

THE FRENCH SOCIALISTS AND EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

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The French Socialist concept of Europe has been penetrated by a profound ambivalence: historically, Europe was valued insofar as it prolonged the internationalist traditions of French socialism, but it was feared because of the diminution of national sovereignty it implied. The tension between these two imperatives has characterised the history of the Socialist relationship to Europe. In this chapter, we shall consider first the historical relationship between French socialism and the European Community; second, the evolution of Socialist policy towards the EC during the 1980s; before, thirdly, concentrating upon the specific sphere of EC institutional reform; and finally, considering how the internal dynamics of the French Socialist party have had an impact upon the party's relationship with the EC.

French Socialism and Europe in Historical Perspective

The French Socialists were internationalists (rather than mere Europeanists) by tradition, proudly claiming the heritage of Jean Jaurès and the Second International. During the interwar period, the SFIO¹ had supported the League of Nations; this was transformed into support for the United Nations (UN) in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War. When the UN proved itself incapable of providing a genuine mechanism of collective security with the onset of the cold war, the Socialists declared themselves resolutely pro-European. The unification of Europe was portrayed by SFIO leader Guy Mollet as a means of strengthening the West against the Soviet threat: Europeanism and Atlanticism were mutually self-reinforcing.² In fact, the party was split between federalist Europeans, fervent Atlanticists, and those occupying a median stance, such as Mollet. During the Fourth Republic (1946-1958), the SFIO declared itself an enthusiastic supporter of Europe, aligning itself with the main initiatives culminating in the Treaty of Rome

of 1957.³ Under Mollet's guidance, the SFIO envisaged the building of socialism within Europe as a preliminary to its construction within France; this theoretical position conveniently postponed indefinitely the pursuit of socialism within France, and allowed the party to participate with a clear ideological conscience in pro-European, centre-right coalitions during the Fourth Republic. Beneath the veneer of the SFIO's supranational discourse, however, ambiguities and inconsistencies remained. Mollet's Socialist-led administration of 1956-57 performed a leading role in negotiating and ratifying the Treaty of Rome, and yet Mollet was instrumental in writing safeguards into the treaty to limit transfers of national sovereignty. And while the SFIO stressed the economic advantages to be gained from a free market, there remained a feeling of unease at being affiliated with a liberal, capitalist association of nations.⁴

In the Fifth Republic, Socialist attitudes towards Europe were strongly influenced by relationships with other parties (notably the French Communist Party- PCF), as well as by internal dynamics within the Socialist movement itself. The firmly pro-EC, pro-Atlantic stance of Mollet's SFIO gradually gave way in the early 1970s to a tougher anti-Americanism, and a more reserved attitude towards the European Community. This reflected both gradual Socialist acceptance of the Gaullist foreign policy legacy, and a tactical accommodation by the new Socialist Party (PS) leader Mitterrand to reach an agreement with the PCF. This shift in Socialist European policy thus took place at least in part for reasons of domestic expediency. Europe itself was rarely deliberated on its own merits.

The party's new radicalism towards Europe was developed in a series of policy documents: the 1972 party programme Changer la vie, the PS-PCF

Common programme of June 1972, the final motion carried by the Bagnolet congress of December 1973. A reluctant acceptance of the European Community in these documents was combined with a primordial emphasis on the national character of the future French socialist experience, and, most revealingly, with a *gaullien*-style belief in the superiority of the French experience over those of its European counterparts. This was affirmed the final motion of the PS Bagnolet congress, which declared that: 'The future evolution of Europe towards Socialism will depend upon the success or failure of the Socialists in France'.⁵ Throughout the 1970s, the actual mechanisms of operation of the European Community were subordinated to debates of a more theoretical (and ultimately less relevant) character: such as whether the French 'break' with capitalism could be exported, or whether socialism was compatible with a Community based on principles of free trade and economic liberalism. The party's discourse relating to Europe was designed to reinforce the idea that a Socialist government in France would be fully in control of its own destiny and that the victorious left would not face insurmountable barriers from European capitalism, or a hostile European Community. The order of priorities established by Mollet's SFIO was thus reversed: priority was to be accorded to the national context, which would spur other European nations to follow the French Socialist example.

The Socialist Party's official position on Europe was heavily influenced by intra-party, as well as inter-party considerations. As party leader, Mitterrand displayed considerable political skill in achieving a difficult balance between the opposing, potentially irreconcilable wings of the Socialist party. At the Bagnolet congress of 1973, Mitterrand successfully isolated the remnants of the SFIO within the new party (by a text which was highly critical with regard to NATO); and constrained the left-wing

CERES faction to tone down its virulent anti-Europeanism. That Mitterrand managed to distance the Socialist party from the supranationalism characteristic of the old SFIO was essential for the survival of the united left alliance. And yet it was imperative to refute the nationalist theses espoused by the CERES faction, which would have transformed the PS into an anti-EC party.

