

political animal. He is too warm-hearted, gentle, and volatile. Nor is he an economic animal. "As far as Africans are concerned, money is a commodity to be used: it should be circulated, not hoarded", he remarked. Like the myth of intrinsically "happier" Africans, this is fine as an expression of non-materialism: but it is precisely this sort of thinking that has plunged countries like Nigeria into deep trouble.

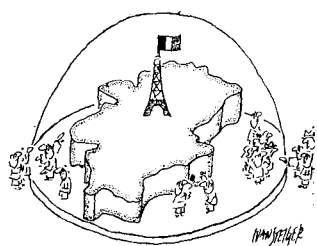
BY A NUMBER of such statements, the Archbishop shows that he has not thought his position through and imagined a post-Independence situation. He represents the last bastion of old-style resistance to apartheid—concentrating on the dispensing of social and economic justice before the demand of transfer to majority rule. As a multi-racial liberal, he represents the same phase as the poet

Oswald Mtshali who (as I wrote in *ENCOUNTER*) "has been rejected by black poets and intellectuals" because "he conforms to the *passé* white liberal mode of satirising the humiliations and institutions of apartheid at a time when black radical opinion is eyeing the reins of power". Shirley du Boulay concentrates on defending Tutu because he sent his children overseas to be educated. But this is quite consonant with his multiracial approach and world view. Tutu is not an Azanian nationalist.

Does this make him another Muzorewa? He could be, if he pursues political leadership. He should remain as he is, a marvellous preacher and mediating spokesman for Christian values. South Africa is going to need him very badly in the coming years. In spite of the violent antipathy of a section of white South African opinion, he is really no extremist. The destiny of South Africa, in fact, is being forged by stony-faced comrades in camps.

Mitterrand's Extended Itinerary

Europe & the Fifth Republic—By MICHAEL SUTTON



THE YEAR of 1958 was of double importance for France: its beginning saw the entry into force of the Treaty of Rome, its end the inauguration of the Fifth Republic. Now, in the summer of 1988, with François Mitterrand at the start of a second term of office at the Elysée, it has become apparent that the *leitmotif* is to be a restrengthened commitment to this two-fold heritage of 30 years. Thus, his self-assumed task will be to strive for a full reconciliation, symbolically speaking, of all he deems worthy to last in the visions of a Robert Schuman and a Charles de Gaulle. Socialism is not to be renounced but the accent will be elsewhere.

Already, under the Fourth Republic, the reach of François Mitterrand's ambition was high, and already he cut an enigmatic political figure. "I have known Mitterrand for twenty years", wrote François Mauriac in 1954; "he is a very intelligent young man as well as very ambitious, with no doubt in his mind that he is destined to be prime minister; but he is also very patriotic." The occasion of this supportive remark was the so-called *affaire des fuites* when, in an apparent attempt to compromise the Mendès-France government, sus-

picious were maliciously stirred up in opposition circles to cast grave doubts upon the public rectitude of the youthful Mitterrand, then Minister of the Interior.

More than three decades later the political ambitions of Mauriac's fellow-Gascon have been more than amply realised, at least if measured by the substance of power attained. Yet the enigma, which rendered Mitterrand vulnerable in the 1954 incident to what were suspicions of treasonable complicity with the French Communist Party, has long persisted. After nearly half a century of public life, including the past seven years at the Elysée, there is still an air of mystery about his political convictions and, perhaps even more, their metaphysical underpinning.

It is therefore scarcely surprising that the run-up to the 1988 presidential elections witnessed further attempts to either pierce or dismiss the mystery in question. Two books in particular are worthy of note: Jean Daniel's *Les Religions d'un président: regards sur les aventures du mitterrandisme*¹ and Catherine Nay's *Les sept Mitterrand: ou les métamorphoses d'un septennat*.² These journalists' offerings are complemented by a third, Robert Mitterrand's *Frère de quelqu'un*, the autobiography of François's elder brother.³

¹ *Les Religions d'un président: regards sur les aventures du mitterrandisme*. By JEAN DANIEL. Bernard Grasset, FF110.

