différente de celle des Etats Unis, dans la mesure où nous n'avons pas ou peu la possibilité de faire appel à des capitaux extérieurs pour financer notre déficit budgétaire; peu de capitaux itinérants acceptent de se placer en France, surtout compte tenu des risques de change actuels." Auberger's acceptance of the "Keynesian" reading of the American upturn was expressed in an interview on 6-1-89. For similar analyses from the left, see Peter Green, "Contradictions of the American Boom", in *International Socialism* 2;26 Spring 1985, pp 3-53; Bruce Steinberg, "Le Reaganisme et l'économie américaine dans les années quatre-vingt" in *Critiques de l'Economie Politique*, avril-juin 1985, pp5-24; for a less engaged account, which compares the performance of all the major industrial nations in the 1980s, to arrive at roughly the same conclusions, see Marc Paillet, *Le Grand Inventaire; Socialisme ou Libéralisme*, Paris, Denoël, 1985

73. Philippe Séguin, *Réussir l'Alternance*, Paris, Robert Lafont, 1985
74. Reported by Yvan Blot, interview of 28-4-89
75. Philippe Auberger, *op cit* p 91, "*l'expansion induit également certaines disparités de revenus qu'il convient de corriger par des opérations de transfert et de redistribution.*" Like others on the "social" wing of the party, Auberger admits to difficulties in balancing in his own mind the claims of social solidarity, the incentive to work and the limits of the state budget, (Interview 6-1-89) Few of his colleagues could have written a full-length book on the French tax-system and picked out for abolition only one category of social-security benefit - the single-parent allowance, because it is subject to too much cheating, (*ibidem* p 134)
76. Chalandon, *op cit* p 25
77. *ibidem* pp 60 and 64
78. Noir, *op cit*, p 141, "*La contrepartie à l'allocation de l'indemnité chômage devrait être obligatoire. Elle pourrait revêtir plusieurs formes.*"
79. Juppé, *op cit* p 86.
80. Noir, *op cit* p 140; "*L'Etat-providence en crise n'évitera pas une réhabilitation du rôle des réseaux privés d'entraide et n'échappera pas à une révision de ses structures actuelles d'intervention.*"
81. *ibidem* pp 165-8
82. *ibidem* p 228
83. *ibidem* pp 192-4
84. Auberger, *op cit* p 231-3; Juppé, *op cit*, p 72-3
85. Noir, *op cit*, p 227
86. At the other end of the scale, much greater information should be made available to all citizens, perhaps on their wage slips, concerning the cost of different public services provided both locally and nationally, (Auberger, *op cit*, pp 223-7)
87. 130 billion francs in 1983, (Auberger, *op cit*, p 229; Juppé, *op cit*, p 66-7)
88. Auberger *op cit* p 229, "*... il faut examiner la structure des dépenses, distinguer les dépenses de fonctionnement et les dépenses d'investissement et déterminer, pour chacune d'entre elles, si elle est créatrice de richesse ou non,..... Il faut également s'interroger sur les modalités de financement du déficit budgétaire, car celles-ci peuvent sensiblement varier. Si on a la sagesse de le financer avec l'épargne, le déficit peut être admissible, surtout s'il correspond à des dépenses d'investissement génératrices de ressources futures.*"
89. It would also be rather artificial, given the likelihood of error in predicting expenditure or revenue in any one year, (Auberger, *op cit*, pp 229-30)

90. Juppé wants to oblige governments to review periodically the *services votés*, that is those items in the annual budget which always pass "on the nod" because they have been budgeted at the same cost in every previous year, notwithstanding intervening price changes, (Juppé, *op cit*, p 69)
91. Auberger, *op cit*, pp 150-151, "... la dénationalisation progressive des entreprises pour lesquelles le statut public ne s'impose absolument pas, ... Naturellement, une telle procédure de dénationalisation sera lente, ..."
92. Emphasis in the original, Juppé, *op cit*, p 74, "..... la première priorité est d'annoncer la dénationalisation immédiate du plus grand nombre des entreprises publiques concurrentielles, en cas de succès de l'opposition, Il ne faut pas perdre de temps car ce qui ne sera pas fait dans la foulée de la victoire se perdra en arguties et combats retardateurs."
93. Interview with Yvan Blot, 28-4-89; "Non, je ne connaissais pas M. Devaquet, mais il m'avait été, ... enfin, je lui avait été recommandé par plusieurs personnages de l'entourage de M. Chirac, et c'est comme ça qu'il m'a demandé si je voulais être son directeur de cabinet. Et alors nous nous sommes rencontrés, le contact s'est bien passé, et il m'a embauché,"
The recommendations came from two people among Chirac's advisers whom Blot knew particularly well - Pierre Juillet and Marie-France Garaud. In fact, through Juillet, Blot probably knew more about the conflicting factions among Chirac's advisers than Devaquet did. He particularly admired Juillet and shared what he regarded as his "liberal" ideas, siding with him, and certain businessmen who had been part of Pompidou's circle, against technocrats like Monod and Juppé. Blot regretted Juillet's later departure from Chirac's inner circle, which allowed the technocrats to get the upper hand. Nevertheless Juillet must have felt he had scored something of a posthumous victory in placing his protégé.
94. Interview with Yvan Blot, 28-4-89. During this interview Blot recalled with pleasure - but without suggesting that there was a direct link - that, a few months after sending Chirac some extracts from Hayek, with passages underlined by himself, he was invited to the ceremony at the town hall at which Hayek in person was awarded the gold medal of the city of Paris.
95. Interview with Yvan Blot 28-4-89; Interview with Jean-François Mancel, 20-4-89; see also Philippe Boggio and Alain Rollat, *Ce Terrible Monsieur Pasqua*, Paris, Olivier Orban, 1988, pp 202-3
96. Interview with Yvan Blot 28-4-89
97. *ibidem*
98. Patrick Jarreau in *Le Monde*, 21-10-82. The Club did not contest these figures in a reply to *Le Monde* (on 7-11-82) but said the subscription could be varied for students. Serge Baumann, in "Le Renouveau des Clubs?", *Revue Politique et Parlementaire*, no 898 May-June 1982, pp 63-79, mentions 150 francs per quarter for ordinary members, and 250 francs p. month for members of the *conseil d'administration*.
99. Jarreau and Baumann agree on this figure, though Jarreau notes that the Clubmen claim 1,500, (Jarreau, *loc cit*)

100. Interview with Yvan Blot, 28-4-89; "...j'ai vu à quel point le Plan ne servait à rien, Il ne fonctionnait absolument pas, c'était une catastrophe. Je n'ai jamais vu d'administration aussi mal organisée, aussi inutile, mais réellement."
101. The Club has always welcomed members of all tendencies, from the *Front National* through the *Centre National des Indépendants* to the RPR and the UDF. By tradition, the President of the Club de l'Horloge has usually been RPR (at one time Blot, and later Henri de Lesquen), and the general-secretary a member of the UDF, (at first Jean-Yves le Gallou who, when he joined the FN, was succeeded by Michel Leroy. (Interview with Yvon Blot, 28-4-89)
102. Jean-Yves le Gallou et le Club de l'Horloge *Les Racines du Futur, demain la France*, Paris, Albatros, 1984 pp 76-85; Yvan Blot *Les Racines de la Liberté*, Paris, Albin Michel, 1985 p 130
103. Interview with Yvan Blot, 28-4-89; "Moi, l'expérience que j'ai eu du RPR pendant 10 ans me convainc qu'il est très difficile de demander à des partis politiques de faire de la réflexion approfondie. Ce ne sont pas des organismes qui sont fait pour ça; toutes les tentatives de faire vraiment de la réflexion approfondie dans un parti politique ne donnent rien. Je suis très sceptique. Je pense que pour les organismes... pour ce qu'il est de la réflexion il vaut mieux faire ça dans des organismes totalement indépendants comme des clubs, des fondations."
104. Yvan Blot, *op cit*, p 41; "On doit toujours étudier les associations concrètes qui se fixèrent comme but la diffusion des idées,..... Les idées ne parlent pas d'elles-mêmes, elles sont diffusées, elles n'agissent que dans la mesure où l'on agit pour elles, où des hommes viennent à leur aide, et notamment dans les milieux influents."
105. See the article by Thierry Pfister in *Le Monde* 22-6-79, and Duranton-Crabol *op cit* p 47. Pascal Sigoda, in "Les Cercles Extérieurs du RPR", *Pouvoirs*, no 28 1983 pp 143-163, makes a similar (not very well substantiated) amalgam between GRECE, the *Club de l'Horloge*, and, even more tendentiously, *Club '89*
106. *Le Monde* 27-3-81
107. Duranton-Crabol, *op cit* p 164-5
108. *Le Monde* 7-11-82
109. One critic found evidence of GRECE's willingness to camouflage their true opinions in appropriate circumstances; "Once armed, each of us can choose the route which seems the most likely to gain for him a small amount of power in the community of men. But in doing so, he is not obliged, and in certain cases, he would be ill-advised, to reveal wholly or in part the ideas of GRECE. He will apply himself to infiltrating our concepts, our rules and our vision as he judges appropriate. That is as it should be for a philosophical society." (Jacques Bruyas, in *Eléments* mai 1969 p 15; cited in Duranton-Crabol, *op cit*, p 140; "Une fois armé, chacun d'entre nous peut s'orienter dans la direction lui paraissant le plus propre à lui fournir une parcelle de pouvoir dans notre communauté d'hommes. Mais, faisant cela, il n'est pas tenu, et dans certains cas il ne lui est pas conseillé de dévoiler en tout ou en partie les idées du GRECE. C'est en fonction de l'opportunité qu'il s'attaquera à infiltrer nos concepts, nos règles, notre vision. C'est cela le propre d'une société de pensée.")
110. Baumann *loc cit* p 69

- 111, Jean-Yves Le Gallou et le Club de l'Horloge *Les Racines du Futur, demain la France*, a second edition with no changes was produced in 1984 (Paris, Albatros), and it is to this edition that page references are made in the following discussion
- 112, Interview with Yvan Blot, 28-4-89
- 113, Le Gallou *op cit*, pp 14, 67, 94-5, 153-6, 255
- 114, Michel Leroy, "L'Etat et la Fonction Souveraine", in *Contrepoint*, no 34, Autumn 1980, pp 108-113; Yvan Blot, "Pour une Redécouverte de la Tradition Républicaine" *Contrepoint* no 37, April 1981, pp 77-90 (esp pp 88-90; Blot *op cit*, *Les Racines,*, pp 139-40 and p 140
- 115, Le Gallou, *op cit*, pp 14, 45, 187-94, 225; Yvan Blot, *op cit*, *Les Racines de la Liberté,*, pp 9-13, 28, 52, 56, 68, 92-99
- 116, Le Gallou, *op cit*, p 131
- 117, Le Gallou, *op cit*, pp 105-108; Blot, *loc cit*, "Pour une redécouverte,"
- 118, Le Gallou, *op cit*, p 33, 52-3
- 119, Henri de Lesquen et Le Club de l'Horloge, *La Politique du Vivant*, Paris, Albatros, 1979
- 120, Blot *op cit*, *Les Racines,*, pp 101-124
- 121, Le Gallou, *op cit*, p 153
- 122, *ibidem* p 163
- 123, *ibidem* p 175
- 124, *ibidem* p 171
- 125, *ibidem*, pp 42, 47-8, 59-60, 68-75
- 126, Leroy, *loc cit*, "L'Etat,", p 110
- 127, Le Gallou *op cit* p 158-9
- 128, *ibidem*, p 170-4
- 129, *ibidem*, pp 156-7 and 160-2
- 130, Georges Liébert, "Cinq Ans de Contrepoint" in *Contrepoint*, no 20 1976 pp 203-209,
- 131, despite promises to the contrary, cf Blot's editorial in *Contrepoint* no 33 spring-summer 1980
- 132, *Contrepoint* 38, June 1981; *Que voulez-vous, nous sommes de vieux entêtés qui avons donné dans la liberté humaine, . . . et qui ne saurions, du tout, en revenir, (de Tocqueville, letter to Gobineau, 19-2-1854)* *Contrepoint* no 39, autumn 1981; *De toutes les idéologies de masse, le socialisme est la plus dangereuse car elle libère l'homme de toute responsabilité, (Vladimir Bukovsky)*

133. *Contrepoint* no 39 pp 5-6
134. As well as regular articles by the Club's cross-party triumvirate of Blot (RPR), Leroy (UDF) and Le Gallou (FN) Blot also secured a large RPR presence (see below) and the participation of the *Centre National des Indépendants*, heirs to the liberal tradition of Antoine Pinay; Philippe Malaud, "Révolution Libérale, Révolution Nationale, Révolution Conservatrice, Révolution Culturelle" in *Contrepoint*, 47, pp 49-51; "Le Neutralisme contre la Paix", in *Contrepoint* no 48, pp 163-165; Jean-Antoine Giansily, "Le Grand Silence", in *Contrepoint*, no 46 pp 159-164; "Réponse à Michel Polac", in no 49 pp 134-139, etc.
135. Yves Lancien, "Les Comptes du Déclin", in *Contrepoint*, no 42-43 pp 27-36; Jean-Pierre Cassabel, "Décentralisation et Misères des Communes", in *Contrepoint*, no 46 pp 115-119
136. Jacques Godfrain, "Dieu est-il Français?", in *Contrepoint* no 44-5 pp 7-12; Jacques Toubon, "Le Travail de l'Assemblée Nationale depuis les Elections Législatives des 14 et 21 juin 1981", in *Contrepoint* no 41 pp 35-40; Bruno Bourg-Broc, "La Fin de la Nuit", in *Contrepoint* no 40 pp 25-28; Bourg-Broc, "Rester Français pour Rester Libres" (about New Caledonia), in *Contrepoint*, no 42-3 pp 37-46
137. Jacques Godfrain, "Le Vrai Danger des Nationalisations", in *Contrepoint*, no 39 pp 77-81; Daniel Méraud, "Politique Economique, la Grande Illusion", in *Contrepoint*, no 40 pp 65-68.
138. Michel Aurillac, "J'Ecris ton nom, Liberté", in *Contrepoint*, no 42-43 pp 11-20
139. Aurillac participated in the seminar on *Le Péril Bureaucratique*, (Paris, Editions Club de l'Horloge 1980), Godfrain in those on *Echecs et Injustices du Socialisme* (Paris, Albin Michel, 1982) and *Le Défi Démographique* (Paris, Editions Club de l'Horloge, 1980)
140. Michel Leroy, *Iac cit*, "L'Etat et la Fonction Souveraine..." pp 108-113; Yvan Blot, "République, Féodalités et Bureaucratie", in *Contrepoint* no 34, pp 103-107; Blot, *Iac cit*, "Pour une Redécouverte" pp 79-90
141. Henri Lepage, "Pourquoi l'Etat croît-il?", in *Contrepoint*, no 34 pp 114-119 Autumn 1980
142. Philippe Baccou et Jacques Szmaraçad, "Salaire Minimum, Egalitarisme et Pauvreté", in *Contrepoint* no 35 winter 1980, pp 71-81
143. Le Gallou, *op cit*, p 175
144. "Table Ronde sur le thème 'L'Economie et les Inégalités'" with the participation of Yvan Blot, Jean Fourastié, Philippe Baccou, Alfred Fabre-Luce, Serge-Christophe Kolm, Kostas Papaioanou, Alain Wolfelsperger, in *Contrepoint* no 41 pp 59-83
145. Blot, "Pour une Stratégie Républicaine", in *Contrepoint*, no 41 pp 23-33. This quotation taken from Blot, *op cit*, *Les Racines...*, p 234
146. Interview with Yvan Blot, 28-4-89; on Novack, see Guy Sorman, *La Révolution Conservatrice Américaine*, Paris, Fayard, 1983, pp 107 and 112; on the Heritage Foundation, see *ibidem*, pp 124-5
147. Guy Sorman, "La Révolution Conservatrice Américaine", in *Contrepoint*, no 47, pp 53-59.

148. Le Gallou, *op cit*, p 249; "caractérisée par l'unidimensionnalité éthique (primat des valeurs d'argent, homogénéisation des modes de vie...)"
149. "In half a century, because their imperialism was only defensive (protecting, but not extending the free world) and mercantilist (imposing its products, its modes of production and consumption) the United States have gone from expansion to contraction, from aggrandizement to withdrawal." (Le Gallou *op cit* p69, "En un demi-siècle, parce que leur impérialisme n'était que défensif (protéger, et non étendre, le monde libre) et mercantile (imposer des produits, un mode de production et de consommation), les Etats-Unis sont passés de l'expansion au retrait, du flux au reflux,")
150. George Nash, "Les racines historiques, philosophiques et sociologiques du Conservatisme aux Etats Unis", in *Contrepoint*, no 47, pp 15-25. Translated from German to French by Yvan Blot; originally published in *Forschungsbericht no 16 of the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung*; Irving Kristol, "Les racines historiques, philosophiques et sociologiques du Conservatisme", in *Contrepoint* no 47, pp 27-31; Translated from German to French by Yvan Blot; originally published in *Forschungsbericht no 16 of the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung*; The two pieces by Jack Kemp were translated by Blot from Kemp's book, *An American Renaissance*; Jack Kemp, "La Renaissance Américaine et le Modèle Suisse", in *Contrepoint* no 47, pp 61-69; Jack Kemp, "Les Erreurs idéologiques de la politique étrangère américaine avant Reagan", in *Contrepoint* no 47 pp 71-78.
151. Yvan Blot, *loc cit*, "Pour une Révolution Républicaine,...." p 10 "L'évolutionnisme de Hayek n'est pas seulement une croyance dans les bienfaits de la liberté, C'est aussi unecroyance dans les bienfaits de la tradition qui exprime le génie d'un peuple en marche. Ce n'est pas un appel à rompre avec le passé pour construire un futur imaginé à priori par quelques uns, comme c'est le cas dans l'optique constructiviste."
152. Jack Kemp, *loc cit*, "La Renaissance Américaine et le Modèle Suisse..." pp 61-69
153. Like many French conservatives, Blot adopts the "revisionist" reading of the French revolution popularized by François Furet, (*Penser la Révolution Française,....*) according to which ancient national rights, not class interests were at stake, so that the attempted establishment of constitutional monarchy in the 1790s was good; everything that happened from Robespierre on was bad. Yvan Blot, *loc cit*, "Pour une Redécouverte de la Tradition Républicaine,...."; Blot, "Le Marxisme et la Révolution Française", in *Contrepoint* no 40 winter 1982 pp 8-18; Blot *op cit*, *Les Racines,...* pp 192
154. Blot, *loc cit*, "Pour une Révolution Républicaine,...." pp 7-11; "Dans certaines situations de sociétés bloquées, une mutation rapide des institutions, c'est à dire une sorte de révolution, peut être bénéfique,.... (In France,.)une profonde transformation de l'action de l'Etat est nécessaire pour libérer les énergies créatrices de nos concitoyens."
155. Blot, *op cit*, *Les Racines,....* pp 48-9
156. Le Gallou, *op cit* p 50
157. Michel Leroy, *loc cit*, "L'Etat et la Fonction Souveraine,...."pp 108-113
158. Yvan Blot, "Pour une Démocratie Authentique", in *Contrepoint* no 41, pp7-10
159. Blot *op cit*, *Les Racines,....* pp 167-189, and 227-231

160. *ibidem* p 157-158
161. Interview with Yvan Blot, 28-4-89
162. *Le Monde* 2-6-89. This transfer was not in itself the sign of a switch in ideological allegiance. Blot's loyalty, like that of Leroy and Le Gallou, went solely to the ideas they worked out in common, and which, by 1984, they had christened *libéralisme national*. (see the preface to the 1984 edition of Le Gallou, *Les Racines du Futur* (no page numbers) Choice of party was a question of mere strategy. Blot left the RPR because Chirac's defeat in the 1988 Presidential election and the Right's loss of their narrow Parliamentary majority marked the end of a strategic period - during which the party had come close to putting his own ideas into practice - and the opening of another during which the unity fashioned around the conservative-liberal programme would be frittered away in short-sighted search of a new direction. Better for an ideologue like Blot to expound his ideas among a more congenial group of potential sympathizers.
163. Blot likes to adopt English terminology to describe his political credo. He calls himself a "conservative" in the manner of Margaret Thatcher - whose portrait adorns the wall of his office in the Club's premises - that is, liberal on economic policy, conservative on social policy.
164. Interview with Yvan Blot 28-4-89; Blot would later give the same account to *Le Monde*, on the occasion of his transfer from the RPR to the FN. (*Le Monde* 2-6-89)
165. Interview with Yvan Blot, 28-4-89. "*C'est vrai que, pendant la période où le RPR s'est retrouvé dans l'opposition, l'opinion publique s'est déplacée vers la droite de façon très très nette, M. Chirac a voulu tenir compte de ça, et puis il y a eu des pressions très très fortes aussi du milieu économique qui a fait que le programme du RPR en économie s'est quand même libéralisé, ça, c'est certain.*"
166. *ibidem*; "*L'influence de l'expérience Reagan a dû jouer, ça sûrement. Mais il y a eu aussi le choc, le choc de l'arrivée au pouvoir des Socialistes. Pour la première fois depuis très longtemps, les Socialistes étaient au pouvoir, en plus alliés aux Communistes.*"
167. *ibidem*
168. Godfrain, *loc cit*, "Le vrai danger des Nationalisations pp 77-81; "*L'Etat est une institution essentielle. Néanmoins, il doit assurer les fonctions de souveraineté et de sécurité qui sont les siennes. Mais ce n'est pas sa vocation de vouloir jouer les entrepreneurs au nom du peuple.*"
169. Interview with Michel Aurillac, 9-2-89
170. Pascal Sigoda, "Les Cercles Extérieurs du RPR", in *Pouvoirs*, no 28 1983, pp 143-163, esp p 146.
171. According to Michel Aurillac, the Club's President, the founders were not sure at the outset whether to go for a group of 20-30 people, or to make it larger. As he put it, "we expected 20, and we got 500." Interview with Michel Aurillac, 9-2-89; for Chirac's role, see *Le Monde* 8-10-83 and 11-10-83; on the Club's role in finding new political activists, see Juppé's comments at the first AGM, reported in Pascal Sigoda, *loc cit*, esp p 151-2.

