

**THE SAVARY LAW ON HIGHER EDUCATION  
AND THE FAILURE TO REFORM  
FRANCE'S UNIVERSITIES, 1789-1984**

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## ABSTRACT

Widespread dissatisfaction with previous conservative administrations swept the Socialists into power in 1981. President François Mitterrand's "ten proposals for education" promised social mobility. France's underfunded and centralized universities stagnated. Standardization fostered patronage networks, hindered research and thwarted the establishment of self-governing universities. Alain Savary, minister of National Education, would redraft the 1968 Faure Law on higher education to stimulate socioeconomic development. Economic stagnation, a population boom, and graduate underemployment indicated the need for reform. In 1983, Savary aimed to grant the universities autonomy and wider access to resources, democratize their administration, and make higher education market-relevant. He promised to improve linkages between *grandes écoles* and universities. Academics, students, and politicians campaigned ardently against Savary's bill. Under presidential pressure, Savary compromised. Savary's law was the last completely redrafted law on higher education. Under later Socialist governments, it provided the framework for regulations and laws creating self-regulating yet undemocratic universities of today.

**Key Words:** France, higher education and state, university reform, Alain Savary, François Mitterrand.

# **DEDICATION**

To working students of the world.

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I cannot find the words to that could appropriately express my gratitude to Marion Walter, the History Department's Graduate Secretary. Without her attention to detail and prompt action, it is doubtful this thesis would have reached the defence stage.

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All errors still present within this text are mine.

—Vancouver, 2007

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## GLOSSARY AND ABBREVIATIONS

- Agrégation:** Certificate required to teach higher education.
- ATOS:** (*Personnel*) *administratif, technique, ouvrier, et de service*, Administrative, Technical, Plant Operations, and Service personnel
- CELF:** *Collectif des étudiants libéraux de France*, Liberal Students Collective of France
- CNEF:** *Centre national des étudiants de France*, National Students Centre of France
- CNESER:** *Conseil national de l'enseignement supérieur et de la recherche*, National Council for Higher Education and Research
- CNOUS:** *Centre national d'oeuvres universitaires et scolaires*, National Centre for University and School Works
- CNPF:** *Conseil national du patronat français*, National Council of French Employers
- CNRS:** *Centre national de la recherche scientifique*, National Centre for Scientific Research
- Concours:** Competitive entrance examination(s) to attend a *grande école* or certain other educational institutions with post-baccalaureate entrance requirements.
- CPGE:** *Cours préparatoire(s) aux grandes écoles*, Preparatory Course(s) for the *Grandes écoles*
- CROUS:** *Centre régional d'oeuvres universitaires et scolaires*, Regional Centre(s) for University and School Works
- CSCU:** *Conseil supérieur du corps universitaire*, High Council of University Academicians
- DEA:** *Diplôme d'études approfondies*, diploma of enriched (higher) studies (The academic third-cycle university diploma)
- DESS:** *Diplôme d'études supérieures spécialisées*, diploma of higher specialized studies (The professional third-cycle university diploma)
- DEUG:** *Diplôme d'études universitaires générales*, diploma of general university studies (First-cycle university diploma)
- DEUST:** *Diplôme d'études universitaires scientifiques et techniques*, diploma of university studies in science and technology (First-cycle university diploma)
- FEN:** *Fédération de l'éducation nationale*, National Education (Teachers) Federation
- GARACES:** *Groupe d'analyse et de recherche sur les activités et les coûts des enseignements supérieurs*, Higher Education Costs and Operations Analysis and Studies Group
- Grandes écoles:** Elite institutions of higher education requiring successfully passing a *concours*.
- GUD:** *Groupement Union-droite*, Group of the United Right (extreme right)
- INSERM:** *Institut national de la santé et de la recherche médicale*, National Institute of Health and Medical Research

- IUT:** *Institut universitaire de technologie*, University Institute of Technology
- JO:** *Journal officiel de la République française. Débats parlementaires – Assemblée nationale. Compte rendu intégral* (Paris, France: Direction des journaux officiels, 1983-1984), Official Journal of the National Assembly of the French Republic. Parliamentary Debates.
- Min. Ed.:** *Ministère de l'Éducation nationale*, Ministry of National Education
- MRP:** *Mouvement républicaine populaire*, Christian Democrat party
- RPR:** *Rassemblement pour la République*, Rally for the Republic (Gaullist party)
- SGEN-CFDT:** *Syndicat général de l'éducation national-Confédération française démocratique du travail*, General Union of National Education-Democratic French Labour Confederation (left wing educators' union)
- SNE-Sup-FEN:** *Syndicat national de l'enseignement supérieur-FEN*, National Union of Higher Education (left wing educators' union)
- SNPEN-FEN:** *Syndicat national des professeurs d'écoles normales-FEN*, National Union of Normal School Professors
- SNEP-FEN:** *Syndicat national de l'éducation physique*, National Union of Physical Education (Instructors)
- STS:** *Section de techniciens supérieurs*, Senior Technician Training Course.
- UDF:** *Union pour la démocratie française*, Union for French Democracy (Giscardian party)
- UER:** *Unité d'études et de recherche*, Study and Research Unit
- UFR:** *Unité de formation et de recherche*, Instruction and Research Unit
- UGC:** University Grants Committee, a British institution.
- UNEF *ex-Renouveau*:** *Union nationale des étudiants de France ex-Renouveau*, National Students' Union of France (Communist leanings), became the UNEF *Solidarité étudiante*
- UNEF-ID:** *UNEF indépendante et démocratique*, Independent and Democratic UNEF (Socialist and Trotskyite leanings)
- UNEF *Solidarité étudiante*:** Formerly the UNEF *ex-Renouveau*
- Université:** When not pertaining to a specific institution after the 1896 reform, the capitalized form refers to the public universities as a whole.
- UNI:** *Union nationale inter-universitaire*, National Union of University Academics

## INTRODUCTION

In France university reforms have a poor reputation. French Education ministers almost always announce that they will reform French higher education, but they generally fail. Either the reform they conceive is never implemented because student demonstrations force the project to be abandoned, or the reform is finally accepted and should be implemented but the minister has changed in the meantime and, lacking his political clout, the reform, in the best of the cases, becomes a secondary priority or is forgotten because the next minister intends to develop his own new reform.<sup>1</sup>

Institutional insularity and disparity, intellectual conservatism, and the defence of privilege had characterized higher education in France since the Napoleonic *Université*. Until recently, these factors sabotaged all attempts to develop self governing universities as multi-disciplinary centres for research.<sup>2</sup> Between 1808 and 1893, there were no universities, just a collection of separate but centrally regulated faculties of arts, science, law, medicine, and theology. In 1896, the state reorganized the faculties into regional bodies, in which condition French universities remained until the Faure Law of 1968 when they became *unités d'études et de recherche* (UER). Professors resisted the many attempts to break this academic isolationism to become part of the wider academic and social world. By the late 1990s, however, French universities had become self-governing institutions and productive engines of research.<sup>3</sup>

The Savary Law of 1984 provided the means by which this transformation could occur, although it took over a decade for it to become apparent. As Eva Steiner notes in *French Legal Method*, French legal tradition stresses providing a framework of principles

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<sup>1</sup> Christine Musselin, "Reforming without reforms: recent evolutions in French universities," *European Reform Experiences in Universities and Research Organizations* (Conference), (Speyer, Germany, 2001), 1. (<http://foev.dhv-speyer.de/governance/deutsch/D%20Forschungsprozess/D1%20Startkonferenz/Dateien/Musselin.pdf>)

<sup>2</sup> Christine Musselin, *La longue marche des universités françaises* (Paris, France : Presses universitaires de France, 2001), 14.

<sup>3</sup> Musselin, *La longue marche des universités françaises*, 17.

that requires government regulations to elaborate on specific instances and rules. Savary's attempt to give the universities the greatest latitude to decide how they operated permitted those institutions and subsequent right wing governments to undermine his reform by not drafting the requisite measures. The new *unités de formation et de recherche* (UFR) – the units of departments – remained separate bodies within each university, the senior professors undermined efforts to integrate their juniors and students into the university's administrative councils, and the state still bore the responsibility of managing the universities. Later Socialist ministers of National Education such as Lionel Jospin enacted the necessary statutory instruments that eventually pressed decision-making authority upon the universities.<sup>4</sup>

Alain Savary became the head of a re-unified Ministry of National Education in May 1981. In its "Ten Proposals for Education," the newly elected Socialist government of Pierre Mauroy promised to reverse the antagonistic policies of Savary's predecessor, the former minister of Universities Alice Saunier-Seïté, and introduce reform with consultation.<sup>5</sup> Savary vowed to promote the fiscal and academic autonomy of the universities, allowing those institutions to become self-governing multi-disciplinary establishments, to make ministerial decisions and appointments transparent, and to facilitate access to higher education to a broader spectrum of French society.<sup>6</sup> He hoped that these policies would prompt the diversification and specialization of the universities, which would in turn stimulate France's slackening economy and allow French universities to compete with other centres for research. Unlike Saunier-Seïté who governed higher education by decree, Savary proposed a

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<sup>4</sup> The gradual coalescing of common and civil law traditions within the European Union, the increasing complexity of modern circumstances, and calls for law reform in France, have caused a shift in recent years from the Napoleonic form to more specific laws along the English model. Eva Steiner, *French Legal Method* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2002), 10-22. Ministry of National Education (France; hereinafter Min. Ed.), "Les études doctorales," (<http://www.education.gouv.fr/sup/formation/etdoctorales.htm>) (November 2005).

<sup>5</sup> Several universities across France had been on strike since November 1980.

<sup>6</sup> Min. Ed., "Exposé des motifs" and "Orientation et sélection," *Cahiers de l'Éducation nationale* (No. 15) (Paris, France: The Ministry, 1983), 4-12.

bill that completely redrafted the Faure Law. The Socialists' decision to break with her authoritarian management style allowed foes of the bill a public forum in which they could present other farther ranging but implausible visions for the universities.<sup>7</sup> Despite the Socialist majority in the National Assembly, compromises forced on the bill either delayed or ruined the changes it introduced.

The resistance to change originated with the formation of the Napoleonic *Université* in 1808. Antoine Prost and Jacques Verger illustrate how these continuities of resistance and reform persisted throughout the nineteenth- and twentieth-centuries. The reduced size and budgets of the Napoleonic faculties in comparison with the Old Regime universities, which at least had legacies, lands, and feudal dues as well as royal support to sustain themselves, exacerbated the insularity of higher education institutions from social and intellectual developments. George Weisz and Joseph Ben David chart the implications of this opposition on French industry. Throughout the nineteenth-century and into the twentieth, fiscal difficulties and ministerial decisions hampered the faculties' ability to produce the scientists, engineers, and technicians French firms needed to compete with their British and German counterparts. John Burney's *Toulouse et son université* reveals how this insularity hindered the drive toward self-governing universities even in a city with a sizable contingent of faculties and with a long tradition of higher education.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Alain Lipietz, "Governing the economy in the face of international challenge: from national developmentalism to national crisis," in *Searching for the New France*, James F. Hollifield and George Ross, eds. (New York: Routledge, 1991). François d'Aubert, *Journal officiel de la République française. Débats parlementaires – Assemblée nationale Compte rendu intégral* (microform; hereinafter referred to as *JO*) (Paris, France: Parlement, 1983-1984) (1983), 1439, 1440, 1442, 1691, 1780, 1836, 1870. Raymond Barre, *JO* (1983), 1377-1378, 1380-1381. Bruno Bourg-Broc, *JO* (1983), 1386, 1585, 1642, 1731, 1793. Jean Foyer, *JO* (1983), 1366-1367, 1731, 1815-1816. Robert Galley, *JO* (1983), 1616, 1727. Gilbert Gantier, *JO* (1983), 1491, 1618, 1731, 1774, 1776, 1792. Alain Madelin, *JO* (1983), 1465, 1601, 1652, 1727, 1836, 1870, 2061. Charles Millon, *JO* (1983), 1498, 1518, 1791, 1805, 1820, 1836. Francisque Perrut, *JO* (1983), 1491.

<sup>8</sup> Joseph Ben David, *The Scientist's Role in Society: a Comparative Study* (Englewood Hills, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1971). John Burney, *Toulouse et son université: facultés et étudiants dans la France provinciale du 19e siècle* (Paris, France: Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1988). Antoine Prost, *Histoire de l'enseignement en France, 1800-1967* (Paris, France: A. Colin, 1968). Jacques Verger, ed., *Histoire des universités en France* (Toulouse, France: Bibliothèque historique Privat, 1986). George Weisz, *The Emergence of Modern Universities in France, 1863-1914* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983).

The strength of resistance did not diminish even after France's ignominious defeat by the German states in the Franco-Prussian War. Christophe Charle notes the opposition to the Law of 1896 in spite of the *Université's* glaring faults. Throughout the first half of the twentieth-century, the state unsuccessfully attempted to enact changes to the universities, but was thwarted by more pressing concerns, notably, national defence. The success of left wing parties following World War II, with their demands to extend the benefits of higher education to a broader segment of society, led to further demands on national education budgets. The *Université de masse* (popular University) demanded by the Communists and the postwar demographic explosion placed pressures on the universities that could not be relieved by the limited resources those institutions received. Allied with institutional insularity and the state's control of the curricula, finances, and structures, these stresses impeded attempts to make significant changes to the *Université* even after the May 1968 riots. Habiba Cohen reveals this continued opposition and the attempts to undermine the Faure Law in the decade following its promulgation.<sup>9</sup> Both she and Charle note the failed attempts to wrest academics from their departments and into the wider world. Yet by 2000, there were French universities, active multi-disciplinary institutions, for the first time since the Old Regime. What had changed?

Christine Musselin demonstrates that attempts to reform higher education by statute failed because such bills tried to enforce institutional diversification by fiat rather than permitting the establishments to evolve of their own accord. Following French legal tradition, the Savary Law was necessarily vague to permit the state to draft regulations suitable for specific institutions. Unfortunately, it also allowed the opposition to present false interpretations on the law. Eventually, a ministerial circular concerning financing the

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<sup>9</sup> Christophe Charle, *La république des universitaires, 1870-1940* (Paris, France: Seuil, 1994). Habiba S. Cohen, *Elusive Reform: the French Universities, 1968-1978* (Westview replica ed.) (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1978).

universities rather than the UFR provided the necessary impetus for institutional diversification.<sup>10</sup>

Party policy had also changed. Since 1947, the Socialists and Communists had supported the Langevin-Wallon Commission's recommendations for higher education. The Commission's report advocated reducing the differences between the *grandes écoles*, the specialist schools, and the universities, and opening higher education to a broader spectrum of French society. Savary did not renounce that vision, but as Claude Lelièvre and Christian Nique demonstrate in *L'école des présidents*, he, President François Mitterrand, and Mauroy emphasized gearing higher education towards employment.<sup>11</sup> This career-centred view was against Socialist traditions and the academic independence of arts professors. Students and professors worried about an attempt to professionalize higher education; indeed in many educational institutions, the adjective *professionnel* meant vocational training rather than preparation for a liberal profession. Despite the resistance of such groups to the professionalization of education, later regulations enabled by the Savary Law enforced the scheme. Then again, such measures could have been enacted as amendments to the Faure Law.

The European Community (EC) was another important factor in the evolution of what Musselin termed *La République des facultés* into a republic of universities. In recent decades, the EC and the EU have moved to standardize social as well as economic policies. A common feature of these policies has been an emphasis on regional development. For French higher education, these plans meant conforming to the degree structure in other European universities to what is known as the *licence*, master, *doctorat* (LMD) format as well as refocusing the universities on regional requirements in the absence of central

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<sup>10</sup> Musselin, "Reforming without reforms," and *La longue marche des universités françaises*, 17.

<sup>11</sup> Claude Lelièvre and Christian Nique, *L'école des présidents: de Charles de Gaulle à François Mitterrand* (Paris, France: O. Jacob, 1995).

direction. While the Savary Law provided the means to execute these European policies, without pressure from that supra-national body, the measures would never have been enforced.<sup>12</sup>

To demonstrate the processes and continuities of resistance and reform and to illustrate how the Savary bill on higher education changed in the eight months it was before Parliament, I have divided this thesis into two chapters.