² *Les sept Mitterrand: ou les métamorphoses d'un septennat*. By CATHERINE NAY. Bernard Grasset, FF96.

³ *Frère de quelqu'un*. By ROBERT MITTERRAND. Robert Laffont, FF100.

IF ONLY BECAUSE of her previous and justifiably successful *Le Noir et le Rouge: ou l'histoire d'une ambition*, a straightforward biography which is richest in its account of Mitterrand's formative years and early political career, attention may first be given to Catherine Nay's new endeavour to chart the significance of a presidency. *Les sept*

Mitterrand must be judged a disappointment if the criterion is the discovery of any deep or profound design. Her earlier quest for the grail of the true Mitterrand gives way in this essay to the resigned and cynical view that there is no elevated purpose. With delectation, she cites the reported confidence of the President of the Republic to a parliamentary deputy, a Rocardian and *ipso facto* high-minded: "You believe that politics is a confrontation of ideas. You are making a mistake, young man, it is a *métier*."

The consistency of Mitterrand is at best the opportunism of the Radical tradition of the Third Republic.⁴ Hence the seven personae of the French President in seven years of office, as represented by the glib title of Nay's essentially facetious work: the first assumed persona is that of Léon Blum (for 1981-82, the blissful opening period); this is soon replaced by that of Blum's own more accommodating successor, Camille Chautemps (1982-83); followed by an about-turn from socialist economics to a certain economic liberalism, and so the mask adopted is none other than that of Ronald Reagan (1983-86); the two years of *cohabitation* see Mitterrand ascend in quick succession from arbiter to *père de la nation* (reminiscent of Pétain) to imperial majesty; while throughout the seven years there is the frequently assumed persona of the Fifth Republic's founder, de Gaulle himself. The contrived or trivial nature of some of these associations is partly redeemed by Nay's undoubted brilliance as a chronicler and raconteuse. Her occasional sketches of Pierre Mauroy, Jacques Delors and Laurent Fabius are especially vivid, and she does provide a good deal of anecdotal evidence showing Mitterrand's unsureness of touch or lack of sound intuition in the sphere of economic policy.

LES RELIGIONS D'UN PRÉSIDENT is a denser and much more serious essay. For Jean Daniel, who takes issue with the historian Jean-Pierre Rioux of the Institut d'Histoire du Temps Présent, Mitterrand can in no way be confined to the Radical tradition. It is indeed, he argues, profoundly misleading to place his roots essentially there:

"In the case of François Mitterrand, I readily admit that he has brought to socialism a perfume of a Republican kind, one that is very 'Fourth Republic'. But this is neither new

nor interesting. What is so and constitutes his most original contribution is clearly the synthesis he realises, first of all within his own person, between a tradition of Christian origin and a socialist tradition."

There have thus been figures of inspiration from both traditions giving a consistency to Mitterrand's thought and convictions. The Socialist ones are above all Jaurès and Blum, and to their legacy or influence the founder of *Le Nouvel Observateur* devotes several percipient pages. On the Christian side, his ascription of inspiration is more impressionistic. From a biographical point of view, he attaches importance to the years passed by Mitterrand (1934-38) at the university residence in the Rue de Vaugirard run by the Marist Fathers (an establishment whose ambience has been described by Catherine Nay in *Le Noir et le Rouge*, and also by Jean Lacouture in his magistral biography, *François Mauriac*). From the standpoint of influences of schools of thought—whether direct or mediated—Daniel pertinently draws attention to the mid-19th-century figures of Lamennais, Lacordaire, Montalembert and Ozanam who, in their different but related ways, sought the forward looking reconciliation of the Catholic Church with the modern world.