172. Club '89, *Une Stratégie de Gouvernement*, Paris, Albatros, 1985. For the list of Club publications, see opposite the title page of this programme
173. *Le Monde* 11-10-89; see also Michel Aurillac, "La Convention Libérale", in *Revue des Deux Mondes*, July 1985, pp 3-8
174. According to Aurillac, indeed, the liveliest debates took place precisely on the question of the correct balance between liberal economics and social protection. Interview with Michel Aurillac, 9-2-89
175. Alain Juppé, *La Double Rupture*, Paris, Economica for the Club '89 1983
176. Interview with Michel Aurillac, 9-2-89
177. *Une Stratégie de gouvernement*, pp 46, 80, 95; The new economists concentrate on the unintended consequences of welfare measures, while the *Club de l'Horloge* stresses the state's loss of prestige if involved in matters which do not concern it.
178. Alain Teyssonnière de Gramont, "Libérer la création de richesses, condition de la création d'emplois", in Club '89, *op cit*, *Une Stratégie de Gouvernement*,... pp 91-106 (p 93); "Le marché et la libre concurrence obligent à l'adaptation permanente des idées et des moyens. Par ces outils, les sociétés évoluées ont su discipliner l'activité individuelle au contre-pouvoir des autres et donc à l'utilité commune."
179. *ibidem* p 103. This statement in turn is followed by a demand (p105) for the privatization of Air France and Air Inter.
180. *ibidem* p 95; "Seules devraient subsister les actions de l'Etat en faveur de programmes de développement d'importance stratégique pour le pays, (recherche-développement, industries naissantes),...."
181. Hervé Lehérisse, "Philosophie d'un Projet: Des Citoyens Libres pour une Nation fière et solidaire" Introduction to *Une Stratégie de Gouvernement*, pp 43-48 (p 46). "Pour autant, liberté ne signifie pas "laissez-faire". Lorsque la convergence des intérêts individuels et collectifs n'est pas organisée, il n'y a pas une dynamique d'échanges positifs, mais seulement des procédures de domination."
182. Jean-Claude Dutailly, "Des Solidarités Claires entre les Français" in *Une Stratégie*,... pp 125-134 (p 127); "En effet, la famille représente un lieu de mémoire et de transmission d'un patrimoine; à ce titre, elle est irremplaçable dans la formation et l'éducation des jeunes,.... C'est en son sein que la culture d'un pays trouve sa diffusion et sa protection,..."
183. Lehérisse *loc cit* p 43-4; "Corrélativement, au sein même de la société civile, l'immobilisme des structures et des appareils perpétue des rapports archaïques où les dominations héritées du passé ne font aucune place aux aspirations nouvelles d'autonomie et de responsabilité personnelle."
184. Nicole Catala, "Relations de Travail et Participation; transformer la relation de travail", in *Une Stratégie de Gouvernement*,... pp 119-124
185. Bernard Magniny, "Mettre l'Etat au service de la Nation", in *Une Stratégie de Gouvernement*,... pp 49-60

186. Catherine Bonnefoy, "Maitriser l'Immigration" in *Une Stratégie de Gouvernement...* pp 77-89 (p 78)
187. "there can be no common law if there are no common basic values..." "*il ne peut exister de loi commune si les valeurs de référence sont hétéroclites...*" Bonnefoy, *loc cit* p 82
188. "*immigrés en surnombre*"; Bonnefoy *loc cit*, p 80.
189. Bonnefoy, *loc cit*, pp 80-88. Most of these demands were to be found in the programme of the *Front National*, and went beyond what Pasqua was prepared to undertake when he became Minister of the Interior in 1986; see Peter Fysh, "Government Policy and the Challenge of the National Front", in *Modern and Contemporary France*, no 31, Oct 1987, pp 9-20.
190. See Leroy, *loc cit*, "L'Etat et la Fonction....", p 112-3; Charles Pasqua, *Une Ardeur Nouvelle*, Paris, Albin Michel, 1985 pp 73-74
191. Jean-Louis Boursin, "Libérer l'Education", in *Une Stratégie...* pp 135-143 (p 138)
192. but with no reference to the voucher system dreamed up by Friedman and popularized by Sorman and others.
193. Boursin *loc cit* p 138; contrast with Pasqua *op cit* p 69; *Libres et Responsables, RPR - Projet Pour la France*, pp 98-99
194. Boursin *loc cit*, pp 140-141
195. See above, chapter 3, and (Charlot, *op cit*, *The Gaullist Phenomenon...* pp 102-109
196. Jean Charbonnel, *Comment peut-on être opposant?*, Paris, Laffont 1983, p 95
197. Pickles, *op cit* pp 181-2
198. Interview with Philippe Dechartre, 6-12-88
199. Pickles, *op cit* p 54
200. Pickles, *op cit*, pp 119, and 399-400
201. See *l'Année Politique* 1967 p 384, cited in Pickles, *op cit*, p 400
202. Roussel, *op cit*, pp 208-9
203. According to Dechartre, Debré referred to the whole idea of *participation* as a *mythe diabolique* (Interview with Philippe Dechartre 6-12-88); this sounds more in character than Debré's ambiguous published praise of it as "a social policy with a revolutionary character". (Debré *op cit*, *Une Certaine Idée...* p 256)
204. Philippe Dechartre, "Transformer la Condition Ouvrière", supplement to the review *Nouveau Siècle*, published by the *Mouvement pour le Socialisme par la Participation*, 1975
205. *ibidem*, see introduction which is a reprint of a speech made by Chirac to the annual congress of the MSP on 15-2-75, and see also Chirac's speech in Montbéliard, 6-5-77,

- cited in Philippe Dechartre, "Pour une Démocratie du Quotidien par la Participation", a report prepared for discussion in the RPR and published in supplement no 7 of *Rassemblement Actualité* June 1977
206. Crisol et Lhomeau *op cit*, pp 169-70. The AOP publicly claimed 450 sections by mid-1977. The authors take the lower figure from an internal document.
207. Interview with Philippe Dechartre, 6-12-88
208. Interview with Georges Repeczky, - Dehcartre's former assistant at the *rue de Lille* 6-12-88
209. Interview with Philippe Dechartre, 6-12-88
210. One of Pons' predecessors, Jérôme Monod, had drafted in a competent organizer, Georges Repeczky, to act as Dechartre's assistant; Interview with Georges Repeczky, 6-12-88
211. *Le Quotidien de Paris*, 9-3-80; *Le Monde* 19-9-79
212. Charbonnel *op cit*, p 103
213. The list of organizations which met to "co-ordinate their doctrine and their action" on 21st April 1980 included a number which had no quarrel with Chirac in the first place, such as Messmer's *Présence et Action du Gaullisme* and Christiane Papon's *Femme-Avenir*, (*Le Monde* 23-4-80) Those which were furthest from the RPR either attended as observers and later withdrew their interest, (the case of the UDT, *Le Monde* 25-4-80) or were not even invited because they had earlier denounced Charbonnel's mission (the case of Gilbert Grandval's *Union Gaulliste pour la Démocratie*, see *Le Monde* 4-10-79 and 4/5-5-80) or remained frostily aloof (the case of Chaban Delmas' *Conseil d'Etudes et de Recherches, Egalités et Libertés* (CEREL), cf *Le Monde* 9-5-80,
214. *Figaro* 8-1-80
215. Gérard Leban, who worked throughout the period on RPR organization of the professions, (Interview 26-4-89); and Jean-Pierre Delalande, who replaced Charbonnel in March 1981, and had no idea why Charbonnel left; (Interview 21-12-88)
216. *Le Monde* 22-9-79
217. *Le Monde* 26-2-80
218. *Le Monde* 28-2-80
219. *Le Monde* 11-4-80
220. *Le Monde* 1-10-80
221. *Le Monde* 7-10-80
222. *Le Quotidien de Paris* 16-10-80
223. The idea that common ground existed between Socialists and Gaullists had long been maintained inside the PS by the CERES faction, (cf the interview with Jean-Pierre Chevènement in *Etudes Gaulliennes* vol 4 no 14 April-June 1976 pp 19-25) See also

238. See chapter 4
239. Philippe Séguin, *Reussir l'Alternance, contre l'esprit de revanche*, Paris, Robert Laffont, 1985, pp 97-98
240. *ibidem*, p 113
241. *Le Monde*, 3-2-90; *Le Monde*, 6-2-90
242. see Frémontier, *op cit*, *Les Cadets,*, pp 191-196
243. Interview with Jean-Paul Delalande, 21-12-88
244. Interview with Jean Charbonnel, 17-4-89; an astonishing response from someone who had supposedly been defending the project for thirty years or more
245. Interview with Jean-Pierre Delalande, 21-12-88, "*Oui, mais, ça, je veux dire, c'est la vie, c'est la vie, c'est partout pareil. A vous, si vous estimez que vous êtes dans une branche qui ne fonctionne pas, d'essayer de vous secouer pour aller dans une branche qui fonctionne mieux, ou bien de vous décarcasser pour que la branche qui fonctionne mal fonctionne mieux, et l'adapter, . . .*"
246. Both phrases in speech marks are from Jean-Pierre Delalande, interview, 21-12-88
247. Interview with Georges Repezcky, 6-12-88; Interview with Gérard Leban, 26-4-89. See also below, chapter 9.
248. Interview with Philippe Dechartre, 6-12-88, "*Et l'AOP, quoi qu'on puisse vous dire, ce n'a plus rien à voir avec le monde ouvrier. C'est le monde des responsables, soit capitalistes, soit simplement technocratiques, n'est-ce pas, dans l'entreprise.*" In the same interview he waxed lyrical about a section he had founded in Nantes, which had once counted 45 workers from all the major firms of Nantes and St. Nazaire, who regularly gave out leaflets outside the workshops. Now if one visited the same section one would find "no more workers' delegates, no more people from the *Comités d'Entreprise*.) For banking, there's the bank manager, for the dockyards, there's the manager of the dockyards, for the bolt industry, there's the boss of bolt-making." (*Plus de délégués ouvriers, plus de syndicalistes, plus de gens des comités d'entreprise. Pour ce qui est des banques, il y a le directeur de la banque, pour les chantiers, il y a le directeur des chantiers, et pour l'industrie des boulons, il y a le directeur des boulons, . . .*)
249. Interview with Philippe Dechartre, 6-12-88; "*Vous ne trouverez jamais un salarié, vous ne trouverez jamais un fils d'immigré, un artiste ou un intellectuel. Uniquement des petits commerçants, des petits patrons, des grands patrons, . . . Estimant que le RPR n'a plus rien à voir avec le Gaullisme, avec la base populaire du Gaullisme, que c'est devenu un parti de droite comme les autres. . .*"
250. Letter dated 25-11-88, (Author's collection)

Colette Ysmal, "L'Impossible Accord PS-RPR", in *Faire* no 64 Feb 1981 pp 60-62, and C. Ysmal et G. Grunberg, "Les Terrains de Chasse de la Droite", in *Faire* no 65 March 1981 pp 45-50

224. *Le Quotidien de Paris* 23-10-80

225. Charbonnel *op cit* p 104-5, and Interview, 17-4-89, Charbonnel emerges with little credit from the whole affair. His claim that he was "démisionnaire de fait" from September 1980 but that he delayed his resignation until March the following year so as to avoid embarrassing Chirac does not make much sense in view of his open support for Debré in the first round of the election. In the second round, he supported Giscard, completely reversing his position of 18 months earlier, while Dechartre, from inside the RPR, and the remnant of Charbonnel's own *Fédération des Républicains de Progrès* supported Mitterrand.

226. At the same time as founding yet another ephemeral *club de réflexion* for the Gaullist left, the *Mouvement Gaulliste Populaire*

227. Charbonnel, *op cit*

228. I have been unable to find any reference to such dissidence in press reports

229. Interview with Jean Charbonnel, 17-4-89

230. Interview with Jean-Pierre Delalande, 21-12-88

231. He was promoted to RPR national secretary for foreign affairs in October 1981, after losing his Parliamentary seat during the summer

232. *Journal Officiel, Débats, Assemblée Nationale*, 27-10-78 pp 6744-5; 26-10-79, p 8928; 23-4-80 pp 596-599

233. Charbonnel, speech to the RPR Central Committee, 20-4-80. Reported in *La Lettre de la Nation*, 21-4-80 p 3; "... de mettre en cause la capacité de décision des chefs d'entreprise qu'il voulait absolument maintenir."

234. Delalande, speech to the RPR Central Committee, *ibid* p 4; "La participation n'est pas la cogestion. A la différence de celle-ci, elle ne met pas en cause l'autorité du chef d'entreprise,..."

235. Philippe Dechartre, "Transformer la Condition Ouvrière", supplement to *Nouveau Siècle*, 1975; "La co-responsabilité, c'est aujourd'hui la cogestion, demain ce sera l'autogestion, système qui, il faut le rappeler, est parfaitement compatible avec une économie de marché et représente l'état le plus évolué de la société participative."

236. Jean-Pierre Delalande, in the debate on the RPR's Bill concerning "L'intéressement des travailleurs au capital, aux fruits de l'expansion et à la gestion des entreprises", *Journal Officiel, Débats, Assemblée Nationale*, April 1980, (23-4-80 p 598) "La participation ne conteste pas, elle, l'économie de marché. Elle la renforce, ..., la compétitivité des entreprises en sera améliorée puisque chacun sera motivé pour aider à son développement; l'entreprise deviendra alors vraiment une équipe en concurrence avec d'autres équipes."

237. See above p 319

In chapter 6 it was shown that the RPR's programmatic renewal ignored what was known of aggregate opinions about economic policy among the electorate, and apparently took scant regard even of the opinions of the self-employed and small-scale employers who were among their strongest supporters in 1981. In the last two chapters, after sketching the increasing interest in liberal ideas among some French intellectuals, we traced the RPR's fragmented and at times contradictory reception of these ideas through the writings of various party members. Although in some cases these efforts were collectively organized through the *Club de l'Horloge* and the more heterogeneous *Club '89*, the Clubs' members definitely saw themselves as disinterested intellectuals rather than spokespeople for particular interests. Often, the intellectual productions were the solo efforts of individuals not associated with any identifiable ideological or interest groups. This chapter is devoted to an alternative approach to the linkage between social events and party programme content. Steering between the macro level of anonymous opinion research and the micro level of individual thinkers, we examine the relationship between the programme writers and organized interests.

From their first appearance on the political scene, the Gaullists' linkage with organized interests was the subject of controversy which increased in theoretical complexity as they became the dominant party at the start of the 1970s. The French Communists reacted to de Gaulle's return to power in 1958 by stressing his personal links with the northern industrial bourgeoisie and characterizing "Gaullism" as no more than the policy of finance capital carried out by a government itself largely made

up of bankers and their employees. ¹

Others on the left, equally hostile but refusing the Communists' reductionism, resurrected and applied to the Gaullists a formula from the pen of Karl Marx which has a special relevance for France; Bonapartism. ² On this reading, the Gaullists came to power as a result of the armed conflict between the Algerian FLN and the fascistic elements in the police and the army who defended *Algérie Française*. With few solid supports among the political elites or the civil service, the Gaullists were obliged to manoeuvre between opposing social forces - relying mainly on the left to disarm the OAS³ and bring the war to a close, and thereafter leaning more to the right to counter the economic and social demands of the working class. ⁴

As time passed and the new régime achieved a durability which coincided with a period of economic success, the imbrication of the new party's leaders with the state administration and their shared grip on the levers of economic power seemed to vindicate the Gaullists' own claim to be even-handed guardians of the general interest. Rather than endorsing this vision of a "third way" between capitalism and socialism, however, academic commentators have interpreted the Gaullists' achievements and their technocratic style as the fulfilment by the dominant party, in association with the state, of the role of a putative "collective capitalist", laying down economic and political conditions thought to be necessary for the smooth functioning of a social system based on private property.

According to Cerny, in leading French society towards "advanced capitalism", by rationalizing the state's fulfilment of certain essential economic functions, far from being the tool of one class or balancing

nervously between conflicting interests, the Gaullists were securing the conditions for

the actual creation of a new and modern capitalist class where one had not spontaneously evolved before.⁵

Birnbaum agrees with Cerny that, with de Gaulle and Pompidou in office "the political-administrative power" exerted certain claims to independence, but insists that the Gaullist "régime" served the same interests as the straightforwardly capitalist Giscardian version which followed it. What distinguished them was simply their different division of labour within the ruling class. Under the Gaullists, according to Birnbaum, this was rather rigid, whereas under Giscard there was a more noticeable intermingling, with representatives of the economic elites taking posts in the government, and former state officials finding berths in industry or banking.⁶

While Cerny concentrated on the *economic* functions of the state as collective capitalist, others, such as Poulantzas and his followers have stressed that the state's "relative autonomy" from particular class interests allows it to play an important role in fashioning a political coalition which conciliates the potentially disparate interests of different classes of property owners. In situations where a single party - like the Gaullists - both places its members throughout the state machine and is electorally dominant, it performs a large part of this brokerage role and again contributes to preserving the existing power relations.⁷

A weakness of most of this theorizing about the Gaullists' mediation of class interests is that it seeks to impose an interpretative pattern on events - the fulfilment of exogenously determined "functions" - without proving a relationship between active subjects, organized interests on the

one hand, and the party on the other. Indeed Cerny blandly disdains to decide whether the Gaullists' creation of "advanced capitalism" was "historical accident or ingenious design".⁹

A second major problem with these characterizations of Gaullism is that they relate to the time when the party was *in power*. Far more attention has been paid to interest groups' approach to the party members as *state officials* than as potential political champions of their causes. Hardly any attention has been paid to the possibility that the party itself has sought out group interests, which it offered to represent in the political domain. As Cerny puts it;

Once Chirac had resigned, (in 1976) business and financial leaders no longer sought out the Gaullists for access to government support and bureaucratic influence...⁹

By 1980, according to Birnbaum;

To a certain extent abandoned by the modernist *grande bourgeoisie* the Gaullist right continues to receive the support of a more heterogeneous electorate, stretching from workers to small and medium scale proprietors...¹⁰

Nothing is said by either of these writers about whether the official attitude of the party *as a party*, or of individual party members, towards class or other organized interests changed as the Gaullists progressively lost their grip on central government power. Cerny sets out to discuss the RPR's "adjustment problem", once the "transition period" to "advanced capitalism" was over, comparing it to the post-colonial adjustment problems of third world parties which had temporarily united all sections of the population in a successful independence struggle. After this rather grandiose introduction, however, he abandons the focus on interest intermediation and plunges into the minor rivalries of day-to-day politics.¹¹

In 1984, a study of the sociology of the RPR membership showed that the party had gained new recruits among the upper class, and among the self-employed non-professional middle-class, while the working class base was disappearing.¹² In 1985, the liberal aspects of the new party programme were juxtaposed with the RPR's electoral success amongst employers, professionals and managerial staff.¹³ But there was still no clear causal link established between the group interests of members or voters, and elements of the programme. The fact that certain party members or supporters have an interest in, say, abolition of government control of redundancies *may* be the reason why this policy was included in the party programme, or it may have been written in just because the drafters thought it was a good idea. The links between interests and programme - if there are any - remain circumstantial until we have evidence that the party deliberately transferred to its programme the key demands of identifiable interests.

This chapter aims to examine some of that evidence, without pretending to account for the shape of the programme line-by-line. In the first section we show that leading party members in the 1980s ruefully accepted that a liberal programme was at odds with the interests of shopkeepers and self-employed craftsmen, whose votes therefore risked being transferred to the *Front National*.

Next, we demonstrate that the party deliberately sought to incorporate the interests of the professions into their programme, though this was complicated by the fact that professionals' interests were not uniform, being very close to those of small shopkeepers at one end of the scale, and big business at the other end.

In the third part of the chapter we first summarize the way in which

business interests in French politics are defended by groups of varying representativity, purpose and organizational style which in general do not attach a high priority to influencing parties or party leaders. By the 1980s, despite their heterogeneity, most employers' organizations were moving towards a liberal consensus, but the initiative for the exchanges which took place between them and the party came from the RPR itself, which sought to involve certain non-party figures in the elaboration of key elements of the new programme.

In the fourth and final part of the chapter we show that the technocratic "interest" remained strong in the RPR. In one important policy area - privatization - a group of technocrats succeeded in imposing their own style on the execution of party policy. They had themselves been closely involved in drawing up liberal policies, however, so they did not act entirely as a brake on the new ideas. Rather, they were involved in a new "liberal" alliance with big business, just as they had formed a more interventionist coalition in the 1960s. The reasons for this change of orientation are discussed in chapter 10.

Shopkeepers and Self-Employed Craftsmen

During the rapid expansion of the French economy after 1945, changes in the way in which goods were sold and services delivered stimulated defensive organization by shopkeepers and artisans threatened with invasion of their markets by competitors operating on a larger scale. In the Fourth Republic, this took the form of Poujadism, a movement combining parliamentary tactics with powerful and sometimes violent mass protest actions by the shopkeepers themselves. Side-tracked by other political issues, however, particularly the Algerian war, the Poujadists failed to develop either a coherent programme or a well-defined constituency. After

1958, with the consolidation of the new régime and the success of Gaullism in penetrating both the white- and blue-collar electorates, the self-employed lost their pivotal position in the balance of political and social forces which had been part of the reason for their initial successes.¹⁴

The Gaullist governments of the 1960s, committed to modernization by expanding the size of economic units, felt able to ignore the shopkeepers' interests; they effectively ended resale price maintenance, operated a tax régime which was easier on larger firms than the smaller, and turned a blind eye to planning decisions which forced small-scale distributors out of business. In the period 1966-71, 1,887 new supermarkets and 143 hypermarkets were opened, while 20,000 corner shops disappeared.¹⁵

This massacre provoked the formation in 1969 of a new organization for the defence of shopkeepers' corporatist interests, the *Centre d'Information et de Défense - Union Nationale des Travailleurs Indépendants* (CID-UNATI), led by Gérard Nicoud. In 1970 CID-UNATI organized a 40,000 strong demonstration in Paris, and in 1972-3 enjoyed significant electoral success in the *Chambres de Métiers* and the organizations which run the self-employed's pension funds. With the Gaullists' popularity amongst workers seriously damaged by the events of May '68, the shop-keepers were able to exploit their renewed strength in the 1973 election campaign. The same year they were gratified by the passing of the *loi Royer*. This blunted competition by forbidding the use of loss-leaders and making certain changes to the regulations governing advertising. Planning decisions on any new supermarkets over 1,000 sq metres (over 750 sq metre in towns smaller than 50,000 people) were handed over to departmental *commissions d'urbanisme commercial*, made up 50% of

local councillors and 50% of the small shopkeepers' representatives. This was an astonishing victory, more even than CID-UNATI had demanded.¹⁶ In 1974, 30% fewer supermarkets were opened than in the previous year, and 1975 saw a tax reform which cut self-employed craftsmen's tax bills by 53% and those of shopkeepers with less than 3 employees by 62%¹⁷

By the end of the 1970s, relations between the RPR and the shopkeepers and artisans seemed to be based on mutual confidence and a certain self-satisfaction. From October 1979 until October 1981 the party's *chargé de mission du commerce et de l'artisanat*, was the young deputy Jean-François Mancel. With no major piece of legislation concerning the small traders before Parliament, his role was to meet, usually in his office at the National Assembly, the leaders of the scores of federations representing each branch of retailing and services, to listen to them and keep them informed of his own activities. The most exciting events of his tenure were the "epic battles" which took place when Parliament was required to fix annually the maximum percentage increase in rent which landlords were permitted to charge their commercial tenants.¹⁸ Although Mancel believed that the federation leaders went to see deputies of other parties as well, he felt they were particularly sympathetic to the RPR,

because Chirac symbolized extremely well for them, I think, the ideal they believed in, that is freedom, but also sensitivity to the problems of the little man in relation to the big commercial and industrial groups.¹⁹

At the end of the 1970s there was more emphasis on protection than on freedom. The party programme, *Atout France*²⁰ linked the health and prosperity of small firms with the fight against unemployment, promising to re-examine and enlarge the scope of the *Agence pour la Création*

d'Entreprises as well as to amend company law in such a way as to limit the risk to the personal capital of those attempting to set up new firms. The programme also reiterated Debré's insistence on the state's duty of protecting otherwise "healthy" firms against temporary or external difficulties such as tardy payment of bills by large customers, political risks arising from dealings with third world governments, and "conjunctural" problems within the economy or the industry in which individual firms were active. Alongside capital-market reforms to allow small firms greater access to private savings, the party suggested freeing them from some of the responsibilities towards their employees enshrined in current labour law, and urged that the state subsidize directly "as in Germany" the salaries of any workers in small firms who were engaged full-time on research.²¹ In addition, a further 13 pages of the 1980 programme were devoted to an examination of the regulatory framework and current range of government aids available to different branches of commerce and service industries, together with detailed suggestions for improvements.²² As Mancel put it;

given that the liberalism which we have evolved today had not got to its current stage of development, in our political attitude the aspect of protectionism towards those categories of the population was in fact quite strong, which means that we certainly had a very strong presence and roots in all those groups and professions.²³

This attitude, furthermore, suited most of the party's deputies and senators.²⁴

Despite their victories of the 1970s, the high cost of credit, the inexorable competition from large-scale distributors, and the increasing amount of time that had to be devoted to bureaucratic form-filling, all

left the independents discontented. Although the *loi Royer* was still in place, it was increasingly circumvented by the practice of building stores of 999 sq metres and then asking for a series of extensions.²⁵

The shopkeepers' combativeness was paradoxically encouraged by the Socialist government. In an attempt to diversify their points of contact with the business community, the government hinted at possible talks with a self-appointed small business' association, the *Syndicat National de la Petite et Moyenne Industrie* (SNPMI), set up in 1977 by the right-wing extremist Gérard Deuil, who was dissatisfied with the representation of the smallholders by the traditional employers' organizations.²⁶ Encouraged rather than charmed by the Socialists' advances, the SNPMI drew 15,000 to a mass protest demonstration in Paris in September 1982, widely publicized as a result of a number of violent incidents. A month later the artisans' federations held demonstrations all over the country, and in May 1983 thousands of shopkeepers and small businessmen joined three Paris demonstrations in succeeding weeks, organized by SNPMI, the CGPME, and CID-UNATI.²⁷

In general the difficulties which the RPR would have in keeping their electoral hold on these petty bourgeois groups during the liberal turn after 1981 were compounded by what Mancel called their dual - and completely contradictory - discourse. On the one hand, they asked only to be left in peace by the government, arguing that the greatest possible freedom was the only condition likely to allow the creation of new jobs and the start-up of new businesses. On the other hand, whenever their specific fields of activity rather than general questions were discussed, they instinctively turned towards the state for protection.²⁸

Mancel's answer to this conundrum was to try to adopt a "didactic"

strategy, making himself the defender of the shopkeepers' interests while at the same time trying to convince them that they would not be able and should not try to withstand indefinitely the pressures making for "modernization" since liberalism would be beneficial to a large number of their businesses, even if some were bound to be eliminated. The 1984 programme, *Libres et Responsables* contained next to nothing on the shopkeepers' problems, beyond a restatement of their difficulty in obtaining suitable finance.²⁹ In 1985 the party published a programme of more detailed measures, *le Renouveau*, for which the 1984 essay served as a general philosophical apology. Here, paradoxically, small firms were placed at the heart of the party's economic strategy, but the conditions for their prosperity were not assumed to require measures different from those proposed for all businesses. On the one hand big was no longer beautiful;

a number of foreign examples indicate, on the contrary, that small and medium-sized firms are at the root of competitive and dynamic economies. So they are an important trump-card which must be brought into play. Our whole project of reducing charges and simplifying rules has this end in view.³⁰

On the other, apart from some comments on the legal conditions surrounding the creation and inheritance of small companies, the programme expects them to profit in the same way as larger ones from decontrol of prices and profits, a new law on competition, abolition of the *taxe professionnelle*, and proposals on industrial training and workplace organization.³¹

For the RPR it was uphill work convincing the shopkeepers that they still occupied a special place in the party's heart. Even if they had not read the party programmes they could not have failed to notice that after the 1981 Presidential election Chirac began to attack market regulation more and more frequently;

The more Jacques Chirac developed really liberal ideas, the more those people began to realize that, after all, that was not what they really wanted...³²

The party's chances of holding on to a larger part of the petty-bourgeois electorate were not helped, Mancel believes, by succeeding governments' failure to manage the impact of modernization on the traditional way of life of the shopkeepers and artisans as well as they had managed the transition in the agricultural sector by compensating financially the proprietors of uneconomic small-holdings who gave up working them altogether, or merged them with larger concerns.³³ For this general failure, the RPR was punished electorally by the rise of the *Front National*, which led ultimately to the rout of 1988;

I would say he (Chirac) had completely changed his message in 1988, and that those people were incontestably drawn towards the National Front.... That was, furthermore, without a doubt one of the reasons why we lost the 1988 Presidential election by quite a margin, because we lost to the National Front a big part of what we might call the "traditional" electorate, shopkeepers, artisans, a few peasants, professionals, who had the feeling that the much more modernist RPR programme was forgetting them...³⁴

Mancel's account of the special regard in which the shopkeepers and artisans were at one time held by the party is echoed by other leaders³⁵, and their progressive disillusionment with RPR policy is confirmed by analysis of election results.³⁶ This loss of support cannot be assigned directly to the fine print of the economic programmes, since the *Front National* in turn defended a "liberal" economic policy³⁷ and since, as we have seen, the shopkeepers' own ideas on their place in society involved a contradictory mixture of free enterprise and protectionist attitudes. Much was owed, no doubt, to the other facets of Le Pen's programme, and to his image as a common man. It is clear, however, that the tone of sympathy

with the slightly old-fashioned world of the shopkeepers, together with detailed attention to their interests, disappeared from RPR programmes between 1980 and 1986. In 1985 the party encouraged them to defend their prosperity and their traditional values by using modern technology to protect themselves and their goods from attack, and urged them to invest in the techniques of *bureautique* and *monétique* (office automation and the use of plastic money) concepts which sound almost as foreign to a provincial French *commerçant* as to the English reader.³² Deliberately, or by oversight, but certainly without regard for the electoral consequences, the party had abandoned its earlier concern to balance the values of freedom of enterprise and the protective state in favour of a discourse dominated by change, risk and gadgetry.