The first chapter examines the modest development that occurred in the one hundred and sixty years between the formation of the *Université* and the promulgation of the Faure Law, as well as the subsequent efforts to counteract that law's progressive aspects. Copies of the laws establishing the *Université* and the universities provided within the *Bulletin des lois* and *Recueil des lois et règlements sur l'enseignement supérieur* in particular demonstrate how little higher education changed in the intervening ninety years.<sup>13</sup> The maintenance of Napoleon's overly centralized body of dispersed faculties and the absence of fiscal and material resources favoured the development of professorial patronage over research. Even when presented with definitive proof that the faculties and later universities were failing France, as in 1870 and 1968, there was insufficient political will to enforce change.

The second chapter demonstrates the quixotic nature of university reform in France as it follows the progress of the Savary bill through the media and the National Assembly. The bill's opponents attacked what they saw as an attempt to deliver the universities to the left wing unions, arguing against the involvement of staff members and external representatives on the administrative councils. They also attacked Savary's intention to rationalize the third

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<sup>12</sup> Christine Musselin, "The Role of Ideas in the Emergence of Convergent Higher Education Policies in Europe: The Case of France," *Working Paper Series (73)* (Cambridge, Mass.: Center for European Studies Harvard University, 2000).

<sup>13</sup> France (Government). *Bulletin des lois* (Paris, France: Imprimerie impériale, 1808). Arthur de Beauchamp, *Recueil des lois et règlements sur l'enseignement supérieur comprenant les décisions de la jurisprudence et les avis des conseils de l'Instruction publique et du Conseil d'État* (t.5, Juin 1889-mai 1898) (Paris, France: A. Générès, 1898), 591-604.

or doctoral *cycle* from two degrees into one. The parliamentary opposition could only delay the bill, but rioters on the street and academics in the media pressed home the calamitous effects the proposed law would have on higher education. Coinciding with these stresses were those from Savary's former rival for the leadership of the Socialist Party, François Mitterrand. Mitterrand compelled Savary to moderate the bill's intentions towards the senior professors and the *grandes écoles*, preferably by ignoring what those supporting the left's reform were saying. Savary was left with a law that pleased no one, disheartened its supporters, and infuriated its opponents.

Savary intended to redraft the universities into self-governing multi-disciplinary centres for research to serve as motors for regional development. Constrained by political exigency to craft a general law on higher education,<sup>14</sup> he had to compromise. The Savary Law failed in the short term because the minister faced an entrenched opposition along a broad front with insufficient political support. Later reformers, notably Savary's fellow Socialist Lionel Jospin, learned Savary's lesson and attacked small problems at key points. They introduced the subordinate legislation and laws that promoted participation, decentralization, and professionalization. The universities had autonomy thrust upon them, forcing them to compete with one another for students and resources, which advanced research as well as improved connections to the economy and other European universities. Though significant problems remained, particularly the privileged status of the *grandes écoles*, and such pressing matters as the demand for social mobility intensified, these later reforms enhanced the status of French universities. Savary's law did not achieve the extensive transformation of higher education he had envisioned, but it presented the means for future reformers to realize those aims.

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<sup>14</sup> Excepting the *grandes écoles*, their preparatory classes, and the liberal professions.

## CHAPTER 1: THE PROBLEMS INHERENT IN FRENCH HIGHER EDUCATION, 1789-1981

The factors that necessitated the Savary Law were similar to those that inhibited it. Intellectual conservatism, centralization, political necessity, and socio-economic change marked the development of higher education in France from the suppression of the universities by the Jacobin regime in 1793 to Alain Savary's appointment as Minister of National Education on 29 May 1981. The fossilized structure of the Old Regime universities that made professors unwilling to adapt to eighteenth-century scientific developments, as well as the revolutionary political environment, sparked the 1793 suppression. Napoleon's need for a loyal educated elite to serve his empire led to the establishment of the *Université* in 1806. The inability of the *Université* to adapt to the great technological and social developments of the nineteenth-century led to the Law of 1896 that established many universities built from Napoleon's fragmented national corporate entity. Pressures brought about by a slowing economy and France's postwar population boom forced the Faure Law of 1968 upon the Gaullist government. The continued inertia and unresponsiveness of the universities, the steadily worsening economy, and growing student militancy prompted the newly elected Socialist government of 1981 to promise the new law, only for it to fall to the same pressures of the earlier reforms.

Of these reforms, the Jacobins' closure of the Old Regime universities was the most extreme. The Revolutionary government did have sound reasons for suppressing the universities. With the abrogation of feudal tenure, the state's requisition of legacies, and diminishing state funding, the universities no longer had the means to fund themselves. Academically, the institutions were backward and unresponsive to the state's needs. Before the Revolution, the conservatism of the universities had forced the royal state to establish the

*Collège royal* and several specialist training schools such as the *École des Ponts et Chaussées* and the *École du Génie* to spur France's academic and economic development. The Jacobins intended the suppression to be a temporary measure before establishing a centralized educational system. Local forces profiting from the universities' closure and the cost of the ongoing civil and foreign wars thwarted efforts to re-establish higher education in anything but a haphazard manner.<sup>15</sup>

Napoleon succeeded where the Revolution failed only to burden future generations with his myopic vision for higher education. Graced with a centralized administration and few impediments to his imagination, Bonaparte acted to build an educational apparatus that would bolster his regime. Between 1804 and 1808, Napoleon adopted the structures that survived or emerged from the Revolution, recasting them to serve his state. The royal specialist schools that the Revolution had redrafted *écoles spéciales* became the *grandes écoles*. Operating under military discipline, these schools trained the elite of the new imperial administration, the state *Corps*. Napoleon retained the Thermidorians' three health schools (*écoles de santé*) to serve his armies and the French people. The Directory's *écoles centrales* (public secondary schools) became *lycées*, males-only boarding or day schools run like military academies. To these institutions, the emperor added the law schools to enforce his new law codes. On 17 March 1808, Napoleon completed his national education scheme by forming another *corps*, the Imperial *Université*.<sup>16</sup>

The *Université* was the central administrative body or corporation for public education. It was an authoritarian creation; all decisions originated with the emperor.

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<sup>15</sup> Charles R. Bailey, *The Old Regime Collèges, 1789-1795: Local Initiatives in Recasting French Secondary Education* (New York: P. Lang, 1994), 9-11, 13-14. Ben David, *Scientist's Role in Society*, 89-90, 94. Burney, *Toulouse et son université*, 29-30, 32. Min. Ed., "Chronologie de l'enseignement professionnel et technique" (<http://www.education.gouv.fr/enspro/ministere/histoire/chap1.htm>). *Histoire des universités en France*, 144-152, 155-156, 161, 257-258, 261-262, 301.

<sup>16</sup> Burney, *Toulouse et son université*, 30-32. *Histoire des universités en France*, 257-258, 261-264, 301. Prost, *Histoire de l'enseignement en France*, 23-24.

Through the High Council of Public Education, it formulated standardized curricula, fees, and organizational structures for the *lycées*, the newly inaugurated faculties of medicine, law, theology, arts (*lettres*) and science. The *Université* also bore sole responsibility for national examinations for and the awarding of the new state diplomas, the *baccalauréat*, the *licence*, the *officiat*, and the *doctorat d'État*. Napoleon controlled the appointment and promotion of the *Université*'s officers from the grand master to the professors. To ensure their loyalty and adherence to the established standards, the emperor divided France into twenty-nine education regions, the *académies*, administered by *recteurs d'académie* (rectors) assisted by inspectors who regulated the institutions within each of the *académie*'s *départements*. Central control was absolute, leading to the fossilization of attitudes and the *Université*'s structures that lasted well into the twentieth-century.<sup>17</sup>

The *lycées* were the national secondary schools that replaced the Revolutionary *écoles centrales*. The cost of tuition and materials and the loss of a son's labour placed the *lycées* – and the private *collèges* – outside the means of petty *bourgeois* families. Despite that socioeconomic requirement, the traditional elite regarded the *lycées* as institutions for *parvenus*, preferring instead to have its offspring attend the Catholic *collèges*. Over time, however, the *lycées* lost that derogatory status and certain important schools like Louis-le-Grand and Henri-IV later gained an important link with the *grandes écoles*, the *cours préparatoires aux grandes écoles* (CPGE). The CPGE prepared students for the competitive entrance examination – the *concours* – required for entry to the *grandes écoles*. Until then, the *lycées* prepared the new elite for the *baccalauréat*.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Burney, *Toulouse et son université*, 31. *Histoire des universités en France*, 301. Prost, *Histoire de l'enseignement en France*, 23.

<sup>18</sup> Burney, *Toulouse et son université*, 30-31, 129. Charle, *La république des universitaires*, 46, 81-82, 114, 116-117. *Histoire des universités en France*, 257-258, 261-264. Antoine Prost, *Éducation, société, et politiques: une histoire de l'enseignement en France de 1945 à nos jours* (Paris, Fr.: Seuil, 1992), 50-51. Prost, *Histoire de l'enseignement en France*, 23, 34. John E. Talbott, *The Politics of Educational Reform in France, 1870-1914* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969), 14.

The *baccalauréat* (baccalaureate) was the first post-secondary diploma. Candidates for the degree could opt for either the grammar option (*baccalauréat ès lettres*) or science option (*baccalauréat ès sciences*). They sat for a two-part examination that included an oral component that tested their knowledge of elite culture (*culture générale*) as well as specific subjects. Successful aspirants (*bacheliers*) could enter one of the faculties or join the lower or middle levels of the state bureaucracy. The two baccalaureates offered unequal educational opportunities, however. *Bacheliers ès lettres* could go to the faculties of medicine, law, theology, and arts, while the *bacheliers ès sciences* could only enter the science faculties. This imbalanced situation lasted until 1834 when the *baccalauréat ès sciences* became necessary to continue medical studies.<sup>19</sup>

Beyond its primary function of judging the academic capability of applicants, the *baccalauréat* examinations assessed their suitability to join the educated classes. The oral component tested the students' cultural capital, giving the faculty professors who served on the examinations boards the opportunity to deny the degree to candidates who used improper diction or had a local "uneducated" accent. The fees for the examination as well as for schooling usually placed the degree beyond the means of the petty *bourgeoisie*. Talent allowed one to advance only so far before the state imposed of financial or cultural restrictions.<sup>20</sup> Even so, a *bachelier* could find secure employment in the lower levels of the national bureaucracy until the 1950s.<sup>21</sup>

To avoid the teaching of subjects that might threaten his regime, Napoleon crafted the faculties to primarily serve a professional rather than an academic function. The faculties, headed by appointed deans, typically had three or four chairs held by senior professors

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<sup>19</sup> Weisz, *Emergence of Modern Universities in France*, 38-39.

<sup>20</sup> *Histoire des universités en France*, 279-281.

<sup>21</sup> Theodore Zeldin, *A History of French Passions. Volume 1, Ambition, Love, and Politics* (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1993), 12-16, 344-346.

(*professeurs titulaires*) – law faculties had five – responsible for a branch of knowledge. Without universities, the faculties operated as separate schools. Despite this separation, the standardized curricula and limited funds they received as well as the inspectorate ensured that differences between faculties of the same type were miniscule at best. This absence of distinction and the rigid control from the centre emphasized seeking promotion through patronage rather than by innovative research. Despite the concentration of authority and of research facilities in the capital that drew professors' attention to Paris, the faculties grafted themselves to the towns in which they were located over time, creating a powerful force against change.<sup>22</sup>

To become a professor in most faculties, one had to study at the *Pensionnat normal* (later named the *École normale supérieure*) and prepare for a further competitive examination, the *agrégation*. The *agrégation* demonstrated an individual's potential to teach, but did not necessitate any similar demonstration of one's capacity for research. Once more, the stress on examinations obstructed development in the humanities and the physical sciences. Blocked from joining the highest ranks of the socio-educational elite by the graduates of the *grandes écoles*, professors at the *lycées* were either studying for the *agrégation* or *agrégés* preparing their *doctorat d'État*.<sup>23</sup>

The academic faculties of arts and science were by far the most numerous types of faculty. Each *académie* had at least one arts faculty, while just over half of the education regions had a science faculty. One of the main functions of the academic faculties was preparing students for and serving on the *baccalauréat* examination boards, for which they received fees that did little to recompense their poor funding and the money gleaned from their students' tuition. Beyond their role of preparing students for the *baccalauréats*, the

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<sup>22</sup> *Histoire des universités en France*, 301-304, 312-316

<sup>23</sup> Weisz, *Emergence of Modern Universities in France*, 41-43.

academic faculties of arts and science trained *lycée* professors.<sup>24</sup> After two years of study, faculty students graduated with the *licence* and could apply for a post in a *lycée*. Two further years of research, which necessitated travelling to Paris where the majority of materials resided, led to the *doctorat d'État*. The academic faculties suffered from relatively poor status due to their number, limited resources, and the comparatively limited career options offered by their degrees. Although the faculties could specialize – and some did according to local interests – most did not have the resources. Consequently, the academic faculties could not improve their status and remained the poor relative in higher education.<sup>25</sup>

While the academic faculties could specialize, in practice few did in the early nineteenth-century. The connection between secondary and higher education hindered the development of the academic faculties as separate, research-based institutions. The faculties were inextricably linked with secondary education. The curriculum of the *lycées* and the *baccalauréat* examinations determined the curricula of the academic faculties. Also, faculty professors began their careers in the *lycées*. *Lycée* and faculty professors resisted later efforts to dissociate secondary education from higher education to protect old patronage networks between faculty professors and their clients at the *lycées* vying for posts in higher education, which entailed keeping the *lycée* professors at their present positions as they sought to become faculty members. Professors in the arts faculties often refused to innovate, sometimes at the behest of the central administration. The absence of library resources, which had been requisitioned by the Revolution as non-instructional property, also hindered the development of the academic faculties. Furthermore, the science faculties lacked the

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<sup>24</sup> Early in their history, the faculties provided additional tutelage to *lycée* students (*lycéens*). This practice had effectively ceased by the mid-nineteenth-century.

<sup>25</sup> *Histoire des universités en France*, 155-157, 159, 162, 279-281. Prost, *Histoire de l'enseignement en France*, 226-228. Weisz, *Emergence of Modern Universities in France*, 42-43. The post-Revolutionary state-run Catholic theology faculties were worse off than the academic faculties, with few students and limited resources. Most Catholic theology students attended seminaries rather than the faculties. The Third Republic eventually closed the Catholic theology faculties in 1886. The state's successful Protestant theology faculties in Strasbourg and Montpellier remained open. (*Histoire des universités en France*, 275).

equipment and laboratory space to perform many experiments. New scientific ideas came more often from autodidacts and private bodies than through public institutions in the early part of the nineteenth-century. The failure to develop France's lead in the sciences had grave consequences well into the twentieth-century.<sup>26</sup>

The professional faculties of law and medicine, arising from the earlier medical and law schools, were high status institutions. They were few in number to ensure the liberal professions were not burdened with an excess of practitioners to threaten the middle and upper *bourgeoisie*. Likewise, high fees kept many unconnected families out of the faculties. Like the *grandes écoles*, both faculties almost guaranteed employment. Other ministries, those of health and justice, respectively, assisted in determining the curricula of the professional faculties. This slight separation of the professional faculties from their academic counterparts would divide the faculties on issues of reform, as the reforms of 1968 and 1984 proved.<sup>27</sup>

The law faculties, unlike the academic faculties, avoided critical discussion of the Napoleonic law codes and government. Legal studies emphasized theory over practical application. To become a *licencié*, a law student had to study for three years. Another two years led to a state doctorate. A legal degree opened more career opportunities than those of other faculties. Law graduates could become attorneys, magistrates, notaries, and administrators. To establish oneself in a successful practice, one needed connections both to gain clients as well as to receive some practical training. This prerequisite for associations with those in the legal profession was an informal post-baccalaureate entrance requirement or

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<sup>26</sup> Victor Karady, "Educational qualifications and university careers in science in nineteenth-century France," in *The Organization of Science and Technology in France, 1808-1914*, Robert Fox and George Weisz, eds. (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 95-124. Prost, *Histoire de l'enseignement en France*, 56-57.

