• Mitterrand appeared at a stadium and attempted to put himself forward as Head of State
• This was seen as undemocratic and clumsy more on his part
• But established his presence anyway
• Mitterrand had been government minister eleven times during Fourth Republic
• Very experienced politician by this stage


• Right continued in power throughout 1970s under Pompidou etc.
• 1971: Mitterrand became leader
• Socialist current renamed Parti Socialiste
• It was a Congrès d’Epinay
• 1972: Programme commun du gouvernement signed in June
• This was between the Communists and Socialists
• Between them they had a lot of support
• Communist Party remained a significant obstacle for the Socialists
• 1974: in the presidential elections, Mitterrand was the only candidate for the Left
• He came in a very close second
• In local elections, Communists and Socialists working and doing well together
• In 1978 parliamentary elections, there was an expectation that the Left would get in
• Communists realised they were losing out to Socialists
• Even losing members to them
• PS seen as younger, the membership tends to be younger
• Quite a lot of white collar, highly trained people in PS
• Contrasted strongly with PCF which tends to be traditional blue collar class
• This was a shrinking class
• It seemed that the PS was part of a better future
• The objective on the part of the PS was it became more explicit, i.e. to steal the vote
• 1972: Mitterrand said: “notre objectif fondamental, c’est de refaire un grand Parti socialiste sur le terrain occupé par le PCF”
• PS had to be built on ground that PCF was presently occupying
• He continued: “afin de la faire la démonstration que, sur les cinq millions d’électeurs communistes, trois millions peuvent voter socialiste.”
• Out of five million communist voters, three million can be persuaded to vote Socialist
• At the time, PCF was still quite active, popular, quite well off
• Left lost 1978 elections, which was a tremendous loss

1972 – 1982: reconstruction and victory

• Two parties went their separate ways in 1970s
• 1981: in presidential elections, Mitterrand was candidate without formal support of Communists
• Communist vote was down to 15%
• Mitterrand won with a slim but clear majority