Professions

In French, one does not speak of "the professions", but of *les professions libérales* - "the liberal professions", a formula which emphasizes individual rather than collective provision of services and hence freedom from politically-determined regulations. Each professional field is regulated by a para-public "Order", membership of which is compulsory for those wishing to practice, and which is responsible for establishing and enforcing standards and laying down guidelines for any ethical questions which may arise. In addition, most professional fields feature one or more associations which seek, like a trade union, to represent the members' specific interests. In the medical field, for example, the regulatory body is the *Ordre des Médecins*, and the largest of three doctors' associations is the *Confédération des Syndicats Médicaux de France*. Both have been described by an American researcher as "conservative"; the former is supposed to be apolitical, but its role in

opposing the liberalization of abortion and contraception led to François Mitterrand's promise (not kept) to abolish it if he should come to power.³²

At the end of the 1970s there was some debate as to whether the professions in a given locality should be given the opportunity of pooling their interests and experience in a para-public *Chambre* in the same way as manufacturers and retailers do in the *Chambres de Commerce et d'Industrie*, and artisans in *Chambres des Métiers*. Instead, there was an attempt at a kind of national union organization, encouraged by the government, with the formation in 1978 of the *Union Nationale des Associations des Professions Libérales* (UNAPL). Despite affiliating 58 associations, UNAPL lacks a proper office and staff of its own and had still not developed an important presence 8 years later. Apart from tax and social security questions, there are few issues which affect all professions equally, and it is difficult to see on which issues the members of different professions could be expected to take an interest in the problems of the others.³³ This lack of cross-professional identity means that the professions often align themselves with small business interests, "since the professionals typically have small offices with problems similar to those of small shopkeepers."³⁴

The RPR has been active in organizing amongst professionals, with varying results for their ideological commitment to liberalism. In at least one case - that of the pharmacists - the profession's demands did closely resemble those habitually raised by small shopkeepers, at some cost to the liberal ideal. In another case - that of the doctors - the corporatist defence of existing privileges arguably helped spread the liberal message. In the case of the banks, the professionals with whom the

RPR were involved were clearly the representatives of big business, and they made a substantial contribution to the party's programmatic orientation.

A key figure in the RPR's relationship with the professionals was Gérard Leban.⁴² Sympathetic to Gaullism by reason of his arrest and deportation during the Second World War at the age of 13, he made a business career in the distribution side of the clothing trade and was drawn into active politics in 1968 when he joined the massive pro-de Gaulle street demonstration which signalled the imminent defeat of the Left at the polls. He joined the UDR and became *délégué départemental* for the *Action Ouvrière et Professionnelle* in the party's Paris organization. From this position he helped to set up the first real AOP section oriented on a profession - accountants - in 1978. Working first under Dechartre and later with Delalande, he was effectively the chief of the professional sections until 1987 when he took on a job in the party organization dealing with Chirac's second presidential campaign.⁴³

By 1981, following on the accountants, AOP sections were established for, among others, doctors, dentists, taxi-drivers, travel agents, and in banking and insurance. Their contribution to the party's programmes was systematized by Leban; before each national election, both legislative and Presidential, each section was asked to supply a document summarizing the condition of their profession, and their propositions; these documents were then fed into the party campaigns. The same procedure was used before the drafting of *Libres et Responsables*.

Due partly, no doubt, to this corporatist method of organization, and in the absence of a pattern of "professional interests" applicable to all fields, the party occasionally got drawn into the defence of special

interests even though these sometimes contradicted the ideology of liberalism and free competition. For example, during the 1980s the pharmacists - among whom there was a strong AOP section - were drawn into a conflict with the supermarket chain Leclerc which won from the *Conseil de la Concurrence* the right to sell certain paramedical products over which pharmacists had had a monopoly.⁴⁴ The conflict was eventually resolved by a classic corporatist compromise worked out by Chirac's own 1986-88 government, thanks to the strong presence of the professionals' representatives in the *cabinet* of the Minister of Health, Michèle Barzach.⁴⁵

Although the organized pharmacists - for many years a protected species - were not very keen on free competition, some of their colleagues in the other medical professions integrated it more easily into their criticisms of Socialist policy, dismissed as "egalitarianism" plus "*assistance généralisée*" (hand-outs for everyone).⁴⁶ The doctors objected to the government's plans for integrated health centres, associated with a scaling down of the proportion of GPs' income coming from private fees in favour of a capitation system similar to the one in use in the UK; they objected to the proposal to abolish the competitive examination which traditionally regulated entry to hospital internships, claiming that this would lead to an over-supply of doctors who, when they found themselves unemployed, would demand the status of civil servants. One of the most emotive issues concerned the Socialists' attempts to democratize the extremely hierarchical hospital service, which the doctors interpreted as an attack on their authority, traditionally sanctified by academic qualifications. "Expertise", as one of the doctors' leaders, the RPR's Bernard Debré put it, "must be the only legitimate source of the

indispensable hierarchy..."⁴⁷ The demand for protection of the divine right of the top doctors was incorporated into the 1984 party programme.⁴⁸

Gérard Leban and the AOP's *section de l'Assistance Publique* considered that the government's proposals, which meant that the heads of department would no longer be the real bosses, "didn't fit our liberal ideas at all."⁴⁹ The section was extremely active, distributing leaflets outside the hospitals and organizing protest meetings addressed by a number of distinguished medical professors "who worked very closely with us."⁵⁰ The spectacle of white-coated medics engaging in political demonstrations naturally caught the imagination of the press, and the doctors had ample opportunity to add to the exposure liberalism was getting generally by expounding their "two axioms of liberal philosophy, the recognition of expertise, and the responsibility of the individual." Under the latter heading they attacked the Socialists' policy of reimbursing the cost of abortions performed by the national health service, and looked forward to the day when health insurance would be partially privatized.⁵¹

As we saw in chapter 8, although the AOP was de Gaulle's "big idea"⁵² to help spread his support among the workers, by the mid-1980s the workplace groups (*sections d'entreprises*) had been taken over by employers and managers at the expense of the the rank and file, much to Dechartre's disgust. Leban, on the other hand, was enthusiastic about the fact that the spread of ideas could sometimes be in the reverse direction to the one originally intended;

....it's true that a large number of ideas and a large number of innovations in our let's say our schema - political as well as economic - came to us from the professions and from the firms where we were working.⁵³

No groups performed better in this respect than those organized in

banking, insurance and the stock exchange. The banking section, led by Pierre Habib Deloncle, son of a former Gaullist minister, had already distinguished itself by organizing street demonstrations outside a bank where a Communist leader, Philippe Herzog, had come - illegally according to the AOP - to address a union meeting. In 1981-2, when the Socialists put through the legislation nationalizing the few banks which had remained in the private sector since 1945, and the cream of French manufacturing capacity, the leaders of the bank section effectively serviced the RPR deputies leading their defence;

Our friends were at the side of Michel Noir who at that time was the deputy dealing with the question in the chamber; and people worked day and night to prepare the documents, the texts for our deputies who were going to speak. They were at the National Assembly with them, and they contributed a great deal to all the amendments which we put forward.⁵⁴

Having helped mould the party's policy during round one of the nationalization battle in 1981, the members of the *section Banque* returned to the fray in 1985-6, in anticipation of round two. This time, helped by AOP activists from the Paris stock exchange, and representatives of the insurance companies, they were "intimately involved" with the teams which helped Balladur draw up his privatization legislation in anticipation of the Right's electoral victory in March 1986.⁵⁵

To summarize then, whereas the pharmacists were concerned exclusively with their own fortunes and tended to push the party in a protectionist direction, the doctors, as well as dosing the party programme with their notions of liberal medicine, had a more public impact which helped reinforce liberal ideas generally, while the bankers and insurers fought state intervention in the commanding heights of the economy and fed their own interests directly - if discreetly - into the party's policy-making.

We consider their role again at the end of the next section, on business interests.

Business

In this section we first describe the traditional heterogeneity of French employer-unionism, and then examine the employers' contribution to the revival of liberal ideology. Although for many years content to form a profitable partnership with the state, some employers' organizations were growing increasingly impatient with state controls by the turn of the 1980s, when they began actively and with growing unanimity to demand decentralization and deregulation. Most employers' groups avoided party politics, however, and it was the RPR which sought to draw the employers into their programme-making, rather than organized business which sought to influence the party.

The most representative French employers' organization is the CNPF, (*Conseil National du Patronat Français*) whose affiliates include more than one hundred national federations covering thirty or so branches of industry, federations of regional associations and about 800 national trade associations.⁵⁶ It is the CNPF which speaks for the individual members of all these bodies when corporatist-type discussions with government and unions take place at national level.

The CNPF's legitimacy has been continually contested, however, by a succession of associations, claiming to represent France's army of small and medium-sized firms, which accuse the "official" movement of selling out to government drives towards mergers and concentration. The longest established, though not always the most influential, of these is the *Confédération Générale des Petites et Moyennes Industries* (CGPME) which has a contradictory relationship with the parent body, refusing the title

of *membre associé*,⁵⁷ but preserving 75 seats in the 500-member *Assemblée Générale*.⁵⁸

The national federations, trade associations, and chambers of commerce and industry concern themselves with the day-to-day problems of running a business, informing their members about new techniques, product regulations, labour legislation, discounts, credit and marketing opportunities, as well as lobbying on matters of common concern where possible.⁵⁹ In general, the federations are of greatest help to the small and medium-sized firms, while the largest intervene directly with the government or the civil service on matters which concern them.⁶⁰ The CNPF can set the tone for the overall employers' movement, but it cannot command it. As a confederal body it must abstain from taking sides on public policy issues which divide its members, such as whether to construct a canal system in the south-east or the north of the country.⁶¹ Even if it wished to, the *Conseil National* does not have the resources to upstage the national federations which are organizationally stronger and better financed than itself.⁶²

Alongside the organizations handling what might be called day-to-day nut-and-bolt issues, French business has a range of more intellectually adventurous groups at its disposal. Debates about general public policy, the employers' role in society and blueprints for harmonious relations with the workers, have traditionally been conducted by what one author has called "opinion" or "vanguard" groups especially constituted for that purpose.⁶³

French employers have long been regarded as the least imaginative, the meanest and generally the most reactionary and parochial of western Europe, relying for success on family share-holding, out-dated techniques,

a protected home market, and hostility to trade unions, rather than effort and risk.⁵⁴ But alongside the traditionalist mass there have always existed groups of radicals, inspired by Christian social teaching, whose members were intent on developing model management relations in their own firms as examples of a better way for their colleagues to follow.

Some of these, like the *Centre des Jeunes Patrons* (CJP) and the *Centre Français du Patronat Chrétien* (CFPC, known until 1948 as the *Confédération Française des Professions*) date from between the wars, when their ideals found expression in local family allowance systems, company housing and other paternalist arrangements. At the liberation they emerged as champions of a national framework of collective bargaining, profit-sharing and unemployment insurance. Although few in numbers - the CJP and CFPC had between two and three thousand members each by the 1980s - the social-Christian vanguard played an important role in the 1950s and 1960s in moving the employers movement towards acceptance of responsibility for their employees' welfare.⁵⁵

In this they were helped by ACADI, (*Association des Cadres, Dirigeants de l'Industrie*), founded in 1945, some said in order to protect the interests of top managers of the largest firms in the event of nationalization. During the 1950s and 1960s ACADI acted as a kind of club in which 300 managers - from both public and private sectors - and some 75 "associates", mostly bankers and civil servants, together urged a high-growth Keynesian model for the future development of French society, stressing the importance of public finance, wages policy and technical progress. Because of their stress on "competence" rather than property as the source of the manager's legitimacy they have been said to represent the technocratic or "Saint-Simonian" wing of the employers' movement.⁵⁶

From their different perspectives the Christians and the technocrats have conducted a running battle over several decades against the traditionalist influence of the smaller and medium-sized firms within the the CNPF, and especially against the CGPME, the progressives' *bête noire*.

When the explosion of May '68 revealed the inadequacy of the official movement's approach to industrial relations, the presidents of a score or so giant enterprises, both public and private, whose fate is closely bound up with that of the national economy, responded by forming a club even more exclusive than ACADI; this was AGREF, the *Association des Grandes Entreprises Faisant Appel à l'Épargne*. Other radicals at first sought to set up an entirely new confederation to outflank the official movement, but the CNPF managed to hold the centre ground by collaborating from 1969 onwards with prime minister Chaban Delmas' attempts to set up a new tripartite corporatist framework for industrial relations. The May events had effectively stimulated the main-stream to narrow the gap between themselves and the *avant-garde*. The new organization therefore turned itself into the most intellectual and the most ambitious of all the employers' think-tanks, *Entreprise et Progrès*.⁵⁷

Whereas the Christian organizations were chiefly concerned to establish workplace relations bearing witness to their members' organicist conception of society, and ACADI sought above all to push forward French economic development, *Entreprise et Progrès* set out not only to influence their business colleagues, but to turn employers as a class into the vanguard of the whole society, remedying what a 1972 opinion poll revealed as the "execrable" image of employers among the French people.⁵⁸ In 1983 they challenged their colleagues to choose between the negative strategy of being a simple "veto group" whose only power was to prevent

decisions which run counter to their interests and the "hegemonic" strategy of pushing themselves forward as a "*catégorie dirigeante*", by

asserting a collective identity... announcing ourselves as a social category conscious of our responsibilities who, by reason of our cohesion, our permanence, our self-confidence, exert an influence on the whole of society⁶⁹

As befitted a movement with hegemonic ambitions, recruitment was on the same basis as to a political party - firms wishing to join had to agree with the group's aims and to undertake to further them in their own domains. Together they organized conferences and day-schools in which they discussed general economic and social developments, as well as schemes for making work more interesting, abolishing production lines and decentralizing management.⁷⁰ In 1983 *Entreprise et Progrès* launched a scheme designed especially to educate Parliamentarians about the problems of the business world, which we discuss below in the context of business and politics. First we trace the history of the French employers' attitudes to liberal ideas.

Before May 1981, when the political pendulum swung in favour of the Socialist Party, few French employers' groups were strongly attached to doctrines of economic liberalism. War-time emergencies had twice dramatically extended state control of wages and prices, and state allocation of raw materials, credit and labour. Business organizations had been only too happy to form cartels which policed these arrangements, extending them as best they could in peace-time, thanks to reconstruction and national planning.⁷¹ In the early 1970s the CNPF co-operated in a rather two-legged form of corporatism in which the unions were rather weak and mutually antagonistic, the government very powerful, and the employers

motivated to sign generous deals mainly by the political aim of helping to keep the existing parties in power.⁷²

Rival wings of the movement damned each other for their lack of liberal credentials. The *petits patrons* considered that they were the only real entrepreneurs since only they daily risked their and their family's personal fortunes in their business operations, whereas the hired managers of the giant firms had no such personal stake, and in any case their companies' fortunes were assured by their virtual symbiosis with the state.⁷³ The technocrats replied that the family firms held back production by refusing to borrow money and invest in new technology, and that, if they were not sheltering behind a protective tariff, they ran cap in hand to the government to ask for a subsidy.⁷⁴

A modest revival of liberalism in the early 1960s culminated in the adoption by the CNPF's 1965 general assembly of a so-called "liberal charter" which prefigured in almost every detail the manifestos of twenty years later - pursuit of personal interests was identified with the common good, homage was paid to competition and the role of profit, controls on prices, wages and hiring and firing were condemned, along with high company taxation, and above all dirigist interference by bureaucrats and politicians.⁷⁵

Though adopted thanks to the liberal convictions and energetic lobbying of small firms by one of the CNPF leaders, Pierre de Calan, the charter was disowned both by the Christian wing and the technocrats who felt themselves attacked. The government also, in the form of Michel Maurice-Bokanowski, made its disapproval known.⁷⁶ Eventually, the sharpening of class struggle, which culminated in May '68, changed both the balance of power in the workplaces and the official language of

industrial relations. The liberal charter was forgotten, 1969 saw the birth of AGREF, through which the leaders of the giant firms intended to pursue their profitable relationship with the state, and in 1972 the presidency of the CNPF was entrusted to François Ceyrac, a careful technocrat who had spent his entire career as functionary of the employers' movement.⁷⁷

At Ceyrac's retirement in December 1981, his heir apparent, Yvon Chotard, the CNPF's chief negotiator and chairman of the social committee, was unexpectedly defeated in the presidential election by an outsider, Yvon Gattaz. In some ways the result seemed to be the victory of the grass roots, the "real" bosses, over the intellectuals and the "establishment" with their long familiarity with the corridors of power. Gattaz was supported neither by the Parisian elite nor by the leaders of the powerful national federations. Secondly, with his brother he was the proprietor of a provincial electronics firm which they had built from nothing and of which only 20% of the capital was held outside their own family. Finally, Gattaz had been campaigning for five years among his fellow *patrons* to make the CNPF more responsible to the mass of affiliated members.⁷⁸

The left were perhaps too quick to conclude, however, that the employers had responded to the challenge of Mitterrand's election by handing over their organization to a reactionary and a backwoodsman.⁷⁹ Gattaz' company, Radiall, belied the parochial image normally attached to family firms.⁸⁰ Gattaz sought the CNPF presidency to give a voice not to small firms, but to the *middle-sized*, which he defined as those employing between 50 and 2,000 workers. The prosperity of the post-war years had fostered the emergence of an economically significant stratum of such firms - 30,000 of them, all family-owned, were responsible for 5½ million

workers and 40% of added value - which were largely ignored by the CNPF. Finally, the association founded by Gattaz and his friends in 1976, ETHIC (*Entreprises à Taille Humaine Industrielles et Commerciales*), had more in common with the vanguard movements than with the CGPME. Its four principles were hierarchy based on competence (not inheritance), open accounting, social harmony, and the employers' devotion of one-tenth of their time to public affairs.⁹¹

In short, the new president of the CNPF was neither a 19th century liberal nor a starry-eyed philanthropist.⁹² From our point of view, Gattaz' election has a particular significance. With the existing leadership tainted by its collaboration with dirigism, a man with Gattaz' background, the self-made boss of a successful firm free of government contracts or handouts, was uniquely placed to draw together the threads of liberal doctrine implicit in the discourse and the practice of the employers' movement, in order to campaign plausibly on what was effectively a new "liberal charter", the employers' response both to the apparent crisis of 1970s interventionism and to the Socialists' own statist solutions.⁹³

In contrast to the liberal ideologues whose work we studied in the last chapter, the employers' programme was marked by their own immediate preoccupations, and by the institutional framework in which they had to work. It was their unanimous demand for cuts in taxes and charges which conditioned their reflections on social policy questions such as the appropriate balance between state-financed benefits and individual effort, while their innovative ideas on workplace organization made them champions of de-regulation.

The battle for tax cuts concentrated on the *taxe professionnelle*, a

pay-roll tax, levied by local authorities and denounced by everyone, up to and including the President of the Republic and the Minister of Finance, although the government somehow could not find a way of making up the revenue short-fall which would result from its abolition.⁸⁴ More complex was reform of the semi-public semi-contractual French systems for unemployment and sickness insurance which were in endemic crisis during the early 1980s due to the multiplication of claimants and the shrinking number of contributors. After two months of negotiations the CNPF achieved some of its aims on unemployment benefits by what were arguably corporatist rather than liberal methods. Certain categories of the unemployed were struck off the register and re-directed to government hand-outs, while the unions agreed to increases in their members contributions. If they did not achieve cuts, the employers were at least satisfied that their share of the costs were not increased.⁸⁵

De-regulation of the economy in the French context primarily concerned the labour market, given general anxiety about high unemployment and the fact that the Socialists had themselves taken the initiative in de-controlling prices. Gattaz occasionally launched comprehensive attacks on the indexed minimum wage (the SMIC) which would have pleased Friedmanites everywhere,⁸⁶ but the CNPF stopped short of demanding its abolition and the federations took different positions about how it should be reformed, with some again suggesting that it could be a subject for negotiation with the unions. Gattaz' idea for a lower "youth minimum wage" was withdrawn after the Socialists supervised the installation of a youth training scheme at rates lower than the SMIC.⁸⁷

The CNPF did demand, however, a deregulatory package which would loosen controls on part-time and temporary work, abolish administrative

oversight of redundancies and relax rules surrounding the so-called thresholds in French workplaces.⁸⁸ The latter was a particularly emotive issue because it concerned not only job security but also workers' rights. In any French factory, if there are at least 10 employees, they have the right to elect a representative (*délégué du personnel*) to whom the employer is legally obliged to grant recognition and certain facilities. If the threshold of 50 workers is passed, the employer must accept, pay for, and from time to time talk to a *comité d'entreprise*. Both thresholds, in addition, trigger the employers' obligation to pay certain payroll taxes. According to the CNPF, the existence of the thresholds dissuaded many employers from expanding their workforces beyond 9 or 49 people. Gattaz argued that nearly half a million "special category jobs", which he dubbed ENCAs (*emplois nouveaux à contraintes allégées*), could be created within five years, if exempted from most of the existing regulations. The claim was minutiously examined and declared fanciful in *Le Monde*,⁸⁹ and was even privately sneered at by the technocrats among the CNPF establishment⁹⁰, but that did not stop the demand for labour-market deregulation, including reform of the thresholds, finding its way into all the liberal programmes of the early 1980s, including those of the RPR.⁹¹

Gattaz' crusade for "flexibility" on behalf of the mass of employers who sought to survive the economic war at the workers' expense was clearly in line with the liberal philosophy of the Chicago school and the French new economists. Nevertheless, he did not come under attack from the so-called "progressive" employers because they had already reached conclusions on flexibility which allowed a synthesis between liberalism and their own vaguely corporatist ideas. This was clear from their reaction to the Socialists' *lois Auroux*, passed in 1982, which, among

other things, introduced compulsory annual negotiations at both industry and firm level and sought to strengthen in-plant union rights, but also encouraged the formation of work-place groups through which employees could express directly complaints about work organization and conditions.⁹²

The legislation was fought strenuously by the CNPF and by the opposition in Parliament, and was formally condemned by *Entreprise et Progrès*, on the grounds that legal obligation would damage the spontaneity of the employers' efforts, while the CJD, approving in principle, had reservations about certain of the required procedures. But all three organizations called on their members to apply the new laws faithfully, filling the mandatory consultation committees with technical and supervisory staff where possible.⁹³

This muted response can be explained by the fact that the employers' vanguard organizations had for some years been developing their own versions of workplace charters enshrining the trade-off which Guy Sorman had discovered in operation in Japan and California - workers granted a share in decision-making in exchange for total flexibility on job organization, hours worked, and salaries.⁹⁴ Members of the CJP (which in 1968 became the *Centre des Jeunes Dirigeants*, CJD) had already experimented with profit-sharing and the distribution of shares to their workers. ACADI supported the 1975 *rapport Sudreau*, which (unsuccessfully) proposed to introduce an element of co-management into the statutes governing the organization of French firms⁹⁵. The *Institut de l'Entreprise* the CNPF's own in-house think-tank founded in 1975, had set up a "movement for quality circles" as early as 1976 and in 1983 produced a report on flexible working hours which recommended that salaries should be

calculated according to the *annual* totals worked.⁹⁶ François Dalle, chairman and managing director of l'Oréal and a founder member of *Entreprise et Progrès* was already expounding his doctrine of the decentralization of authority in the firm in the late 1960s⁹⁷, and *Entreprise et Progrès* could claim with some justice in the 1980s that

Innovations like flexitime and the workers' rights of expression in the workplace have been inspired by (our) propositions.⁹⁸

Entreprise et Progrès also found the loop-hole in the Auroux laws allowing local managements to negotiate with workers' representatives - not union officials - company agreements setting aside existing regulations, particularly on wages and hours, for up to three years.⁹⁹ This option became more attractive after December 1984 when the unions' rank and file rejected a national deal on "flexibility" which their leaders had spent seven months negotiating with Yvon Chotard.¹⁰⁰ As the 1980s progressed, the employers' most determined innovators continued to make the running with their proposals for management buy-outs, stock-options and *individualization* of hours and salaries, which were endorsed by the CNPF, and in some cases by the Socialist government.¹⁰¹ By now they saw no reason to reject the liberal tag, as their spokesman told a French researcher;

May 1981 showed that the members of *Entreprise et Progrès* are attached to the market economy and don't like dirigism; in short they are liberals and not socialists, not even moderate ones, which their progressiveness on social matters and their diatribes against the conservatism of the CNPF might have led one erroneously to believe.¹⁰²

In the face of this desertion of the ranks, the CJD preserved its radical reputation by disapproving cuts in public investment,¹⁰³ while *Entreprise et Progrès* railed against what it called the "omnipresent and

impotent state."¹⁰⁴ But, while the CJD also demurred at the official movement's attack on the thresholds, its own reform proposals partook of the liberal model of the workplace charter - each firm, whatever its size, should have a *conseil d'entreprise* which would henceforward fuse in itself responsibility for matters at present dealt with by a plethora of different committees or representatives, (health and safety, *comité d'entreprise*, *délégués du personnel*, union sections, etc.) and would be able to negotiate fixed-term deals setting aside existing labour regulations.¹⁰⁵ What remained of the CJD's radical tradition was in any case diluted during the 1980s as the influence of the small-scale catholic bosses was out-weighed by a new intake of professional managers, and the group's audience shrank, reflecting its failure to recruit among the new generation of hi-tec and service companies.¹⁰⁶

The fact that the employers were fashioning a consensus among themselves on liberal economics did not necessarily mean that they united to convert the RPR to their own ideas. Under Gattaz' leadership, the CNPF preferred to work constructively with the government in power rather than try to form a bloc with the right-wing parties. According to one employer he reduced to a minimum the "too visible" relations with the opposition,¹⁰⁷ which meant both refusing public talks with them, a policy badly received by Gaullist politicians in particular,¹⁰⁸ and absence from the 1984 mass demonstration against the Socialists' schools policy.¹⁰⁹

In avoiding party politics the CNPF behaved in the same way as most other interest groups in France at the beginning of the 1980s.¹¹⁰ Research carried out at that time confirmed what had been implied by an earlier study of the administrative elite in France,¹¹¹ namely that all interest

groups attach a much lower priority to influencing parties or party leaders than to contacts with elected government officials or civil servants.