Lastly, he points to two notable affinities, one in the shape of the kindred spirit of the Péguy of *Notre jeunesse* and the other—an almost provocative suggestion—in the form of shared social sympathies or instincts, transmitted through not too dissimilar family backgrounds and upbringings, with Charles de Gaulle. In partial explanation of the aversion of both Mitterrand and de Gaulle to what might be loosely termed "financial capitalism" or perhaps more simply "money", their common concern (however differently expressed) for the working class, and their joint predilection for an elusive *troisième voie*, Daniel rightly stresses the powerful influence of the tradition of so-called *catholicisme social* within the French Catholic world in the early decades of the 20th century.

All this may seem somewhat recondite, part of the *rétro* décor of the long-dead Third Republic. But Jean Daniel, in remembering it, has his eyes essentially fixed on the present. He relates it, in the case of Mitterrand, to what he terms the "re-establishment of Judaeo-Christian continuity in the official Catholic Church",⁵ notably after the Second Vatican Council, largely as a result of Christian shame and a new

⁴ A view shared by Franz-Olivier Giesbert, of *Le Nouvel Observateur*, who has lumped Mitterrand and Chirac together as erstwhile favourites of Henri Queuille, the pre-War Radical minister of agriculture and then Prime Minister under the Fourth Republic in 1948-49. See Giesbert's *Jacques Chirac* (Editions du Seuil, 1987). This book, incidentally, underlines what appears as Chirac's constant opportunism, though this does not preclude sympathy on the author's part for the former Prime Minister.

⁵ See the interview in *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 1 April, 1983. Reproduced in Cardinal Jean-Marie Lustiger, *Osez croire, osez vivre: articles, conférences, sermons, interviews, 1981-1984* (Editions Gallimard, 1986). See, also, Jean-Marie Lustiger, *Le Choix de Dieu: entretiens avec Jean-Louis Missika et Dominique Wolton* (Editions de Fallois, 1987). A similar dialogue, often covering the same sort of questions, was conducted by Missika and Wolton with Raymond Aron at the beginning of the 1980s. See Raymond Aron, *Le Spectateur engagé: entretiens avec Jean-Louis Missika et Dominique Wolton* (Julliard, 1981).

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awareness in the face of the Holocaust. A symbol in France of this recovered continuity is the presence of Cardinal Lustiger as Archbishop of Paris (a figure of fascination to Daniel, especially on account of the freshness of Lustiger's eschatology and his understanding of the destiny of Israel¹).

In addition to this new accent of universal dimension, there has been the full reconciliation of the Catholic Church in France with the Republic, also partly an effect of the horrors of Nazism—"the second French Revolution", Daniel calls it in an excess of hyperbole. Under these changed circumstances, he says, it is Mitterrand who represents his country supremely well in reinterpreting the political meaning of its complex Christian heritage. The French President is thus especially sensitive, in the aftermath of the Holocaust, to the profound right of the state of Israel to exist. Yet this awareness of France's "new Judaeo-Christian dimension", as ascribed by Daniel to Mitterrand, heightens almost paradoxically the obligation to find a fruitful *modus vivendi*, both at home and abroad, with the world of Islam, the third great religion of common descent from Abraham. It is a challenge posed by France's own large Maghrebian population (1.4 million residents of Maghrebian nationality, never mind origin, at the time of the 1982 census), as well as by France's long-standing and close links with Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia, and also with the Lebanon.

THE TENSION between responding to this challenge and, on the other hand, loyalty to Israel must entail necessarily, Daniel implies, a measured approach to the problems of the Middle East; foreign to Mitterrand's mind is the impulsive pro-Arabism of a Jacques Chirac or a Claude Cheysson. Coupled with the singular failure of France to carry any weight in easing the conflicts in the Middle East during the past seven years, the same tension has also encouraged Mitterrand in his increasingly insistent view that the European Community must assert itself as a veritable actor on the international political stage. Only thus will France's voice be heard. Indeed this logic is a major theme of Daniel's essay.