<sup>27</sup> F. d'Aubert, *JO* (1983), 1835. R. Barre, *JO* (1983), 1380. Jacques Blanc, *JO* (1983), 2042. J. Foyer, *JO* (1983), 1365, 1650-1651. G. Gantier, *JO* (1983), 1691. Emmanuel Hamel, *JO* (1983), 2043. Louis Lareng, *JO* (1983), 1392, 2091. Roland Lebel, *JO* (1983), 1347-1348. A. Madelin, *JO* (1983), 1674, 1915, 2043, 2061. Jean-Louis Masson, *JO* (1983), 1357. C. Millon, *JO* (1983), 1519, 1835. Étienne Pinte, *JO* (1983), 1406. RPR, *JO* (1983), 1650.

*sélection*. The faculties' status and unofficial means of *sélection* lent their students a counter-reformist viewpoint.<sup>28</sup>

The medical faculties prepared prospective health officers for the two-year *officiat* or hopeful physicians for the four-year *doctorat d'État*. Though they were few in number, the faculties offered greater opportunities for newcomers by emphasizing talent over connections. The cost of a medical doctorate was great, but a graduate could establish a practice anywhere in France and be assured a decent living. Unlike the law schools, the medical faculties did have an official means of limiting enrolment. The *numerus clausus* restricted the number of medical students in accordance with the needs of the state, which in turn protected the status and livelihood of present and future physicians. Also, the practical nature of medical study permitted the faculties to innovate, although limited resources made specialization difficult.<sup>29</sup>

Paris's academic precedence was insurmountable. The political centralization wrought by the Revolution promoted the academic centralization that had begun during the Old Regime. The capital was one of three cities with all five types of faculties. Paris was also home to many of the *grandes écoles* and research institutes, the *grands établissements*, as well as several of the most prestigious *lycées* such as Louis-le-Grand. Having lost most of their research facilities such as libraries and equipment during the Revolution, and prevented from amalgamating the resources of local faculties, the provinces were unable to gain ground on the capital. Consequently, *lycée* and faculty professors wanting to advance their careers sought posts in Paris. A post at a notable Parisian *lycée*, close to the best libraries and research materials, was preferable to a lower-ranking faculty post in the provinces. Seeking

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<sup>28</sup> R.D. Anderson, *Education in France, 1848-1870* (Oxford, Eng.: Clarendon Press, 1975), 226. Burney, *Toulouse et son université*, 125-126, 130-131, 188-190. *Histoire des universités en France*, 266-267. Weisz, *Emergence of Modern Universities in France*, 26.

<sup>29</sup> *Histoire des universités en France*, 294-299. Prost, *Histoire de l'enseignement en France*, 225-226. George Weisz, "Reform and conflict in French medical education," in *The Organization of Science and Technology in France, 1808-1914*, Robert Fox and George Weisz, eds. (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 69-78.

patronage became unavoidable if one sought promotion. The whole arrangement hindered innovation. Professors faced with demands for new courses or programs responded that only the national government could effect such changes. Napoleon's decision to spurn the establishment of separate universities that might have acted contrary to his interest undermined the development of higher education in the provinces with serious consequences for France's socio-economic development.<sup>30</sup>

The *grandes écoles* and the similarly prestigious research institutes (*grands établissements*) such as the *Collège impérial* (formerly the *Collège royal*) and the *Muséum national d'histoire naturelle* that trained the new socio-educational elite were separate from the Imperial *Université*. Other ministries were responsible for the public specialist schools. For instance, the Ministry of War regulated the *École polytechnique*. Until 1834, a prospective student could pass from a private *collège* to a *grande école* without attending a *Université* institution or needing a *baccalauréat*. Instead, entry into a *grande école* required passing another competitive examination, the *concours*. At about the same time, the July Monarchy grafted the *grands établissements* to the *Université*. Enrolment in the schools and establishments was small, but the institutions were well funded by the state. Their small numbers ensured that graduates from a *grande école* or *grand établissement* were almost certain of finding a profitable post in the state hierarchy. Consequently, the students, alumni, and professors of those elite institutions as well as the ministers responsible for them guarded their privileges against any effort to tie them to the faculties – including those of the *École normale supérieure* when it was attached to the Ministry of Public Instruction in 1904 – or to

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<sup>30</sup> Burney, *Toulouse et son université*, 30-31. Min. Ed. "Chronologie de l'enseignement professionnel et technique." *Histoire des universités en France*, 263, 267-271.

improve the status of the faculties. This defence plagued any attempt to reform higher education.<sup>31</sup>

In spite of the difficulties posed by its organizational rigidity, institutional conservatism, the Paris-provinces divide, and the *grandes écoles*, the *Université*'s role in French society grew throughout the nineteenth-century. The Guizot Law of 1833 established three levels of education – primary, secondary, and higher – albeit without much success. The state gradually assumed control over public primary education from the burdened localities, expanding it to answer the increasing demands of the working classes and petty *bourgeoisie* who desired social mobility. Combined with the drastic social and technological changes that occurred in the nineteenth- and twentieth-centuries, the boundaries between the levels of education became increasingly vague. The faculties grew with the expansion of elementary and secondary education, as technological changes led to specialization in the science faculties. Industrialization also led to an increased involvement of French industry in higher education, although to a much smaller degree than in German universities.<sup>32</sup>

Twentieth-century reformers, including Alain Savary, revisited two significant reforms of the *Université* proposed during the nineteenth-century that encountered all of the aforementioned forces of resistance. The establishment of *centres universitaires* and the formation of a public education service directly imperilled the status of professors. Under the Restoration, Louis XVIII briefly toyed with the idea of reinstating the Old Regime universities before realizing the benefits of centralized control. Louis-Philippe revisited the idea at the beginning of his reign. The *bourgeois* monarch considered reorganizing the

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<sup>31</sup> Burney, *Toulouse et son université*, 162-173. Charle, *La république des universitaires*, 45, 47, 57-58, 88. C.R. Day, "Education for the industrial world: technical and modern instruction in France under the Third Republic, 1870-1914," in *The Organization of Science and Technology in France, 1808-1914*, Robert Fox and George Weisz, eds. (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 128. *Histoire des universités en France*, 264-269, 276-279. Prost, *Histoire de l'enseignement en France*, 72. Weisz, *Emergence of Modern Universities in France*, 31.

<sup>32</sup> Ben David, *Scientist's Role in Society*, 89, 94-99. Charle, *La république des universitaires*, 120-123. *Histoire des universités en France*, 283, 302-303. Weisz, *Emergence of Modern Universities in France*, 31-33.

faculties into a few *centres universitaires* situated in the largest towns. Led by the recently rehabilitated François Guizot and Victor Cousin, the professors (*universitaires*) were quick to denounce the scheme as contrary to their and the regime's interests. Both Guizot and Cousin later served several terms as minister of Public Instruction under Louis-Philippe to ensure that policy and the attempt to create a single public education service consistently failed.<sup>33</sup> The notion of *centres universitaires* flourished once more in the middle of the nineteenth-century when the backwardness of the French faculties became apparent to junior professors (*assistants* and *maîtres-assistants*)<sup>34</sup> studying in German universities. The junior professors' studies and reports formed the basis for the Third Republic's great reform, the Law of 1896.

Many professors feared the concept of a public education service, however. Both senior<sup>35</sup> and junior professors believed that labelling their profession a service would reduce them to mere functionaries. They stressed that the professoriate was one of the pillars of the state and that classifying them as bureaucrats rather than officers of the state would undermine their status. Again, Guizot sank the idea only to have it surface with the Falloux Law of 1850. The notion of a public education service continued to bob to the surface throughout the Third and later republics, particularly under left wing governments like that of the Popular Front before World War II and of the Socialists in the 1950s and 1980s.<sup>36</sup>

Another persistent issue was the lack of research performed by either the faculties or the *grandes écoles* that led other ministries as well as private bodies to establish schools of their own, or to train technicians for the new industries. The *grandes écoles* had adopted the traditional elite's abhorrence for exclusively practical studies, which was a serious contradiction for engineering schools important for France's economic development. When

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<sup>33</sup> *Histoire des universités en France*, 302. Weisz, *The Emergence of Modern Universities in France*, 30-33.

<sup>34</sup> Probationary lecturers and lecturers, respectively.

<sup>35</sup> *Professeurs* (professors) and *maîtres de conférences* (senior lecturers).

<sup>36</sup> Jean-François Chanet, *L'École républicaine des petites patries* (Paris, Fr.: Histoires Aubier, 1996), 20-22. Weisz, *Emergence of Modern Universities in France*, 30.

new technologies did arise, such as electrical engineering and aeronautics, the state established specialized *grandes écoles*. The *grandes écoles* emphasis on theoretical studies hampered the application of scientific knowledge, the very purpose of engineering, from reaching industrial fruition, leading to stagnation in those fields.<sup>37</sup>

Although the science faculties were more open to change, they too suffered from academic conservatism as well as limited funds. French firms remarked on the connections between German higher education – the universities and higher technical schools – and industry, wondering why such links were so difficult at home. Industries required dedicated researchers who could discover ways to reduce costs and improve production. Synthetic dyes and advances in metallurgy and other sciences, arrived at through careful study in well-equipped laboratories, spurred a wide variety of German industrial firms from Krupp to Bayer and Siemens, allowing France's new continental rivals to gain rapidly on Britain's early lead. As the nineteenth-century progressed, the government granted greater latitude to the faculties to seek and receive supplementary private funding. By the latter half of the century, several science faculties had very good applied science programs (Nancy, Grenoble, Toulouse, Lille) that awarded lower status university rather than state diplomas. Too often these changes occurred too late to have a significant effect on the economy as a whole.<sup>38</sup>

Patronage was a further barrier to research. Again, the German universities proved a model of success. French report writers claimed that German professors gained their posts through a proven research record rather than connections. In France, one advanced by stages from being an instructor at a *lycée* to a post within a faculty, if one acquired the *agrégation*, which was dependent on one's facility with language, and had the right contacts. French

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<sup>37</sup> Prost, *Education, société, et politiques*, 36. Terry Shinn, "From 'corps' to 'profession': the emergence and definition of industrial engineering in France," in *The Organization of Science and Technology in France, 1808-1914*, Robert Fox and George Weisz, eds. (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press; Paris, Fr.: Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, 1980), 185-196. Min. Ed., *Le site Descartes* (<http://www.recherche.gouv.fr/site/instit.htm>), 1.

<sup>38</sup> Charle, *La république des universitaires*, 99-114. Weisz, *Emergence of Modern Universities in France*, 34-35, 38.

reformers were less favourable to the German tradition of starting as an unpaid *privat-docent* (teaching assistant), preferring instead the more meritocratic method of beginning as a *lycée* professor. Patronage did tend to focus attention on Paris rather than local interests, which further impeded research. The *universitaires* commented on how even provincial German universities could gain and retain a good reputation, unlike provincial French faculties. They concluded that if the *Université* stressed research qualifications rather than the patronage granted by chaired professors, the provincial faculties would improve. This call to advance research and innovation over patronage and seniority found militant echoes in the May 1968 riots a century later.<sup>39</sup>

The German states' victory over the French Second Empire in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71 gave reformers the opportunity to put their plans into action. Between 1877 and 1896, the new Third Republic built the foundations for a massive overhaul of the *Université*. The Ministry of Public Instruction permitted the faculties to secure private funding for courses that deepened the science faculties' connections with local industries. Unfortunately, the resulting specialization by the faculties was not officially recognized and unofficial acknowledgement of a student's work with certificates of specialization ended in 1885. That same year, however, the Goblet decrees established the *conseils généraux des facultés* (faculty general councils).<sup>40</sup>

The *conseils généraux* provided the framework to build *centres universitaires*. The councils grouped faculties within the *académies* together to promote cooperation between the disciplines to create links strong enough to found a semi-autonomous university. Reformers

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<sup>39</sup> Anderson, *Education in France*, 225, 229-230, 232-234. Burney, *Toulouse et son université*, 13, 65-72. Charle, *La république des universitaires*, 38-46. *Histoire des universités en France*, 289-290, 302, 304-305, 312. Prost, *Histoire de l'enseignement en France*, 229. Weisz, *Emergence of Modern Universities in France*, 36. For the continuation of the struggle between seeking patronage and performing research into the 1960s and beyond, see Cohen, *Elusive Reform*, 70-72.

<sup>40</sup> Burney, *Toulouse et son université*, 13. Charle, *La république des universitaires*, 52-59, 99-114, 120-123. *Histoire des universités en France*, 325-326. Prost, *Histoire de l'enseignement en France*, 238-239. Weisz, *The Emergence of Modern Universities in France*, 29.

were divided on what sort of university they wanted. Some reformers, particularly those closely tied to the *Université* hierarchy, argued for the creation of regional universities that would leave the faculties virtually untouched. Other reformers believed that a few, perhaps five or six, universities located in major cities offered the best chance for the development of research-based higher education.<sup>41</sup>

In 1893, the state gave the councils civil status, enabling them to engage in contracts with outside (i.e., private) bodies for funding. Louis Liard, the director of Higher Education in the Ministry of Public Instruction, hoped granting the councils *personnalité morale* would promote the development of concentrated universities. Regrettably, the chaired professors dominated the councils and defended against any scheme that could undermine their authority, independence or status. The *grandes écoles* and their alumni argued in defence of their privileges against the threat posed by the proposed university centres. The mayors of towns benefiting from the faculties' presence, supported the professors' against concentrating the faculties into a few university towns. Students also worried about their future. A small number of university centres rather than regional universities meant *sélection* as there were fewer faculties and opportunities to enter higher education. It meant having to relocate as well, necessitating a greater outlay than many struggling students could afford even with grants.<sup>42</sup>

Faced with such strong resistance, the Law of 1896 achieved little. Instead of a few large universities in major cities, the law produced regional universities within the *académies* administered by the *conseils généraux*, which were headed by the rectors. Legally, the Napoleonic *Université* had ceased to be, but the same problems remained. The chaired professors retained their patronage networks and the faculties maintained a measure of

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<sup>41</sup> Charle, *La république des universitaires*, 52-59, 99-114, 120-123. *Histoire des universités en France*, 325-326. Prost, *Histoire de l'enseignement en France*, 238-239.

<sup>42</sup> Charle, *La république des universitaires*, 47-55. Prost, *Histoire de l'enseignement en France*, 239-240.

independence from the new university administrations. Instruction remained authoritarian and conservative. Without the concentration of the faculties in a few centres, the universities did not have enough resources to conduct extensive research, never mind compete with the *grandes écoles* or the German universities. Also, the new provincial universities still had not the capacity to contend with the newly formed University of Paris, which had been one of the main purposes behind the reform.<sup>43</sup>

Despite the professors' desire to maintain the *status quo*, social, economic, and demographic pressures eventually necessitated further reforms. As women, the working classes, and petty *bourgeoisie* recognized that education could provide social mobility, they demanded the extension of free public education to post-primary and secondary schools. Between 1885 and the Berthoin reforms of 1959, the state responded to this pressure by broadening the scope of free public education to cover most post-primary schooling, with the exception of the *classes préparatoires aux grandes écoles* (*grandes écoles* preparatory courses or CPGE). The state also began to unify the competing strands of post-primary education such as the various public *collèges*<sup>44</sup> and *écoles primaires supérieures* (higher primary schools) and delaying the streaming of students while raising the school leaving age to sixteen by 1967. Observation cycles streamed less fortunate students away from higher education. By delaying streaming until secondary school and by ensuring more students attended either a *lycée* or *collège*, the universities experienced a drastic increase in enrolment, particularly in the arts faculties. Unfortunately, neither the national planning council established in 1945 nor the government planned sufficient funds or time to cope with the

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<sup>43</sup> Charle, *La république des universitaires*, 70-80. Harry W. Paul, "Apollo courts the Vulcans: the applied science institutes in nineteenth-century French science faculties," in *The Organization of Science and Technology in France, 1808-1914*, Robert Fox and George Weisz, eds. (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press; Paris, Fr.: Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, 1980), 176-181. Prost, *Education, société, et politiques*, 50-51, 57. Prost, *Histoire de l'enseignement en France*, 239-240.