The critical tone adopted by Mitterrand's PS towards the European Community from 1971-74 was in part an instrumental response to the exigencies of the party's factional and coalitional politics. Mitterrand's own European credentials were not in doubt.⁶ As candidate of the united left in the 1974 presidential election, Mitterrand adopted what one commentator has called a 'centrist position' in relation to European debate.⁷ This involved a moderation of previous hardline positions, without resorting to the SFIO's classical supranationalism. During the 1974 campaign, Mitterrand pledged that France would contribute to reinforcing the EC structures, called for the creation of a common defence policy, and urged a democratisation of European institutions. In November 1974 Mitterrand declared himself interested by Giscard's propositions relating to European Political Union. This new stance reflected Mitterrand's 1974 presidential bid and his successful attempt to project himself as the natural alternative presidential leader.

Socialist discourse on Europe to some extent reflected changing domestic political priorities. This pattern was reasserted after the left's defeat in the 1978 legislative election; a toughened stance on Europe was a by-product of Mitterrand's attempt to secure the Socialist nomination for the 1981 presidential election. The issue of Europe figured prominently in the debates preceding the PS congress of Metz in 1979. Mitterrand was suspected of weakening his commitment to the EC, in order to

facilitate an alliance with the left-wing CERES faction in an attempt to bar rival Michel Rocard from contesting the party's 1981 presidential nomination. It was noteworthy that the PS manifesto for the 1979 European election, drafted by the Metz majority, was far less integrationist than that agreed in Brussels with other European Socialist parties one year earlier.⁸ But the 1979 PS manifesto did outline a series of demands that recurred persistently throughout the 1980s: the need for common EC policies in key industrial sectors (such as Iron and steel, shipbuilding, textiles, and aerospace), the necessity for a coherent European social policy, and reform of the CAP.⁹ French dirigiste traditions were thereby extended to the European sphere.

Beneath the party's Socialist rhetoric of the 1970s, it was easy to discern an underlying thread of pro-European realism; this was expressed, for instance, in the party's majority support for the direct election of the European parliament. Socialist European policy was a delicate tightrope exercise throughout the 1970s. Mitterrand managed to ensure a minimal pro-European position which isolated manifest opponents of the EC, in the CERES faction and elsewhere, but which parted ways with traditional notions of supranationalism.

The Evolution of Socialist policy towards the EC, 1981-93

Prior to Mitterrand's election as President, the European community had rarely been debated upon its own merits, but was subordinated to the imperatives of internal politics. The prevalence of the national perspective was evident in Mitterrand's 1981 campaign, in which only cursory attention was paid to Europe. Of Mitterrand's 110 propositions, only three dealt with Europe. Any assessment of the French Socialist party and the EC during the Mitterrand presidency must distinguish

between, on the one hand, the evolution of presidential policy and the activities of the various Socialist governments; and, on the other hand, the policy positions and attitudes adopted by the party itself.

During the early period of the Mitterrand presidency (1981-83), it was difficult to distinguish between the two: both the party stricto sensu, and the executive were largely absorbed by domestic policy. European policy had traditionally formed a part of the presidential 'reserved domain', yet Mitterrand appeared rather uninterested in Europe, preferring instead ambitious foreign policy initiatives designed at portraying the new President as champion of the Third World. At this early stage, Europe was conceived of primarily in terms of policies, rather than institutional reform: this order of priorities was outlined in the French government's 'Memorandum on the Revitalisation of the Community' of October 1981. The memorandum called for united European action in a wide variety of spheres, including economic policy, industrial policy, and a coordinated EC-wide economic relaunch to combat rising unemployment.¹⁰ The central proposal - EC wide reflation - was dismissed with a mixture of bemusement and ironic disbelief by France's EC partners, all pursuing tough anti-inflation policies. Only after it had become clear that France's partners had no interest in following his 'socialist' lead was Mitterrand forced to deal with Europe as it existed in reality.

President Mitterrand's neo-Keynesian attempt to reflate the French economy after May 1981 was clearly at odds with the economic policies pursued by France's main trading partners. The failure of Mitterrand's initial activism revealed unambiguously that French economic policy, facing grave problems domestically, was not for export.¹¹ And yet the European dimension was central to domestic economic policy. For most observers, unilateral Keynesian reflationary policies were no longer

possible for a medium-sized nation such as France in an interdependent world economy. The critical turning point in Mitterrand's first presidential term arose in March 1983, when the President was forced to arbitrate between two opposing economic policies in a move which set the course for the rest of his presidency. The choice lay between whether to remain within the European Monetary System (EMS), devalue the franc for the third time and accept a tough anti-inflationary economic package; or else to withdraw from the EMS, adopt protectionist measures for French industry and continue on the reflationary path traced since May 1981. After much hesitation, Mitterrand chose the former course of action, confirming thereby that France could neither isolate itself through adopting protectionism, nor indefinitely pursue different economic policies from those of its main trading partners.