Descending from the realm of meta-politics, Jean Daniel does point to the concrete achievements of Mitterrand's 1981-88 presidency. Pride of place must go to the Machiavellian eviction of the French Communist Party from the centre stage of French politics, thereby rendering viable the democratic alternation of power under the Fifth Republic. Vital, too, was the support given by the French President to Chancellor Kohl in January 1983, at a time of vacillation in the Western alliance, through the former's speech to the *Bundestag* in favour of the installation of Pershing 2 missiles. Finally, if there is virtue in humility and common sense, there was also the squarely faced recognition in March of the same year, that

the necessary revision of domestic economic policy had to be of a radical and permanent kind.

Robert Mitterrand's *Frère de quelqu'un* is a work of family piety. It is instructive for all that. It corroborates the portrayal of Mitterrand's childhood and youth in *Le Noir et le Rouge*. It certainly reinforces Jean Daniel's point about the importance of a "tradition of Christian origin". And there are occasional striking lines: for instance, about François Mitterrand's great interest from the outset in the initiatives of Robert Schuman and Jean Monnet⁶; and, earlier, about his first meeting with de Gaulle in Algiers in December 1943 (a meeting, says Robert Mitterrand, whose significance has been overplayed in explaining the subsequent souring of relations between his brother and the General).

Whatever the enigma of the complicated François Mitterrand, he has now returned to the Elysée for a second term of office. If he enjoys a further seven years or even five at the Elysée, he will have been the longest serving head of state under the Fifth Republic, the régime he initially damned. Moreover, he now aspires to popularity or support of a broad Gaullist kind. This aspiration was manifest during the period of the presidential elections in his search for non-Socialist support from the "social democrats" represented in the National Assembly by either the *CDS* (the centrist party, which is effectively the successor of the *MRP*, the large Christian Democrat party under the Fourth Republic) or else certain other deputies belonging to the *UDF* federation, with no party affiliation but of centrist leanings. Another way, of course, of looking at the preferences embodied in this overture is to simply note that, in what should be the final and crowning stage of Mitterrand's career, it seems to bring him back *mutatis mutandis* to much the same sort of centrist position he held in the Palais Bourbon from 1946 to 1958, in three successive legislatures of the Fourth Republic, by virtue of his membership of the small *UDSR* party.

WHAT IMPRINT DOES François Mitterrand wish to leave now? Between declaring his candidature on 22 March and his election on 8 May 1988, François Mitterrand aired his views at length and on a wide range of matters. Two quite different texts merit attention: his interview with Olivier Duhamel, entitled "*Sur les institutions*", published in the review *Pouvoirs*,⁷ and his remarkable *Lettre à tous les Français*—intended as a monumental epistle rather than a vulgar electoral campaign message—which was published in French newspapers at the end of the first week of April.⁸

The most striking remarks in the interview with Duhamel relate to Mitterrand's view—after five years of undisputed power and two years of *cohabitation*—of the office of President itself. The role of the head of state, he said, should be neither that of a nonentity ("*président-soliveau*") on the model of the Fourth Republic, nor that of an omnipresent ruler ("*président commande-tout*") on the original Gaullist model. The proper role should be rather "to establish the path for the nation in those areas where what is at stake is its security, its place in the world, its liberties and its continuity."

⁶ A point that has been stressed by François Mitterrand himself. See, for instance, his *Réflexions sur la politique extérieure de la France: introduction à vingt-cinq discours, 1981-1985* (Fayard, 1986).

⁷ François Mitterrand, "*Sur les institutions*", in *Pouvoirs: revue française d'études constitutionnelles et politiques* (Presses Universitaires de France, no. 45, 1988).

⁸ See *Le Monde*, 8 and 9 April 1988.

But, as experience has proved, the problem is that there is a certain ambiguity about the respective functions of President and Prime Minister as laid down under articles 5 and 20 of the Constitution: "The Republic", he argued, "would have much to gain from a clearer division of tasks and more precise demarcation of boundaries within the executive power."