When a sample of 99 interest group officials were asked to choose among a list of ten types of action that groups might adopt to forward their cause, only 10 (9.9%) said they often tried to influence parties or leaders, far fewer than those who said they often participated in government committees (55.2%), or cultivated frequent formal and informal contacts with government officials (53.6% and 46.9%). Other frequently-used strategies included public relations campaigns and parliamentary lobbying on specific issues. Even action in the Economic and Social Council (26.1%) and demonstrations, strikes and other direct action (12.8%) were resorted to more often than party contacts, and only legal action (7.8%) was less popular.¹¹² Among the smaller sample of business organizations, (33 respondents) government contacts were even more frequent, (60-70% saying they often used them), with influencing parties again coming near the bottom of the scale of priorities (9.7%).¹¹³

The paucity of party contacts matches interest group leaders' poor opinion of their effectiveness. Respondents were asked which type of action was the *most effective* in influencing policy, and the replies were classified according to the type of action mentioned first. Of 94 respondents across all types of interests, not one cited first influencing parties and their leaders as an effective method of pursuing their aims.¹¹⁴ About a third of the sample said they often lobbied individual Parliamentarians,¹¹⁵ but only 8.5% had a full-time lobbyist and over 70% none at all. Most groups relied on local branches to influence deputies in their constituencies.

These findings contrast with practice during the 1950s, when some parties were more or less targetted for capture by interest groups.¹¹⁶ One reason for this is undoubtedly that the 1958 constitution shifted the balance of power markedly from Parliament to the Executive. There would not be much point in capturing parties whose ability to influence policy had been heavily circumscribed. Furthermore, it has been suggested, parties in the Fifth Republic have been larger, with broader electoral support than they were in the Fourth, making them better able to resist special pleading by organized groups.¹¹⁷

By the early 1980s, business involvement in politics still existed, but was sporadic, not always visible, and variable in form rather than systematically oriented towards a single party. Close business involvement in Alain Carignon's campaign in Grenoble in 1983 seems to have been remarked on because it was exceptional.¹¹⁸ Often, rather than investing heavily in a single party or a single candidate, businessmen preferred to run for office themselves. The RPR dislodged a Communist mayor in Nimes, also in 1983, thanks to Jean Bousquet, the owner of Cacharel. In the Paris municipal elections both the CGPME and the *Confédération Générale des Cadres*, a managers' union, successfully negotiated places on the RPR lists.¹¹⁹ Party tickets were not sought systematically, but they were certainly the surest guarantee of success. Businessmen like Jean-Maxime Lévêque who tried to mount their own non-party campaigning organizations, or local businessmen who ran for office on their own but failed to get elected, were soon forgotten.¹²⁰

Parliamentary lobbying itself tended to be directed towards deputies of all parties when the legislative programme turned up issues which the groups were interested in. One in four organizations maintained an all-

party subject group or *amicale* in Parliament.¹²¹ The CGPME counted Socialists among the 160 deputies in its *amicale* in 1979,¹²² while *Entreprise et Progrès*, with its self-assigned goal of expanding employers' influence in society, targetted its programme of work experience placements at the parties of the Left as well as the Right. Begun in 1983, they made it possible for Parliamentarians to make a series of programmed visits, covering between 12 and 25 days in a year, to one of the member firms, in order to study at first hand the effects of their legislative activity, and to familiarize themselves with any aspect of the business they were interested in, from corporate planning to selling products on the shop-floor.

The verdict of one RPR deputy who took part in the programme was that there was a considerable rapprochement between the world of work and the world of politics between 1981 and 1986. They had been far apart, without realizing it,¹²³ but began to understand and appreciate each other more through participating in many seminars and day-schools as well as through the *stages d'entreprise*. Etienne Pinte spent one day a week for 16 weeks at the French subsidiary of IBM;

I was initiated into the world of work, of which I knew little, and that not very well, and that gave me another view, another side, another vision of the workplace. For me, if you like, it was very fruitful, very enriching, because afterwards, every time I was involved in legislating I asked myself whether the new laws we were about to vote would foster or hinder the dynamism of the economy, the dynamism of individual firms.¹²⁴

By 1986, the programmes had attracted 25 enthusiastic *stagiaires*, of whom only 3 were from the RPR (14 were Socialists and 8 UDF), and the following year there were 55, including some candidates applying for a second course in a different firm.¹²⁵ The higher proportion of Socialist

Party deputies availing themselves of this opportunity probably reflected their own sense of their greater unfamiliarity with the employers' concerns, as well as the intentions of *Entreprise et Progrès* who had no wish to preach to the converted. Nevertheless, Pinte's testimony shows how the RPR's conversion to liberalism in the wake of Chirac's 1981 election campaign owed a lot in a variety of small ways to developments in the business world, as well as to the arguments of Chirac's most committed supporters. Gérard Leban, recounting the influence of the AOP sections in the drafting of *Libres et Responsables*, no doubt spoke for many when he implied that business had a more or less natural right to determine key aspects of the party programme;

The more important they (the sections) become, the more we realize that it's in the world of work and the professions that a country's politics are decided at the end of the day. They are the life of the country.¹²⁶

While those rank and file deputies who felt they lacked insight into business problems did their best to remedy their deficiencies, the party leaders had no hesitation in bringing business leaders directly into the work of drafting party programmes. We have already seen the contribution made by the AOP's banking section under Pierre Habib Deloncle, who, as a director of the *Banque Indosuez* had a direct interest in the party's policy on privatization. A colleague to whom he and the RPR turned during the nationalization-privatization episode was Jean-Maxime Lévêque.¹²⁷ This banker and former civil servant already regarded himself as a liberal and a monetarist in the 1960s¹²⁸ and was aggressive in defending the private sector from the threat of government interference. He campaigned publicly against the left before the general elections of 1974 and 1978, and even more vigorously in 1981, when his bank, which had narrowly

escaped nationalization in 1945, was at the top of the Socialists' list. From 1976-81 he was a member of the CNPF's economic policy committee, and from 1981 onwards a member of the *conseil d'orientation* of the *Institut de l'Entreprise*, one of the CNPF's research institutes responsible, as we saw above, for popularizing quality circles and flexible working conditions.

Despite his earlier association with de Gaulle, from which he retained "a few links" with the RPR, Lévêque was not a strong supporter of the party, nor of its leader, blaming Chirac's rivalry with Giscard for the victory of the left in 1981. In general he was sceptical about the ability of the RPR and the UDF to defend the ideas he believed in;

I knew only too well their links with the civil service elite, which had drawn them into pursuing the indefinite extension of the state's activities.... These parties had become electoral machines serving the ambition of their leaders and the interests of their entourages. They had abandoned the battle of ideas and little by little reduced their conception of politics to a vague system for managing a society which had become more or less socialist.¹²⁹

Despite this lukewarm attitude towards the right-wing parties he nevertheless threw in his lot with them in the face of their common enemy, and in 1981 joined in the battle of amendments to the Socialists' legislation, most of which, he claimed, were worked out in the CCF offices.¹³⁰ When the battle was lost he left CCF and with some friends set up a new bank outside France,¹³¹ but was persuaded "by thousands of letters" to remain on the political stage, as leader of the *Union pour l'Initiative et la Responsabilité*, which he founded in May 1982, and which was to play a modest role, through its meetings and symposia, in elaborating and popularizing the "popular capitalist" approach to privatization which Balladur put into practice in 1986.¹³² At the same time he continued to contribute indirectly to the RPR's programme-

formation through his participation in meetings and discussions organized by the AOP banking section,¹³³ but much more directly as a member of one of the groups formed by Edouard Balladur and Jacques Friedman which worked out the details of the proposed privatization and tax-cutting legislation during 1985.¹³⁴

The party's willingness to seek advice and help from outside their own ranks in drawing up the programme on which they hoped to return to government was even more pronounced when the time came to negotiate a common programme with the UDF. This was done during a series of meetings at which the participants were not only members of the two parties but also figures from the business world who had no party affiliation. The RPR side was led officially by Alain Juppé, who liaised with Balladur's groups as well as running a small team of his own.¹³⁵ The committee chiefly concerned with the future government's economic programme, however, was formed by André Giraud of the UDF and Jacques Plassard, a member of no party and long-time director of the CNPF's in-house economic forecasting unit, REXECO, (*Recherches pour l'Expansion de l'Economie*). Consisting of about ten people, including the RPR's Philippe Auberger, the group "worked throughout 1985", to produce the blue-print of the economic aspects of the 1986 joint platform of government.¹³⁶

A comparison of the various texts reveals that during 1984-6 there was a developing symmetry between the ideas of the employers, the RPR programme and the final joint programme of government. In 1984, the party's proposals for the workplace included decentralization, quality circles, profit-sharing, and the linking of wages to performance of the firm, but the programme promised only to "re-examine" the social and fiscal thresholds which were alleged to hold back firms' growth, and to

"make more flexible" the regulations covering hiring and firing, and it was vague about tax cuts. ¹³⁷

In 1985, administrative control of redundancies was judged to be no longer needed, and the thresholds were to be set aside for a period of five years, ¹³⁸ while the programme gave clear support to the employers' preference for part-time and temporary work, for variable wage-levels within the firm, and for local bargaining which would set aside national agreements. ¹³⁹ The 1986 joint programme of government contained all this plus 20 billion francs of tax-cuts for business and a proposal for "enterprise zones", the relaxation of a wide range of existing regulations on working conditions within depressed regions. ¹⁴⁰

Plassard, described in a 1977 study of the employers' movement as their "number one economist" ¹⁴¹ earned a respectable income for his bosses by selling his unit's sectoral and regional economic studies to the biggest firms in the country, including the national Railway and Electricity boards ¹⁴² In 1975 he was said to produce "reports on the economic conjuncture which are often remarkable but which are read, in spite of that, by few people." ¹⁴³ A decade later, thanks to the RPR and the UDF, he was given a larger field than usual over which to exercise his talents.

We may summarize as follows the impact on the RPR of the employers' conversion to liberalism. The French employers' movement before and for twenty years after the Second World War had the reputation of being industrially lethargic and politically reactionary. A traditional division of labour between different organizations left the CNPF and its industrial and commercial affiliates with responsibility for bread and butter issues

while a number of progressive ginger-groups fought a running battle against the official movement's political and social conservatism. Neither wing of the movement was renowned for its attachment to liberal economic doctrine.

This situation changed after 1981, when the gap between the CNPF and the *avant-garde* narrowed and nearly all sections of the movement pressed for a reduction of state intervention in the economy, decentralization of collective bargaining, and flexible working conditions agreed at plant level.

During the Fifth Republic organized interests have not often sought to influence political parties directly, but in the early 1980s, *Entreprise et Progrès* campaigned to increase employers' influence in society generally. They organized a series of work experience sessions for individual deputies which some RPR deputies found useful, although more Socialist deputies took part in this scheme than those of any other party.

The RPR's published programmes nevertheless show that the party adopted all the employers' demands on tax-cuts and deregulation of the labour market. This is best explained not by business lobbying but by the party leadership's willingness to turn to business leaders for advice and in some cases to bring them directly into the process of programme-writing.

Technocrats

An intriguing question raised by the RPR's turn to liberalism is how the party could bring itself to attack the civil service and the state which traditionally provided both its institutional avenue to power and the moral and intellectual justification for the way that power was used. Older party leaders like Chirac, Boyon and Peyrefitte had all begun their

political careers as civil servants seconded to the *cabinets* of powerful ministers. Chirac's closest confidants among his own generation were fellow graduates of the *Ecole Nationale de l'Administration* such as Monod and Friedmann who later dropped active politics in favour of business. Key members of his band of young loyalists, like Juppé, Toubon and Perben were trained at ENA, as were their rivals for influence within the party like Blot, Séguin and Mancel. Of these, only Blot, as we have seen, openly questioned the value of his training. How was the party convinced that it was wise for the elite to abandon their stewardship of the nation's affairs?

There are a number of *a priori* reasons why we might expect the influence of graduates of the elite civil service schools to diminish within the RPR after 1981. The number of the party's deputies was more than halved in that year, so there was not much scope for the infusion of new blood. Chirac chose to find berths for some of the defeated deputies in party headquarters, as we saw in chapter 4, so there were correspondingly fewer openings for ambitious ENA or Polytechnic graduates just starting their careers. Above all, in the years after 1981, the classes of newly qualified technocrats seeking openings in public life had a choice only of Socialist or Communist ministerial cabinets in which to apply their training and to seek powerful sponsors of their future careers. If they were RPR or UDF sympathizers they could take ordinary posts in the civil service involving little political discretion. Alternatively, they could seek out the rare bastions of local power in which RPR notables could give them jobs commensurate with their abilities.

The Paris town hall, as we saw in chapter 4, was far and away the most important source of such jobs. Frémontier, in his study of the rising

generation of 40-year-old rightwingers, unearthed the examples of Bruno Bourg-Broc, whose career took in a spell in charge of the RPR cadre-school, Patrice Martin-Lalande, whose first job was as *directeur de cabinet* for the president of the *Centre* regional council, and of Dominique Perben, who was for a while *directeur administratif* of the *Rhône-Alpes* region.¹⁴⁴ But of these, only Perben was an "enarque", indicating that such jobs were usually unattractive to graduates of the elite schools. Revealingly, Perben had himself transferred to the region because it made a better base than Paris from which to campaign for his successful election as mayor of Chalon-sur-Saône in 1983, a project which was itself largely inspired by his dissatisfaction with working for Socialist bosses at the ministry of the Interior.¹⁴⁵

In general, however, it is too early yet to say whether the loss of power by the parties of the Right will have long term effects on their traditional patterns of elite recruitment. Frémontier discovered seven graduates of ENA or the *Ecole Polytechnique* among the 33 RPR members of the young guard. Of these, Toubon, Juppé and Séguin had already served conventional apprenticeships in ministerial cabinets during the 1970s, Jean-Louis Masson, an engineer, was already a deputy in 1978, Jacques Vernier, his colleague in the *Corps des Mines*, was director of the Artois-Picardy water authority before being elected mayor of Douai in 1983, the sixth was a professional diplomat.¹⁴⁶ Perben was the only one of the seven who felt obliged to make a radical change of direction in response to the blocking of the usual career path.

Whatever may have been the career choices of the RPR graduates of 1981-86, clearly they were too young to affect the new party policy being worked out by their elders. People like Toubon and Juppé were comfortably

installed in key party positions, with colleagues like Séguin waiting to challenge them, and the example of Perben showed that, for those ambitious enough, other means of rising within the party were available. In terms of generational renewal, therefore, one could not expect much impact on policy to result from the changes set in train by the Socialists' victories. On the contrary, there was evidence that the *enarques* who controlled the RPR had not relaxed their caste's grip on the levers of economic power, and had no intention of doing so. This was illustrated by the execution of the privatization programme master-minded by Edouard Balladur.

Despite the party's widely publicized attacks on state interference in the economy, their avowed faith in the laws of the market, and their promise to create a kind of "popular capitalism" by encouraging widespread share-ownership, the massive and extremely rapid¹⁴⁷ sell-off of state assets carried out in 1986 and 1987 achieved none of these things. After taking account of multiple applications from the same family, and the rush to take profits by selling as soon as the shares were quoted on the stock exchange, share-ownership was little more widespread in the French population at the end of 1987 than it had been in 1981.¹⁴⁸

The sales were accomplished under conditions which hardly reflected faith in market forces. The government insisted that the new owners of each firm should include a "stable core" of shareowners pledged not to sell their holdings, and to work together to block attempted takeovers. The constitution of these "stable cores" was to be decided administratively rather than by sale of appropriate blocks of shares to the highest bidders.¹⁴⁹ Furthermore, the government left on the statute book laws which made administrative authorization necessary before any

non-EEC company could acquire more than 20% of any French firm, and which protected armaments and financial companies against takeovers by any firm, foreign or French.¹⁵⁰

The most telling criticism of the privatizations, however, was that the manner in which they were organized in no way broke with the existing pattern of state domination of French economic affairs. No-one has summed up better than Balladur himself the extraordinary concentration of powers granted to the finance minister and his close colleagues. It was the Minister who decided in what order companies should be brought to the market, he who chose the members of the *Commission de la Privatization*¹⁵¹ and the merchant bankers who would advise the government, he who fixed the sale price of each company, who decided on the composition of the stable cores, who fixed the percentage of shares to be made available in each case to the core, the public and the firm's workers, and he who made the final allocation when the subscription was closed. "So many pointless discussions were avoided - and so much time was saved!", exuded Balladur, thanks to such a concentration of decision-making in one person.¹⁵²

The new minister's previous career, discreet to the point of obscurity, bore the mark of the faceless technocrat rather than of the RPR's vaunted new openness to the grass roots. A member of Pompidou's *cabinet* from 1966-68, he was, with Chirac, one of the small group closest to the prime minister during the trials of May '68. Later, as assistant to Michel Jobert, Pompidou's *secrétaire général* at the Elysée palace, he was said to have drifted away from Chirac, who was under the influence of Jobert's rivals, Juillet and Garaud. When Chirac became prime minister in 1974, Balladur went to work in industry.¹⁵³ Their reconciliation began only when Juillet and Garaud had left Chirac's staff and was sufficiently

complete during 1980 for Chirac to ask Balladur to take a leading role in his 1981 campaign. Balladur refused and advised him not to stand.¹⁵⁴

During the next five years Balladur continued to work in the private sector, seeing Chirac only on a personal basis, but usually once or twice a week by 1985. He guided Chirac towards acceptance of the idea of *cohabitation* with Mitterrand in the event of an opposition victory in 1986, and played a key unofficial role in developing the policies the party hoped to put into effect on its return to power. It was in his rooms in the *rue Dumont d'Urville* that a small group of colleagues spent 1985 drafting the privatization law, the list of firms to be privatized, the tax and budget cuts to be implemented during the next two years, and proposed amendments to the labour law.¹⁵⁵

Since he had no official party position and no contacts with the world of politics, Balladur's role was hidden from the public, and his name absent even from the various contemporary journalistic portraits of the leading lights of the RPR.¹⁵⁶ Admitting a preference for working alone, and a distaste of long meetings,¹⁵⁷ he had no contact with the *Club de l'Horloge*, and "never set foot" in the meeting rooms of the RPR's own *Club'89*, according to its president, Michel Aurillac.¹⁵⁸ Only his surprise appointment as Minister of State for Finances, the Economy and Privatization in March 1986 revealed publicly for the first time the reliance which the RPR leader placed on him.

Balladur's sudden emergence from obscurity, his lack of political credentials, and the extraordinary concentration of his powers, themselves evoked the archetypal Gaullist technocrat. But it was his allocation of parcels of former state assets to the selected stable cores of the newly privatized companies, together with the choice of the new managing

directors, which did most to fuel accusations that he wanted to establish and artificially prolong the control of a narrow caste of ENA-trained ex-civil servants, many of them friends of the RPR, over the commanding heights of the economy, even after these had been returned to the private sector.¹⁵⁹ Far from exposing the French economy to a vigorous shake-up at the hands of experienced private-sector managers, the new appointments amounted, according to one critic, to the restoration of a "traditional system of establishment solidarities, structured around an all-powerful finance minister."¹⁶⁰ The new presidents of Paribas and the Havas group were close friends of Jacques Chirac,¹⁶¹ as were Jérôme Monod and François Heilbronner, the bosses of *Lyonnaise des Eaux* and the still publicly-owned GAN (*Groupe des Assurances Nationales*). It so happened that *Lyonnaise des Eaux* and Paribas became part of the stable core of Havas, while the GAN in turn was part of the stable cores of Paribas and the *Société Générale*, and the same interlocking pattern extended to the other newly privatized giants including the *Compagnie Générale de l'Electricité* and the *Credit Commercial de France*. Furthermore, Heilbronner and de la Genière, the new head of the *Compagnie Financière Suez*, were both active members of the group which had helped Balladur draw up the whole scheme.¹⁶² *Le Monde* described it as

a gigantic self-controlling mechanism covering the whole nation, made up of a series of dual, triangular or cascading interlocking investments.¹⁶³

Even some members of the UDF felt impelled to protest against the creation of a new "RPR state-within-the-state."¹⁶⁴

All this is revealing of the RPR leaders' reluctance to emancipate the French economy from the protective embrace of the civil service, and

of their desire to reward friends who might later be in a position to donate suitable sums to party funds. But it does not fully explain why Balladur and his fellow technocrats opted for privatization. After all, if the continued rule of the technocracy was what counted, it was simple enough to replace all the heads of the nationalized firms with party supporters after each election, as had been the tradition up to date, and there would have been no need to privatize at all.

The party went further than that and the technocrats made no objections. This was because, rather than constituting an obstacle to the execution of the new policies, the technocrats had themselves helped to draw them up. They had formed a *de facto* alliance with sections of big business to put forward a kind of "technocratic liberalism" which satisfied the ideas and interests of both. The RPR leaders' decision to privatize depended on more than their penchant for empire-building, and should be seen as linked to a genuine attempt to reassess - albeit through a frame of reference warped by their technocratic past and their political friendships - the challenges facing the national economy of which they aspired to be the guardians. We make our own survey of these changes in chapter 10.

Conclusions

Although political scientists have sometimes applied the term "collective capitalist" to the actions of Gaullist-dominated governments, there has been no serious study of the relationship between the Gaullist party and interest groups.

Our research shows that, during the 1980s, the RPR paid less attention to the interests of small shopkeepers and artisans than they had

done in the past. The party actively sought the views of both professional groups and organized business when drawing up its programmes in 1984 and 1985. The professions had some impact on programme content, but this was mitigated by their own lack of homogeneity. Some key business demands, on the other hand, were directly incorporated into RPR policy, partly because business presented a united public case for tax-cuts and deregulation, and partly because the party invited individual representatives of big business to take part in drafting their programmes. They shared this work - completely outside any party framework - with a group of technocrats who acted as advisers to the party president. The technocrats' influence superficially seemed to negate in practice some of the liberal principles which they and the party espoused. We shall argue in the next chapter, however, that, although they tried to keep power in their own hands, the technocrats intended to use it in a direction broadly consistent with big business interests.

Notes to Chapter 9

1. Henri Claude, *Gaullisme et Grand Capital*, Paris, Editions Sociales, 1960
2. Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* Moscow, Progress Publishers 1977
3. *Organisation Armée Secrète*, a terrorist group composed of disaffected soldiers and *pieds noirs* who resisted Algerian independence and tried several times to assassinate de Gaulle
4. "Le Gaullisme", Unsigned article in *Lutte de Classe* new series no 3, April 1967 pp 6-14
5. Philip G. Cerny, "Gaullism, Advanced Capitalism and the Fifth Republic", in David S. Bell (ed) "Contemporary French Political Parties", London, Croom Helm 1982, pp 24-51 (p 32)
6. Under the Gaullists, the state retained the leading role, but if the Giscardians were to replace them as the dominant party on the Right, this leadership position would be reclaimed by a sociologically-defined elite which Birnbaum labelled the "establishment", Pierre Birnbaum, "The State in Contemporary France", in Richard Scase (ed), *The State in Western Europe*, London, Croom Helm 1980 pp 94-114 (p 102)
7. Bob Jessop, *Nicos Poulantzas, Marxist Theory and Political Strategy*, London, Macmillan 1985, pp 60-67
8. Cerny, *loc cit*, p 32
9. *ibidem*, p 39
10. Pierre Birnbaum, *loc cit* pp 101-2
11. Cerny, *loc cit*, pp 40-48
12. Patrick Guiol and Eric Neveu, "Sociologie des Adhérents Gaullistes", in *Pouvoirs* no 28 1984 pp 91-106
13. Colette Ysmal, "Un Colosse aux Pieds d'Argile, le RPR" in *Les Temps Modernes*, April 1985, no 41/465, pp 1872-1892
14. Suzanne Berger "Regime and Interest Representation, The French traditional middle classes", in Suzanne Berger, (ed) *Organizing Interests in Western Europe*, Cambridge, CUP, 1981
15. *ibidem*, p 96
16. "For the first time in the history of the French Republic authority to limit entry into trade was delegated to a corporatist body." (*ibidem*, p 95)
17. *ibidem* p 97
18. Interview with Jean-François Mancel, 20-4-89
19. *ibidem*, "Dans l'ensemble, c'étaient des gens qui se sentaient extrêmement proches de nous pour la plupart d'entre eux, parce que Chirac incarnait, je crois, parfaitement

bien pour eux, l'idéal auquel ils étaient attachés, de liberté, mais aussi de prise en considération des problèmes des petits, finalement, par rapport aux grands groupes commerciaux et industriels."