At a lower level, this debate occurred within the party: the PS was split between those who advocated reluctant acceptance of the new austerity policy in support of the President, and those, such as J-P Chevènement, who contested the foundation of such a policy in the name of national independence and the pursuit of Socialist objectives. Chevènement's alternative economic strategy would have involved a leap into the unknown; its critics contended that it would have marginalised France within Europe, and resulted in even tougher austerity measures to defend the franc. Moreover, any protectionist measures would have invited retaliation from France's principal trading partners. And yet, the party leadership was clearly disoriented by the magnitude of the economic u-turn of 1982-83 and initially sought solace in the belief that the change in economic policy would only prove to be a temporary affair. Once it became apparent that the new economic direction was to be a permanent feature of government policy, the party leadership reluctantly adjusted its political message and supported the government. This policy

choice was of vital importance for the European debate within the party. Acceptance of the European constraint, however reluctantly, dictated a policy-choice based on that of economic convergence with France's EC partners; the refusal to cede to the imperatives of the European constraint logically dictated a political strategy predicated upon the celebration of national independence, at the expense of possible isolation within the EC. The former viewpoint formally prevailed at the party's 1983 congress.¹²

While officially supportive of the new economic direction, however, party policy simultaneously advocated neo-Keynesian measures of European-wide economic relaunch at variance with government policy. Such concerns peppered the PS manifesto for the 1984 European election, which also urged coordinated EC industrial policies to fight off the challenges of Japan and the US.¹³ The PS continued to portray Europe in terms of a conflict between the forces of progress and the Right, a conception which had arguably been transcended by Mitterrand's espousal of the European cause in key speeches such as that to the German Bundestag in January 1983, or that to the Strasbourg Assembly in May 1984. In time, however, the Socialists followed the lead provided for them by their President. Once the PS had officially accepted the turning implied by March 1983, it was virtually condemned to follow the President of the Republic on related issues; this was expressed notably, for example, by PS support for the Single European Act in 1986, notwithstanding severe misgivings from sections of the party.

The Single European Act was accepted without any real public debate within the PS, through solidarity with President Mitterrand before the 1988 presidential election.¹⁴ In various later policy documents the PS denounced the 'liberal' interpretation of the Act, which sought to

transform the EC into an arena for 'naked deregulation'. In its 1989 European manifesto, for instance, the party specifically criticised certain measures introduced by the Act, such as the ending of exchange controls, and certain effects of fiscal harmonisation.¹⁵ The 1989 manifesto argued that the effects of the single market 'could be negative in the short term', and urged that the single market be accompanied by measures to combat unemployment. The party was adamant upon the need for the social charter to accompany moves towards the single market. In essence, the PS was unwilling to allow the EC to be reduced to an 'extended free trade zone' of the type advocated by Mrs Thatcher, an interpretation vigorously rejected by Mitterrand as well. As a counterpart to the Single European Act, the PS called for increased social and economic coherence between member-states, embodied by coordinated EC programmes to promote growth and employment, and for a range of new common policies. The party's official support for the Maastricht treaty stemmed in part from the belief that the 'social chapter' rectified the free market excesses of the single European Act. In the absence of a Socialist Europe, definitively buried in March 1983, the French Socialists insisted upon the imperative of social, economic and industrial counterweights to a predominantly liberal and capitalist European Community.

The French Socialists and EC Institutional Reform

During the early phase of the French Socialist government (1981-83), French policy was underpinned by attention to the prerogatives of national sovereignty. The government consistently favoured concern with policies over institutions, preferring to maintain the institutional status quo, rather than envisage endangering the national safeguards obtained by Guy Mollet and General de Gaulle.¹⁶ The issue of majority

voting was particularly sensitive, since it appeared likely that majority votes during this period would go against France. The party supported the 1966 Luxembourg compromise, which allowed any member-state to oppose a veto on issues of 'vital national interest'. The French government - like the British - was initially cautious over initiatives aimed at EC institutional reform, such as the Genscher-Colombo reform proposals of 1981, the Spinelli initiative of 1982 or the European Parliament's draft European Union Treaty (EUT) of 1984.¹⁷ Throughout his presidency, Mitterrand remained favourable, *grosso modo*, to an intergovernmental model of EC decision-making, as had Presidents Giscard d'Estaing, Pompidou and de Gaulle before him. It was the responsibility of national leaders to 'preside and decide'.¹⁸ The nature of the French presidency itself, by any comparative measurement a key political office within the EC, incited French Presidents to favour vital national decisions being taken by national leaders. The length of the presidential mandate, moreover, meant that the French President could be confident of following through his European initiatives to their fruition. Yet, in the interests of enhanced European integration and the pursuance of French policy objectives (notably in relation to social and monetary policy), Mitterrand proved more willing than any of his predecessors to consent to and indeed initiate reforms of the ECs institutional structures.

The standard adopted by the party closely followed the government's priority concern with policies rather than institutions. In its 1984 European manifesto, for instance, the PS was reluctant to deal with the issue of Community reform; it denounced the draft EUT as a 'federalist constitution'. There was, however, a notable discrepancy between the attitude of the PS leadership in Paris, and the more integrationist approach adopted by Socialist MEPs in Strasbourg. There was

considerable reluctance on the part of the European deputies to follow orders to vote against the draft European Union Treaty in 1984.¹⁹ Given its affirmed anti-federalist stance, the (national) party was understandably shaken by Mitterrand's pledge to support the treaty at his speech to the Strasbourg Assembly in May 1984.