Another subject touched upon in this interview was that of the relation between government ministers and political parties. An acerbic remark was made about Chirac remaining as head of the *RPR* while serving as Prime Minister (a return to "the worst habits of the Fourth Republic") and having consequently allowed the heads of the other parties in the parliamentary majority coalition also to hold simultaneous ministerial responsibility. Such a practice, ruled Mitterrand, must not be repeated. He raised the possibility of a reduction in the term of the presidential mandate from seven to five years, even if it was not something that he would personally press for. He also called for a more responsible parliament. In contrast to the practice of the outgoing Chirac government, there should be little recourse in the future to legislation by ordinance and to the guillotining of parliamentary debate, and parliament should attend to its own image with, for example, less flagrant absenteeism and more question time. But, true to much of the spirit of the Fifth Republic, Mitterrand also suggested a wider use of the referendum, with a power of initiative accorded to the electorate at large.

IN ITS CONSIDERATION of constitutional issues, the *Lettre à tous les Français* covered much of the same ground. However, one change of position during the few weeks between the finalisation of the two texts may be remarked upon. In the *Pouvoirs* interview, Mitterrand appeared to call for a minor revision of the Constitution ("a few slight adjustments" were the words he used) in respect of articles 5 and 20, which define the respective powers of President and Prime Minister. But in the subsequent *Lettre*, such constitutional revision was explicitly ruled out. His treatment of problems relating to taxation and the social security system had—not surprisingly—a resolute Socialist tone. Yet, more generally, his approach to economic and social policy testifies to the fact that, in contrast with 1981, there is now a large consensus across a broad political spectrum—excluding the Communists and the National Front—that a certain pragmatism must take precedence over political dogma.

Where the *Lettre à tous les Français* showed the most vigour was, first, in its demonstration that its author had succeeded in exercising his proper prerogatives in the spheres of foreign policy and defence during the two difficult years of *cohabitation* and, secondly, in its lofty plea for a stronger Europe. As regards the latter, Mitterrand insisted on the crucial need to infuse a new vitality into the European Community through the implementation of the "completing the internal market" programme, with its end-1992 deadline, in the framework of the Single European Act. He also called

for a new effort in the realm of defence ("everything indicates that the common defence of Europe will soon take the centre of the stage"). The model, of course, is present Franco-German military cooperation. Transposing the rallying cry of Charles Albert of Piedmont in the revolutionary year of 1848, Mitterrand grandiloquently concluded that "*l'Europe se fera par elle-même—ou jamais*".

FRANÇOIS MITTERRAND has in the past proved himself an international statesman of considerable stature, as witness his measured realism in the face of Soviet power and his support of Spain's entry into the European Community, an indispensable step if the rhetoric of European integration was to be shown as other than pious nonsense. However, if he is to realise his now enunciated aims to consolidate the institutions of the Fifth Republic and, at continental level, to strengthen the role of the European Community, he cannot disregard the truth that there is many a hard practical decision ahead. At home, economic and social questions may no longer be the subject of high political passion; but it is clear that a major reform is needed of France's tax and social security systems, and that there must also be new thought about how best to tackle unemployment.⁹

As for the European Community's plan for "completing the internal market" by the end of 1992, there are a host of major problems still to be resolved. A notable example is the EC harmonisation or approximation of taxes, as was made

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⁹ These matters were seriously analysed by Raymond Barre during his own presidential election campaign. See his interesting book, *Questions de confiance: entretiens avec Jean-Marie Colombani* (Flammarion, 1988).

abundantly clear in the preliminary report of the so-called Boiteux Committee—or, more properly, the *Commission de Réflexion Economique pour la Préparation de l'Echéance de 1992*—a report which was submitted to Edouard Balladur, then Minister of Economics and Finance, in February of this year. These various considerations point to the advisability of having a Prime Minister, like Michel Rocard, who can work hand in hand with the President and who has a head for economic questions. By May 1988, conflictual *cohabitation* had apparently outlived its day. And any slight prospect of its

revival was ruled out by the results of the June legislative elections, which, tight as they were, gave no majority to the RPR-UDF alliance.