20. *Atout France*, Paris, Roudil, 1980

21. *ibidem*, pp 140-144

22. *ibidem*, pp 145-158

23. Interview with Jean-François Mancel, 20-4-89, *"A l'époque c'était quand même pas trop difficile, dans la mesure où le libéralisme qu'on développe aujourd'hui n'était pas au point où on le connaît actuellement, ce qui veut dire que l'aspect protectionniste au profit de ces catégories-là était quand même relativement fort dans l'attitude politique que nous avions, ce qui veut dire qu'on avait incontestablement une présence et des racines très fortes dans toutes ces catégories-là,"*

24. "...because it was an important group of voters for the RPR, and therefore most of the Parliamentarians were very sensitive to the shopkeepers' and artisans' concerns, and I think that was part of their basic outlook." (Interview with Jean-François Mancel, 20-4-89, *"... parce que c'était un électorat important du RPR, et à partir de là, la plupart des parlementaires étaient très sensibles aux préoccupations des commerçants et artisans, et je crois que ça faisait parti aussi de leur état d'esprit,"*)

25. Interview with Jean-François Mancel, 20-4-89

26. Suzanne Berger, "The Socialists and the Patronat; Dilemmas of Co-existence in a Mixed Economy," unpublished paper, 1984 p 9

27. *ibidem* pp 11-12

28. "....then their language changed completely.... for immediately they started to tell me, 'Ah yes, but, you see, in our case, this regulation ought to be amended so as to take account of such and such a development, this aspect of the profession seems to us to demand new legislation, a decree would be very useful here on this special point,' and they became extraordinarily dirigist." (Interview with Jean-François Mancel, 20-4-89, *"alors là le discours changeait complètement, ... car immédiatement ils me disaient, 'ah oui, mais alors, chez nous, vous comprenez, il y a tel règlement qui devrait être modifié pour pouvoir prendre en considération telle et telle évolution, il y a un texte de loi qui nous paraît indispensable pour pouvoir réglementer cet aspect de la profession, il y a un décret qu'il faut prendre ici pour régler tel problème," et ils devenaient extraordinairement dirigiste,"*

29. *Libres et Responsables, RPR - Projet pour la France*, Flammarion 1984 p 76

30. *Le Renouveau, Facts RPR pour la France*, p 47, *"de nombreux exemples étrangères indiquent au contraire que les petites et moyennes entreprises sont à la base d'économies compétitives et dynamiques. Il y a donc là un atout important qu'il faut jouer. Tout notre projet d'allègement des charges et de simplification des procédures tend vers cet objectif,"*

31. *ibidem* p 47

32. Interview with Jean-François Mancel, 20-4-89, "*Plus Jacques Chirac a développé des thèses de véritable libéralisme, plus ces gens-là ont commencé à s'apercevoir qu'en définitive ce n'était peut-être pas ce à quoi ils tenaient le plus*"
33. *ibidem*, See also Martin Kolinsky, "Agriculture, Problems of Modernization", in Michalina Vaughan, Martin Kolinsky and Peta Sheriff (eds) *Social Change in France*, Martin Robertson, Oxford 1980, pp 140-167
34. Interview with Jean-François Mancel, 20-4-89, "*Je dirais qu'il l'a surtout complètement changé en '88, ce discours, et que ces gens-là ont été incontestablement tenté par le Front National, C'est sans doute d'ailleurs une des raisons qui font qu'on a assez nettement perdu les élections présidentielles de '88, c'est que nous avons perdu au profit du Front National une bonne partie de cet électorat, disons "traditionnel" finalement, de commerçants, d'artisans, d'un certain nombre d'agriculteurs, de professions, qui ont eu le sentiment que le programme beaucoup plus moderne, finalement, du RPR, les oubliat,*"
35. Interview with Jacques Boyon, 27-4-89
36. Chirac and Barre both won 23% of the votes of shopkeepers and artisans in 1988, against 31% for le Pen, Only 15% of this group voted for Mitterrand, See Peter Fysh, "Defeat and Reconstruction; the RPR in 1988," in *Modern and Contemporary France*, no 35, October 1988 pp 15-25
37. *Le Monde*, *Dossiers et Documents* special issue, *Les Elections Législatives du 16 mars 1986, Le Retour de la Droite*, pp 48-51
38. *Le Renouveau* 1985 p 47.
39. Frank L. Wilson, *Interest Group Politics in France* cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987, pp 117-119
40. *ibidem*, p 117; Interview with Jacques Boyon, 27-4-89,
41. Wilson *op cit*, p 118
42. Although from October 1979 until October 1981 Jacques Boyon was listed officially as *chargé de mission* for the *professions libérales* at party HQ, (*Figaro* 5-10-79, *Le Monde* 6-10-81), Leban's involvement - through the *Action Ouvrière et Professionnelle* - was the greater, Interviews with both of them (Leban 26-4-89; Boyon, 27-4-89) revealed that Leban had vivid recollections of organizational work, and Boyon none at all,
43. When I interviewed him in 1989 he was *adjoint au maire de Paris, chargé de l'artisanat et de l'industrie*,
44. *Le Monde* 17-6-87
45. Interview with Gérard Leban 26-4-89
46. Bernard Debré, president of *Solidarité Médicale* and son of Michel Debré the former prime minister, who in turn became a Gaullist deputy in 1986, "Le Choc de Deux Philosophies", in *Contrepoint* no 47 pp 99-102 (p99)
47. *ibidem*, p102

48. *Libres et Responsables, RPR - Projet pour la France* Paris, Flammarion 1984 p 95
49. Interview with Gérard Leban, 26-4-89; "...qui faisaient que les chefs de service n'étaient plus les vrais patrons,..... ne convenaient pas du tout à nos idées libérales,..."
50. "Très engagés à nos côtés,...." Interview with Gérard Leban, 26-4-89, The professors involved included profs Ourbak, head of cardiology at the Broussais hospital, Frézal, Pruc, and Cabrol. It is interesting to compare this unconditional defence of the authority conferred by the "expertise" of the medical professors with the prevailing "liberal" attitudes to teachers in schools. As we saw in chapter 8, writers like Sorman and Michel Noir considered it essential to dilute the teachers' authority, countering it with the influence of parents and local councillors,
51. B. Debré, *loc cit*, p 101-102
52. The phrase was used by Leban during my conversation with him, 26-4-89
53. *ibidem*, "...c'est vrai que c'est des professions et des entreprises que sont venus un grand nombre d'idées et un grand nombre d'innovations dans notre,....je dirais notre schéma, aussi bien politique qu'économique,"
54. *ibidem*, "Nos amis étaient aux côtés de Michel Noir, qui était à ce moment-là le député qui défendait à l'Assemblée ces problèmes-là; et les gens passaient des jours et des nuits à préparer les éléments, les textes pour nos parlementaires qui intervenaient, Ils étaient à l'Assemblée à leurs côtés, et ils ont beaucoup contribué à tous les amendements que nous avons proposés,..."
55. *ibidem*
56. Henry Ehrmann, *Organized Business in France*, Princeton, Princeton University Press 1957. See the list on page 21 and the charts on pp 496-7
57. Bernard Brizay, *Le Patronat*, Paris, Seuil, 1975, p 75
58. Henri Weber, *Le Parti des Patrons, le CNPF 1946-1986*, Paris, Seuil, 1986 pp 75 and 108-9,
59. Their performances vary quite markedly. The iron and steel industry federation has generally been seen as a notorious cartel feather-bedded by successive governments. On the other hand, the textile industry did little to gain government assistance even at a time of acute crisis, and the trade association representing the food industry had such minimal presence that the ministry of finance apparently forgot their branch of the economy when dividing up a billion francs of industrial development loans in 1965, (Wilson, *op cit* p 97)
60. *ibidem*, 96
61. *ibidem*, p98
62. In the mid 1970s, all of organized business employed over 6,000 full time workers, but only 210 worked directly for the CNPF. Its budget was 25 million francs out of a total 500 million for all employers' organizations, (*ibidem*, p 145)

63. Ehrmann, *op cit* p 188
64. Weber, *op cit* pp 259-284; Alain Peyrefitte, *Le Mal Français*, Paris, Plon 1976, pp 202-208 and p 369
65. Weber, *op cit*, pp 112-121, Ehrmann mentions three or four smaller organizations with similar ideas active during the 1940s and 1950s, (Ehrmann *op cit*, pp 188-207), Others came into existence during the 1970s, notably ETHIC, *Entreprises à Taille Humaine Industrielles et Commerciales*, founded in 1976 by Yvon Gattaz, future president of the CNPF,
66. Weber, *op cit*, pp 121-123; see also Ehrmann, *op cit*, pp 195-197
67. Weber, *op cit*, pp 173-179
68. *ibidem* p 177
69. Jean-Claude Guibal, *délégué-général* of the group, *Intervention à l'assemblée générale du 6 décembre 1983*, pp 11 and 13 (duplicated text) Cited in Weber, *op cit*, p 384, "...affirmer une identité collective,... s'ériger en catégorie sociale consciente de ses responsabilités et qui, par sa cohésion, sa permanence, sa confiance en soi, exerce une influence sur l'ensemble du corps social."
70. Weber, *op cit*, p 178, Leaving the small firms to the CGPME and the biggest to AGREF, the group recruited among the "big medium sized" ones, particularly those involved in mass-produced consumer goods such as L'Oréal, Singer, André (shoes) and Colgate-Palmolive,
71. Richard F. Kuisel, *Capitalism and the State in Modern France, Renovation and economic management in the twentieth century*, Cambridge, CUP, 1983
72. George Ross, "Gaullism and Organized Labour; Two Decades of Failure?", in Andrews and Hoffman (eds) *The Fifth Republic at Twenty*, State University of New York Press, Albany 1981, pp 330-347; Martin Schain, "Corporatism and Industrial Relations in France", in P. Cerny and M. Schain (eds) *French Politics and Public Policy*, London, Pinter 1980 pp 191-217; Suzanne Berger, *loc cit*, "The Socialists and the Patronat...", p 5
73. Jean Bunel et Jean Saglio, *L'Action Patronale*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1979, p 88. On the dependence of giant firms on state orders and state industrial policy, see Elie Cohen and Michel Bauer, *Les Grandes Manoeuvres Industrielles*, Paris, Belfond 1985, On the mingling of the business and administrative elites, see Ezra Suleiman, *Elites in French Society*, Princeton; Princeton University Press, 1978; Anne Stevens, "The Higher Civil Service and Economic Policy-Making", in P. Cerny and M. Schain (eds), *French Politics and Public Policy*, London, Pinter 1980, pp 79-100
74. Weber, *op cit*, pp 36-39
75. The state, it was alleged, "submerged by the proliferation of its own interventions, no longer has the means of fulfilling its real tasks as it should (which are)... to illuminate and facilitate economic and social choices, without trying to predict and orient everything. It should neither concern itself with the management of private firms, nor subject them to artificial competition from public or para-public enterprises." (*Charte Libérale*, article 11, Cited by Weber, *op cit* p 148, "La France,... n'a pas su limiter les empiètements progressifs de l'Etat qui, submergé par la prolifération de ses propres interventions, n'a plus les moyens d'assurer

convenablement les tâches qui lui incombent,.... veiller au maintien d'une saine concurrence, éclairer et faciliter les choix économiques et sociaux, sans pour autant prétendre tout prévoir et tout orienter. Il n'a ni à s'immiscer dans la gestion des entreprises privées, ni à leur opposer d'artificielles concurrences par le biais d'entreprises publiques et parapubliques.")

76. Weber, *op cit*, pp 148-51

77. *ibidem*, pp 194-201

78. *ibidem*, pp 305-321

79. Jack Dion and Pierre Ivorra, *Sur la Piste des Patrons*, Paris, Messidor/Editions Sociales, 1987 p 112.

80. Technically a leader in its field - the manufacture of coaxial connectors - it exported 40% of its output, multiplied its turnover eight times over during the "crisis" decade of the 1970s, and recorded profit rates of around 10% annually, which put it among the front rank of successful French businesses. (Weber, *op cit*, p 314)

81. *ibidem*, p 318-322; Putting into practice their ideas about the proper human scale (*taille humaine*) of factories, the Gattaz brothers deliberately sited their own firm on five different sites in the Grenoble region, each one employing about 200 workers. (André Harris and Alain de Sédouy, *Les Patrons*, Paris, Seuil, 1977, pp 206-7)

82. His propulsion to the leadership, it has been suggested, was not a panicky reaction to the Socialists' victory, but should be interpreted as the pragmatic selection of the ideal figure to mediate between the employers and the new government. A man of modest social origins, not implicated in the coming battle of the nationalizations, and politically neutral - with no personal affinities with the previous regime and no heavy involvement in previous battles against the left, was "a man not susceptible to any of the Left's usual criticisms." (Weber, *op cit*, pp 308-9)

83. When the Socialists appeared to abandon their hopes that the nationalized sector would be the motor of new growth and provider of new jobs, and turned to an emphasis on the value of the "enterprise" for the whole society, (Berger, *loc cit*, "The Socialists,...", p 7) this could only serve to increase the self-confidence of Gattaz and his colleagues.

84. Weber, *op cit*, p 341

85. *Le Monde* 12-1-84; Corporatist practices thus did survive the Socialists' arrival in power, despite what Berger has described as their generally anti-corporatist stance. (Berger, *loc cit*, p 27)

86. In French, the minimum wage is known as the SMIC - *Salaire Minimum Interprofessionnelle Croissant* (the "expanding multi-industry minimum wage".) Gattaz dubbed it the *Salaire Maximum d'Inflation et de Crise*. (Speech to the *Forum de l'Expansion*, 18-10-83, Cited in Weber, *op cit*, p 342)

87. *Le Monde* 18-12-85

88. Weber, *op cit*, p 352

89. *Le Monde* 24-5-84

90. Weber, *op cit*, p 399
91. *Libres et Responsables, RPR - Project pour la France, Paris, Flammarion 1984 p 75; Le Renouveau, Pacte RPR pour la France, 1985 pp 36-42, esp p 37*
92. Bernard H. Moss, "After the Auroux Laws; Employers, Industrial Relations and the Right in France", in *West European Politics*, January 1988 pp 68-80 (p 73)
93. Weber, *op cit*, pp 348-9, 386 and 390
94. For this reason I find it hard to accept Berger's suggestion that the Auroux laws provided the shock which turned the French employers towards liberalism, "consolidating a new global vision of what is wrong in the relations between state and economy in France". See Berger *loc cit*, p 20
95. Weber, *op cit*, p 123
96. Jack Dion and Pierre Ivorra, *Sur la Piste des Patrons*, Messidor/Editions Sociales, 1987, p 118
97. Roger Priouret, *La France et le Management*, Paris, Hommes et Techniques et Editions Denoël, 1968, p 115
98. "Des innovations telles que l'horaire souple ou l'expression directe des salariés ont été inspirée par ses propositions," Opening statement of an (undated) manifesto supplied by *Entreprise et Progrès*.
99. Weber, *op cit*, pp 387-8
100. *ibidem*, pp 354-6
101. *ibidem*, pp 388-389
102. Jean-Claude Guibal, quoted in *ibidem*, pp 384-5; "Mai 1981 a mis en évidence que les membres d'Entreprise et Progrès sont attachés à l'économie de marché, n'aiment pas le dirigisme; bref, sont des libéraux et non des socialistes, même modérés, comme avait pu abusivement le laisser croire leur progressisme social et leurs diatribes contre le conservatisme du CNPF,
103. *ibidem*, p 391
104. *Entreprise et Progrès* Manifesto, p 6,
105. Weber, *op cit*, p 393
106. *ibidem*, p 392
107. Jean-François Mary, "Le Patronat a-t-il encore besoin du CNPF?", in *Revue Politique et Parlementaire* no 920 Nov-Dec 1985 pp 48-53 (p 51)
108. Wilson, *op cit*, p 99-100
109. Moss, *loc cit*, p 76. Moreover, despite the quasi-unanimity on issues close to the workplace, the peak organization itself was subject to outbreaks of discord. The

- defeated presidential candidate, Yvon Chotard, continued to press for corporatist-type collective bargaining - perhaps more out of personal pique than because he had a following in the movement. There were also differences on more global aspects of policy. The representatives of industries dependent on the home market, such as construction and distribution, wanted reflation, the president of the *Conseil's* economic committee preferred a boost for investment, while Alain Chevalier, of *Entreprise et Progrès*, favoured early devaluation of the franc. (Mary 1985 pp 52-3)
110. Wilson, *op cit* p 15. As the author admits, it is difficult to ascertain the representativity of his sample, but it included the major employers', farmers' and trade union bodies, as well as organizations representing lawyers, doctors and dentists, educational and environmental groups, savings and insurance associations, and groups representing parents, consumers, veterans etc. The research consisted of interviews with 99 representatives of 77 organizations in 1979, and a further 41 interviews in 1982 and 1984.
111. Ezra N. Suleiman, *Politics, Power and Bureaucracy in France; the Administrative Elite* Princeton, Princeton University Press 1974.
112. Wilson, *op cit*, p 150, table 5
113. *ibidem*, p 151, table 6.
114. *ibidem*, p 153, table 7. Frequency of use of a particular strategy is not always synonymous with perceived effectiveness; although participation in government committees was one of the most frequently adopted forms of action, it was also judged by those practising it to be one of the least effective. Interestingly, in judging the effectiveness of different strategies, business leaders cited contacts with civil servants in first place, while unions and farmers' organizations listed contact with ministers first.
115. *ibidem* p 150
116. Civil servants, it is alleged, had practically colonized the Socialist Party, defenders of church schools captured the catholic MRP, and farmers' interests had succeeded in electing 50 deputies, enough to form an effective lobby inside the Chamber. (Wilson, *op cit*, p 172) Meanwhile the main employers' organization drew opprobrium on itself by subsidising the campaigns of 160 deputies elected at the 1951 general election. (Ehrmann, *op cit*, p 227)
117. Wilson, *op cit*, p 172
118. Colette Ysmal, *Demain la Droite*, Paris, Grasset p 88
119. Wilson, *op cit*, p 87 and p 103
120. This was the case of Maurice Genoyer in the *Bouches du Rhône*. See Thierry Saussez, *Politique Séduction; Comment les Hommes Politiques Réussissent à nous plaire*, Paris, J-C Lattès, 1986 pp 169-172
121. Wilson, *op cit*, p 171
122. *ibidem*, p 102 and p 171

- 123, "Everyone had the word 'liberalism' on their lips. They wanted it; we spoke of it but didn't put it into practice," Interview with Etienne Pinte, 13-12-88, (*Tout le monde avait le mot 'libéralisme' à labouche, Les uns le souhaitaient, Les autres en parlaient, mais n'en faisaient pas.*)
- 124, *ibidem*, "Je me suis initié au monde de l'entreprise que je connaissais peu ou mal, et cela m'a permis d'avoir une autre vue, une autre approche, un autre regard de l'entreprise, Pour moi, si vous voulez, ça a été très fructueux, très enrichissant, parce que, ensuite, quand je suis venu à légiférer, à chaque fois, je me suis posé la question de savoir si la législation que nous mettions en place favorisait ou freinait le dynamisme économique et le dynamisme de l'entreprise
- 125, *Entreprise et Progrès* borrowed the idea from a similar scheme operated in the UK by the Industry and Parliament trust, (Interview with Dorothee Fournier of *Entreprise et Progrès*, 21-12-88.) See also *Le Courrier du Parlement*, 17-6-86 and *L'Expansion*, 11-9-87
- 126, Interview with Gérard Leban, 26-4-89, "Plus elles prennent de l'importance, plus on se rend compte que c'est dans le milieu de l'entreprise et de la profession que là se décide la politique d'un pays en fin de compte. C'est la vie du pays."
- 127, Like many top French businessmen, Lévêque had studied at the *Ecole Nationale de l'Administration* and begun his career as a member of the elite civil service corps, the (*Inspectorat des Finances*), serving, with Jacques Ruëff, as economics adviser to de Gaulle at the *Elysée* from 1960-64. He then made a successful career in the private sector, taking over the small and sleepy deposit bank, the *Crédit Commercial de France* (CCF) and multiplying the scale of its activities 20-fold by 1982, thanks to successful operations in the syndicated loans business, (Jean-Maxime Lévêque, *En Première Ligne*, Paris, Albin Michel 1986, p 142 and 156-7)
- 128, *ibidem*, pp 84-100
- 129, *ibidem*, p 200 "Je connaissais trop bien leurs liens avec la haute administration, qui les avaient conduits à organiser eux-mêmes l'extension indéfinie des activités de l'Etat, Ces partis étaient devenus des machines électorales au service de l'ambition d'un chef, et des intérêts d'une équipe, Ils avaient délaissé le combat des idées et réduit peu à peu leur conception de la politique à une vague méthode de gestion d'une société plus ou moins socialisée."
- 130, *ibidem*, p 179
- 131, *ibidem*, p 199
- 132, *ibidem*, pp 200-201
- 133, Interview with Gérard Leban, 26-4-90
- 134, Interview with Hervé Fabre d'Aubrespy, 24-4-89, Fabre d'Aubrespy, who was also involved in these groups, was appointed *directeur de cabinet* by Alain Juppé when the latter took over the general secretaryship of the RPR in 1988. See also Ballardur, *Passion et Longueur de Temps*, Paris, Fayard, 1989, p 39
- 135, Interview with Hervé Fabre d'Aubrespy, 24-4-89
- 136, *ibidem*

- 137, *Libres et Responsables* pp 75-77 and 84-85
- 138, *Le Renouveau* p 37
- 139, *Le Renouveau* pp 39-42
- 140, *Le Monde, Dossiers et Documents, special issue, Les Elections Législatives du 16 Mars 1986, Le Retour de la Droite*, p 49, RPR members' views of who won and who lost, if anybody, in the "negotiation" seem to depend on their view of what ought to be their own party's natural policy. Many follow Balladur in suggesting that the "balanced" approach of the RPR found the middle way between the different wings of the UDF, the ultra-liberal *Parti Républicain* and the social Christian CDS, (Balladur 1989 p 45) while those less enamoured of Balladur's liberalism claimed that the arbitration must have been in favour of the liberal group in the PR led by Alain Madelin, (Interview with André Fanton, 21-4-89)
- 141, Harris et de Sédouy, *op cit*, p 212,
- 142, Dion et Ivorra, *op cit*, p 123
- 143, Brizay, *op cit*, p 270, "Il produit des notes de conjoncture souvent remarquables mais dont l'audience reste malgré tout restreinte,"
- 144, Frémontier, *op cit, Les Cadets, . . .*, p 86
- 145, Desjardins, *op cit, Les Chiraquiens, . . .*, pp 254-5,
- 146, Frémontier, *op cit, Les Cadets, . . .*, p 67 and annexes,
- 147, It took Margaret Thatcher seven years to achieve as much as Balladur seemed likely to accomplish by the end of 1987; see Mairi Maclean, "The Future of Privatization in France; a Crisis of Confidence?", in *Modern and Contemporary France* no 31, October 1987, pp 1-9
- 148, Michel Bauer, "La Privatisation à la Française, ou le Triomphe de l'Etat Colbertiste", paper presented to a conference on The Politics of Privatization in Western Europe, *Maison Française*, Oxford, 13th and 14th November 1987, pp 27-29. A rather truncated version of this paper was later published as "The Politics of State-directed Privatization," in *West European Politics*, vol 11 no 4 October 1988
- 149, Bauer, *loc cit*, "La privatisation," p 18
- 150, *ibidem*, p 24
- 151, The role of the *Commission de la Privatisation* was to conduct a certain number of consultations and then fix a *minimum* price for the shares of each company on sale. The Minister made the final decision, (Edouard Balladur, *Je Crois en l'Homme plus qu'en l'Etat*, Paris, Flammarion, 1987, p 116
- 152, *ibidem*, p 96
- 153, Franz-Olivier Giesbert, *Jacques Chirac*, Paris, Seuil, 1987, p 161. Later still, with Balladur apparently frustrated by mundane work in the private sector, it was

- Pompidou's widow who urged Chirac to find a more demanding role for him, (*ibidem*, p 327)
154. *ibidem*, p 328-9; Ballardur, *op cit*, *Passion et Longueur*, p 30
155. According to Ballardur, this work was carried out in agreement with Juppé, who was officially in charge of negotiations with the UDF, (*ibidem*, pp 37-40)
156. For example, Thierry Desjardins, *Les Chiraquiens*, Paris, La Table Ronde 1986; Jacques Frémontier, *Les Cadets de la Droite*, Paris, Seuil 1984; Colette Ysmal, *Demain la Droite*, Grasset 1984
157. Ballardur, *op cit*, *Passion et Longueur ...*, p 38
158. Interview with Michel Aurillac, 9-2-89
159. The new head of Saint-Gobain was Jean-Louis Beffa, of the *Corps des Mines*; at the CGE (*Compagnie Générale de l'Electricité*) it was Pierre Suard, a former adviser to Michel Debré and member of the *Corps des Ponts*; the new president of the CCF (*Crédit Commercial de France*), Michel Pebereau, was an *Inspecteur des Finances*, as was Renaud de la Genière, a life-long technocrat and lately president of the bank of France, who took over the *Compagnie Financière Suez*, (Bauer *loc cit* pp 32-33)
160. *ibidem* p 34
161. *ibidem* p 32-33
162. Ballardur, *op cit*, *Passion et Longueur,.....* p 39
163. *Le Monde* 17-9-87
164. *Le Monde*, 24-9-87

Chapter 10 The World

In this chapter we account for the tempering of Gaullist technocrats' interventionist ambitions in the 1980s, in comparison with what they had been in the 1970s and especially the 1960s. It is shown that pervasive interventionism was the cause of certain diseconomies even in the 1960s, but that France was partially cushioned from their effects by participation in a world system in continuous expansion until 1974. A survey of changes in the world economy since the end of the 1960s implies that the retreat of the state was even more appropriate for the prosperity and expansion of French capitalism in 1980 than it would have been in 1960. As a result, the formerly interventionist alliance between technocrats and some sections of big business, which had solidified during the 1960s, had by the 1980s turned into a liberalizing coalition in which the technocrats' "rational" approach to securing French competitive advantage in the world system postulated the new freedoms which their key business partners were now demanding.

A technocrat tackling *a priori* the organization of national economic activity with a view to successful competition in the world market would start out by recognizing that there are three ways in which exchanges of values between nations can take place: through capital movements, through trade and through movements in exchange rates.¹ This chapter, in three parts, examines each of these in turn.

In each of these dimensions the Gaullists of the 1960s developed characteristically interventionist lines of policy. First, success in world trade was thought to depend on the creation of "national champions" in each

branch of industry, together with the selective allocation of credit to branches offering the best prospects in international competition. Secondly, the funding of French-only prestige or strategic projects aimed to protect key sectors of the economy from being bought up by American capital as a result of long-term capital movements. Finally, the general's attachment to fixed exchange rates linked to the gold standard reflected his understanding of the advantages accruing to any nation with a strong currency. Close government supervision of the financial sector therefore served the twin aims of controlling the value of the franc and guiding the allocation of credit to private economic actors.