The Socialist party had consistently emphasised the importance of promoting common European policies, rather than engaging in reforms of the ECs institutional structure. The party was willing to go along with the institutional reforms, initiated by Mitterrand and others, while finding it difficult to summon up excessive enthusiasm in this respect. By 1986, the Socialists openly recognised the link between institutional and policy reforms: moves towards greater majority voting in the European Council, for example, would facilitate the adoption of measures promoting a 'social Europe'. In this respect, as in others, the Socialists followed the lead provided by their President.

The major institutional reforms contained in the Single European Act and in the Maastricht Treaty lie outside of the boundaries of the present chapter. To recall briefly, the Single European Act gave the European Parliament the power of co-decision with the (intergovernmental) Council in relation to the measures needed to bring about the single European market by January 1st 1993, an important step in the direction of supranationality. The Act also decreed that the European Council would be able to oppose the Parliament only by unanimous opposition to its decisions. Both provisions exceeded French proposals.²⁰ The Act left largely intact the intergovernmental basis of decision-making within the Community: the Council of Ministers remained the key institution, and the rule of unanimity was retained for all matters except those relating to the single market. In practice, however, the momentum created by the

Act led to the virtual abandoning of the unanimity rule, and the advent of majority voting as the norm within the European Council. The only sustained attempt to resurrect the veto since 1986 related to the French threat in 1992/3 to veto the EC-US compromise agreement over GATT. The Maastricht treaty, analysed below, went further in the direction of supranationality, without fundamentally challenging the intergovernmental basis of the Community.

In the following section, we shall consider the evolution of official Socialist attitudes towards the Commission, the European parliament, and the concept of political and economic union.

The Supranational Institutions: I. The Commission The Socialists' initial reluctance to envisage any major reform of EC institutions masked a suspicion of supranationalism inherent in the European Parliament, the European Court of Justice and the Commission. The interventionist economic policy initially pursued within France brought the Socialist government into frequent conflict with the Commission. Complaints against the French assumed two characteristics: that it was adopting protectionist measures contrary to the Treaty of Rome, and that it was channelling state-aid to lame-duck industries.²¹ The Commission's veto in 1991 of the takeover of the Canadian aerospace company de Havilland by the state firm Aerospatiale was met with ill-disguised fury by the French government.²² Throughout the period leading upto the Maastricht summit agreement of December 1991, the Socialists' flowery rhetoric favouring European integration was somewhat difficult to reconcile with attacks against the supranational pretensions of the Commission, even though headed by Frenchman Jacques Delors after January 1985. The French negotiators in the intergovernmental conferences preceding Maastricht were determined to ensure that the

Commission's power should remain limited, and that it should be excluded from the proposed common foreign and security policy, much to the dismay of Delors. Indeed, the Maastricht treaty fell well below the expectations of Delors, since it rested too firmly on the existing intergovernmental bases of EC decision-making. The Commission emerged as a favoured object of criticism for both sides in the Maastricht referendum campaign of September 1992.

II. The Parliament The French Socialists consistently took a minimalist view towards the powers of the European Parliament: this reflected a long preoccupation with national sovereignty, as well as the centralising traditions and the notion of the indivisibility of the French Republic. There was also the belief that it was preferable to strengthen the intergovernmental Council of Ministers, rather than the near-impotent Parliament. In the pre-Maastricht negotiations, Mitterrand originally proposed more joint meetings of parliamentarians from the European Parliament and from national parliaments. These meetings would perform a purely consultative role, with the Parliament thereby deprived of its existing powers.²³ In both the Single European Act and the Maastricht treaty, Mitterrand was obliged to accept rather more authority for the European Parliament than he had initially intended.

Mitterrand's reluctance was shared by his party. The relative isolation of the French stance was illustrated at a joint session of European parliamentarians in November 1990 at Rome: this conference was attended by representatives of the European Parliament (one-third) and the National Parliaments (two-thirds). The conference overwhelmingly adopted a text calling for co-decision for the Parliament with the Council. The confusion reigning within the PS was illustrated by the fact that all other European Socialist parties accepted the Rome text, while the PS

opposed it.²⁴ Simultaneously, a Fabius-Dumas amendment to the party's 1990 European manifesto urged that a new European Senate be created, to be composed of representatives of the national parliaments, as well as European deputies, in order to rectify 'the worrying loss of power' of national parliaments to Community institutions.²⁵