<sup>44</sup> By 1963, these were the *collèges d'enseignement général* (general colleges) as well as the *collèges d'enseignement technique* (technical colleges) and the *collèges d'enseignement secondaire*.

postwar demographic explosion. These processes opened higher education to a broader spectrum of French society, which placed a difficult burden on the schools and universities even before the post-World War II populated boom had matured.<sup>45</sup>

The state did make changes to higher education, but these were relatively modest. The Fouchet reforms of 1964 and of 1966 dispensed with the *année propédeutique* or probationary year at the beginning of university studies and instituted the three cycles of university study. In the academic faculties, the first cycle led to the *diplôme universitaire d'études littéraires* (DUEL) or the *diplôme universitaire d'études scientifiques* (DUES) respectively. In 1966, the *diplôme d'études universitaires générales* (DEUG) replaced the DUEL and the DUES as the second post-secondary diploma. The second cycle led to the *licence* and the third to the *doctorat*. Eliminating the probationary year removed a political difficulty, but did not relieve the pressure on the overwhelmed faculties.<sup>46</sup>

The national planning council's failure to prepare an adequate response to the postwar demographic explosion meant that new facilities and universities were at best half-built. Postwar universities were built along the lines of American campuses that removed them from urban life and entertainment. Even when recreational facilities were present, the over-centralization of education required that students wait months to receive permission to use them. Changing social mores regarding the sexes exacerbated the problems wrought by overcrowding and authoritarian instruction.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Bernard E. Brown, *Protest in Paris: Anatomy of a Revolt* (Morristown, NJ: General Learning Process, 1974), 9-11. Jean-Claude Émin and Paul Esquieu, "A Century of Education" ([http://www.insee.fr/en/ffc/docs\\_ffc/ds9905.html](http://www.insee.fr/en/ffc/docs_ffc/ds9905.html)). W.R. Fraser, *Reforms and Restraints in Modern French Education* (London, Eng.: Routledge & K. Paul, 1971), 27, 36, 58-59, 76. *Histoire des universités en France*, 374, 376. Prost, *Education, société, et politiques*, 38, 50-51, 57, 66n3, 124. Prost, *Histoire de l'enseignement en France*, 422-423. Laurence Wylie, *Village in the Vaucluse* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.), (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974), 90-93, 98-99.

<sup>46</sup> Bernard E. Brown, *Protest in Paris: Anatomy of a Revolt* (Morristown, NJ: General Learning Process, 1974), 9-11. Émin and Esquieu, "A Century of Education." *Histoire des universités en France*, 374, 376. Prost, *Education, société, et politiques*, 124. Prost, *Histoire de l'enseignement en France*, 422-423.

<sup>47</sup> John Ardagh, *France in the 1980s* (Harmondsworth, Eng.: Penguin, 1982), 487, 494-495. Brown, *Protest in Paris*, 21-22. Cohen, *Elusive Reform*, 1-2.

Other problems facing the students were the high drop-out rate and underemployment. Almost half of university students failed to graduate for financial reasons. Although the French state heavily subsidized higher education, many students from the lower and lower middle classes had trouble paying their living expenses. They had to work to fund their education, which made it difficult to fulfil their course requirements. Many found the situation untenable and quit. The state aggravated the problem of underemployment by simplifying and diversifying the *baccalauréats*. By establishing a variety of *baccalauréats*, the state merely created another set of educational dead-ends that led neither to the universities nor other forms of post-secondary education.<sup>48</sup>

Those students who did graduate had difficulty finding a decent career. Most university students were in the arts faculties, many taking such courses as sociology, psychology, and other disciplines without immediate business applications. Students recognized that many graduates from those disciplines did not find well-paying jobs. Companies wanted technicians and scientists rather than sociologists. Arts students likewise deplored gearing their studies towards a professional outcome in business. The rising number of university graduates undermined the value of their diplomas. The French economy, operating according to outmoded, labour intensive methods of production, was not expanding as rapidly as that of West Germany, its Common Market partner.<sup>49</sup>

The students and workers' revolt of May 1968 was a product of the poor conditions within the universities combined with a general disaffection with Gaullist rule and the thwarted ambitions and desires of the western hemisphere's postwar generation given substance by resistance to the United States' war in Vietnam. As the French had exported its

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<sup>48</sup> Ardagh, *France in the 1980s*, 475, 495. Brown, *Protest in Paris*, 21-22, 160-164, 177-178, 183-188. Cohen, *Elusive Reform*, 16-18, 116-119. Prost, *Education, société, et politiques*, 117-121, 127-131.

<sup>49</sup> Ardagh, *France in the 1980s*, 493-494. Brown, *Protest in Paris*, 2-3, 159-163. *Histoire des universités en France*, 389-393. Lipietz, "Governing the economy in the face of international challenge," 28-30. Prost, *Education, société, et politiques*, 120-121.

Indochinese conflict to the Americans, the Americans exported their young adults' crusade against authority to the French. Television broadcasts of brutal police actions against the students brought awareness of the universities' failings to general knowledge, and the support of the workers. The threat of a full-scale revolution finally forced the government to act. The state placated the workers, then crushed the students. Even so, de Gaulle realized higher education required reform. His new appointee as minister of National Education, Edgar Faure, prepared to introduce a new, more democratic, more responsive *Université*.<sup>50</sup>

The Faure Law of 12 November 1968 gave students the opportunity to participate in policy-making for the universities. Also, the Faure reforms united all members of the university teaching staff from teaching assistants to full professors to administer the universities. Or so it seemed at first glance. In truth, the new legislation did not ensure the representation of either the students or the junior professors. Students needed an unrealistic level of participation to secure the optimum level of representation in order to have an active voice on the new institutional councils. Even those students who advocated representation on the various councils soon lost interest in the absence of any real voice in university policy. The full professors, therefore, continued to dominate the university councils after the Faure reforms.<sup>51</sup>

The institutional changes Faure introduced were drastic. He dissolved the pre-revolt universities into self-determined study and research units (*unités d'études et de recherche*, UERs) in the hope that the UERs would coalesce into truly geographically concentrated universities performing inter-disciplinary research as intended by the Law of 1896. Unfortunately, most of the UERs joined into strongly politicized universities, often fracturing

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<sup>50</sup> Ardagh, *France in the 1980s*, 475, 495. Brown, *Protest in Paris*, 21-22, 160-164, 177-178, 183-188. Prost, *Education, société, et politiques*, 117-121, 127-131.

<sup>51</sup> Ardagh, *France in the 1980s*, 495-498. Cohen, *Elusive Reform*, 54-63, 85-92, 94-99, 104-106. *Histoire des universités en France*, 393-395. Prost, *Education, société, et politiques*, 131-137.

the faculties and still geographically dislocated despite Faure's attempts to geld the more radical faculties by arranging the formation of some UERs. From twenty-three regional universities, seventy-one arose. This reform achieved a measure of institutional specialization, but mostly in terms of political outlook rather than fields of study. The universities still did not have enough autonomy and many were still too dispersed geographically to use what little freedom they had effectively.<sup>52</sup>

A further effort to achieve a multi-disciplinary university was the integration of the university institutes of technology (*instituts universitaires de technologie* or IUTs), created in 1964 to provide highly skilled technicians for industry, into the universities. The IUTs were not wholly successful initially due to their demeaning technical rather than theoretical leaning. Unlike the universities, the IUTs could select their students. While this right to select would raise the general estimation of the IUTs in the eyes of parents and prospective students, as would the comparatively good jobs of IUT graduates, for other university students it brought worry. The integration of a UER that could discriminate might mean the extension of the right to select candidates to the other UERs of the university. So far, that has not been the case.<sup>53</sup>

Outwardly, the Faure reforms answered many but not all of the problems facing the universities. However, serious problems remained. The gap between entrants and graduates in higher education remained unchanged. This wastage of lives and educational resources embittered students and undermined the French economy. France's position in the Common Market, however, permitted her to avoid the worst consequences of her economic backwardness. The new universities lagged as distantly behind the *grandes écoles* as their pre-1968 predecessors. Worse still, the provincial universities trailed those in Paris to a

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<sup>52</sup> Ardagh, *France in the 1980s*, 495-498. Cohen, *Elusive Reform*, 53-54, 94-99. *Histoire des universités en France*, 393-395. Prost, *Education, société, et politiques*, 131-137.

<sup>53</sup> Ardagh, *France in the 1980s*, 495-497.

similar degree, and none were particularly responsive to France's needs. Furthermore, professors continued to teach the majority of lower level courses in the old magisterial manner. Thus, despite the radical changes Faure introduced, in actuality little changed.

Faure's successors clawed back the students and junior professors' few gains. Gradually, the state returned the university councils back to the leadership of the full professors. Central control also increased to pre-revolt levels. Students rapidly became apathetic to their role in university administration in any case. Their continued militancy had lost them much of the public support they enjoyed in the early stages of the May 1968 revolt. The chance for change ended without answering any of the pressing concerns. The universities remained undemocratic, unresponsive to economic and social needs, overwhelmed by students unable to complete their education, and incapable of competing with the *grandes écoles*. Still, the surreptitious undoing of Faure's compromise of 1968 by subsequent ministers of education between 1969 and 1976 failed to provoke widespread student protests.<sup>54</sup>

The appointment of Alice Saunier-Seïté as secretary of state and subsequently minister of Universities between 1976 and 1981 reawakened the students and the call for reform. With her authoritarian stamp, she advanced the position of the traditional university hierarchies. Her attitude toward anyone who opposed her was openly contemptuous. While student militancy often undermined public goodwill, Saunier-Seïté's behaviour broadened the base of discontent with her management of higher education.<sup>55</sup>

Alice Saunier-Seïté began her ministerial career on 12 January 1976 as secretary of state for Universities, replacing Jean-Pierre Soisson. From her extensive experience within the *Université*, she was aware of the state of French universities. She had been a geography

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<sup>54</sup> Cohen, *Elusive Reform*, 79-81. *Histoires des universités en France*, 393.

<sup>55</sup> Ardagh, *France in the 1980s*, 499-500. Cohen, *Elusive Reform*, 81-82, 102. *Histoires des universités en France*, 390, 393-394.

professor, a dean, the director of an IUT, a vice-president of the University of Paris-XI, a permanent member of the *Centre national de la recherche scientifique* (CNRS), and lastly the rector of the Reims *académie* (1973-1976). She knew of the cramped and occasionally squalid conditions in which students, lecturers, and professors worked, of the strife both between the professoriate and students as well as within professorial ranks, of insufficient support staff and materials, and the growing insularity of academia in response to a swiftly changing world. On her accession to the secretaryship, she avoided such policies as the introduction of *sélection à l'entrée* (post-baccalaureate entrance requirements), but promised technical – pedagogical and organizational – changes. Given the decline in tension between the Ministry of Education and the contending parties of students and educators since 1968, her nomination caused little unease.<sup>56</sup>

Saunier-Seïté's political fitness matched her practical qualifications for the job. Like many of her colleagues in the senior professoriate, she believed in the right's policy of defending their privileges against the demands of the junior professors and students. She was an ardent supporter of the politics of then president Valéry Giscard-d'Estaing (i.e., a Giscardian), believing in the liberal democratic values of smaller government and individual responsibility. In terms of university policy, these liberal policies encouraged declining budgets and streamlined operations, which meant fewer staff and worsening conditions. Giscardian liberalism also threatened to introduce *sélection*. The Giscardian administration sought to sever the tenuous links between the students who opposed more stringent university entrance requirements and the educators – the junior professors – who were in a position to assist them. The government similarly strove to fracture the professorial hierarchy by emphasizing the differences between senior and junior professors. By separating the junior

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<sup>56</sup> Edwy Plenel, "Les silences de l'ancien ministre," *Le Monde* (30 May 1982), 14. "Mme Saunier-Seïté (universités)," *Le Monde* (15 May 1981), 12.

professors from the senior professors, the government distanced the lower ranked professors – those most likely to support the students – from any administrative influence. In essence, she intended to take action against the *Université de masse* envisioned by the Faure Law of 1968.<sup>57</sup>

The previous minister of Education, René Haby, and his secretary of state for Universities, Soisson, had prepared the first salvoes against the Faure Law by reducing spending. The 1970s Oil Crisis wrought by the Yom Kippur War caused the economic stagnation that necessitated this retrenchment. The diminished funding threatened a decline or cessation of services and programmes. To lessen the impact of these planned blows, he calmed the students by lowering the student quota necessary for representation on the university and institutional councils to twenty-five percent of an institution's student body in 1975. Haby's quota reduction from the fifty-percent level legislated in 1973 was, however, cynical rather than generous. Rarely did more than twenty-five percent of the student electorate vote. Those students who did vote either supported government policy or were its harshest critics such as the Communists and Socialists who could be safely ignored as obstructive radicals. Haby and later Saunier-Seïté eased the way for more radical right wing alterations to the *Université* by restoring control of the institutional councils to the senior professoriate. Soisson had planned a more aggressive measure, however. The Left discovered his efforts to introduce *sélection à la carte* (entrance based on a student's dossier or portfolio) into the second-cycle of university studies in arts and the sciences. Soisson intended to reduce the burden on the state as the French economy faltered due to the Oil Crisis, strong competition from West Germany, and outdated manufacturing and

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<sup>57</sup> 'Liberal' in France of the 1970s and 1980s was a synonym of 'Giscardian' and similar rightist ideologies seeking to diminish the state's role in society by the reduction of government expenditures. Lelièvre and Nique, *L'école des présidents*, 306.

management techniques. The attempt was met with indifference by the professoriate and anger by the students.<sup>58</sup>

In time, Saunier-Seïté generated animosity by her own devices. She belied the generosity of her initial promise to focus on the technical side of university reform with inflammatory arrogance. Indeed, after her first year in office, she refused to meet with student representatives. Increasingly, she deputized loyal officials to represent her and her interests on administrative councils.<sup>59</sup>

Between 1977 and 1979, she produced ministerial orders that clawed back the few gains granted by the Faure Law to the junior professoriate and students. In 1977, she redrafted the regulation governing the appointment of an IUT's director so the minister responsible for higher education would no longer have to seek the favourable advice of its council. Since the students and teaching staff of the IUT tended to be politically conservative, the measure avoided great controversy but presented the leftist student and teaching unions with a dangerous precedent. On 28 September 1978, she published an order permitting rectors to assign set term limits, generally one year, on the contracts of probationary lecturers as a means of control. The leftist student and educator unions, the UNEF *ex-Renouveau* and UNEF *indépendante et démocratique* on one side and the SGEN-CFDT and SNE-Sup on the other, began to rally against Saunier-Seïté and her supporters within the *Union nationale inter-universitaire* (UNI), the CELF (*Collectif des étudiants libéraux de France*), and the *Syndicat autonome*. Radicalism fed on radicalism as she fired off more hard-line policies while she became increasingly entrenched and embattled inside

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<sup>58</sup> Serge Bolloch, "Le ministère n'est pas favorable à l'élection des directeurs d'I.U.T." *Le Monde* (26 January 1982), 12. Jean-Claude Cassaing, *JO* (1983), 1956, 1980. Jean Hugues Colonna, *JO* (1983), 1407. Guy Ducoloné, *JO* (1983), 1950. Bertrand Girod de l'Ain, "Du plan socialiste à la réforme Savary: 1. – L'éternel retour," *Le Monde* (24 May 1983), 1. Jean Giovannelli, *JO* (1983), 1955. Yves Lancien, *JO* (1983) 1974. Lelièvre and Nique, *L'école des présidents*, 308. Eliane Provost, *JO* (1983), 1414. Alain Savary, *JO* (1983), 1350, 1979. Jean-Pierre Sueur, *JO* (1983), 1383, 1557. "Mme Alice Saunier-Seïté: détestée souvent, courtoisée parfois," *Le Monde* (15 May 1981), 12.