In the rest of this chapter it is shown that, in the twenty years between the hey-day of Gaullism and the RPR's return to power in 1986, economic changes took place on a world scale which logically led - in some cases compelled - even the most hard-bitten technocrat to abandon much of the traditional Gaullist interventionism in favour of reliance on market forces. The 1960s were a period of booming production and trade, during which there was a large net flow of direct investment from the United States to France and the rest of Europe, while exchange rates were governed by the system of fixed parities established at Bretton Woods in 1944. By the 1980s, steady expansion was a thing of the past and the internationalization of production was reflected in tighter competition both in manufacturing and in the financial services industry. There had been massive changes in the structure of capital flows, and exchange rates were floating.

Long Term Capital Flows

At least one strand of Gaullist industrial policy, the development of *grands projets* linked to French prestige or strategic independence, had

always implicitly conflicted with a purely rational approach to the organization of the national economy, because of the way it ignored comparative advantage. The French-only projects made some political sense in the 1960s, however, at a time when there were fears about an American take-over of European industry.

During the early part of the post-war economic boom, up until the mid-1960s, technical superiority and economies of scale helped American firms to run up large dollar surpluses on visible trade, which they channelled into a flow of overseas direct investment facilitated by the then low price of labour and other goods in the rest of the world, including Europe. The pattern was soon established that American exports of capital exceeded in volume even the size of US trade surpluses, thanks to the position of the dollar as a major reserve currency.²

Even as late as 1968 the total of European financial assets held in the USA was nevertheless greater than the total of American investments in Europe - some \$26 billion against \$24.7 billion. But 3/4 of European holdings in the USA consisted of indirect investments, implying no control over American industry, while US firms preferred to hold directly the totality or a large majority of the shares in their European subsidiaries. Four fifths of all US investment in Europe was in the form of direct investment at the end of the 1960s. In Germany, 79% of US-owned subsidiaries were controlled 95% or more by the parent. In France, of 272 American subsidiaries, 117 were owned 99% or more by the parent, while only 28 had 40% or less of their capital in American hands.³

In France, where a 20% shareholding is officially regarded as sufficient to secure effective control of a public company, the American invasion prompted fears about foreign control of strategic sectors, and

foreigners' ability to transfer or repatriate advanced technology to or from France at will. The government responded with administrative controls on inward investment and with subsidized programmes of research and development in fields such as computers, energy, weapons, and space exploration among others. In 1959, the creation of subsidiaries by foreign companies, and foreign holdings of 20% or more in any firm were made subject to administrative approval. As a result, the aerospace and armaments industries were kept entirely French during the 1960s. Americans continued to buy up subsidiaries in other EEC countries, however, and were able to penetrate the French market thanks to the progressive abolition of tariffs. As early as 1967, the French controls on direct investment were relaxed.⁴

Shortly afterwards, the sheer cost of some of the French-only projects favoured by de Gaulle, and their disproportionate demands on resources needed for other economic activities, convinced his successor as President, Georges Pompidou, of the inevitability of partnership with American or European capital. In computers, he sanctioned the marriage between Honeywell and the French *Machines Bull*, after massive spending on development of new products which ultimately proved inappropriate for the market.⁵ The Anglo-French Concorde project was succeeded by Airbus, which associated France with Spain, Great Britain and West Germany. French space research efforts were linked to the European Ariane programme. In other fields, the relaxation was even greater - the electricity utility, EDF, was allowed to buy American nuclear technology from Westinghouse, and aero-engine manufacturers SNECMA began to buy material from General Electric.⁶

During the 1970s, the trend towards internationalization of production was intensified. Average annual foreign direct investment (FDI) by US-

registered companies was 3 billion dollars in the early 1960s, 5 billion at the end of the decade, and 7 billion in the early 1970s. By 1978 it had risen in fits and starts to 16 billion dollars annually,⁷ although there is some evidence that the year-on-year rate of increase slowed in the second half of the 1970s.⁸

The really significant trend to emerge in the 1970s, however, was that for the first time European and Japanese firms developed enough resources to contemplate establishing production platforms in the USA.⁹ The decline in the value of the dollar during the 1970s cheapened American assets so that in 1980 DM 123 million could buy an American firm worth DM 183 million in 1970. Over the same decade, American labour costs increased by one-fifth the Japanese rate, one quarter the German, and half the British, making production in America a more attractive proposition.¹⁰

In the period 1961-7, the United States had been the source of 61.6% of all direct investment emanating from the top 13 capital-exporting nations. In the period 1974-79, its share had fallen to 29%, the lead undermined principally by Germany and Japan, (17% and 13% of FDIs each in the latter period), while France had managed a modest increase from 6.9% to 7.8%.¹¹ 1981 was the first year for thirty years when foreign investment in the US exceeded American investment overseas, to the tune of \$18.6 billion against \$7 billion.¹²

This trend was reflected in the pattern of FDI in France itself. In 1971, the share of direct investment in France by EEC countries (51.9%) had already overtaken the American share (30.7%) By 1978 the disproportion was even sharper - 61.1% of the inflow was European, and only 15.1% American in origin.¹³ By the end of the 1970s, the blunting of the American challenge had removed the major justification for the earlier autarchic policies of

de Gaulle and his die-hard followers like Debré. Instead, the French economy was increasingly integrated with those of the EEC countries, with whom the French government had agreed in principle to pool sovereignty. But meanwhile a new pattern of long-term capital movements was emerging, in which France was a rather modest performer.

The trend was now against 100%-owned subsidiaries, reflecting the fact that none of the developed countries enjoyed the same technological lead in a large number of fields that the Americans had had in the 1960s. No longer able to command superprofits arising from a long-term technical advantage, investors were more willing to share with others the benefits - and the risks - of new ventures. There was thus a new trend towards interlocking investments in which firms' decisions were determined less by the "nationality" of their prospective partners than by what each could offer the other in the context of international competition.¹⁴

Reflecting the end of the colonial era and the enormous disparities between the world's richest and poorest countries, cross-border investment was concentrated more and more in the developed world and the newly industrialized countries. In 1971, 56.% of French FDIs went to the OECD (the world's richest countries); by 1980, the share was 67%. In the same period, the share going to the USA rose from 12.3% to 24.5%.¹⁵

But between 1967 and 1976, the French share of the stock of foreign direct investment worldwide fell from 5.7% to 4.1%, and France was overhauled in the international league table by Germany, Japan and Switzerland.¹⁶ In 1979, the French share of the stock of FDIs in the USA was 5%. The British (18.9%) and Japanese (3%) shares showed the importance of long-term accumulation in the mature American economy.¹⁷ But it was in the mosaic of internationalized production in the newly industrializing

countries that the French lag was disturbing, American firms had cornered 30,2% of foreign investment in Brazil by 1979, while the Germans had 14%, Japan 10,7%, the Swiss 11%, and the French only 5%. In Mexico, France had a meagre 1,8%, as against 72,2% owned by the US, 5,8% by West Germany, 4,7% the UK and 4,2% Switzerland. French foreign investment was still strongly structured by ties with former colonies in Africa, located in the poorest and slowest developing continent in the world.¹⁸ This pattern had been encouraged by interventionist policies, for the four major official organizations providing subsidies or insurance to would-be investors have traditionally aimed their operations at francophone Africa and Madagascar.¹⁹

Some have seen this as a symptom of France's reduction to the status of an "intermediate" economy, whose characteristic role is to import high-technology and high-skill products from her main rivals, the USA, Japan and West Germany, and in turn to manufacture and export medium technology and medium skill products, such as metal processing plant, transport systems, and nuclear power stations, to the Eastern bloc and the third world.²⁰ One way to halt or reverse this trend would be to invest more resources in education and research, as urged by the Gaullist deputy for the Ardennes in relation to the steel industry, as we saw in chapter 8. For his part, aware of the way in which the French share of claims on the world stock of value was hampered by the colonial past and de Gaulle's dreams of grandeur, Edouard Balladur determined to integrate French capital into the most technically advanced part of the world system. To do this, he wanted to privatize it;

Nothing would have been more harmful and dangerous than to exhibit an outmoded spirit of nationalism. Now that competition is world-wide, French firms must be present everywhere, and the best way of ensuring

this is for them to have substantial financial and industrial links with international groups. That is why it was essential to be able to reserve for foreign buyers part of the capital of the firms put on sale.²¹

Although on the day of the sale, the total foreign participation was limited to 20%, and any *single* investor from outside the EEC would need Treasury permission to exceed a 20% holding, from the first day of trading there would be no limit placed on total foreign holdings in any non-armaments company. Many French firms owned foreign subsidiaries, argued Balladur, so

By what right could we have forbidden the same freedoms in France to foreign firms coming from countries which like us are members of the EEC or the OECD. It was unthinkable, against natural rights, against our very national interest.²²

Balladur's arguments had been prefigured by the bankers on whom the party relied to make their case against the Socialists' nationalizations in 1981. While still laying claim to "an ambitious policy of national independence"²³ the RPR deputies recognized that that ambition was now conditioned by the internationalization of the key sectors of the French economy. All the industrial groups it was proposed to nationalize made more than 50% of their turnover outside France, they told the National Assembly. Nearly²⁴ all of their growth plans, which were now in jeopardy, depended on tie-ups with foreign, especially American, firms. For good measure, they added that the proposed new monopolies were against the spirit of the treaty of Rome.²⁵

Twenty years of change in the shape of world capitalism had forced leading Gaullists to admit openly that it was now time to abandon the general's dream of establishing French-only production units subject only to the orders of the French government. By the end of the 1970s there were

similar reasons for disillusionment with the second major strand of Gaullist industrial policy.

Trade

Endorsed by Gaullists as different as Chaban Delmas and Debré, and expressed in the 5th plan which ran from 1965-70, this was the proposed amalgamation of a number of medium-sized firms in each branch of industry into one or two "national champions", giant companies considered to be of sufficient size to succeed in international trade. To achieve their aims, the planners targetted grants and subsidized credit on individual firms in return for their acceptance of state-proposed reorganization schemes codified in individual contracts.²⁶

Michel Debré, Minister of Finance from 1966-8, later boasted of the fusion of two deposit banks into the BNP, one of the world's top ten, the amalgamation of 13 insurance groups into three, the formation of the SNIA (*Société Nationale Industrielle Aérospatiale*) from three existing firms, the merger of the chemicals concerns Ugine, and Kuhlmann, later to be joined by the aluminium producer, Péchiney, and of the help given to SNECMA, (*Société nationale d'équipements et de constructions de moteurs d'aviation*).²⁷ Overall, in each of the years from 1966-69, the value of merger operations was double or more the sum of the value of mergers in the entire period 1950-1960.²⁸

The steel industry provided the most graphic example of this dirigist policy going awry. By borrowing huge sums from the banks, scrapping their older plant, pooling their more efficient operations, and constructing two brand new super complexes using the latest technology on coastal sites near Dunkirk and Marseilles, French steel companies contributed to the absolute

overproduction which destroyed profit margins throughout the European industry. At the same time the companies' debts rose from 33% of sales in 1952 to 112% in 1978, until their solvency came to depend completely on annual transfusions of public money. Subsequently, the political considerations which weighed most in the painful rationalization decisions taken by the Gaullists' successors in power, had more to do with avoiding the political consequences of massive regionally concentrated unemployment than with the international trade in steel.²⁹

Although steel was the worst case, there were other drawbacks to a policy oriented exclusively on big firms and closely supervised by the government. Mergers did not always lead to enough rationalization and streamlining, but were sometimes limited to a "confederation" of existing structures which retained their old practices, and added new problems in the shape of additional layers of management. There was a tendency for wages to drift upwards to the highest level in the new group, and the "champions" were still not big enough in some sectors to take the field successfully against their American rivals, although they had become "too big" for France in the sense that managerial decisions on wages or redundancies were immediately loaded with political and social implications.³⁰ Above all, it was not clear that state aid was essential to bring about those amalgamations which had the strongest market logic. In computers aids were crucial to keeping the French industry afloat, but ultimately ineffective in international terms. On the other hand, it allegedly played no role at all in the merger of Saint-Gobain - Pont à Mousson, which would have occurred as a result of market logic in any case, according to the group's new manager.³¹

After 1974, the governments of Giscard d'Estaing, in which the

Gaullists were progressively less and less influential, continued the highly interventionist approach of their predecessors, identifying certain industries and even firms as key to the national effort and seeking to influence the structure and volume of output with import quotas, export subsidies, preferential public purchasing, artificially induced restructuring and even the blocking of attempted foreign takeovers.³² But under the impact of economic crisis the political concern to head off unemployment led to a certain loss of coherence and the managed economy began to resemble a field hospital whose patients were lame ducks rather than national champions.³³

Later studies showed that even when the state pursued plans for individual sectors vigorously and consistently, it was prevented from achieving its aims by problems peculiar to each case. In chemicals and machine tools, governments tried to pick the industry up off the floor, but were defeated by the poor adaptation of existing French firms to international competition. In consumer electronics and computers, they tried to impose on moderately successful private-sector firms product development and marketing decisions dictated by state preferences for a certain pattern of international tie-ups, but were ultimately defeated by the industrialists' adherence to their own strategies. In oil and telecommunications, governments succeeded in building up para-public industrial units of international rank, but at the cost of losing control of long-term strategy to the bureaucracy they had themselves created.³⁴

Apart from Chalandon, as we saw in chapter 8, Gaullists have rarely admitted that it was mistaken in principle to expect civil servants and politicians to predict which sectors French businesses ought to operate

³⁵ in, In 1979 the RPR in Parliament was still officially endorsing Debré's calls for protectionism and a state-directed investment programme, while the plethora of investment aids were criticized in *Atout France* not because they existed but because of poor targetting. In the 1980s, however the turn to liberalism was associated with recognition that the conditions of international competition had changed dramatically since the recession provoked by what economists call "the first oil-shock" in 1974.

Whatever the results of individual domestic policies, prosperity under the Gaullists was clearly conditioned by French participation in the thirty-year world boom, fuelled by an interlocking circuit of manufacture, trade, and expectations, which integrated all the industrialized countries with open economies.³⁶ When the boom was at its height, so was the concentration of trade among the leading nations. In 1960, two thirds of the import trade of industrial countries was between themselves, and by 1971, the proportion had risen to three-quarters.³⁷ As part of this co-operative pattern, the French economy itself became much more open. The share of French GDP which was traded in the early 1950s was roughly one twelfth.³⁸ In 1960, exports represented 15% of GDP (imports 12,9%); in 1970, exports were 16,3% (imports 15,8%), and in 1980 the figures had risen to 22,3% and 24,1%.³⁹ The effects of partnership with the other EEC countries were particularly striking. In 1958, just over a quarter of French trade was with the EEC; by 1979, it was over a half.⁴⁰

But France's effort was essentially participatory rather than decisive in world expansion. The French share of advanced countries' combined GNP rose from 8% in 1953 to 9,7% in 1977. In the same period, the American and British shares of world production shrank, but France was herself overhauled by West Germany and Japan, up from 6,5,% to 13,2% and from 3,6%

to 17,7% respectively.⁴¹

If France prospered during the boom, despite or because of Gaullist interventionism, by the end of the 1970s French industry was having increasing difficulties coping with much tighter international competition in a period of static or shrinking markets. In each of the years 1978 -79 - 80, France ran a trade deficit with the USA, the EEC and OPEC, selling more than she bought only in the Eastern bloc and the non-oil developing countries.⁴² Between 1978 and 1982 the only industrial branches to record a surplus in the balance of payments were agri-business, capital goods, and transport equipment. Of these, only agri-business had strengthened its position during the four years.⁴³ Foreign penetration of the French consumer goods market was rising most strongly in clothing and in brown goods containing electronic components, sectors in which the newly industrializing countries of the Pacific were specialized.⁴⁴

These were the figures which prompted Michel Debré to describe free-trade as *mortelle* for France, while the 1980 RPR programme called for a reconquest of the domestic market and the former Gaullist minister Jean-Marcel Jeanneney repeatedly demanded protectionism at EEC level.⁴⁵ In contrast, Balladur's appraisal of these developments led him to the conclusions already reached by Chalandon. His growing influence on Chirac helped them to become the new party orthodoxy;

There came the oil crisis of 1973, then another in 1979. There was the crisis of the international monetary system, inflation, and a slump in economic activity,.... The legitimately protected economy of 1945 no longer bore the slightest resemblance to the open economy of the 1980s. We were in the era of the lowering of barriers, of the internationalization of the economy, of sharper and sharper international competition demanding the ability to respond quickly which only freedom can guarantee. In the face of these new challenges, among the great modern nations, only our own economy was still astonishingly

sheltered, regulated and state-dominated,⁴⁶

In reaction to the failure of macro-level attempts to predict the best market opportunities for French businesses, and worried by France's galloping deficit with West Germany,⁴⁷ her biggest trading partner, policy-makers and commentators turned their attention to the relative performance of French and German firms. In 1976, the Ministry of Industry officially abandoned the national champions policy and announced that the future lay with small firms.⁴⁸

If so, the future was not very promising. A survey of firms employing less than 500 workers revealed that 60% would reject an increase in their capital that gave a bank or state agency some share in their firm, 78% of them used no market studies, 31% never test-marketed a new product, and 67% had no trade union organization in the plant.⁴⁹ In the late 1970s, three quarters of all French exports were provided by less than 1,000 firms, including all of the biggest, each of which devoted at least 40% of its turnover to exporting. The remaining quarter of the total was provided by 10,000 small or medium-sized firms, for which exporting constituted some 20% of turnover. A former minister of foreign trade, J-F Deniau, calculated that France needed to convert a further 10,000 firms to the idea of exporting regularly, in order to approach the situation pertaining in West Germany or Belgium.⁵⁰

In 1982, a fifth of all French companies and a third of the hundred largest were in the red, the rate of profit across industry had fallen from 28,5% in 1973 to 24,4% in 1980 and 22,6% in 1982, and the rate of self-financing had fallen from 76,1% in 1979 to 51,2% in 1982.⁵¹ In 1986, the greater dynamism of the West German small-business sector seemed to be confirmed by the report of a Swiss research institute which found that

German firms were more likely to take the initiative in Franco-German co-operative ventures, which in consequence were more likely to be aimed at the French market.⁵² All of these figures help to explain how the RPR's technocrats fell in with the employers' outcry against taxes and charges, their attempts to by-pass union organization, and their claim to greater freedom of decision making in response market changes.

Money

The distinctive Gaullist exchange-rate policy of the 1960s was the work of the general himself, his special financial adviser Jacques Ruëff, and Michel Debré, prime minister 1959-63 and Finance minister 1966-68. Its essential feature was defence of a high value for the franc, in order to maintain French diplomatic and economic leverage; in pursuit of this aim the Gaullists distinguished themselves during the 1960s by persistent calls for the reorganization of the international payments system, and actions designed to frustrate US domination in this area of international relations. Even during the 1960s, however, economic changes were working to undermine a single country's ability to manage its own exchange rate. These changes were magnified greatly during the 1970s, and the general's interventionist policy did not long survive his own loss of power.

In 1971, the money value of world trade was 3½ times what it had been in the early 1960s.⁵³ In the same year, if the value of world exports were added to the value of the non-exported output of firms owned or controlled abroad, the total amounted to roughly 20% of estimated world output, or over half of the GNP of non-Communist countries.⁵⁴ Taken together, expansion of trade and international production implied the need for private economic actors to hold larger and larger stocks of the world's

currencies. As a result, quite small changes in the cost of borrowing money or in expectations of variations between parities began to result in "violent lurches of funds across the exchange rates,"⁵⁵

This was a problem not only for the currency which was under attack; under the system of fixed exchange rates which obtained throughout the 1960s, the authorities in charge of a strong currency, such as the Deutschmark, which was usually on the receiving end of speculative flows, were obliged to "buy up" vast quantities of the threatened currency in order to defend its parity, an operation which usually entailed an unplanned increase in the domestic money supply, and the wrecking of existing inflation and growth targets.⁵⁶

Western governments reacted to the problem of excessive private liquidity in piecemeal fashion. Germany and the USA enacted legislation penalizing foreign borrowing.⁵⁷ The Japanese had won exemption from the spirit of international agreements, and operated stringent controls on currency markets and foreign investment.⁵⁸ The British relied on periodic US assistance to bolster sterling. During the 1960s the French argued more and more insistently that only a wide-ranging reform of the international monetary system, preferably giving a prominent role to gold, could deal adequately both with exchange rate instability, and with the unfairness of the US' ability to finance their trade deficit by printing dollars.⁵⁹

By the end of the 1960s, in the US, Japan, the UK and France reserves were less than 10% of money supply defined as cash and current accounts. In 1969 the identified short-term dollar assets held by banks and firms in the international money market were \$162 billion. In 1970 they rose to \$212 billion, and in 1971 to \$268 billion. The latter figure was more than twice the value of all the international reserves held in central banks and

international monetary institutions. In 1973 a US government committee conceded;

These are the reserves with which the central banks fight to defend their exchange rates. The resources of the private sector outclass them.⁶⁰

The imbalance between private and official liquidity ruled out decisively any national exchange rate policy which did not have powerful support within the international community, and during the decade from about 1965 to about 1975 it progressively destroyed the system of fixed exchange rates which had governed international payments since 1944.

By the late 1960s the USA had begun to return deficits on visible trade, which were financed by the export of dollars. We have already seen that this was the source of complaints that Americans could "buy up" Europe if they chose. The excess of dollars in the system, turned into a flood by the cost of the Vietnam war and dubbed the "dollar overhang", cast doubt on the Americans' ability to exchange gold for dollars, as they officially promised to do, if presented with too many demands at the same time. Under the 1944 Bretton Woods agreement the US Federal Reserve was committed to handing over gold only for dollars presented by central banks.⁶¹ But Japan had promised unofficially not to exchange dollars for gold - which represented only 15% of their reserves in the 1960s, a much smaller figure than was usual in Europe,⁶² and in 1967 the West German government announced that it would not seek to convert its dollars, in exchange for increased US payments for the cost of its armed forces stationed in Germany.⁶³

In contrast, French policy after 1958 was to seek to have part of their payments surpluses settled in gold, while the Bank of France converted existing dollar holdings into gold at the rate of 30 tons a

month. In January 1965 it was announced that this would continue, that \$150 million was to be converted immediately, and that the French government would seek automatically to convert any new accumulation of dollars. At a famous press conference in February 1965, de Gaulle made an eulogistic and flamboyant call for a return to the gold standard,⁶⁴ A year later, Giscard was replaced as finance minister by Debré, a 'hard-line' defender of gold.⁶⁵

While the avowed French aim was to double the price of gold, the Americans wanted to prevent it rising at all and causing a *de facto* devaluation of the dollar. France's membership of the US-sponsored Gold Pool, a purchasing cartel managed by the Bank of England and designed to smooth out fluctuations in its price, was thus less than full-hearted. In mid-1967, in response to a rising world-wide demand for gold which pushed the price up, France withdrew unilaterally from the Pool.⁶⁶ Between June and November there were 14 extensions of \$50 million each to the Pool's buffer stock, financed by contributions from central banks, sterling was devalued, and the gold rush continued into the new year, forcing the US Congress to abolish the statutory American gold reserve minimum of \$10 billion, despite the announcement of "draconian" new measures aimed at stemming the dollar outflow. With the free market price of gold soaring way above the "official" price established by a short-lived two-tier system, the US monetary authorities finally renounced dollar-gold convertibility in August 1971, and were obliged to abandon the notional price of \$42 to the ounce in the spring of 1973.

The mid-1960s can be seen as the high-water mark of the independent Gaullist exchange-rate policy, during which the French government made its modest contribution to bringing down the dollar. Yet the forces which

produced that outcome would probably have done so even without de Gaulle, and it was the French government itself which was to be their next victim. The events of May '68 led to a drain of \$4,7 billion from the French reserves in the following 12 months. Together with the weakening of the franc, this undermined the French position in negotiations for the reform of the international payments system.⁶⁷ After his victory in the June general election, which momentarily stemmed the flight from the franc, de Gaulle's last show of defiance was to refuse the widely anticipated devaluation and reimpose a deflationary credit package along with exchange controls which had been lifted only 6 weeks previously.⁶⁸

But the franc came under renewed pressure immediately following the general's departure in April 1969. Bowing to the inevitable, Pompidou devalued by 11,11% in August, and France was obliged publicly to swallow the pill of consultations with IMF officials with a view to arranging a stand-by credit of \$1 billion. More discreetly, France the following December ratified an expansion of the IMF's system of Special Drawing Rights - an alternative to gold which de Gaulle had always rejected - and all demands that reduction of the US deficits should precede reorganization of the international payments system were quietly buried.⁶⁹ Some seven years later the IMF adopted another reform of its statutes, by which no member nation would be permitted to define its currency by reference to gold, the official gold price was abolished, and exchanges of gold between central banks accordingly came to an end.⁷⁰

Giscard d'Estaing represented France at this funeral of the gold standard in Jamaica in 1976, but did not ask the French parliament to ratify it until April 1978, when the reform had already achieved the appropriate qualified majority among the Fund's other members and the only

effect of rejection would have been to reduce the size of stand-by credits available to any future needy French government,⁷¹ *La Lettre de la Nation*, guardian of the Gaullist conscience, vigorously reiterated the RPR's opposition to a system of floating currencies,⁷² Couve de Murville protested that the new statutes constituted the formal abandonment of all the ideas which France had defended since 1960, and Debré led a small group in opposition in the chamber.⁷³ But the party's official spokesmen, signalling reluctant acquiescence, implicitly admitted that the era of individual central bank interventions had passed with the system of fixed parities and, significantly, looked forward to a future stabilization of rates based around a possible European pole.⁷⁴

The 1970s was a decade of even faster growth in private liquidity than the 1960s as the Eurobond market outgrew Eurodollars, multinational firms set up their own banking operations, and there was a proliferation of all kinds of new credit instruments, more and more freely traded outside the confines of the old stock exchange closed shops. According to one estimate, by the mid 1980s no more than 10% of all the foreign exchange traded daily around the world was earmarked for the payment of bills or the purchase of goods; the rest was pure speculation.⁷⁵ The problems caused by the consequent exchange-rate volatility for the calculation of returns from trading in goods more or less compelled the organization of something like the European Monetary System, in an attempt to maintain rough parities within a target zone. The Gaullists have long since given up to the British prime minister the distinction of being the system's chief opponent.