Political and Economic Union: beyond Intergovernmentalism? For all of his genuine attachment to Europe and his rhetorical commitment to European integration, Mitterrand revealed a strong preference for intergovernmentalism as the proper method of conducting the Community's affairs: nation-states had a primordial role to play in building a more integrated Europe. In the period leading up to the Maastricht summit, there was a determination amongst Mitterrand's advisors to limit the supranational aspirations of the Commission President, Delors, as well as to resist attempts to make the European Parliament more democratic and to extend the scope of its competence unduly. At Maastricht, Mitterrand accepted *some* strengthening of the Commission and the European Parliament.²⁶ But this was counterbalanced by the Summit's expressed aim of moving towards a single European currency by 1999 (at the latest) and by provisions for the new common foreign and security policy, both of which excluded the Commission and (initially at least) strengthened the role of the European Council.²⁷ In the appreciation of J-P Cot:

Mitterrand attaches a decisive importance to the European Council in the process of building Europe. This is undoubtedly due to the role he has performed as an active participant in this Council for twelve years. But for him this is not incompatible with a closer European federation of a supranational character.²⁸

As on other occasions, party policy evolved in line with presidential

preoccupations, albeit imperfectly. The PS European manifesto of November 1990 represented the party's fullest statement of European policy for almost twenty years.²⁹ The PS manifesto stressed the need for common social, economic and monetary policies within the EC, as well as an 'external affirmation' of the Community on the international scene. The party refused any early enlarging of the EC to encompass the new democracies of Eastern Europe, but declared its support for Mitterrand's proposed European Confederation as the most effective means of responding to the collapse of Communism.³⁰ While the PS manifesto called for a European central bank, and a single currency, this bank would have to operate 'within the context of orientations given by the relevant political authority': any moves towards monetary union and a single currency must be accompanied by real democratic controls. Given the promixity of party-president ties, especially in the principally presidential sphere of European policy, it was likely that the party's manifesto represented Mitterrand's own priorities over economic and monetary union.

At Maastricht, President Mitterrand was far more willing to accept derogations of national sovereignty in the economic sphere than in the political. This reflected the fact that since 1983, the French economy had become increasingly integrated with those of neighbouring EC economies; and that European monetary policy was already supranational, insofar as the EMS imposed similar economic policies on member-states. Quite apart from the benefits of economic and monetary union, Mitterrand calculated that a single currency and a European central bank would allow the French a greater influence over monetary policy, currently monopolised by the German Bundesbank. The commitment to economic union illustrated the extent to which Mitterrand had fully integrated the European constraint into his

conception of France and Europe: it testified to the irreversible nature of the u-turn undertaken in 1983 and to the new confidence felt in future French economic performance. On economic and monetary union, Mitterrand had every reason to be satisfied: the fixing of a staged timetable for the creation of a single currency by 1999 at the latest was Mitterrand's greatest summit achievement. The final treaty locked the EC more firmly into economic integration (the objective of a single currency by 1999) than it made real concessions to the principle of political union. To this extent, it responded more accurately to French priorities than to German ones.

Socialist Party Dynamics and the EC

Throughout its history (1971-93), internal party dynamics have had a bearing upon PS attitudes towards the EC in several ways. In this final section, we shall consider the relationship between President Mitterrand and the PS as the presidential party; the relations between the national PS leadership and the Socialist group in Strasbourg; and the extent of intra-party dissent over Europe within the PS.

The president-party relationship In the Fifth Republic, the presidential party has tended to exist in a subordinate relationship to the President.³¹ *Grosso modo*, the Socialist party fitted into this model throughout its two periods in office, from 1981-86 and (to a lesser extent) 1988-93. Apart from the systemic pressures of the Fifth Republic, this subordination bore testament to the influence exercised by Mitterrand over the party he had restored to fortune in the 1970s. Party vassalisation also stemmed from the fact that Europe had traditionally formed a part of the presidential reserved sector. Finally, the mitterrandiste party leadership felt a duty of solidarity with the president

and his governments.

It was revealed above how the Socialist party's stance on the EC throughout the Mitterrand presidency drew its inspiration from President Mitterrand's changing position on the Community: party positions usually echoed presidential decisions, albeit typically after a delay. In fact, there were more or less subtle differences of emphasis between Mitterrand and his party. These stemmed in part from the different functions party and president were called upon to perform. In his role as President of the French and as a leading European statesman, Mitterrand increasingly advocated the cause of European integration as one which transcended left and right. Party leaders, on the other hand, were far more likely to portray the European debate in terms of traditional divisions between a 'Europe of the Right' and a 'Socialist Europe'. As representatives of a party organisation, Socialist politicians such as Jospin and Fabius (respectively heads of the PS list in the 1984 and 1989 European elections) could criticise the shortcomings of 'liberal' Europe, epitomised in Margaret Thatcher's Britain, more overtly than President Mitterrand, who was constrained to a measure of diplomatic restraint.³²

The evolution of PS doctrine on Europe closely paralleled that of President Mitterrand, but there were instances of political and policy dissension between party and president. We saw above how, in 1984, the party's official anti-federalist position stood uneasily alongside Mitterrand's abrupt commitment to the cause of European integration in his speech to the European parliament in May 1984. The deteriorating relationship between party and president in the 1990s manifested itself in the sphere of European policy, as in others: there was considerable exasperation within the PS leadership that Mitterrand decided to put the

Maastricht Treaty to a - constitutionally unnecessary - referendum in September 1992, thereby subjecting the party itself to the real possibility of public disavowal six months before the 1993 National Assembly elections.