<sup>59</sup> "Mme Saunier-Seïté: détestée souvent, courtoisée parfois," *Le Monde* (15 May 1981), 12.

her offices on rue Dutot. This seclusion deepened once she rose to ministerial rank on 10 January 1978. Her avoidance of the universities' representative bodies, her efforts to concentrate control over the University within her office or through loyal officials and allies, and her increasingly provocative statements to the press supported her detractors' claims of her indifference to the plight of the University.<sup>60</sup>

Likely in response to a growing number of strikes sparked by the SGEN-CFDT and the SNE-Sup, the minister of Universities acted forcefully. On 31 December 1979, she established the CSCU (*Conseil supérieur du corps universitaire*). The CSCU was now the arbiter of the qualifications for tenure and promotion. Ostensibly, the CSCU determined a candidate's suitability based on that person's research and publishing record rather than the degrees or seniority the individual possessed, thereby "unblocking" the careers of deserving junior professors. Appearances were deceiving. Saunier-Seïté's appointees and supporters dominated the CSCU, which effectively politicized the recruiting and promotion of the professoriate. An academic's political affiliation or research subject, whether too left wing or too novel, became sufficient cause to deny a professor a post or advancement. This restriction on academic freedom brought the junior professoriate to heel. Saunier-Seïté targeted the students next.<sup>61</sup>

In the summer of 1980 with the students on holiday, she introduced two schemes that threatened *sélection*. She proposed the DEUG *renforcé* (enriched DEUG) for the first cycle and revoked the national accreditation (*habilitation*) for certain "poorly attended" and "uneconomical" second- and third-cycle programmes in seventeen universities. The minister of Universities presented both policies as a means of improving higher education. The DEUG

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<sup>60</sup> Georges Sueur, "Deux syndicats appellent à la grève dans les universités lilloises," *Le Monde* (22 April 1981), 18. "Madame Saunier-Seïté regrette 'l'hermitisme'," *Le Monde* (9 January 1981), 10. "Mme Alice Saunier-Seïté: détestée souvent, courtoisée parfois," *Le Monde* (15 May 1981), 12.

<sup>61</sup> Lelièvre and Nique, *L'école des présidents*, 305-306.

*renforcé* offered an enriched curriculum that would, in time, elevate the overall quality of university education. The cancellation of *licence*, *maîtrise*, and doctorate programmes with low enrolment in certain universities would liberate funds for programs of greater appeal. Both schemes were direct assaults on the *Université de masse* enshrined within the Law of 1896 and the Faure Law. The DEUG *renforcé* and the termination of graduate programmes threatened students and faculty with the creation of *universités-parking*. The *universités-parking* were to offer only the DEUG rather than the proposed DEUG *renforcé*, condemning the graduates of those institutions to second-rate first-cycle diplomas. Students feared that without the proposed DEUG *renforcé*, they would not be able to advance to the second-cycle.<sup>62</sup>

Saunier-Seïté propounded the DEUG *renforcé* as an experimental diploma offered in certain high-demand disciplines (law and economics, medicine, and modern languages). Students would have to take additional courses and maintain an excellent attendance record. This new diploma failed, however, to correct the greatest problem at the undergraduate level. The majority of those failing to complete the first cycle were those students who had to work to remain in school, who could neither register in more courses nor even always attend those in which they were currently enrolled. To students and the majority of the CNESER (*Conseil national de l'enseignement supérieur et de la recherche*) the minister intended to supplant the existing DEUG with the DEUG *renforcé*, thereby allowing the state to ignore the drop-out problem altogether. The CNESER, despite the arguments and votes of Saunier-Seïté's appointees to the Council, decided against the implementation of the DEUG *renforcé*. While CNESER decisions on such matters were advisory rather than authoritative, had the minister disregarded the Council's advice, she would have invalidated the legitimacy of the proposed

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<sup>62</sup> Serge Bolloch, "Réduire les effectifs," and "Un projet de diplôme..." *Le Monde* (16 February 1981), 6. "Second-rate" in terms of the views of both students and French society in general, comparable to the opinion of university professors towards comparable college programmes in Canada.

diploma before the professoriate. The Council did, however, allow for the development of programs of regional interest, such as courses in Mediterranean languages at the proposed University of Corsica (*Université de Corse*). Before the end of her tenure, she attempted to circumvent the CNESER by creating a DEUG *renforcé* in Mediterranean languages at the latter university. Ultimately though, such attempts to introduce the DEUG *renforcé* by stealth failed.<sup>63</sup>

The termination of the seventeen graduate programs was entirely within Saunier-Seïté's ministerial prerogative. The CNESER had reduced an even greater number of terminations to seventeen and had voiced concerns about limiting the right of instruction, but the minister and her advisors were determined. The cancellations hit smaller universities mostly, forcing the affected students to either transfer to a university offering the same or similar program or alternatively to quit. Students and some professors attacked the development of *universités-parking* that offered only DEUG-level diplomas for those too poor or otherwise unable to transfer to another university. The minister argued that the cut programs affected few students and that the closures freed money for more successful and more economically advantageous programs.<sup>64</sup>

Arguably, the *universités-parking* purportedly formed by the cancellation of post-DEUG programs in the smaller universities could have created the equivalent of North American community colleges, albeit ones with fully transferable degrees, at least until the DEUG *renforcé* became the norm in the other universities. Saunier-Seïté's statements about defending French meritocracy against the mediocrity of the *Université de masse* undermined her position by threatening exclusion through irreversible *sélection*. Her arrogance

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<sup>63</sup> Catherine Arditti, "DEUG renforcé ou DEUG corse," *Le Monde* (18 February 1981), 11. S. Bolloch, "Un plan de diplôme..." *Le Monde* (16 February 1981), 6, and "Horaires renforcés pour trois nouveaux diplômes d'études universitaires générales," *Le Monde* (2 April 1981), 16. André Mandouze, "Vessie, lanterne, et université," *Le Monde* (13 March 1981), 16.

<sup>64</sup> Jean Bollack, "Exigence ou mépris?" *Le Monde* (18 April 1981), 21. E. Plenel, "Les silences de l'ancien ministre," *Le Monde* (30 May 1981), 14.

heightened the fears that traditionally surrounded the introduction of any policy suggesting *sélection*. Similarly, the reasons for cutting some programs were not simply economic (low enrolment) but also political. Those courses that contrasted with her philosophy, notably courses in sociology, education, and other purportedly left-leaning disciplines, suffered the deepest cuts. Economically, it was argued that graduates of such programs had little prospect of generating much wealth. By cancelling those uneconomical courses she was decreasing the number of underemployed. More directly, however, she was reducing and dispersing her opposition.<sup>65</sup>

Lastly, in response to growing tensions in North Africa and the Near East, as well as at home, Saunier-Seïté made it more difficult for foreign students to register in French universities. She pushed pre-registration schedules earlier and required the student to be physically present in France before the commencement of courses. Tests in French language comprehension for foreign students became stricter. Furthermore, foreign students experienced reduced access to the prestigious Parisian universities. These directives hindered access to French universities to many students from former French colonies.<sup>66</sup>

Saunier-Seïté's zeal, though appreciated by the president, worried the prime minister, Raymond Barre. Facing the possibility of general elections in 1981, he tried to curb her worst excesses. He stymied her project to reduce the student presence on the administrative councils, although a similar bill sponsored by her ally, Senator Jean Sauvage, became law on 21 July 1980. The Sauvage Law (*loi Sauvage*) amended articles thirteen to fifteen of the Faure Law that specified the ratios of membership on the university and UER councils. The

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<sup>65</sup> "Madame Saunier-Seïté: détestée souvent, courtoisée parfois," *Le Monde* (15 May 1981), 12. J. Bollack, "Exigence ou mépris?" *Le Monde* (18 April 1981), 21. S. Bolloch, "Réduire les effectifs," *Le Monde* (16 February 1981), 6. A. Mandouze, "Vessie, lanterne, et université," *Le Monde* (13 March 1981), 16. E. Plenel, "Les silences de l'ancien ministre," *Le Monde* (30 May 1981), 14. Alice Saunier-Seïté, "Mme Saunier-Seïté dresse le bilan de son activité ministérielle," *Le Monde* (30 May 1981), 14.

<sup>66</sup> "Annulation partielle d'une circulation sur les étudiants étrangers," *Le Monde* (16 January 1981), 14. "Grèves et manifestations," *Le Monde* (9 January 1981), 10.

senior professoriate received fifty percent of the seats, the externals had fifteen percent, the students had fifteen percent, the junior professors had ten percent, and the administrative, technical, plant operations, and service staff had ten percent. The junior professors, subject to the discipline of the CSCU, had to consider their careers before taking action against this act and other measures enacted by Saunier-Seïté or her allies. Most university students were either apathetic toward school politics or refused to vote for these new councils. Giscardian and conservative student groups such as the CELF and UNI filled the vacuum thus created. The Sauvage Law thereby removed the two groups most likely to resist the Giscardian vision from the university administrative councils.<sup>67</sup>

Protests against Saunier-Seïté gradually grew in both fervour and numbers. Some students and faculty members embarked on strikes in November 1980 and that continued sporadically until François Mitterrand's election as the Fifth Republic's first Socialist president. The strikes began in Perpignan and continued on to several provincial universities, notably Strasbourg, Besançon, Dijon, Toulouse, and Reims. Lille and Rennes also joined in the struggle. The University of Haute Bretagne (Rennes-II) lost its president, Michel Denis, in protest against the Sauvage Law. The faculty and students supported their former president but feared Saunier-Seïté's possible retaliation, perhaps resulting in the university's closure. The *Toulousains* of Toulouse-II and Toulouse-III struck hard against the offices of a local television station to gain airtime for their message, captured the city hall, and invaded the local CROUS meeting on 8 January 1981 in protest against the loss of six *habilitations* for *diplômes d'études approfondies* (DEA). The *Lillois* protested against the rector's refusal to renew the contracts of fifty-five *assistants* at Lille-III. In Dijon, about half of the 13,000 students had been affected by the strikes in early January, excepting those students in the

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<sup>67</sup> Alain Colombeau, "Rétablir la légalité," *Le Monde* (8 July 1981), 2. François Lebrun, "Restaurer la confiance," *Le Monde* (8 July 1981), 2. Serge Bolloch, "Les modifications apportées par Mme Saunier-Seïté au texte orientation de 1968 seront supprimées," *Le Monde* (27 August 1981), 18.

health sciences UER and the IUT. Saunier-Seïté's policies threatened the governing UDF (*Union pour la démocratie française*) party and president with defeat in the coming elections.<sup>68</sup>

Though Barre had failed to silence Saunier-Seïté and her supporters completely before the 1981 elections, he as good as assumed her ministerial responsibilities soon after the passage of the Sauvage Law. In an effort to detach his administration from her actions, he established the Fréville Commission to investigate higher education in other countries, notably the United States, Great Britain, and West Germany. The prime minister indicated that the commission's findings would form the basis of the Gaullist/Giscardian party's post-electoral reform platform.

The Fréville Commission's report offered a new Giscardian vision for higher education in keeping with prevailing economic conditions. It recommended a swift increase in registration fees from 95 French francs (FF) to almost 250 FF. Although tuition would still have been smaller than that required by North American universities, the nearly three-fold increase appalled French students and parents. The fee increase could have placed higher education beyond the limits of poorer students who already had to work to go to school. The fees would alleviate some of the financial burden on the state. Another recommendation, if it had succeeded, would have reduced the burden further. The commission proposed establishing a British-style university grants committee (UGC) that would grant the universities greater fiscal autonomy to allow them to seek private sources of funding. The implied reliance on business to support the universities increased the fears of

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<sup>68</sup> Serge Bolloch, "Le 'grande soulagement' d'une université sans président," *Le Monde* (14 May 1981), 16. Robert Carles, "Dijon: un nombre inhabituel de grévistes," *Le Monde* (10 January 1981), 14. G. Sueur, "Deux syndicats appellent à la grève dans les universités lilloises," *Le Monde* (22 April 1981), 18. Charles Vial, "Les habilitations de diplômés nationaux," *Le Monde* (7 January 1981), 13. "Des étudiants se mobilisent dans plusieurs universités de province," *Le Monde* (16 January 1981), 14. "Grèves et manifestations," *Le Monde* (9 January 1981), 10. "L'hiver rampant' des étudiants," *Le Monde* (16 January 1981), 1. "Toulouse : occupation des locaux FR3," *Le Monde* (10 January 1981), 14.

arts students of corporate meddling and further cuts.<sup>69</sup> As the economy faltered and as decent careers became harder to find, however, the attitudes towards the professionalization of higher education began to change. Thus, while difficulties existed, the desire to find solutions was growing.

The Socialist Party of France benefited from this agitation as well as the growing general disenchantment with Gaullist government. On 23 July 1977, the Party presented its manifesto to reform education. Then-presidential candidate François Mitterrand echoed that document in his “ten proposals for school” presented on 15 March 1981. Among these proposals was the desire to raise the pass rate of the various *baccalauréats* (general, modern, technical, and vocational) to eighty percent of the students taking them, not all of which granted access to higher education. This part of the program necessitated a massive amendment to the existing educational structure. The conference’s vision for the universities harkened back to the reforms of 1896 and 1968. In response to the perceived needs of the French economy and society, the Party wanted to create universities that were autonomous and democratic, and that promoted inter-disciplinary research. These lofty aims would be put to the test once the Socialists were elected in 1981.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Serge Bolloch, “La commission Fréville propose de développer l’autonomie des universités,” *Le Monde* (28 March 1981), 14. Alain Geismar, “Ouvrir le débat universitaire,” *Le Monde* (17 June 1981), 17. Jacques Robert, “Demain, l’Université,” *Le Monde* (3-4 January 1981), 6.

<sup>70</sup> Ardagh, *France in the 1980s*, 500-501. Prost, *Education, société, et politiques*, 80-81. Savary, *En toute liberté*, 11-14.

## CHAPTER 2: ALAIN SAVARY AND THE FAILURE TO REFORM HIGHER EDUCATION, 1981-1984

The Socialists' victory in the May 1981 general election followed the successful bid of their presidential candidate, François Mitterrand. With them came promises of a return to the hopes of the Faure Law (21 November 1968). Mitterrand appointed Pierre Mauroy as prime minister. Alain Savary, a regional councillor, became the head of a Ministry of National Education reuniting the ministries of Education and of Universities on rue Grenelle. The preference for Savary as opposed to the resident Socialist education critic, Louis Mexandeau, was likely a result of Savary's close friendship with Antoine Prost, the noted education historian, and Savary's willingness to serve the best interests of the party. In particular, Mexandeau's close ties with the teachers' unions would have worried the conservative alumni associations of the *grandes écoles* and spurred the senior professoriate into immediate action. The moderate Savary, eager to fashion a workable solution to the various problems within French education, conformed closely to Mitterrand's designs for education. Upon taking office, he announced his intention to examine two important areas requiring reform: the status of state-funded private education and the role of higher education. At the end of his three-year tenure, these efforts suffered unsurprising defeats. In both instances, an opposition comprising not only the right but also important left wing figures in education and the government thwarted Savary's plans.<sup>71</sup>

From promising beginnings in May 1981, the Socialist government soon faced reality. The new minister did have over a hundred years of republican educational theory and

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<sup>71</sup> Charles R. Day, Ch. 7, "The Socialists in Power, 1981-1993," 1-2. For an account of his failure to impose state control over publicly funded private education, please see Sofia Oberti, "Should the state finance private education?: Alain Savary's attempt to solve the private school debate in France from 1981 to 1984," (Unpublished M.A. thesis, Simon Fraser University, 2001).

President Mitterrand's "ten proposals for education" behind him.<sup>72</sup> The opposition to reform had over one hundred years of unquestioned successes against government efforts to place higher education under the administration of a single ministry or to establish university centres.