Along with the consequences for exchange-rate policy, an equally far-reaching consequence of the vast expansion of private liquidity has been an

explosion in the range of financial products on sale since deregulation during the 1970s in the USA and the UK. A Gaullist deputy, Pierre Bas implicitly abandoned previous orthodoxy when he told the Socialists in 1981 that it was pointless to carry further the nationalization of the banks, since interest rates depended on many external factors which governments cannot possibly master in an open economy.⁷⁶

During the 1980s it became clear that liberalization of the French financial services industry was essential if Paris was to continue to profit from the spin-offs of status as a major financial centre, and if French-owned banks were to compete on equal terms with their rivals. France, like all European countries including the UK, lost market share in the Eurocurrency business during the 1970s to the growing off-shore centres in the Caribbean, the Middle East and the Pacific.⁷⁷ Whereas in 1971 only New York (55) and London (217) harboured more international bank branches than Paris, (38) by 1978 the French capital, having advanced to 66, had been overtaken by Hong Kong (102) and Singapore (73).⁷⁸ In 1981 a comparative study of the Euromarkets and international financial policies concluded that Paris could never become a major world-wide financial centre because of the close control over financial markets exercised by the Bank of France.⁷⁹

During 1984-5 it turned out to be a Socialist government which energetically pursued deregulation. The stock exchange was reformed to allow dealing in swaps, options and the other paraphernalia of high class gambling. An unquoted shares market was established and the former division of functions between banks and other financial actors broken down, allowing each to lend over a bigger range of terms, at variable rates of interest.⁸⁰ Bowing to the logic of these developments when he took over

the ministry of Finance in 1986, Balladur, the Pompidolian technocrat, carried further the abolition of exchange controls, and put an end to the last elements of the system of detailed quantitative control of credit which had once been the pillar of the Gaullist state's management of the economy.⁸¹

Notes to Chapter 10

1. A nation continually obliged to use its gold and foreign currency reserves in order to settle payments deficits incurred through trade would undergo a continual decline in its share of claims on world production. On the other hand, if French citizens had surplus cash, they could buy assets in other countries, (expressed in a net outflow of direct investments) which in time would generate an income, and result in a net transfer of wealth towards France. If two countries have similar rates of productivity, and exploit equally well their comparative advantages through trade, one country may yet have an advantage over the other because its currency is awarded a higher value by the international agencies which regulate such matters. The country with the "stronger" currency would be able to buy more goods on the world market than its undervalued rival, at the same opportunity cost, at the same time being able to earn a larger share of claims on the world stock of value from the sale of a given quantity of identical products.
2. Andrew A. Shonfield, "International Economic relations of the Western World, an overview", pp 1-142 of *Politics and Trade*, Vol 1, of A.A. Shonfield (ed) *International Economic Relations of the Western World, 1959-71*, London, Oxford University Press for the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1976
3. Bertrand Nezeys, *Les Relations Economiques Extérieures de la France*, *Economica* 1982, pp 186-188
4. Nezeys, *op cit*, pp 303-4
5. Peter Hall *Governing the Economy, The Politics of State Intervention in Britain and France*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1986, p 182
6. Elie Cohen and Michel Bauer, *Les Grandes Manoeuvres Industrielles*, Paris, Belfond, 1985
7. Nigel Harris, *Of Bread and Guns, the World Economy in Crisis*, Penguin, Harmondsworth 1983 pp 124-5
8. Nezeys, *op cit*, p 189
9. Between 1959 and 1976, European companies secured places in the list of the biggest 12 firms in 9 of the 13 major industrial branches, Japanese firms in 8 of them. (Harris, *op cit*, p 125)
10. *ibidem*, p 128
11. Nezeys, *op cit*, p 189
12. Harris, *op cit*, p 124
13. Nezeys, *op cit*, p 190
14. *ibidem*, pp 191-197
15. *ibidem*, p 219; In 1965, the total of direct investment and long-term loans passing from France to the US was F 33,6 million. In 1976, at F 1,568,7 million, it was 47 times higher in money terms, 25 times higher after taking account of exchange-rate changes and the evolution of prices in the USA. (P. Arnaud-Ameller and F. Marnata, *Les Flux*

d'Investissements Directes entre la France et l'Extérieur, 1965-78, Editions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris, 1981, p 67)

16. Nezeys, *op cit*, p 218
17. Constantin Lougouvoï, *L'Economie, Les Français et l'Etat*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France 1981 p 147
18. *ibidem*, p 147
19. *ibidem*, p 148
20. Robert Boyer, "The Current Economic Crisis, it's dynamic and implications for France", in Hoffman, Ross and Malzacher (eds), *The Mitterrand Experiment*, Cambridge, The Polity Press, 1987 pp 33-53; Philip G. Cerny, "State Capitalism in France and Britain and the International Economic Order", Philip Cerny and Martin Schain (eds), *Socialism, the State and Public Policy in France*, London, Frances Pinter, 1985, pp 202-223
21. Edouard Balladur, *Je Crois en l'Homme plus qu'en l'Etat*, Paris, Flammarion, 1987, p 85; "Rien n'eût été plus nocif et dangereux que de faire preuve d'un esprit nationaliste dépassé. A l'heure de la compétition mondiale, les entreprises françaises doivent être présentes partout, et le meilleur moyen d'y parvenir, c'est qu'elles aient des liens industriels et financiers développés avec des groupes internationaux. C'est pourquoi il était indispensable de pouvoir réserver à l'étranger une certaine part du capital des entreprises mises en vente."
22. *ibidem*, pp 111-112; "Au nom de quoi aurions-nous pu interdire pour toujours aux entreprises étrangères ressortissantes des Etats membres comme nous de la Communauté européenne, ou membres de l'OCDE comme nous le sommes nous-mêmes, de disposer chez nous des mêmes libertés? C'était impensable, contraire au droit, contraire à nos intérêts nationaux mêmes."
23. Speech by Michel Noir, first session of 14-10-81, *Journal Officiel, Débats, Assemblée Nationale*, 15-10-81
24. One speaker made an exception for the steel and defence industries, Lucien Richard, speech in first session of 14-10-81, *Journal Officiel, Débats, Assemblée Nationale*, 15-10-81, p 1766
25. Speeches by Michel Noir, Lucien Richard, Jacques Godfrain, Maurice Couve de Murville, Pierre-Bernard Cousté in *Journal Officiel, Débats, Assemblée Nationale*, 14-10-81 and 15-10-81
26. Hall *op cit*, p 149
27. Michel Debré, *Une Certaine Idée de la France*, Paris, Fayard, 1972, p 242
28. Suzanne Berger, "Lame Ducks and National Champions. Industrial Policy in the Fifth Republic", in Andrews and Hoffman (eds) *The Fifth Republic at Twenty*, Albany, State University of New York Press, 1981 pp 292-310, p 295
29. Jack Hayward "The Nemesis of Industrial Patriotism; the French Response to the Steel Crisis", in Jack Hayward, *The State and the Market Economy, Industrial Patriotism and Economic Intervention in France*, Brighton, Wheatsheaf, 1986 pp 68-104

30. Berger *loc cit*, "Lame Ducks," p 299
31. *Ibidem*, p 296
32. Diana Green, "Industrial Policy and Policy-Making, 1974-82", in Vincent Wright, (ed) *Continuity and Change in France*, London, Allen and Unwin, 1984, pp 139-158; Diana Green and Philip Cerny, "Economic Policy and the Governing Coalition", in Philip Cerny and Martin Schain, (eds) *French Politics and Public Policy*, London, Pinter 1980
33. Berger *loc cit*, "Lame Ducks," p 305
34. Cohen et Bauer, *op cit*
35. For evidence that "strategic" considerations contradicted EDF's calculations about what was appropriated for the market, see Peter Pringle and James Spiegelman, *The Nuclear Barons*, London, Sphere 1983 pp 277-8 and 356
36. Harris, *op cit*, p 44. The world production of goods and services was multiplied two and a quarter times between 1950 and the early 1970s; agricultural production increased by between 2 and 3 percent annually, and industrial production by an annual average of 5.5%. Three structural aspects of the boom were very striking. First, the growth of output was accompanied by an even bigger expansion in trade, which almost doubled between 1960 and the early 1970s, an unprecedented rate of expansion. Secondly, the growth of trade in manufactures far outstripped trade in other sectors. Between 1953 and 1973, the share of manufactured goods in world trade rose from 49% to 63%, while the share of agricultural products fell from 36% to 21%. (Harris, *op cit*, p 45, table 3.) The expansion of trade in manufacturing reflected its higher marginal return on investment than primary production and the fact that, once consumers move above the subsistence level, demand for agricultural products reaches a plateau, while demand for manufactures continues to increase with income. Important conditions for the expansion of world trade were the foundation in the 1940s of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, new institutions geared to international co-operation, and the signature of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), which began a process of multilateral tariff reductions, completed by the 'Kennedy Round' of negotiations in the early 1960s. As expectations of increased output and demand were confirmed, they formed a circular relationship with moves towards tariff reduction, being translated into the creation of influential lobbies for free trade in the countries concerned. (See Shonfield *loc cit* p 106.) For a more detailed discussion of the causes of French growth, see appendix 4
37. Shonfield *loc cit* p 103
38. *Ibidem*, pp 97-8
39. OECD Economic Survey 1981.
40. EEC Annual Economic Report, cited in Lougovoy, *op cit*, p 84
41. Chris Harman, *Explaining the Crisis, a Marxist Reappraisal*, London, Bookmarks, 1984 p 97
42. Lougovoy, *op cit*, p 83
43. *France*, La Documentation Française, Paris, 1984, p 97

44. In 1978, imports of shirts and blouses were 46% of total sales, compared to 10% in 1971; imports of radios were 89% (38% in 1970). (Lougovoy, *op cit*, p 107)
45. Debré cited in Christian Stoffaes *La Grande Menace Industrielle* revised edition, Paris Calmann-Lévy, 1979 p 18; see J-M Jeanneney, *Pour un Nouveau Protectionnisme*, Paris, Seuil 1978; "Les Mérites d'un Certain Protectionnisme à l'Echelle Européenne", in *Problèmes Economiques* no 1, 879, 20-6-84, pp 14-15. See also the discussion in Bertrand Nezeys, *Les Relations Economiques Extérieures de la France*, Paris, Economica 1982 p 269-294
46. Balladur, *op cit*, *Je Crois,.....* p 37, "Vinrent la crise pétrolière de 1973, puis celle de 1979, Vinrent la crise monétaire, l'inflation, la baisse de l'activité,.... L'économie légitimement protégée de 1945 n'avait plus rien à voir avec l'économie ouverte des années 1980. Nous étions à l'époque de l'abaissement des frontières, de la mondialisation de l'économie, d'une concurrence internationale sans cesse plus âpre qui réclamait les facultés d'adaptation rapide que seule donne la liberté. Or, face à ces nouveaux défis, notre économie restait, parmi les grands pays modernes, étonnamment abritée, étatisée, réglementée."
47. French trade with Germany has been in deficit for twenty years, although for a similar period after 1945 there was a rough balance. From the mid 1960s until 1973 the deficit was held to about 6 billion francs; from 1976-79 it averaged around 10 billion, before rising precipitously during the 1980s to its 1985 figure of 28 billion francs. *Le Monde, Dossiers et Documents* no 151, January 1988 *Les Relations Franco-Allemandes*
48. Suzanne Berger, *loc cit*, "Lame Ducks,.....", p300
49. SOFRES survey cited in *Le Monde, Dossiers et Documents; Les Petites et Moyennes Industries*, no 30, April 1976
50. Quoted in Lougovoy 1981 p 77
51. Suzanne Berger, "The Socialists and the Patronat, Dilemmas of Co-existence in a Mixed Economy", unpublished paper, 1984, note 2 p 26
52. *Le Monde Dossiers et Documents* no 151 January 1988 *Les Relations Franco-Allemandes* p 3 Report commissioned by the West German government from Prognos AG of Basle, carried out with a sample of 121 firms, representative of all sectors.
53. Shonfield, *loc cit* p 111
54. *ibidem*, note 29 p 138-9
55. *ibidem*, p 116
56. Otmar Emminger "The Exchange Rate as an Instrument of Policy", in *Lloyds Bank Review*, July 1979 no 133 p 1-22
57. The German Kuponsteuer of 1964, and the American Interest Equalization Tax of 1963, Shonfield called the packages of which these measures were a part "controls without conviction which invited defiance." (Shonfield, *loc cit*, p 112)

58. Susan Strange, *International Monetary Relations*, vol 2, of A.A. Shonfield (ed) *International Economic Relations of the Western World*, London OUP for the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1976 pp 275-6
59. The French harboured resentments against the Anglo-Saxons since French proposals had been virtually ignored by them at Bretton Woods, and were given further grounds complaint in 1956 when stand-by arrangements granted to the franc in the wake of the Suez operation were accompanied by conditions far more stringent than any demanded of the British in the previous year. (Strange, *op cit*, p 54)
60. The US Tariff Commission, *Implications of Multinational Firms for World Trade and Investment, and for US trade and labor*, Washington, February 1973 p 9. Quoted by Shonfield, *loc cit* pp 111-2
61. Ricardo Parboni, *The Dollar and its Rivals*, London, Verso, 1981 pp 59- 60. Since the 1930s American citizens had not been allowed to own gold in the United States, a proscription which was extended to Americans abroad in the 1950s.
62. Strange, *op cit*, pp 275-6
63. *ibidem*, p 287
64. which even Jean-Maxime Lévêque, the conservative financier who had recently left the Elysée judged unrealistic. (Jean-Maxime Lévêque, *En Première Ligne*, Paris, Albin Michel, 1986 p 10)
65. Strange, *op cit*, p 225
66. Russia, which had been a heavy seller in recent years because of the failure of Khrushchev's 'virgin lands' policy, sold no gold on the world market for the first time since 1952; western gold production had ceased to rise, while private demand was high because of the weakness of sterling, and because of the war in Vietnam. For the first time since the war all newly mined gold went into private hands. During the second half of 1966 the price of an ounce of gold was never below \$35.15, and in 1967 it rose to \$35-20, pushed higher by the outbreak of war in the Middle-East. On the gold crisis, see Strange, *op cit*, pp 279-288 and Parboni, *op cit*, pp 59-62)
67. Strange, *op cit*, pp 253 and 323
68. *ibidem*, p 325
69. *ibidem*, p 254
70. René Sédillot, *Histoire du Franc* Paris Sirey 1979, pp 267-8; Andrew Crockett, *Money, Theory, Policy and Institutions* Walton on Thames, Nelson 1979 2nd ed, p 251
71. *Le Monde* 8-4-78
72. *La Lettre de la Nation* 7-4-78
73. *Le Monde* 8-4-78

74. Michel Maurice-Bokanowski, speech in the debate on ratification of the increase of the French quota in the IMF, Senate session of 25-4-78, *Journal Officiel, Débats, Sénat*, 26-4-78 pp 593-4
75. Adrian Hamilton, *The Financial Revolution, the Big Bang World-Wide* Viking (Penguin) 1986 p 51
76. Speech by Pierre Bas, *Journal Officiel, Débats, Assemblée Nationale* 15-10-81 p 1821
77. D.F. Lomax and P.T.G Gutman, *The Euromarkets and International Financial Policies*, London, Macmillan, 1981, table 1.13, p 13
78. *ibidem*, p 12
79. *ibidem*, p 130
80. Joël Métais and Philippe Szymaczak, *Les Mutations du Système Financier Français, (Innovations et déréglementation)*, La Documentation Française no 4820, 1987
81. Edouard Balladur, *Vers la Liberté, La Réforme Economique 1986* La Documentation Française, Paris 1987, pp 39-64

Chapter 11 Interpretation

In this case-study of the RPR, academic approaches to party behaviour have generally been criticized for failing to tackle the subject from the starting point of parties' links with the wider society. Some authors, such as Panebianco and Lagroye, have recently provided welcome exceptions whose work we have tried to build on.

Nevertheless, a survey of the party's organizational development and transformations in chapter 4 revealed no link between programmatic development and changes in the make up of the party's dominant coalition. Ironically, the ideas of a defeated faction, the Gallo-Giscardians, were those which triumphed in the party in the 1980s.

In chapter 5 we encountered a rather crude sociological variant of a class explanation of party behaviour. New party activists, claimed Frémontier, are from business backgrounds, whereas their elders are state-trained technocrats. Therefore it was inevitable that the party's attachment to interventionism would give way to liberalism. After careful consideration, we dismissed the argument on Frémontier's own evidence: he had not proved that a new generation of activists had tipped the balance in favour of business interests. Furthermore, there is no necessary correlation between numerical dominance of a certain class of members, and influence on party programmes.

In chapter 6 of the present work it was argued that the political scientist's stock-in-trade of election studies and even the comparatively more exotic discipline of political communications in the end could establish no causal link between party competition, voting behaviour or opinion research and the content of the programmes which the RPR placed

before the electorate in the 1980s.

On the basis of the evidence presented in chapters 7-10, can we begin to construct an alternative and more satisfying theoretical model which could account for party programme change? This is the task of most of this chapter, which addresses the linkages between party, class and ideology.

A point we can make fairly confidently is that in this case sociological data is of secondary rather than primary importance. One of our arguments against Frémontier was that data about rather loosely drawn occupational categories was not sufficient on its own to account for the ideas of his subjects. Similarly, we know that the membership of debating societies like the *Club de l'Horloge* and the *Club '89* was largely recruited from professionals and private-sector managers,¹ but we do not know for certain whether the work-situation of all such members led them to favour the retreat of the state, or whether, on the contrary, they worked for firms comfortably surviving on safe government contracts or sheltering behind cartels or other restrictive practices.

Brechon, Derville and Lecomte, in their study of the delegates to the 1984 RPR congress, are more precise. They found both that professionals and private sector managers were more numerous among the generation of activists who joined the party after 1981 than among those who joined before,² and that such activists were more favourable to the market and less favourable to reducing disparities of income than other categories.³

But this in turn raises another question. There is no data which tells us whether such people joined the party because it was *already* beginning to put across a message which they agreed with, or because,

moved by outrage at the new government's policies they flocked to the party which seemed to be the Socialists' most uncompromising opponent, thus changing its character. Whichever way round it was, (perhaps both at once) neither the sociological background nor the ideas of individual activists affected programme-content directly, as we showed in chapters 4 and 9, because the members had a negligible practical role in actually drawing up the programme.

Nevertheless, members do sometimes abandon their parties *en masse* because of policy disagreements.⁴ That this did not happen to the RPR implies that the bulk of the members were happy with the programme. The programme-drafters may have supposed that their projects would be acceptable to a milieu which they knew and understood, but we have no evidence that they wrote the programme to please the members. Such evidence as we have deployed in chapter 4 seems to show that they took no notice of the members.

From all this, we can construct the following hypothesis of the linkage between party and club membership and programme content: a new programme was drawn up relatively independently of the members and their particular concerns, but its content was such as to gain the assent of activists made up primarily of professionals and private-sector managers, who were perhaps those whose work situation made them most favourable to liberalism. Once the process of ideological production (in the case of the clubs) or revision (in the case of the RPR) was under way, it may have been reinforced by a pattern of self-selection in recruitment to clubs and the party.

If it did not emanate directly from the party and club activists, what was the source of the coherent liberal programme to which they gave

their assent? In chapter 7 we sketched something of ideological changes among mainly non-party intellectuals of the French Right. In Chapter 8 it was shown that American experiences vied with more traditional organicist conceptions and pragmatic instincts in those thoughts of RPR notables which were recorded on paper or in speeches. From this cross-fertilization emerged the formula that the state should do less in order to do better the things which it does.

This formula could be interpreted either in a mainly liberal sense, implying that the state should reduce its constraints on individual non-economic as well as economic activity, or in a mainly authoritarian sense, implying that the state should abandon its egalitarian ventures in order to concentrate on its role as guardian of law, order and morality. As such, the formula could appeal to RPR members of different political sensibilities, and was easily assimilable by members at any level of the hierarchy. It also corresponded roughly to the interests of many French employers.

Some of the latter, as we showed in chapter 9, had themselves selectively drawn on their own experiences and on the intellectuals' output, in order to develop a liberal programme which concentrated on tax-cutting and deregulation of the labour market. We saw that similar conditions led to similar conclusions in Japan, the USA and France. The French employers' contribution to the liberal revival was certainly enough to allow us to dismiss Wilson's suggestion that business,

rarely takes an interest in formulating broader future social or economic policies, usually it reacts to government initiatives.⁵

But some would-be Marxists have tried to impose equally unsuitable blanket interpretations on the international popularity of liberalism;

according to one attempted account of "capitalist strategy in the crisis",

The thesis we shall defend is that there is really only a single capitalist strategy (by the term capitalist, we mean at the same time the employers and states).....⁶

In attempting to assign appropriate explanatory weight to each of the variables in the RPR's ideological renewal, we are struck rather by the disjunctions between the ideas of Blot, the more rigorous of the new economists, and the interests of different groups of employers. Like their colleagues elsewhere, French employers have developed diverse attitudes to the question of discipline and hierarchy within the workplace. To the extent that quality circles and flexible working can persuade workers to discipline themselves, some managers can contemplate a relaxation of the state's traditional role as moral standard-bearer and regulator of the picket lines, and they have a corresponding incentive to support a programme of relative democratization of local government. Certainly, like the new economists but unlike Blot and his friends, most employers can afford to be indifferent to the question of whether their employees or clients are homosexuals, patriots, catholics, or even republicans. In his continual attempts to drag in these issues, Blot was distinctly out of phase both with the new economists and with the grass roots aspirations for a less hierarchical society which we discussed in chapter 5.

Secondly, in the nature of things, employers are divided amongst themselves both on where the limits of state interventionism should be drawn, and on such other liberal tenets as the undesirability of monopoly. Although there was a growing liberal consensus on deregulation

of the labour market, state contracts conserved their importance for arms manufacturers; regulation, price-fixing and cartellization were more attractive to the technocrats who ran Air France than to the bankers threatened by international financial deregulation. Some business leaders were much more careful than others to set limits to the retreat of the state from the economy and from its redistributive role. Their pragmatic liberalism is perfectly expressed by Raymond Barre;

It is not a question only of the competitiveness of French firms, whether they are public or private, agricultural, industrial or commercial, but of the competitiveness of the nation as a whole..... from the education system, through social security, to the administration, so that there is a notion which seems more and more important: the notion of the fixed costs of the nation. This notion should be systematically taken into account today so that these fixed costs do not amount to a serious handicap in international competition.⁷

This is a far cry from the demands of Lepage and Sorman that the provision of education and social insurance should depend essentially on the whims of the "consumers". Barre's approach was echoed by François Périgot, president of the CNPF, welcoming the opportunities of 1992,

on condition that we reform the tax-system, the social system and especially the educational system which turns out unemployed people...⁸

The most pragmatic representatives of business interests, in short, saw a continued role for the state in creating and maintaining by the most economical means an infrastructure sufficient to provide French businesses with a healthy and educated workforce and the minimum administrative assistance necessary to help them face up to international competition.

The stance of Barre and his fellow thinkers provides a useful guard against the temptation to conclude that objective conditions have

combined to ensure that an era of "liberal" capitalism is now set to succeed the preceding "state-capitalist" phase of expansion. In chapter 10 we summarized the objective factors which contributed to French technocrats' disillusionment with pervasive interventionism, but it is still far from clear that, for all industries and all states, a completely "hands-off" relationship is the one which best suits business interests. The success under different conditions of the newly industrializing countries of the Pacific basin illustrates the point well.²⁹

It is a rich irony that the first element of explanation of the Gaullists' programmatic renewal is the party's handing over drafting of parts of their programme to small groups of unelected businessmen and technocrats. Our study has found no evidence that the business interests involved formed any kind of coherent fraction of the bourgeoisie, united by similar material interests. Attempts to divide the modern bourgeoisie up into rival fractions of financiers and industrialists have not been very successful.³⁰ The ideas of the RPR's friends may have been more liberal than those of other colleagues, partly because they included a number of bankers and financiers, whose industry was seriously disadvantaged by state controls. But equally significant was the participation of representatives of firms which hoped to buy into the state or municipal assets which it was planned to put on sale. There were strong personal and clientelistic links between them and the RPR leaders. On one level, the class input into the new RPR programme was no more mysterious than that.

On another, more general level, however, it seems fair to say that

class interests had a lot to do with the international liberal revival of the late 1970s and early 1980s. Liberal ideas have existed in various forms since Adam Smith. Why did they enjoy such a burst of new theorizing and such a revival of popularity when they did? Giving a new twist to Marx's notion that the ruling ideas in any society are the ideas of the ruling class, Irving Kristol, one of the American thinkers close to Yvan Blot in his ideas, paid this homage to his business benefactors;

Not that they contributed much in the way of ideas, their real contribution was money. In the last twelve years, the business world has shown itself to be more and more and more sensitive to and interested in the neo-conservative current, and it generously encourages more and more studies of conservatism and neo-conservatism, with the result that the "think-tanks" of this current of ideas, the Hoover Institute, the American Enterprise Institute, the Heritage Foundation, the Hudson Institute, are steadily becoming centres of competence and authority in the United States¹¹

In short, there was a revival of liberal self-confidence because American employers were prepared to pay American intellectuals to produce ideas which aimed to "roll back" what they regarded as noxious collectivist influences in American society. Not only did they succeed in securing the election of Reagan in the USA, they also spread their influence across the Atlantic into European politics, as our own study has shown. Developments in the RPR are a precious illustration of the lesson that it is one thing for more or less common interests to exist, another thing for ideologists to articulate those interests into a coherent programme, and still another for an organized group of fellow-thinkers to campaign for that programme.

The maturation of a number of objective conditions - developments in the world economy, the French Socialist electoral victory, unemployment

and the crisis of French trade unionism¹² which undermined workers' self-confidence - made it possible for liberal ideas to gain in popularity in a country where they had been weak for most of the 20th century. The theoretical work of the American think-tanks gave those ideas freshness and contemporary relevance. Yvan Blot and the *Club de l'Horloge* were the self-appointed vanguard of the "national liberal" current which brought about a remarkable realignment in the traditional stance of a major national party.