Relations between Paris and Strasbourg French Socialist euro-deputies have always performed a prominent role within the European Parliament, where the PS forms an influential member of the European Socialist group, the largest after the 1989 European elections. After 1989, the French Socialist Jean-Pierre Cot achieved a high profile as President of the Socialist Group within the European Parliament. According to Cot:

The relationship between the Socialist party's national leadership and the European deputies is a very relaxed one. The Paris leadership imposes few directives on its European deputies and leaves them with considerable freedom of manoeuvre. This was not always the case, however, especially between 1979 and 1984, when the party's European deputies were more subject to central party control. Since 1984, there has not been one occasion when the central party has had to impose its views upon the European party.³³

The PS national leadership has in the past affirmed a right of oversight and control. In a policy statement adopted by the party's Directing Committee in 1978, for instance, the PS declared that 'French Socialist euro-deputies are naturally subjected to the exercise of party discipline'.³⁴ In practice, the Socialist group in Strasbourg has enjoyed considerable autonomy, and has revealed itself to be consistently more federally-inclined than metropolitan deputies. The evolution of official party policy towards firmer support for European integration comforted the position of most Socialist euro-deputies.

The major influence exercised by the national party over its European delegation occurs at the level of candidate selection, rather than through any crude attempt to control the voting record of the Socialist European deputies. French European deputies are elected by a fixed national list system of proportional representation. The top twenty or so places on the PS list secure election. The distribution of places on the PS list is determined by complex negotiations between the party's main factions, with each awarded places in proportion to its percentage weight within the party, as expressed at the biennial national Congress. Factional rivalries are considerably lessened once the election has taken place.

Neither the European Socialist Group, nor the French delegation are monolithic. Divisions amongst French Socialist European deputies occasionally stem from their metropolitan factional allegiance, but these are rare. One such example occurred in relation to the 1982 Spinelli initiative: left-wing CERES European deputies wanted nothing to do with the Spinelli initiative, whereas Rocard's supporters strongly backed it. As a general rule, however, European deputies have been less afflicted by factional rivalries than their metropolitan counter-parts. A more common source of division relates to conflict between the European Socialist group, and the position adopted by the French delegation. When there is an open conflict between the delegation and the Group, a proportion of euro-deputies will invariably side with the group, rather than the delegation.

Within the European Group itself, the French Socialists have occupied a clearly identifiable minority position in relation to several key policies, such as agriculture, the location of the European parliament, and the importance of civil nuclear energy. Apart from these specific issues, where the national interest prevails, Cot believes that the French

delegation is 'at the very heart of the Group's activities'.³⁵

Intra-party tensions From the creation of Mitterrand's PS in 1971, the real line of division over Europe was not fully reflected within the party's official factions. While the leftwing CERES was consistently minimalist towards the EC, the other main groupings contained within their ranks fervent Europeans, as well as determined opponents of European 'technocracy'.³⁶ Party divisions over Europe were thus cross-cutting. These divisions were revealed in relation to a broad spectrum of policies and conceptions of Europe. In the ensuing section we shall consider several key themes which expose the divisions existing within the party over Europe. This ought not to minimise the broad level of pro-European sentiment amongst the French Socialists of most persuasions, especially after the economic choice of March 1983 revealed the illusory character of attempting to build Socialism in one country:

Supranationality versus national sovereignty The Socialist Party contained the full range of positions along the supranational - national continuum. This included avowed federalists in the tradition of Jean Monnet, such as Jacques Delors, who favoured strengthening the Community's supranational institutions, such as the Commission and the Parliament. The mainstream sentiment within the party was articulated by Mitterrand who adopted a central position: the promotion of European integration was allied with a preference for strengthening intergovernmental, rather than supranational decision-making procedures. At the other extreme, those such as Chevenement refused any (further) delegations of national sovereignty to EC institutions. The 1981-93 period proved that, in the interests of enhanced European integration and the pursuance of French policy objectives (notably in relation to social and monetary policy), Mitterrand was more willing than

any of his predecessors to consent to and indeed initiate reforms of the ECs institutional structures.

The role of Germany German unification provoked an underlying tension over Europe within the PS. Amongst the leftwing Socialisme et République (ex-CERES) faction, there had long existed an almost pathological distrust of Germany and German intentions.³⁷ Chevenement's opposition to the Maastricht treaty stemmed above all from the belief that Republican France must not succumb to German domination, in the monetary, political or economic spheres. Other Socialist politicians were less overtly anti-German. French administrations since 1981 had reasserted the centrality of the Franco-German partnership within the EC, and President Mitterrand not only established a 'special relationship' with Helmut Kohl, but was associated with each of the initiatives culminating in moves to greater European political and economic integration at Maastricht. And yet, fears of the economic and political weight of the unified German state permeated French governments, as well as sections of the Socialist party, and were expressed by both sides in the Maastricht referendum campaign. For supporters, a tight European union of the type proposed by the Maastricht treaty was the only means of providing a corset to tie the unified German state into western Europe and prevent neutralist temptations. For opponents such as Chevenement, on the contrary, the Maastricht treaty provided the instrument for enhanced German domination of western Europe. It was unsurprising that the traditional Franco-German axis emerged rather bruised from the French referendum campaign.