Within the Ministry of National Education, there were two important post-baccalaureate programmes administered by the directorate for secondary education, the *Sections de techniciens supérieurs* (senior technician training programmes; STS) and the *cours préparatoires aux grandes écoles* (*grandes écoles* preparatory courses; CPGE). The *lycées* housed these two programmes and the directorate administered them with input from their respective sponsors.<sup>73</sup> The secretary of state for Universities had no say in the operation or administration of either the STS or the CPGE even though the programmes offered the equivalent of the first cycle of higher education. Both the STS and the CPGE had stringent entrance requirements, unlike the universities, which increased their prestige. The STS, recruiting from the *lycées techniques*, provided an honourable and likely more profitable alternative to university for working class students while the CPGE, recruiting from elite *lycées* in Paris and other big cities, opened to their students the opportunity of entering France's finest educational institutions, failing which there were always the universities. Neither the other ministries nor the departments within the Education Ministry had shown any intention of relinquishing any control of their charges in the past. It was extremely doubtful their stance would change under a moderate ministry such as Alain Savary.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Claude Lelièvre and Christian Nique, *L'école des présidents: de Charles de Gaulle à François Mitterrand* (Paris, Fr.: Éditions Odile Jacob, 1995), 307.

<sup>73</sup> By the 1980s there were three types of *lycées*: the *lycées classiques* (comparable to English grammar schools), the *lycées techniques* (technical schools), and the *lycées professionnels* (vocational schools).

<sup>74</sup> C. Arditti, "DEUG renforcé or DEUG corsé?" *Le Monde* (18 February 1981), 11. S. Bolloch, "Réduire les effectifs," and "Un projet de diplôme..." *Le Monde* (16 February 1981), 6. Charles Vial, "Les professeurs d'écoles normales ne veulent être..." *Le Monde* (27 February 1981), 12.

Savary's first press statements demonstrated that Mitterrand and Mauroy's confidence in him was well placed. The new minister of National Education declared he would consult with all interested parties before implementing any sort of reform. He swore that the Sauvage Law would be repealed as soon as possible, though. Savary promised that the hopes lingering from the Faure Law would be reborn. On the matter of the cancelled *habilitations*, he gave no definitive answers except to say that the question of granting accreditation rights would be studied and that the process of terminating them without consultation would cease. The conference of university presidents was in some measure convinced by the new minister's moderate tone. The left wing student unions – the *Union nationale des étudiants français ex-Renouveau* (National Union of French Students; UNEF *ex-Renouveau*, Communist dominated) and the *UNEF indépendante et démocratique* (UNEF-ID, with Socialist leanings) – announced they would wait before pronouncing judgment. Both left and right wing professors unions, the alumni association of the *grandes écoles*, and the *Syndicat autonome* (Independent Union of Academics) declared that Savary was well meaning but ignorant of what French higher education truly required.<sup>75</sup>

As the year progressed, it became evident to all concerned that beyond abrogating the Sauvage Law, Savary would wait until some measure of consensus could be achieved. Some on the left, particularly within the UNEF-ID, raised concerns that the minister had 'gone native' and was accepting the advice of his officials, several of whom were appointees of the

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<sup>75</sup> Serge Bolloch, "Les universitaires souhaitent un débat national sur l'enseignement," *Le Monde* (28 May 1981), 18; "Le ministère de l'éducation nationale a entrepris la révision de la liste des diplômes nationaux: les présidents d'universités pourront 'faire appel'," *Le Monde* (3 June 1981), 10; "M. Alain Savary a reçu les présidents d'universités," and "Première décision pour les assistants," *Le Monde* (13 June 1981), 15. C.L., "M. Alain Savary, ministre de l'éducation nationale, recevra dès cette semaine les organisations syndicales," *Le Monde* (26 May 1981), 14. "Les attributions du ministre de l'éducation nationale," (30 May 1981), 14. "La carte des formations universitaires: les deux UNEF expriment leur satisfaction," *Le Monde* (7 July 1981), 10. "M. Savary précise certaines orientations de sa politique universitaire," *Le Monde* (17 June 1981), 18. "M. Savary précise ses intentions à l'égard des assistants d'université," *Le Monde* (20 June 1981), 42. "Les réactions des syndicats d'enseignements à la carte des formations universitaires," *Le Monde* (8 August 1981), 8. "Le SGEN-CFDT se déclare satisfait du nouveau ministre de l'éducation nationale," *Le Monde* (28 May 1981), 18. "Le SNE-Sup: un ministre bien disposé mais peu informé," *Le Monde* (15 June 1981), 8.

reviled Saunier-Seïté, rather than following the Socialist Party platform outlined in the 1977 *Plan socialiste*. Savary felt that only by consulting with all interested parties could a reasonable and workable solution to higher education in France be devised. To obtain the opinions of the interested parties, Savary would establish the Quermonne and Jeantet commissions, which will be discussed below. Even so, the elements of certain policies Savary would attempt to implement were already in place.<sup>76</sup>

The problems inherent in French higher education, as related above, were cause enough to opt for considered solutions. When Alain Savary took office, only about forty percent of those students studying in the first cycle continued through the entire two-year study period, and only twelve percent actually succeeded in obtaining their DEUG within that timeframe (*diplômes d'études universitaires générales*, general diplomas in university studies). Far too many students were opting for reading arts rather than studying the sciences, and far too few technicians and engineers were graduating from STS, IUT, and *grandes écoles* to satisfy the demands of industry and society.<sup>77</sup>

As part of its mandate, the Government intended to implement a general policy of decentralization in accordance with directives from the European Economic Community and to support local economic and cultural development. Far too much political power as well as cultural and economic influence still resided in the Parisian region, the Ile-de-France. This state of affairs was particularly telling in education. Since education was reputedly the chief mechanism that enabled the French meritocracy, learning was seen as the motor behind socio-economic development in France. The domination of institutions in the Ile-de-France

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<sup>76</sup> F. d'Aubert, *JO* (25 May 1983), 1446. Serge Bolloch, "Le ministère n'est pas favorable à l'élection des directeurs d'IUT," *Le Monde* (26 January 1982), 12; "Des évolutions qui favorisent les rencontres," *Le Monde* (12 March 1982), 23; "M. Savary invite tous les universitaires à participer à la réflexion sur l'avenir de l'enseignement supérieur," *Le Monde* (17 March 1982), 12; "La composition de nombreux conseils d'université est profondément modifiée," *Le Monde* (14 April 1982), 4. Lelièvre and Nique, *L'école des présidents*, 307. J-L. Masson, *JO* (24 May 1983), 1355. Alain Savary, "Les parents ne sont pas suffisamment informés des objectifs et des méthodes de l'enseignement" déclare M. Alain Savary au 'Monde de l'éducation'," *Le Monde* (2 September 1981), 9.

<sup>77</sup> Day, "The Socialists in Power, 1981-1993," *Schools and Work*, 11

over those in the hinterland retarded the provinces' economic and cultural improvement and consequently that of the nation.<sup>78</sup>

France's slumping economic situation was particularly noticeable against the success of her eastern neighbour, the Federal Republic of Germany. After almost two centuries of enforcing the vision of a unitary state, the French government embarked upon regional development. As education was seen as the motor behind socio-economic development and as the supremacy of the Parisian region institutions was unchallenged, the hinterland and by consequence the nation would remain deprived and economically depressed unless competing educational centres could be established. Since it was neither feasible nor desirable to establish a spate of *grandes écoles* in the provinces, the Government decided to elevate the local universities as regional cultural centres as well as make them more responsive to the needs of local businesses rather than simply national institutions of higher education. In some respects, this policy was a return to the pre-1896 era when the faculties offered their own diploma programmes based on local needs and interests as opposed to the general national diplomas. While the Government expressed no interest in scrapping the national diplomas, it did consider the issue of university diplomas, as will be discussed later in this chapter.<sup>79</sup>

In the interest of supporting the creation of greater ties between local industry and the universities and of securing some form of post-educational work prospects for students, Savary broke from Socialist tradition and considered the general professionalization of higher education. By soliciting the involvement of business in post-baccalaureate education, Savary turned against the spirit of May 1968 and the ideal of disinterested learning. Instead, he responded to the growing numbers of students who complained that their years of study

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<sup>78</sup> Musselin, "Role of Ideas," 4-8.

<sup>79</sup> R. Barre, *JO* (1983), 1379. J-C. Cassaing, *JO* (1983), 1762. A. Madelin, *JO* (1983), 1772. RPR, *JO* (1983), 1771. A. Savary, *JO* (1983), 1763.

provided them nothing of benefit. The effort of eliciting business interest and student support for the professionalization of education, particularly in the liberal arts, would prove difficult if not impossible in most instances. The professionalization of the liberal arts required interdisciplinary work. Many students were against an increased workload while the educators in those subjects threatened with the influx of arts students argued that such interdisciplinary endeavours merely disrupted the smooth operation of education without any ensuing benefit.<sup>80</sup>

In any case, support would have to be gained for these policies of decentralization and professionalization within the universities themselves. The Sauvage Law stood in the way of securing meaningful support from the university administrations. It reduced the dynamism of the universities by removing those people with the greatest motivation to spur pedagogical developments from university administration, namely the students and the junior professoriate. As it was predominantly the students who demanded that their education reflect developments in the outside world and be of some support in finding a decent career rather than a simple low-status job, the Government needed their voice and that of sympathetic junior professors on the university councils. Thus, those least likely to assail the Government's effort to provide them with a future had the least voice in the university councils. The abrogation of the Sauvage Law would reopen the administration to the positive and, it was hoped, creative influence of the students and junior professoriate and would facilitate the implementation of the Government's policies.<sup>81</sup>

While his only immediate legislative act was to abrogate the Sauvage Law, Savary's plans for future bills were ambitious. The new minister intended to harmonize higher education by extending his reforms to encompass all public institutions of higher education,

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<sup>80</sup> J. Foyer, *JO* (1983), 1555. C. Millon, *JO* (1983), 1830.

<sup>81</sup> J-C. Cassaing, *JO* (1983), 1956. J-H. Colonna, *JO* (1983), 1487. J. Giovannelli, *JO* (1983), 1955. A. Savary, *JO* (1983), 1350. J-P. Sueur, *JO* (1983), 1383, 1557.

from the STS to the *grandes écoles*, and to reduce the inequalities within the social selection of post-secondary students. This harmonization was something even the Faure Law (1968) had failed to attempt. To succeed in this aim, the STS and the *cours préparatoires aux grandes écoles* had to be somehow amalgamated within the universities. Likewise, the universities and the *grandes écoles* would have to reach a degree of parity in status. Both efforts were fraught with difficulties. Disrupting the STS at a time when the *patronat* (large industry and business leaders, represented by the CNPF) demanded more trained technicians and engineers threatened disaster. Only the universities, with their inability to establish their own entrance requirements, could provide such numbers. However, the STS were certain to resist any undermining of the status of the *brévet de technicien supérieur* (senior technician's certificate; BTS) and any assimilation into the first cycle of the universities. The CNPF and the *grandes écoles* constituted a much more important source of opposition to the reform of higher education. Their alumni associations and professional societies represented the elites of France and they were well connected in all the key agencies and media outlets. Moreover, any serious attempt at reform was certain to bring the students of the elite *lycées* out onto the streets.<sup>82</sup>

Savary wanted to restore participation within the administration of institutions of higher education to students, the junior professors, ATOS (*administratif, technique, ouvrier, et de service*; administrative, technical, plant operations, and service) personnel as well as representatives from external organizations. These external representatives (externals) were to be a contentious subject during the parliamentary debates. The governing Socialist Party (the Government) construed 'externals' to mean all sorts of knowledgeable or otherwise

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<sup>82</sup> As evinced by attempts of the current rightist government of Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin to introduce the First Job Contract policy (*contrat de première embauche* or CPE), first announced on 26 January 2006 ([http://www.premier-ministre.gouv.fr/en/information/latest-news\\_97/dominique-villepin-building-sound\\_55283.html](http://www.premier-ministre.gouv.fr/en/information/latest-news_97/dominique-villepin-building-sound_55283.html)). The protests began on 7 March 2006, as noted in *Le Monde* (<http://www.lemonde.fr/web/panorama/0,11-0@2-734511,32-752532,0.html>).

interested individuals chosen from outside of the university community, from union representatives feared by the right to professionals (engineers, lawyers, medical practitioners, etc.) and other experts. The opposition parties (the Opposition), the Gaullist *Rassemblement pour la République* (Rally for the Republic; RPR) and the Giscardian *Union pour la démocratie française* (Union for French Democracy; UDF), argued that the Government really meant union representatives either from the CFDT (*Confédération française démocratique du travail*, French Democratic Labour Confederation) or the CGT (*Confédération générale du travail*, General Labour Confederation) rather than experts or other members of the liberal professions, the *patronat*, or the *cadres* (management). The Opposition stated throughout the legislative process that the intentionally vaguely termed ‘externals’ threatened to put the universities under union control (*syndicalisation*), undermining Savary’s efforts to gain support from business interests.<sup>83</sup>

The Minister desired to promote research and professionalization in all three university cycles (DEUG, *licence* and *maîtrise*, and advanced studies diplomas and doctorates). Professionalization of the first-cycle was particularly important as scarcely two-fifths of students obtained the DEUG within the intended two years. The arts and sciences UER continued to suffer from high drop out and failure rates. Many students of those UER either had insufficient cultural capital or came from economically disadvantaged circumstances and had to work to fund their studies. Unfortunately, an arts or science DEUG did not guarantee a career. Interdisciplinary studies, however, offered the possibility of giving the first-cycle graduate a broadened skill set to improve the chance of finding gainful employment or of continuing on to the next cycle.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> F. d’Aubert, *JO* (1983), 1443, 1954. B. Bourg-Broc, *JO* (1983), 1386. J. Foyer, *JO* (1983), 1317. G. Gantier, *JO* (1983), 2020, 2119. A. Madelin, *JO* (1983), 1778, 2092, 2123, 2139. É. Pinte, *JO* (1983), 1405. Jean Proveux, *JO* (1983), 1395. Jean Royer, *JO* (1983), 2157.

<sup>84</sup> S. Bolloch, “Préparation à l’emploi et démocratisation,” *Le Monde* (8 January 1983), 9.

Among the many reforms Savary thought to introduce, one was to increase the numbers of technicians and engineers trained in France. As both the STS and the IUT had *sélection à l'entrée* (post-baccalaureate entrance requirements) and as the *grandes écoles* would not open their doors to larger numbers of candidates for fear of diminishing their elite status, the universities alone could provide the necessary numbers. While Saunier-Seïté had tried to close the universities' engineering doctorate programs, culminating in the *thèse de docteur-ingénieur*, Savary proposed to extend the possibility of obtaining the title to those in the sciences and even those in arts UER. More modestly, however, the Minister endeavoured to introduce the DEUST (*diplôme d'études universitaires scientifiques et techniques*) as an alternative to the BTS – failing the integration of the STS into the universities – and the DUT (*diplôme universitaire de technologie*). Savary proposed such changes as a means of improving the status of arts graduates as well as those in vocational programmes, but only succeeded in worrying engineers and students in the IUT about the potential depreciation of their degrees.<sup>85</sup>

Savary envisioned the second cycle as the first entirely professional stage of study as well as the first research stage. The Minister considered introducing *sélection à la carte* for certain second-cycle programs as Soisson and Haby had in 1975. Despite the inevitable opposition the mention of *sélection* met from students and some educators and universities, the process allowed the Ministry to reduce costs by eliminating those deemed least able to continue from the rolls and by terminating *habilitations*. Furthermore, second-cycle *sélection* would allow the universities to specialize and to compete for greater status permitting the Ministry to close the pathways into second-cycle from other institutions. Certain second-cycle programs already had *sélection* procedures: the *maîtrise de sciences et techniques* (master of science and technology; MST) and the *maîtrise d'informatique appliquée à la*

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<sup>85</sup> A. Madelin, *JO* (1983), 2234.