Whether Jean Daniel's wider reflections on François Mitterrand will appear significant or not in seven or five years time is an interesting question. The challenges are there to see: the future handling of the domestic issue of immigration and nationality, and the framing of a more coherent and dignified policy—at national and European level—in respect of the Middle East.

A Personal Enquiry

Richard Ellmann as Biographer—By PARK HONAN



IN THE MOST unashamed way, I am going to draw on my acquaintance with Richard Ellmann and on a comment he made on my work. My object is not to puff myself or to imply that we were close friends (we never were). But since the man is revealed partly through what he said and the impression he gave, and that “man” has

something to do with Ellmann, the biographer of Joyce and Wilde, I find it right to be personal about him—at the risk of seeming too autobiographical.

Ellmann is the best literary biographer to have written in English in our century. No one would call his *Joyce* or *Wilde* “academic”¹; they lack the stiff, squeezed-dry aspect of other scholarly accounts of lives and do not play false with human experience and feeling. Yet he was an academic professional, leaving a post at Evanston in Illinois to take a chair of English at Oxford. He was a convivial figure at New College, even an early morning jogger. Shortly before he died he was teaching during autumn terms at Emory in Georgia.

I met him in the 1960s, not long after he published *James Joyce*. We exchanged letters, oddly enough about tax laws, and later I asked Weidenfeld & Nicolson to send him a copy of my *Matthew Arnold: A Life* (1981) as a matter of course. Neither my editor nor I were seeking a comment from him, and I would not have expected him to send me more than a postcard in acknowledgment, and so I was surprised by his letter from West Germany. “I have just this moment put down your book”, Ellmann wrote to me from Höxter on 3 September 1981,

“... with a great sense of having been successfully ushered

through sixty-odd years of the 19th century. Your book succeeds abundantly in changing one's view of father (and mother) and son, but it also re-draws Arnold's character, so he is no longer the sombre character ‘with Matthew Arnold's face’ but has ebullience along with irony and intelligence and earnestness. The account of his life as school inspector is fascinating, as with the account of his American tour. Then there is your great coup in identifying Marguerite—a pity that she didn't at least bear him an illegitimate child—one feels for his embarrassment and humiliation, and welcomes the power of poetry to make so much out of their incomplete moments together. His life as a married man is also fascinating instead of (like most married lives) dull. . . . I've much enjoyed my four days in your company!”

How typical of his kindness, I thought. Dick Ellmann had no need to praise me—he owed me no favours—and certainly I had no need of his praise. After years of work on a biography one knows its merits and faults well enough oneself. (One may need praise during the writing, or require lavish praise after repairing the plumbing or wallpapering the bedroom.)

I HAD KNOWN DICK only slightly. At one meeting he seemed relieved to talk to me apart from other sherry-drinking guests at a reception; perhaps only because he knew I would listen. He was an excellent listener himself, and I may have chatted idly for five minutes; then he told me that he was not certain that he could ever adjust to being a professor at Oxford. He disliked committee-work, felt that he might be viewed as a shirker, and was anxious about his wife's health. On another occasion he was reluctant to talk about the present at all. He told me about interviewing Carl Jung in Switzerland on the subject of Joyce. I never had any illusion that I had penetrated the veil of Dick Ellmann, and felt that a soft wall of kindness kept us apart: he must have told others as much as he told me. But one tries to peer over walls, and I thought

¹ *James Joyce* (Oxford University Press, 1959, n.e. 1982) and *Oscar Wilde*. By RICHARD ELLMANN. Hamish Hamilton, £15.00.