Economic and monetary Union At an official level, Socialist party policy was one of resolute support for the Maastricht treaty, including moving

towards monetary union by 1999, or before. This position barely concealed serious policy divisions. Party opponents of Maastricht argued that the EMS already tied all other countries to the German mark, and, thereby, to German economic policy. Full economic and monetary union would render this process irreversible, depriving French governments of their residual economic sovereignty.³⁸ This was another version of the political voluntarism versus economic constraints debate engaged within the party in 1983. Although majority party opinion firmly backed the Maastricht treaty, party declarations tended to imply that economic and monetary union was vital because it was a means of recovering control over economic policy from the grasp of the Bundesbank, and that the future European central bank would be subjected to enhanced French influence.

Conclusion

From 1984 onwards, the idea of Europe was a guiding theme and justification for President Mitterrand's political activity. European Community policy comprised the principal area in which Mitterrand could perform a proactive role. Far from being constrained merely to react to events, as in economic policy, the French president successfully promoted his own European agenda: more than any other European leader, François Mitterrand lay behind initiatives culminating in the Single European Act and the Maastricht treaty. It was a positive feature of Mitterrand's political leadership that he was able to provide a far-sighted vision of Europe's future which captured the imagination of European peoples well beyond the hexagon.

The Socialist party consistently followed the lead provided for it by President Mitterrand. The construction of Europe acted as ideological

leitmotiv for the party, arguably for the lack of anything better. After 1983, the Socialists gradually reverted in practice to Guy Mollet's formula whereby Europe provided a surrogate sphere of political activity that could compensate for the party's inability or unwillingness to transform French society. Thus, the evolution of the party's stance in relation to the European Community was itself indicative of its self-confidence and its sense of purpose within the domestic French political scene. Europe became the focus of attention on those occasions when the party appeared disorientated by policy u-turns in the domestic sphere. The Socialist commitment to European integration fulfilled several other functions. It helped to justify the painful economic u-turn of March 1983 by placing it within a broader European context. It helped to restore a degree of credibility on the party after the policy excesses of the 'state of grace' (1981-82). It comprised an ideal which was sufficiently vague to allow most currents within the party to agree in principle.

The party's attitude towards the European Community was partially shaped by the dynamics of the French political system. It followed the lead provided for it by President Mitterrand, often rather uncomfortably. As with other French parties, the PS was divided in relation to Europe. The oppositional role performed by J-P Chevenement during the Maastricht referendum campaign left observers to predict a formal split within the party. And yet, the PS was the least divided of the mainstream parties over Europe; less so than the RPR, or the UDF. Finally, the PS was not a monolithic entity. There were subtle differences of opinion between the party leadership, and the more integrationist PS European deputies; as well as over specific issues relating to political and monetary union.

The old dream of the French Socialist Party acting as an inspirational

guide for others to imitate had to be shelved after the economic u-turn of 1983. French socialism was recalled to order by external constraints, rather than the reverse. The party's recognition of the European constraint represented more than a mere choice in favour of the EC. Acceptance of the need for economic convergence also testified to the economic transformation that had occurred during the Mitterrand presidency. The PS gradually came to accept the imperative of European institutional reform engaged in the single European Act, and the Maastricht treaty, although it never shared the obsession with institutional reform of prominent Socialists such as Commission President Delors, or, indeed, Mitterrand himself, and maintained an ideological register to the 'left' of the Socialist government. By 1993, however, any PS reversion to the doctrine of the early 1980s that 'Europe will be socialist, or not at all' appeared distinctly improbable.

Notes

1. *Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière*, the party's official title from 1920-1969.
2. See G. Prosche, 'L'identité européenne du Parti socialiste français', Revue du Marché Commun, no. 343, January 1991, pp. 49-56.
3. The exception to the party's pro-European stance was the proposed European Defence Community (the 'European Army'), first proposed in 1951, which was intended to accompany German rearmament. This was finally defeated by the French National Assembly in 1954; SFIO opposition secured the fate of the treaty. A bitter legacy of anti-Germanism manifested itself within the party's ranks; the EC itself was envisaged as a corset to prevent Germany from dominating the continent.
4. See Gerbet, P., 'Les Partis politiques et les communautés', in Rideau, J., et al. La France et les communautés européennes, Paris, Librairie générale du droit et de la jurisprudence, 1975, pp. 81-85.
5. Cited in Le Poing et la rose, supplement to no. 73, August 1978.
6. A. Cole, François Mitterrand: a Study in Political Leadership, London, Routledge, 1994, chapter eight (forthcoming).
7. Pinto Lyra, R., La Gauche en France et la construction européenne, Paris, Librairie générale du droit et de la jurisprudence, 1978, p. 253.
8. Le Poing et la rose, no. 72, July 1978. The French delegation to the Brussels meeting of 1978 comprised Michel Rocard, Jacques Delors, Jean-Pierre Cot and Robert Pontillon.