*gestion* (master in applied informatics in administration; MIAGE).<sup>86</sup> Extending *sélection* to other disciplines would permit the state to appear sincerely interested in improving standards within the second-cycle. As *sélection* at any university stage provoked student demonstrations, Savary would have to introduce it into the second-cycle as a possibility rather than as a necessity.<sup>87</sup>

For the third-cycle, the Minister considered rationalization. The various third-cycle diplomas and doctorates in most disciplines would be reduced to a single doctorate comparable to the American PhD and similar programs in Europe. The coveted *doctorat d'État* (state doctorate) necessary to progress into the senior professoriate would disappear along with *doctorat de troisième cycle* (third-cycle doctorate) into a single *doctorat* (doctorate program). The DEA (*diplôme d'études approfondies*, diploma of advanced studies) and the DESS (*diplôme d'études supérieures spécialisées*, diploma of higher specialized studies) would be retained, the former as a proof of research capacity and the latter as a vocational diploma. Through such alterations, French higher education would resemble its European counterparts in the United Kingdom and the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany). Such a dramatic reform promised protests from academics with or in the process of getting their state doctorates, notably amongst the strong lobby backing the senior professors. Students studying for the DEA would likely feel relief that they would not need to spend up to ten years to complete their education. Those with or seeking to obtain the DEA already suffered a loss when a decree from Saunier-Seïté had granted students studying for the *agrégation* the same status as those with the DEA.<sup>88</sup> Ostensibly, the then minister for Universities presented the measure as one that furthered research, even

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<sup>86</sup> The MIAGE was subsequently retitled the *maîtrise de méthodes informatiques appliquées à la gestion*.

<sup>87</sup> F. d'Aubert, *JO* (1983), 1720, 1733. J-C. Cassaing, *JO* (1983), 1733. R. Lebel, *JO* (1983), 1348. A. Madelin, *JO* (1983), 1723, 1733, 1727. É. Pinte, *JO* (1983), 1406. A. Savary, *JO* (1983), 1352, 1723.

<sup>88</sup> Jean Bollack, "Exigence ou mépris?" *Le Monde* (18 April 1981), 21.

though the *agrégation* was a teaching certificate while the DEA was the first entirely research-based diploma. Savary's rationalization, unlike Saunier-Seïté's cynical ploy to retain the support of the socio-educational elite, would remove one of the obstacles—the state doctorate—preventing junior professors from entering the senior professoriate and would save third-cycle students and the state both money and time.

Akin to those who crafted the Law of 1896 and the Faure Law, Savary advanced the cause of greater university autonomy. The decentralization of the *Université* would be difficult, but in keeping with national and European policies of granting greater administrative control to local authorities, the Minister sought to regionalize the universities making them responsive to and engines for cultural and economic development. Decentralization required participation to ensure the universities and other institutions of higher education would not stagnate while research and professionalization were complimentary aims to drive the motor for regional development. Without decentralization, the entire project to reform higher education would falter. The creation of autonomous institutions demanded the reduction of those establishments' dependence on state funding, whether by shifting that responsibility to local government or, better yet, on to other public bodies and private industry. Such additional funding would provide the universities with independent means to finance their development and would relax the pressure on the national treasury. It was hoped that once the universities had been prompted in such a manner, they would in turn influence local development. Such funding could be secured through contracts, though the precise arrangement of those deals as well as the process of disbursing the funds would have to be examined.

These aims taken together formed an ambitious plan for higher education as had not been attempted since the Napoleonic *Université* or the Law of 1896. Would the scheme be as successful as the former or as derisory as the latter? Either way, the Minister refused to act

without a solid foundation based on as much information as he could find. First, he had to accustom himself to the demands of his new role.

In June 1981 after only one month in office, pressed by the leftist educators' unions, the SGEN-CFDT and the SNE-Sup, Savary established a commission under Jean-Louis Quermonne to study possible means of university reforms. The report of the Quermonne commission was released in November 1981 to immediate and unequivocal condemnation by those same unions as it reiterated similar recommendations to those of the previous government's Fréville Commission. The Quermonne Commission attacked the idea of imposing a *corps unique* of professors rather than retaining the existing two general ranks of senior professors (professors and senior lecturers) and junior professors (lecturers and probationary lecturers), insisting that two ranks were a better guarantee of a quality education. As Savary had to maintain the goodwill of the left wing unions in the face of opposition from the right wing and senior professors, he shelved the Quermonne Commission's report. Instead, he sought another plan to reform higher education, including re-examining the procedures governing the foreign students' admissions.<sup>89</sup>

With the failure of Quermonne's commission, Alain Savary formed another under Claude Jeantet to embark on widespread consultations with all interested parties in higher education, from the *grandes écoles* and their alumni to the left wing students' and educators' unions. The Jeantet Commission met with one hundred and ten organizations and examined 286 responses to the questionnaires sent out to the universities to produce its report outlining the main directions of the proposed Savary bill presented to the Council of Ministers on 3 October 1982. The Commission's report emphasized the need to: grant greater autonomy to the universities; open the higher education to the wider world; harmonize but not establish uniformity amongst the various institutions of higher education; emphasize interdisciplinary

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<sup>89</sup> Lelièvre and Nique, *L'école des présidents*, 309.

research, and guarantee the participation of all elements and types of institutions of higher education. The threat of forcibly incorporating the *grandes écoles* into the Ministry of National Education was specifically disavowed by the Minister, the universities were to offer CPGE but those within the *lycées* would persist uninterrupted, and the STS would be left unmolested in the technical *lycées*. The draft bill avoided any reference to either a *corps unique* or single electoral college (*collège unique*) for all professors in university elections.<sup>90</sup> The left feared that the exclusion of both the *corps unique* and *collège unique* were unreasonable concessions to the right, while conservatives and ‘liberals’ (i.e. Giscardians) feared the eventual inclusion of those schemes through amendment.<sup>91</sup>

On 22 November 1982, the Minister met with representatives from the SGEN-CFDT and the SNE-Sup to receive their opinions on the draft bill. The SGEN-CFDT in particular was opposed to the draft bill’s neglect of the notion of a *corps unique* of professors and walked out of the meeting. The SNE-Sup leadership took a moderate approach supporting the same status for all members of the professoriate while stating its willingness to wait on such reforms, thereby minimizing potential rifts between its members. Afterward, Savary stated that the future replacement for Saunier-Seïté’s CSCU, a *conseil supérieur des universités* (Universities High Council; CSU), would be elected by separate electoral colleges (senior professors and junior professors voting as separate groups) prompting both unions to declare a strike on 25 November 1982. The SGEN-CFDT and SNE-Sup complained that they had waited a year for nothing. Savary refused to bow to this pressure

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<sup>90</sup> *Collège unique* within this work *does not* refer to a contemporary effort by the Savary ministry to incorporate private secondary schools that received most of their funding from the State within the public system *unless specifically noted*.

<sup>91</sup> “L’avenir est au rapprochement,” *Le Monde* (12 March 1982), 23. Serge Bolloch, “M. Alain Savary insiste sur la spécificité de chaque établissement d’enseignement supérieur,” *Le Monde* (9 March 1982), 13. Serge Bolloch, “Des évolutions qui favorisent les rencontres,” *Le Monde* (12 March 1982), 23, 26. Serge Bolloch, “L’avant-projet de loi sur l’enseignement supérieur est bien accueilli par la conférence des présidents d’université,” *Le Monde* (8 January 1983), 9. Pierre Lafitte, “L’importance et le rôle des classes préparatoires,” *Le Monde* (12 March 1982), 23. Lelièvre and Nique, *L’école des présidents*, 311-312. Pierre Trey, “Dialogue et ignorance,” *Le Monde* (29 April 1983), 10. Paul Vermande and Michel Rousselot, “Des acquisitions trop théorique,” *Le Monde* (12 March 1982), 25. F. d’Aubert, *JO* (1983), 1459. R. Barre, *JO* (1983), 1381. The Government, “Article 12,” *JO* (1983), 1655. J-L. Masson, *JO* (1983), 1357. A. Savary, *JO* (1983), 1701, 1702.

and continued to reiterate that he would not introduce either the idea of a *corps unique* or a *collège unique* to the bill.<sup>92</sup>

The *Conseil national de l'enseignement supérieur et de la recherche* (National Council for Higher Education and Research; CNESER), in its function as the key advisory body to the government on higher education and research, received a draft of the bill for scrutiny. The CNESER comprised of a mixture of academics and of political appointees. The majority of the latter group had been appointed during the tenure of Alice Saunier-Seïté and were her supporters. Nevertheless, the CNESER was, on whole, in favour of the bill. Ultimately, the Council did offer certain recommendations to the Ministry.<sup>93</sup>

On 6 January 1983, Savary presented the draft bill to a conference of about sixty university presidents. Provisions requiring the establishment of *départemental* and regional advisory bodies remained as did the proposal to replace the one university council with three. The draft bill avoided any suggestion of instituting either a *corps* or *collège unique*. The university presidents tentatively accepted the draft bill. The left wing educators' unions reserved their opinions. The largest student unions, the UNEF *ex-Renouveau* (Communist influenced, soon to be renamed UNEF *Solidarité étudiante* to differentiate it from similarly named far right organizations) and the UNEF-ID (Socialist and Trotskyite influenced) endured a similar split. The UNEF-ID was ardently opposed to the idea of professionalization as an assault against academic general culture. The UNEF *ex-Renouveau* and its successor reserved its final judgment, but appreciated the Government's interest in promoting the professionalization of higher education. Of course, the right provided even stronger resistance against the Socialist program of university reform.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Lelièvre and Nique, *L'école des présidents*, 312-314

<sup>93</sup> "Le Conseil national de l'enseignement supérieur et de la recherche (CNESER) a approuvé," *Le Monde* (5 February 1983), 11.

<sup>94</sup> "Les réactions à l'avant-projet sur l'enseignement supérieur," *Le Monde* (14 January 1983), 17. Catherine Arditti, "Le projet de loi sur l'enseignement supérieur : pas de vote avant l'automne," *Le Monde* (26 Apr. 1983), 10. S.

The rightist unions, led by the *Fédération des syndicats autonomes de l'enseignement supérieur*, the UNI (*Union nationale inter-universitaire*, National Union of University Academics), the CELF (*Collectif des étudiants libéraux de France*, Collective of Liberal Students of France), the CNEF, and groups allied with the far right (e.g., the *Groupement Union-droite*; GUD) provided the vanguard of the assault against the Savary bill. The *syndicats autonomes* (independent unions) of higher education educators defended the senior professoriate's right to administer the universities and to establish those institutions' curricula. For them, only the rigorous control of institutional policy by the senior professoriate assured the quality of higher education. UNI, CELF, and CNEF members accepted a similar outlook, arguing for a return to Saunier-Seïté's liberal (i.e. Giscardian) policies. The far-right movements argued they were defending French civilization against Marxism.<sup>95</sup>

Still, having secured the reluctant acceptance of the university presidents and of the leftist unions – both groups willing to wait until the program of reforms had been finalized – the Minister presented the bill to the Council of State to ascertain its coherence with existing statutes. The Council of State ordered amendments that removed the requirement to establish consultative councils at the regional level to coordinate the actions of institutions of higher education. The Council also insisted that the minister responsible for higher education rather than the minister of National Education would decide upon *habilitations*. These reversals of

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Bolloch, "L'avant-projet de loi sur l'enseignement supérieur est bien accueilli par la conférence des présidents d'université," *Le Monde* (8 Jan. 1983), 9. P.B. "Le débat sur la réforme de l'enseignement supérieur: UNEF indépendante et démocratique: un projet 'intéressant mais flou'," *Le Monde* (24 March 1983), 13. "Le 'oui mais' des deux UNEF," *Le Monde* (15 April 1983), 30.

<sup>95</sup> "Les réactions à l'avant-projet sur l'enseignement supérieur," *Le Monde* (14 January 1983), 17. "Plusieurs milliers d'étudiants dans les rues de Paris," *Le Monde* (29 April 1983), 10. Catherine Arditti, "Le projet de loi sur l'enseignement supérieur: pas de vote avant l'automne," *Le Monde* (26 April 1983), 10. Serge Bolloch and Charles Vial, "La 'manifestation-savonette'," *Le Monde* (29 April 1983), 10. Thierry Bréhier, "Les députés au spectacle," *Le Monde* (29 April 1983), 10.

the Minister's initially more accommodating view of institutional autonomy led to further backlashes against the bill as it neared presentation before the National Assembly.<sup>96</sup>

Similarly, as time progressed, opposition to the bill, and related Government bills, became more organized. Medical students campaigned for the specific status of their UER within the universities at the same time interns and chiefs of the CHU (*centres hospitalo-universitaires*, University Hospital Centres [teaching hospitals]) battled against reforms to the existing medical training regimen imposed by Ministry of Health. Students of the law and economics UER likewise sought to defend their disciplines as deserving of specific status as professional departments within the universities, even going so far as to retain the term 'faculties.' Arguably, the law, business administration, and economics students had reason to defend the exclusivity of their UER as graduates of those bodies had some expectation of future employment unlike the majority of those in the arts and sciences UER. Unlike the law and economics UER, however, the health sciences UER operated in accordance with a *numerus clausus* (acceptance of only a set number of candidates per year). The *numerus clausus* ensured that the medical and pharmaceutical professions were neither overpopulated nor underqualified and directed students who failed to enter those UER over to other disciplines.<sup>97</sup>

Savary rejected calls from professors for post-baccalaureate *sélection* to the first cycle of studies in the law, economics, and administration UER to improve their competitiveness and enhance their exclusivity. The Savary bill did, however, threaten the introduction of *sélection* as a prerequisite to the second-cycle. The non-exclusivity of those UER and the threat of second-cycle *sélection* within some unspecified disciplines, but which

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<sup>96</sup> Roland Dumas, *JO* (1983), 1360. J. Foyer and other RPR deputies, *JO* (1983), 2261. G. Gantier, *JO* (1983), 1636, 1686, 1694, 1700, 1774, 1925, 2011, 2093, 2127, 2225, 2353, 2362, 2413, 2414. A. Savary, *JO* (1983), 1483 (on the Council of State accepting article 1 of the bill), 1625, 1649.

<sup>97</sup> J. Foyer, *JO* (1983), 1364. Jean-Yves Nau, "Les mouvements de protestations dans le corps médical prennent de l'ampleur: les pièges de la crédibilité," *Le Monde* (24 March 1983), 13.

likely included those within law or administration, along with rightist agitation within the universities were sufficient reasons to produce demonstrations. The far right was particularly active within the Assas Centre of the University of Paris-II where the GUD held sway.<sup>98</sup>

The right wing and moderate groups gradually coalesced loosely around a national organization against the Savary bill, the *Coordination nationale contre le projet Savary* (*Coordination*). The *Coordination* may not have been wholly successful in uniting the right wing groups in organized protest against the bill, but it did bring students and agitators out into the streets for occasionally violent clashes against police.<sup>99</sup>

Right wing movements did not inspire the demonstrations alone. Left wing educators were equally worried about their status after the proposed reforms came into effect. The UNEF-ID and the left wing educators' unions went on strike to protest against the bill, albeit peaceably. Others from the left broke from the policies traditionally held dear by their political compatriots. Laurent Schwartz, author of a chapter on education within the 1981 *Annual Report* and professor of mathematics at the *École polytechnique* was one such leftist educator who rejected the direction of the left wing educators' unions. Schwartz was a convinced Socialist, but with respect to higher education he possessed the typical mindset of a senior professor. Like many professors of the left, he agreed with the notion that more students would enhance social mobility, but that was the only concession he made to the left. In a January 1983 meeting with President Mitterrand, Schwartz offered his opinions on the means of improving higher education, none of which included either a *corps unique* or a *collège unique* from which Savary was similarly attempting to distance himself. The *corps unique*, Schwartz declared, would undermine research within French universities as there

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<sup>98</sup> Catherine Arditti, "Le projet de loi sur l'enseignement supérieur: pas de vote avant l'automne," *Le Monde* (26 April 1983), 10. S. Bolloch and C. Vial, "La 'manifestation-savonnette'," *Le Monde* (29 April 1983), 10.