That realignment in its turn has raised a number of questions which might fruitfully form the basis for further research. The first is the degree to which the RPR contributed to shifting the whole centre of gravity of French politics to the right during the 1980s, even though they gained precious little electorally from the decade.

If our study has proved anything it is that the RPR leaders ignored voter scepticism in launching their liberal campaign, yet managed to win a few converts on the way to a narrow election victory. There is a lesson there for members of the British Labour party who have justified revision of their own traditional policies by arguing that Thatcherism satisfies citizen aspirations.

More generally, our findings ought to reinforce the view that parties are key autonomous agents for social and political change. Even if political scientists rightly point to their marginal impact on policy outcomes once institutional and interest-group constraints are taken into account, parties have a key role in focussing the ideas which citizens have about the society they live in. Indeed party rivalry is virtually the only framework within which most voters can think about broad social questions. It is for this reason that one is tempted to think that the

RPR, paradoxically urged on by the freakishly reactionary *Club de l'Horloge* and the elitist technocrat Balladur converted more people to liberalism in France than the combined efforts of non-party propagandists like Lepage and Sorman.

A related question concerns the degree to which economic or social factors, relayed through the party system, were responsible for the break-up of the right-wing coalition after the 1988 French presidential elections. Should the decision of the *Centre des Démocrates Sociaux* to set up its own group of deputies, and the acceptance of government posts by some of their fellow-thinkers, be taken as signs of a serious disagreement among the former coalition members over the best economic strategy for France, provoked by the "liberalization" of the RPR? Was the break forced by the Centre's distaste for the hegemonizing ambitions displayed by the RPR during the 1986-88 government, notably in the controversial privatization process? Or, at its lowest, does the Centre's partial *rapprochement* with Mitterrand's Socialists rest on no more than the personal ambitions of number of professional politicians, merely the latest exponents of the rich tradition of opportunism in French politics?

Notes to Chapter 11

1. Pascal Sigoda, "Les Cercles Extérieurs du RPR", in *Pouvoirs*, no 28, 1983, pp 143-158
2. Pierr Brechon, Jacques Derville et Patrick Lecomte, *Les Cadres du RPR*, Paris, Economica, 1987 p 35
3. *ibidem*, p 37
4. For example, the haemorrhage from the western Communist Parties after the invasion of Hungary in 1956, and the periodic transfusions into and out of the German FDP as the leaders amend their coalition policy at national level
5. Frank L. Wilson *Interest Group Politics in France*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987, p 93
6. "La thèse que nous voulons défendre est qu'il y a bien une seule stratégie capitaliste (par le terme capitaliste, nous désignons à la fois les patrons et les Etats),..." (Nicolas Benies, *L'après-libéralisme, patronat et classe ouvrière dans la crise*, Paris, PEC/La Brèche, 1988
7. "Il ne s'agit pas seulement de la compétitivité de nos entreprises publiques ou privées, agricoles, industrielles, et commerciales, mais de la compétitivité de l'ensemble national, du système d'éducation au système d'administration en passant par notre système de protection sociale, de telle sorte qu'une notion apparait de plus en plus importante; celle des coûts fixes de la nation, cette notion doit aujourd'hui être prise en compte de façon systématique afin que dans la compétition internationale, ces coûts fixes ne soient pas un handicap redoutable." (Raymond Barre, *Réflexions pour Demain*, Hachette/Pluriel, 1984, p 206)
8. "à condition de réformer le système fiscal, social et éducatif notamment, qui fabrique des chômeurs,..." (*Le Monde*, 18-6-87)
9. The economies of Singapore and Hong Kong enjoy considerable freedom from regulation, whereas Taiwan has been rigorously controlled, and South Korea is somewhere in between, Nigel Harris, *The End of the Third World*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1986; see also, Alex Callinicos, "Imperialism, Capitalism and the State Today", in *International Socialism*, no 35, summer 1987, pp 71-115
10. F. Morin, *La Structure Financière du Capitalisme Français*, Paris, Calman-Lévy, 1974
11. "Non qu'ils aient apporté des idées, ils ont plutôt apporté de l'argent. Ces douze dernières années, le monde des affaires s'est révélé progressivement de plus en plus sensible et intéressé au courant néo-conservateur et il encourage généreusement de plus en plus d'études sur le conservatisme et le néo-conservatisme, de telle sorte que les "réservoirs à pensée" de ce courant d'idées, l'Institut Hoover, l'AEI (American Enterprise Institute), la Heritage Foundation, le Hudson Institut, deviennent de façon régulière des centres de compétence et d'autorité aux Etats-Unis." (Irving Kristol, "Les Racines Historiques, Philosophiques et Sociologiques du 'conservatisme'", in *Contrepoint* no 47, pp 27-31)
12. See *Le Monde*, 19-11-87

RESEARCH SOURCES

Interviews

This thesis could not have been completed without the co-operation of twenty-three RPR members who agreed to be interviewed. Twenty were politicians of first or second rank, and three were party workers. The list of names and interview dates includes brief statements of the interviewees' relevance to my project. They are not necessarily complete summaries of their careers.

t Indicates the interview was tape-recorded.

Philippe Auberger t, 6-1-89

Mayor of Joigny, 1977- Deputy for the Yonne, 1986-

Author of *L'Allergie Fiscale*, the party's "tax expert". Sent briefing papers to Chirac, 1979-80.

Michel Aurillac t, 9-2-89

Former prefect. Deputy for Indre, 1978-81; Minister of Co-operation, 1986-88. Founder and president of Club '89, 1981-

Yvan Blot t, 28-4-89

Co-founder of the Club de l'Horloge in 1974; *Directeur de cabinet* to RPR general secretaries, Alain Devaquet, 1978-9, and Bernard Pons 1979-84. Member of RPR *commission exécutive* during this period; active in training of party cadres, and in sending briefing papers to Chirac and other leaders.

Yvon Bourges, 11-1-89

Gallo-Giscardian, Minister of Defence, 1975-80; Mayor of Dinard, 1962-7 and 1971-89; Senator for Ile-et-Vilaine, 1980- ; President of Brittany regional council, 1986-

Jacques Boyon t, 27-4-89

Mayor of Pont d'Ain, 1971- ; Deputy for Ain, 1978-

Responsible for *professions libérales* at party headquarters, 1979-81.

Responsible for local government, 1981-4. Also worked in non-party group, directly with Chirac and others, based at Paris town hall. 1986-88, junior minister in defence department.

Albin Chalandon, 1-12-88

Chabaniste, former general secretary of UNR, Minister of Justice 1986-88, author.

Jean Charbonnel t, 17-4-89

Left Gaullist; junior minister 1969-73. Deputy and Mayor Brive-la Gaillarde intermittently since 1967. Left UDR and went into opposition in 1975. Returned to fold in 1979, as part of Chirac's attempt to rally Gaullist diaspora for 1981 campaign.

Philip Dechartre t, 6-12-88

Left Gaullist; junior minister 1969-72. Responsible for *Action Ouvrière et Professionnelle*, 1976-80. Resigned from RPR in 1988 in protest at move to the right.

Jean-Pierre Delalande t, 21-12-88

Deputy for Val d'Oise, 1978-81, when he was main parliamentary spokesman on participation. Lost seat in 1981; briefly in charge of AOP at rue de Lille, before moving to foreign policy, where he was member of RPR *commission exécutive*, 1981-83.

Patrick Devedjian t, 9-1-89

Mayor of Antony, 1983- ; Deputy for the Hauts de Seine, 1986-

Responsible for federations at party headquarters, 1986-8; part of Chirac's 1988 campaign team.

Hervé Fabre-Aubrespy, 25-4-89

Worked for Toubon, on elections, and for Balladur on drafting of privatization legislation. Currently *directeur de cabinet* of Alain Juppé, RPR general secretary.

André Fanton †, 21-4-89

Debréiste, UNR deputy for Paris, 1958-78, except when junior minister 1969-72. Responsible for communications, at party headquarters, 1979-81, and afterwards for opinion polling up to 1985.

François Fillon, 5-1-89

Deputy for the Sarthe, 1981- Mayor of Sablé, 1983-

Michel Giraud † 10-1-89

Mayor of le Perreux, 1971- President of Ile de France regional council, 1976-1988. Senator, 1977-88; Deputy, 1988- Chief spokesman for decentralization in the RPR

Jacques Godfrain, 21-12-88

Deputy for the Aveyron, 1978- ; National Secretary, responsible for law and order policy, 1984-88

Yves Guéna †, 5-1-89

Debréiste, Deputy for Dordogne, 1962-81, and 1986-88; Mayor of Perigueux, 1971- ; Various ministerial posts, 1967-9. General secretary of UDR, 1976, when he helped Chirac found the RPR; *Délégué Politique* of RPR, 1977-8.

Gérard Leban †, 26-4-89

Businessman who from 1978-87 set up and ran the "professional" side of the *Action Ouvrière et Professionnelle*. *Adjoint* to Chirac at Paris town hall.

Jean-François Mancel †, 20-4-89

Deputy for the Oise, 1978-81 and 1986- President of the *Conseil général* of the Oise, 1985- Responsible for commerce and artisanat at party headquarters, 1979-81. Responsible for *animation* and member of Executive Committee, 1981-4.

Michel Maurice-Bokanowski †, 14-12-88

Minister of Industry, 1962-66. Mayor of Asnières, 1959- ; Senator for the Hauts de Seine, 1968-

Pierre Messmer, 20-12-88

Prime Minister 1972-74; President of RPR group of deputies, 1986-88.

Alain Peyrefitte †, 6-12-88

Gallo-Giscardian; Minister of Justice, 1976-81, author.

Etienne Pinte †, 13-12-88

Deputy for the Yvelines, 1978-

Main parliamentary spokesman on family/demographic policy in late 1970s.

Georges Repeczky †, 6-12-88

Retired industrial manager; worked in party headquarters, for the *Action Ouvrière et Professionnelle* since the mid-1970s.

In addition to the members of the RPR, I am grateful to Dorothee Fournier and Paul Burg of *Entreprise et Progrès*, who described their work and supplied me with some of the organization's publications.

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Appendix 1 Michel Giraud on the Grass Roots against the Bureaucracy

November 1974 The town council of the commune of Le Perreux makes an application to the department of Val-de-Marne for the provision of a third municipal crèche. Reply; Le Perreux is in 25th position on the waiting list.

October 1975 The commune decides, because of the urgent need, to take charge of the project itself. Asks for a subsidy from the *District de la Région Parisienne* and from the *Caisse d'Allocations Familiales* of the department. A number of forms are filled out and despatched to the sub-prefecture (which has a right of review over all branches of the administration within its geographical area), and to the department's Social and Health Service. (The *Direction Départementale des Affaires Sanitaires et Sociales* DDASS)

End 1975 The mayor of Le Perreux receives a letter from the regional prefect; "The third crèche will be subsidized." Three new files are sent to the sub-prefecture.

Early 1976 The Prefecture demands three more files, the DDASS six.

Spring 1976 The DDASS accepts the project, but asks the commune to manage the construction. The commune accepts, on condition that the running costs of the third crèche, like the those of the first two, will be borne by the department. Condition accepted; but all the files have to be rewritten to take account of objections from the DDASS medical inspector, (even though a purpose-built and mass-produced unit is concerned). Ten copies of the new file are sent to the DDASS.

Autumn 1976 The commune accepts further recommended changes. A number of "final" documents are sent to the DDASS with the aim of getting an opinion from the safety officers. Seven further files are demanded and duly despatched. Technical approval is given.

December 1976 The prefecture asks for five more "definitive" files. The *Caisse d'Allocations Familiales* asks for one more. The construction permit is issued. Meetings are organized between the architect and the department's works and safety services.

February 1977 Definitive permission to go ahead is granted, but the contract with the building firm still has to be approved, and the commune has to be officially notified that it will receive its subsidies.

Autumn 1977 The contract is approved. The *Caisse d'Allocations Familiales* announces its agreement; the department votes through the subsidy; work commences.

March 1978 The crèche is already half-built, but the *Caisse d'Allocations Familiales* asks for thirteen more documents. The departmental and regional medical inspectors have come up with eight new recommendations. The *Caisse* will only release the subsidy if the Commune pledges in writing to follow them. New discussions, in an effort to avoid extra building work. The department appears to go back on its formal agreement to staff and equip the crèche; the mayor makes several personal interventions to get confirmation of the original agreement.

July 1978 The crèche is almost finished, and its waiting list is getting longer, but no staff or equipment have been allocated. New meetings with the DDASS to ensure that this is done.

Surprise; the completed crèche has been planned to run off an energy source which is mostly non-electric. The DDASS requires an industrial-type all-electric power-unit. Extra work has to be organized and means found of paying for it.

1979 After 5 years, 10 council meetings and 10 kilos of correspondence, the crèche opens its doors.

from Michel Giraud, *Nous Tous la France*, Paris, Jean-Claude Lattès, 1983, pp 169-171.

Appendix 2 Gary Becker's theory of consumption

Henri Lepage deploys Becker's theories to refute those diehard enemies of liberalism - in both the socialist and the conservative camps - who attack the very grounding hypothesis of classical economic theory by suggesting there is more to human motivation than "rational choice" by each individual of the action which will produce the greatest individual benefit. Do they not have a point in arguing that life only *seems* to be about choices concerning what to consume, and how to get the necessary money, because capitalism "requires" us to buy an ever-increasing flow of goods, and is prepared to spend huge sums on advertising to make sure that we do so? If left to themselves, would not people show that they are motivated by other considerations, such as love, altruism, self-respect and tradition?

We may think so, says Lepage, only because we are not familiar with the magisterial vindication of classical economics which is Gary Becker's theory of consumer behaviour. (The next few paragraphs are based on Lepage, *op cit*, *Tomorrow Capitalism...* pp 161-184) According to Becker, consumption is not the "final" act which economists have supposed it to be. People seek not market goods alone, but satisfaction, and this is only achieved by combining goods with the time it takes to enjoy them. The value of time is the value of what could have been produced (for most people: earned) in that time, and since productivity is continually increasing, time is continually increasing in value. As is normal in capitalism, production of any good leads to economising on the most expensive input, and it follows that, in all their activities, people seek to use less time. Hence, we buy more labour-saving devices, and accumulate more and more objects. Our preferences change because of a change in price - the price of time - and not because of moral decadence or a conspiracy of producers.

Becker and his followers have used this theory of consumer behaviour to explain a number of phenomena previously thought (by them) to be intractable to economic analysis. Divorce and common law marriage are on the increase because the high cost of time makes it irrational for women to stay at home and perform work which can be done by machines. (Anyone familiar with Marxism or feminism will have difficulty recognizing this

idea as "new".) Health expenditure rises as income rises because illness represents a greater cost to the higher-paid.

Why are old people more motivated by tradition than younger people, and is not adherence to traditional ways of doing things a refutation of the rationalism assumed by liberal theory? Adherence to tradition is in fact rational, says Becker, in that it saves on information costs. To abandon tradition is to "disinvest" present knowledge and "retrain" by investing in new knowledge. For old people, this new knowledge may not be needed for long, therefore it is irrational to invest in it. (Becker and Stigler, "De Gustibus non est Disputandum", in *American Economic Review* no 67, 1977 p 81; cited in Lepage, *op cit*, ... pp 176-7)

Why do people behave in an altruistic way, such as by giving money to charity? Becker's answer to this question hinges on the concept of *esteem*, which he assumes is sought by everyone - although how it is allocated may differ from one social milieu to another. But even the purchase of esteem is a function of the time/cost equation. In general, it can be assumed that the supply of altruism in the form of donated time (eg. voluntary work) will decrease as the value of time increases. Hence, in poor societies and in the working class, social solidarity, which buys esteem, is paid in time, which is cheap. In societies where time has a high value, altruism is expressed in the form of money. The new economists thus have yet another "scientific" reason for rolling back the welfare state; lower taxes mean increased individual income, and with a higher income, individuals will expand consumption of everything, including the consumption of esteem through donations to charity. Therefore, the authorities should cut taxes and welfare programmes, and the shortfall in public solidarity will be made up by private charity. (Gary Becker, "Social Interaction", in the *Journal of Political Economy*, no 82 1974. Conclusion by Lepage *op cit* pp 173-6)

Appendix 3 Guy Sorman and Liberal Theory

There is much that is unsatisfactory in Sorman's popularization of liberal theory. We have ignored it up until now, because it does not affect our main argument directly, but we prefer not to skip over it altogether. In part 4 of *La Solution Libérale*, Sorman mounts a defence of Schumpeterians against Keynesians;

The Schumpeterians, on the other hand, look to individual initiative. For them, it's managers, inventors, and traders who provoke growth. It was not consumer demand which created the car industry or the home computer, but the inventive and commercial flair of the entrepreneurs"

Elsewhere he delves even further into history to illustrate the continuity of thought between different generations of supply-siders ;

Growth is therefore - to borrow the terms of one of the founders of French liberalism, Jean-Baptiste Say - the result of supply by producers, which in turn creates consumer demand. *This supply is itself influenced by the climate, which may be encouraging or discouraging to producers.*"

Leaving aside the concession to Keynesianism in the last line (our emphasis) - Keynes himself perfectly integrated into his theory the neo-classical notion of "expectations", proposing a modest dose of interventionism precisely in order to remedy declining expectations during a slump - it is interesting to juxtapose this with what Sorman has to say about Galbraith, the *bête noire* of US liberals. In the 1970s, says Sorman,

He described the modern economy as a society dominated by giant multinationals run by an elite of managers which he called the "technostructure". The technostructure decided which products were to be launched on the market, and imposed them with the help of advertising. . . . Today, reality is the opposite of this schema. The technostructure does not know what the company is going to sell tomorrow, and it is the market which gives it the answer. If the managers make a mistake, advertising, no matter how massive, cannot do anything about it, it cannot impose a product rejected by consumers."

So, according to Sorman at one moment the producer is king, at another moment the consumer is king! A juxtaposition which makes us suspect that

his liberal programme has more to do with ideology than with scientific thinking.

- a. *Les Schumpéteriens, à l'inverse, parlent sur l'initiative individuelle. Ce sont les chefs d'entreprise, les inventeurs, les commerçants qui tirent la croissance. Ce n'est pas la demande des consommateurs qui a créé une industrie de l'automobile, de l'ordinateur individuel, mais le génie productif et commercial des entrepreneurs. (Gorman, La Solution Libérale, Paris, Fayard, 1984 p 144)*
- b. *La croissance est donc - pour reprendre les termes d'un fondateur français du libéralisme, Jean-Baptiste Say, le résultat de l'offre des producteurs qui suscite à son tour la demande des consommateurs. Cet offre est elle-même tributaire d'un climat qui encourage ou décourage les producteurs (ibidem p (v))*
- c. *Il décrivait l'économie moderne comme une société dominé par des multinationales géantes aux mains d'une élite de managers qu'il appelait "technostructure". La technostructure décidait quel produit lancer sur le marché et l'imposait grâce à la publicité,..... Aujourd'hui, la vérité est à l'inverse de ce schéma. La technostructure ne sait pas ce que la compagnie vendra demain, et c'est le marché qui le lui dit. Si elle se trompe, la publicité, même massive, n'y pourra rien, elle n'imposera pas un produit que les consommateurs refusent. (ibidem p 156-7, note 1.)*

In chapter 10 we gave a summary account of the sources of the post-war economic boom which, it was suggested, helped the French economy to grow, irrespective of the particular policies being pursued by the Gaullists. Among more detailed theories of the sources of economic growth, some have pointed to the existence of "long waves" of economic development, the so-called Kondratieff-cycle, whose shape is determined by cycles of technological innovation, and is superimposed on the business cycle familiar to Marxist and neo-classical economics. (Discussed, along with other theories, in Chris Harman, *Explaining the Crisis, a Marxist Reappraisal*, London, Bookmarks, 1984 pp132-6; also in *Le Monde, Dossiers et Documents* no 106 December 1983, *Dix ans de Crise*). Others have stressed the transfer of large numbers of workers from low-productivity agriculture to high-productivity industry. (Jean Fourastié, *Les Trente Glorieuses*, Paris, Fayard 1979; Charles Kindleberger *Economic Growth in Britain and France In 1950*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1964. Yet others belong to the "permanent arms economy" school, seeing the diversion of surplus value into waste production as a factor offsetting the long term decline in the rate of profit. (Michael Kidron *Capitalism and Theory* London Pluto Press 1974.)

As for the political conditions which can help or hinder growth, one point of view is that political stability is harmful, for it fosters the consolidation of interest groups whose defensiveness prevents or brakes salutary renewal or transformation of social relationships and working practices. (Mancur Olson, "The Political Economy of Comparative Growth Rates" in Dennis C. Mueller (ed), *The Political Economy of Growth* London, Yale University Press, 1983 pp 7-52.) Applied to France, this thesis runs up against the objection that periods of economic growth have coincided with the political domination of supposedly conservative interests and mentalities, (J-C. Asselain and C. Morisson, "Economic Growth and Interest Groups; the French Experience", in Mueller, *op cit*, pp 157-75) while the long time-scale of the economic historian points to a gradual transformation of the economic "culture" of the French business class, irrespective of political conditions. (Richard F. Kuisel, *Capitalism and the State in Modern France* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983.)

This last point in turn counters the temptation to assign too decisive a structural and cultural role to a reforming bureaucracy. (Philip G. Cerny, "Gaullism, Advanced Capitalism and the Fifth Republic", in David S. Bell (ed) *Contemporary French Political Parties* London Croom Helm 1982 pp 24-52) A completely rounded summary of all the factors which have contributed to post-war French growth would have to balance all these points, along with the contribution of American investment, industrial concentrations spelling the doom of the family firm, new patterns in social and geographical mobility, and the impact of membership of the EEC. (Jean-François Hennart, "The Political Economy of Comparative Growth Rates, the case of France", in Mueller, *op cit*, pp 176-202.)

328, 335-49, 351-2 - role / CdH & forming RPR & liblism

332 - Juppe found difficulty in form & liblism

333 - by '84 Juppe's vision / role for state opposed by ultra-liberals.

333-4 RPR writings: American new econ techniques. Juppe critical of U.S. monetarism → supply-side theory. Aubreyer + tax cuts

334-5 some RPR members try to include w/ all aspects - Reaganism. Juppe, Aubreyer, Turbon, Segoin

341 - Michel Levy collaborator of H. Madelin

342 - inability → parties & general innovative projects

343-4 - structure & operation / CdH

350-1 by late 80's Blot fully embraces supply-side economics & prod - his contribution to 1986 platform.

352 - Blot memo to Chirac 340

474 - RPR program drawn up w/out reference to party members.

475 - cross fertilization / ideas of pol clubs + Am experienced party activists. ⇒ party program (see p 315)

475-6 CNDP's contributions to ideas & RPR program.

479-80 influence / objective conditions - i.e. Socialists, poor economy - and Club de l'Horloge / neo liberal turn around.

480 - RPR shift gravity - political debate first in 1980s.

480 - party role in politics

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p35 tax reductions: '84 program p 29 '81

Atout Fr. p 37, 33, 32, 29, 39, 40

p 29 JC + '81 campaign themes, 39

p 38 inconsistency of old Gaullist policies a tax spend
68-69 - vote, Juppé + Aurillac - early 80s rethink - 1272 policies p 102, 131, 133, 4, 179, 242 (double quote)

71 - Club 89 p 179, 100

p 97/1140 - Elie Coeurpie was influence on econ policies in JC
p 106 Juppé dropped f RPR cbc 1981

p 119 Debra '81 candidacy (wealth tax)

p 126 - Panzianco's thesis: Δ + orgat'l reform

318 Bokanowski's call f tax reform: late 70s

318 " " conversion & lib'lism

322 influence Chalandon for lib'l conversion - Gaullists but did not try Δ party 314

324 " / Peyrefitte

325 - many politicians do not date JC's conversion 1981

225 - What was '81 program about? Why those measures?

110 - Yvan Blot p 204 - Club Historique rolling back St p 149, 326, 328, 204 that p 288 p 338+

118-22 Debra's candidacy in '81

123-26 Gaullist ministers - govt + response to Chirac 1976-81

128-29 policymaking in RPR: parliamentary party, 100 de Lille, Chirac's advisers - p 145

151 - RPR + grassroots revolt against - state? not big influence T-182

218+ what explains RPR's liberal turn

222 JC's attitude programs

222 RPR + RR / impact, RR p 291

209 - Libres et Responsables authored by J-L Boulanger

152-53 - liberalism not transferred f - periphery centre

153+ Peyrefitte, Grand : critic of role of St.

205 Juppé Levier de l'Espérance p 370-7 that 32

160+ - new RPR members + MPs - already neoliberals or converts?

p 163 - converts post '81. p 165-6, 168

p 166+ rare when new élus already liberals: Desodjian p 199

p 126 FN @ Deux = 1983: Euro election 237

p 175-7 - associat'l life of French not ↑

179 - re-cuing think tanks

189-90 JC + interventionist approach in Paris but gradually turning to private sector

192 - Paris law taxi

95-6 MEO 119-20, 122, 135, 143 that 74, 139 that 49 [96 Atout France

97 - Friedmann, Ely + Juppé

194-5 - J. Boyon does not have liberal credentials - RPR majors - 1985

196 - RPR majors very state interventionist

197 - " " blend of lib'lism + interventionism - 201

194, 197 - P. Aubergier 1326, 251 (+ tax), 333

2013 experience - local govt + mayors did not contribute much to RPR's programmatic dropout.

201 - 1983 local elections not forgot = lib'l platform

214-217 - styling party programs - r determining factors. a theoretical discussion

215-16 - wrong v hail end / ideology: 1970s.

216 taxes public spending + source / voter cleavage

218 party competition not an explanation of RPR's lib'l turn 236

218 public opinion ignored - deciding RPR strategy + program writing

218 2 strategies of Chirac in '81 - move center or v. rt

219 Semis sees electioneering rhetoric as most important factor / RPR's liberal turn

322-4 Chirac attacks + Escard + reactionary policies due to party pole rivalry rather than ideological differ. 322, 324-5

324 - Peyrefitte sees failures, Carter-Castellan judgement of success, M.T. RR as important in liberalization / RPR 325