9. Le Poing et la rose - spécial responsables, no.81, 3 May 1979.
10. 'The Hopes and Holes in Mitterrand's Plan', The Economist, 17 October 1991.
11. The attempt to reflate the French economy after 1981 led to a severe disjunction of the French economy: the trade deficit doubled from 50 billion francs in 1981, to 93 billion in 1982; inflation stood at over 20% by end-1982, the budget deficit represented well over 3% of GNP. Figures from B. Belassa, 'Five years of Socialist economic policy in France: a balance sheet', The Tocqueville Review, vol. 11, no. 7, 1986, pp. 269-283.
12. Motion I, Le Poing et la rose, no 102, October 1983. Le Monde, 31 October 1983 for details of congress debates.
13. 'La volonté de la France, une chance pour l'Europe', Le Poing et la rose, no. 103, June 1984.
14. On this aspect, see Le Guay, V., 'Les Partis français saisis par l'Europe', Quotidien de Paris, 2 July 1987.
15. 'Manifeste socialiste pour l'élection européenne', Vendredi, no. 18, 12 May 1989.
16. See Hayward, E., 'The French Socialists and European Institutional Reform', The Journal of European Integration, vol. 12, nos. 2-3, 1989, pp. 121-150.
17. For details of these initiatives, see Wistrich, E., After 1992: The United States of Europe, London, Routledge, 1991, pp. 37-40.
18. The expression is Helen Drake's. H. Drake, 'François Mitterrand and European integration' in G. Raymond, France during the Socialist Years, Oxford, Berg, 1994 (forthcoming), p. 25.
19. This point was stressed in an interview with Jean-Pierre Cot, 30 March 1993.
20. For a simplified summary of the Act's provisions, see N. Nugent, The Governments and Politics of the European Community, London, Macmillan, 1991, pp. 48-49.
21. Scotto, M., 'La France est-elle dans le collimateur de bruxelles?', Le Monde, 23 February 1983. The Germans were particularly irritated by French subsidies to the nationalised Steel industry.
22. Le Point, 17 October 1991.
23. Duverger, M., 'L'Héritage européen', Le Monde, 26 April 1991.
24. Ibid.
25. 'PS: les malgré nous de l'Europe', Le Figaro, 16 December 1990.
26. The European parliament was to be invested with the power of co-decision in four policy spheres: research, the environment, consumer affairs and the single market. The parliament would retain its right of veto over the accession of new members and the signing of association agreements, as well as a new right of veto over international agreements and changes in its electoral procedure. The parliament was to be given the right to invest the Commission, in addition to its ultimate right of no confidence in the Commission. To the dismay of Delors, the Commission did not

emerge greatly strengthened, although its legitimacy was reinforced, insofar as it was henceforth to be invested by the European parliament.

27. The decision to move towards a single currency would in principle be taken either by a qualified majority vote within the Council in 1996; or, failing sufficient economic convergence, by a minority of countries determined to go ahead with a single currency by 1st January 1999. The common foreign and security policy provisions kept foreign policy firmly in the hands of national governments; decisions relating to EC competence to intervene in foreign policy affairs would require first a unanimous vote within the Council; qualified majority voting would apply to details of implementation thereafter.
28. Interview with Cot, 30 March 1993.
29. Le Monde, 21-22 October, 23 November 1990.
30. Mitterrand's idea of a European Confederation, associating existing EC member-states, the EFTANS and the new Eastern European democracies (including the USSR) was first raised in December 1989, as the French President's response to the events of eastern Europe. The format of the confederation would allow the new democracies to associate themselves with the EC, without threatening the cohesion of the existing EC structure. Mitterrand's confederation evoked a lukewarm response elsewhere.
31. See Cole, A., 'The Presidential party and the Fifth Republic', West European Politics, vol. 16, no. 2, April 1993, pp. for detailed analysis.
32. Such determination even incited the Socialists to accept the consequences of a closer political union. As former Foreign Affairs minister Cheysson argued in 1989: 'We must have a strong political authority, or else Europe will continue to evolve towards Mrs Thatcher's dream'. Le Monde, 4 April 1989.
33. Interview with Jean-Pierre Cot, 30th March 1993.
34. Cited in Verger, C., Les Députés socialistes français du parlement européen, Unpublished thesis, Paris, Institute of Political Studies, 1982, p. 10.
35. Interview with J-P Cot, 30th March 1993.
36. The diversity was greatest within the mitterrandiste faction (for instance, between J. Delors and P. Joxe), while the Mauroy and Rocard groupings were more consistently pro-European.
37. This sentiment was expressed by Alain Minc who argued that 'there is no European problem, only a German one' in a colloque organised by Chevenement's club République moderne. Cited in Le Monde, 4 April 1989.
38. See, for instance, Chevenement's interview with Le Quotidien de Paris, 3 September 1992.

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