<sup>99</sup> Serge Bolloch and Charles Vial, "Vifs incidents à la fin de la manifestation contre le projet de loi sur l'enseignement supérieur," *Le Monde* (2 May 1983), 10.

would be no tangible rewards to performing research. A single electoral college of university professors for university elections would likewise be counterproductive as it would merely promote demagogic programs. Yet his contrariness did not end there. Arguing in favour of raising pre-registration fees to finance higher education, Schwartz went far beyond the increase suggested by the Fréville Commission (to 250 FF). He declared that if higher education was to prosper without excessively burdening local authorities, fees would have to rise to between 1,000 and 2,000 FF within 'a reasonable period of time.' He established the *Qualité de la science française* association to advance his vision of higher education, adding to the groups against the Savary bill.<sup>100</sup>

Between the bill's introduction before the Council of Ministers in October 1982 and its re-presentation to that body on 30 March 1983 Savary was under constant pressure from delegations and demonstrations to either scrap or rewrite the proposed measure. Starting in January 1983, Savary felt increasing pressure from the Presidency at the Elysée Palace. As noted previously, President Mitterrand had met with Schwartz to discuss the means of improving the quality of higher education in France. From that point, the president and his advisors took a more active role in influencing policy. On 1 March 1983, Jacques Attali, special advisor to the president, expressed his concerns to Mitterrand that Savary might concede to demands from the junior professoriate in the law and economics UER, notably amongst the *assistanat*, that the *agrégation* requirement for accession to the senior professoriate be scrapped. The supporters of removing the *agrégation* requirement in the health sciences and law and economics UER argued that such an action would simply

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<sup>100</sup> "Des universitaires créent l'association 'Qualité de la science française': 'pour réhabiliter la valeur, le talent, et la compétence'," *Le Monde* (26 January 1983), 11. "L'agitation universitaire: cinq mille étudiants dans les rues de Paris," *Le Monde* (29 April 1983), 1. "Le 'oui-mais' des deux UNEF," *Le Monde* (15 April 1983), 30. "Le rapport de la commission du bilan sur l'enseignement et le développement scientifique," *Le Monde* (13 January 1982), 12. C. Arditti, "Le projet de loi sur l'enseignement supérieur: pas de vote avant l'automne," *Le Monde* (26 April 1983), 10. P.B., "Le débat sur la réforme de l'enseignement supérieur: UNEF indépendante et démocratique: un projet intéressant mais flou," *Le Monde* (24 March 1983), 13. Pierre Trey, "Dialogue et ignorance," *Le Monde* (29 April 1983), 10. Lelièvre and Nique, *L'école des présidents*, 313.

harmonize career paths within the universities. Both Attali and the president sided with the professors against such a banalization of the professional UER and informed Savary of that official but unstated policy. Such pressure from the head of state grew as the bill proceeded through the legislative process, immeasurably adding to the stress upon Savary.<sup>101</sup>

Pressure from the leftist unions and the rightist movements did not diminish as the proposed date for the first reading of the bill, 24 May, neared. As might be expected, the level of tension increased. Protests by law students led by right wing groups became increasingly violent. These groups demanded the same concessions the government had given to the disciplines of medicine and architecture, notably the Ministry's non-interference with the law schools curriculum. While the majority of protestors on both the right and left engaged vocal but restrained demonstrations, a small but growing segment headed by the GUD and the *Parti de Renouveau national* (Party for National Revival) embarked on battles with the police. The Socialist government, in a complete reversal of the situation in 1968, called upon the CRS (*Compagnies républicaines de sécurité*, national security police force) to crush the strikes, at least by the rightists. On the first day of the debate, rightist protestors attacked Jack Lang, the Socialist secretary of state for Culture, outside of the National Assembly with construction materials obtained from a nearby worksite. As the RPR and UDF complained about police brutality, the Socialists and Communists wondered whether similar statements by their parties resulted in the delayed response by police as a method of further discrediting the weakening Government.<sup>102</sup> Despite the agitation against the bill, the measure continued its progress towards the first reading.

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<sup>101</sup> Lelièvre and Nique, *L'école des présidents*, 315.

<sup>102</sup> Thierry Bréhier, "A l'Assemblée nationale: l'opposition défend les élites et dénonce le 'syndicalisation' des universités," *Le Monde* (26 May 1983), 8. "Le projet Savary embarrasse le PS et mobilise l'opposition," *Le Monde* (26 May 1983), 1.

The legislative process before the National Assembly began when the *Commission des affaires culturelles, familiales, et sociales* (National Assembly Standing Committee on Cultural, Family, and Social Affairs) received the bill on higher education on 17 April 1983. The Standing Committee examined the bill while conducting twenty-four of its own interviews with interested organizations and persons before the end of the preliminary examination period on 18 May 1983, six days before the bill's first reading on 24 May 1983. The proceedings of the Standing Committee were comparatively speedy due to the voluntary absence of those members who were deputies of the Gaullist *Rassemblement pour la République* (Rally for the Republic; RPR) and the Giscardian *Union pour la démocratie française* (Union for French Democracy; UDF). The absence of RPR and UDF deputies from the Standing Committee resulted in Opposition claims of insufficient time to adequately study the bill before its first reading in the National Assembly. The complaints struck against the Government's motion advancing the bill as an urgent measure requiring immediate study by the Lower House. Alain Savary and the Standing Committee's reporter, the Socialist deputy Jean-Claude Cassaing, both noted that sufficient time to examine the bill and its potential repercussions had been granted to members of the Standing Committee, so the failure to study the bill was entirely the fault of those deputies who absented themselves from that body's work. The two men also noted that the Opposition had time enough to draft about two thousand amendments and sub-amendments to the bill before the first day of debate.<sup>103</sup>

On 10 May 1983, the Ministry published the explanatory notes (*exposé des motifs*) for the bill on higher education (Savary Bill). As noted above, the Opposition and private

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<sup>103</sup> B. Bourg-Broc, *JO* (1983), 1385. J-C. Cassaing, *JO* (1983), 1341, 1526, 1528, 1931. R. Dumas, *JO* (1983), 1360. Claude Evin, *JO* (1983), 1419-1420. Pierre Joxe, *JO* (1983), 1479-1480. R. Lebel, *JO* (1983), 1347. A. Madelin, *JO* (1983), 1416, 1437. C. Millon, *JO* (1983), 1528. Jacques Santrot, *JO* (1983), 1416. A. Savary, *JO* (1983), 1354, 1434. J-P. Sueur, *JO* (1983), 1381. Pierre Zarka, *JO* (1983), 1369.

members were given eight days between the tabling of the bill and the termination of its preliminary examination period on 18 May 1983. The bill had been drafted as a framework law by including within its first title the possibility of incorporating all public institutions of higher education, and perhaps private institutions, under the general administration of the Ministry of National Education. At the very least, Savary hoped to harmonize the relationships between the various schools, institutes, universities, and other academic bodies to facilitate the transfer of knowledge and students ('users' [*usagers*] within the text) between them. In keeping with this vision, the bill instituted a single secular public service of higher education to administer and teach within all public institutions of higher learning regardless of the ministry under which such an educational establishment operated. Nevertheless, the organization and administration of those institutions under the control of other ministries would be subject to the authority of the Ministry of National Education only if the other ministry and the institution so agreed. As it was highly unlikely that either the institution or the other ministry would allow the Ministry of National Education to govern that institution's operations that part of the bill's first article was effectively devoid of purpose. Other than the harmonization of what the bill termed as 'academic, cultural, and professional public establishments' (*établissements publics à caractère scientifique, culturel, et professionnel*), Savary's four aims were for those institutions' democratization, decentralization, and professionalization as well as the development of interdisciplinary studies.<sup>104</sup>

The effort to restore participation within higher education began with the abrogation of the Sauvage Law on 25 November 1981. As noted above, repealing the Sauvage Law neither resulted in the immediate reversal of the Saunier-Seïté era university administrations nor any real improvement on pre-Sauvage Law levels of representation. Eighteen months later, the Savary Law revealed the Socialist government's vision for the democratization of

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<sup>104</sup> Min. Ed., "Exposé des motifs," 4-11.

higher education. In the place of one, or in rare instances two, institutional councils, the new Law established three councils to serve as an institution's government under its chief administrator. The administrative council (*conseil d'administration*) would oversee the institution's general operation. It was comprised of all interested parties in higher education, from the professors to the ATOS (*administratif, technique, ouvrier, et de service*; administrative, technical, plant operations, and service) personnel as well as external representatives (externals) from business or other bodies. Educators (*enseignants*) and researchers (*chercheurs*) formed the bulk of the internal personnel, comprising between 35-45% of the council, while students obtained 15%, ATOS personnel 10%, and externals between 30-40%. The scientific council (*conseil scientifique*) advised on pedagogical questions and relayed requests for *habilitations* to the university president. On this council, the educators and researchers necessarily received the bulk of the seats with 50-70%. Students were granted only between 7.5-12.5% of the seats, half of which were to go to those in the third-cycle, while externals could receive between 10-30%. The last council, that of studies and university life, was to consist of equal parts educator-researchers and educators (*enseignants-chercheurs* and *enseignants*) on one side and students on the other for a joint total of 75-80% of the seats. Between 10-15% of the seats were to go to ATOS personnel and a similar range of percentages went to the externals.<sup>105</sup>

The flexibility of institutional organization afforded by the generally broad range of percentages offered universities the chance to become different entities through their administrative structures. Financial autonomy was a necessary part of the process of differentiation. While the state remained the chief investor in the universities, Savary presented an option that would allow the universities to both gain additional funds from outside the usual state grants and to form greater links with the local culture and economy. A

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<sup>105</sup> The Government, "Article 26" and "Article 27," *JO* (1983), 1974-1982, 2007-2009.

university, or other quasi-autonomous public establishment of higher education, could enter into multi-year contracts with other public bodies, such as other universities or nationalised industries, or private ones. Savary may have hoped that such contracts would eliminate the need to raise the students' cost of registration from 95 FF to the Fréville Commission's recommendation of 250 FF or to enact other drastic measures.

The Minister introduced a measure of pedagogical autonomy as well. The new *unités de formation et de recherche* (UFR) replacing the UER would have greater input in the development of their internal programs, although final decisions for most UFR would be the province of the university administration as before. The health sciences UFR (covering the medicine, dentistry, and pharmacy departments) were, however, to be specific institutions within the universities subject to their own regulations and granted extensive independence to determine their organization and curriculum in conjunction with the Ministry of Health. The other disciplines' UFR (law, arts, sciences, etc.) remained wholly subordinate to the university's central administration, much to the consternation of students in the law and economics UFR who protested their links to the Ministry of Justice were as strong and important as those of pharmacy, dentistry, and medical students to the Health Ministry. The law and economics UFR's stance on their independence had been notably strident against any measure to force the acceptance of interdisciplinary research, claiming that legal studies demanded as much specialized knowledge as the health sciences.<sup>106</sup>

On the subject of interdisciplinary research, Savary modified his position. Having been duly chastised in the eighteen months since the bill-drafting process had begun by protesting students not to force interdisciplinary research on the UFR, especially on the law and economics UFR, the bill noted that the UFR would *promote* the development of

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<sup>106</sup> Charles Vial, "L'agitation contre le projet de réforme de l'enseignement supérieur," and "M. Savary n'a plus de véritables interlocuteurs," *Le Monde* (5 May 1983), 14.

interdisciplinary studies. The level of support for such studies was dependent on students and their UFR. In light of that likely failure, Savary's new concept for first-cycle studies leading to the DEUG would further advance the idea of interdisciplinary research.<sup>107</sup>

The curricula of the existing DEUG programs, the Minister argued, were too stringent. He alleged that they did not permit the student to find his or her aptitudes, but restricted their learning within unnecessarily circumscribed boundaries. Savary posited that such intellectual constraints was one of the major explanations, along with economic difficulties and extra-curricular work, for why only about forty-percent of first-cycle students managed to complete that stage within two years, and that about sixty-percent were able to complete that stage at all. By broadening the scope of first-cycle studies, the Minister granted students the chance to find their strengths and improve their employment opportunities. As noted below, the Opposition would claim that the Government was re-establishing a propedeutic or probationary cycle that could be avoided by instituting *sélection à l'entrée*.<sup>108</sup>

The concept of pedagogical autonomy expanded to the idea of university diplomas awarded independently of the national diploma scheme. Savary had no intention of scrapping the national diplomas in favour of a program based entirely on university-awarded degrees. The parliamentary opposition (Opposition) claimed that only university-awarded degrees guaranteed greater university autonomy. Instead, the Government declared university diplomas would supplement those granted by the Ministry to cover areas theretofore ignored. The university itself would develop the curricula for such diplomas. If a specific curriculum or program became a success, the Ministry might make it a national

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<sup>107</sup> Catherine Arditti, "Un entretien avec M. Alain Savary," *Le Monde* (3 May 1983), 10.

<sup>108</sup> F. d'Aubert, *JO* (1983), 1503, 1515, 1694. R. Barre, *JO* (1983), 1379. B. Bourg-Broc, *JO* (1983), 1496. J. Foyer, *JO* (1983), 1364, 1366. J-P. Fuchs, *JO* (1983), 1445. R. Galley, *JO* (1983), 1393. G. Gantier, *JO* (1983), 1657. R. Lebel, *JO* (1983), 1348. A. Madelin, *JO* (1983), 1417, 1470, 1623, 1669, 1678, 1837, 1838. Claude-Gérard Marcus, *JO* (1983), 1655. J-L. Masson, *JO* (1983), 1356, 1446, 1467, 1497, 1838. C. Millon, *JO* (1983), 1518. É. Pinte, *JO* (1983), 1406, 1681. J. Royer, *JO* (1983), 1390, 1658, 1665. A. Savary, *JO* (1983), 1352.

*habilitation* with a national diploma. The university could even be granted permission to introduce *sélection à l'entrée* into such programs. Unfortunately, it was doubtful the university diplomas would receive the same recognition as national diplomas and would instead be wholly dependent on local interest.<sup>109</sup>

By gearing the first cycle towards general studies and re-establishing university diplomas, Savary tried to draw academics from their ivory towers to assist France's cultural and economic development. Unless students could gear their studies towards the chance of gaining future employment and professors updated their curriculum and programs to account for cultural shifts (including rising unemployment rates), the French economy and by extension French culture would stagnate. The final product of this pressure to make all of post-secondary institutions relevant and responsive to present concerns was the professionalization of education. Though the introduction of careerism into higher education was a major reversal of Socialist policy and caused some lack of support among academics and fellow Socialists, the Communists supported the plan as a means of combating social inequality. For teachers and instructors, professionalization would begin in conjunction with their first-cycle studies, and teacher training was to be re-examined and improved rather than disregarded as under Saunier-Seïté. In most other disciplines, professionalization was to commence in the second-cycle. In legal studies, that meant increasing specialization, while in the arts and science UFR it entailed the introduction of research. For those in the sciences at least, research could lead to improved employment prospects after graduation. Savary hoped that this new emphasis on research would lead to contracts between the universities and external agencies that would alleviate some of the financial stress of funding higher education while producing means of propelling the economy forward. Universities could, in

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<sup>109</sup> F. d'Aubert, *JO* (1983), 1742. R. Barre, *JO* (1983), 1378-1379. B. Bourg-Broc, *JO* (1983), 1759. J-C. Cassaing, *JO* (1983), 1762. G. Gantier, *JO* (1983), 1772, 1773. A. Madelin, *JO* (1983), 1745, 1761, 1762, 1763, 1772, 2230. A. Savary, *JO* (1983), 1763. RPR, *JO* (1983), 1771.

turn, exploit the results of research itself by securing patents, trademarks, and copyrights for licensing agreements. In the course of the debates, the Opposition responded to that expectation with the notion that the researcher ought to receive some benefit for his or her work rather than lose all entitlement to the parent institution.<sup>110</sup>

Yet the Minister did not merely have to contend with the conflicting desires of academics and students, as well as obstruction from the parliamentary Opposition. As noted above, Savary had to ensure the continued support of his President who was increasingly siding with the senior professoriate. Consequently, the Savary Bill bore all the features of a compromise. It offered the potential for great changes to the structures of higher education, but the bill couched that promise of renewal in vague terms. As such, the bill was susceptible to all the tactics of an embittered parliamentary Opposition.

From the commencement of debate, the right wing Opposition attacked with fervour. The RPR and UDF's amendments and other tactics fell into four main categories, those that: delayed the passage of the bill to the Senate by obstructive recommendations; limited the scope of the bill to the universities; attempted to defend their concept of institutional autonomy; and limited the challenge to the socio-educational elite by entrusting the administration of the institutions to responsible groups (educators of magisterial rank and other experts) and reducing the burden of ever-growing numbers of students entering higher education.

Delaying the passage of the bill on higher education allowed the RPR and UDF time to produce their own vision for higher education to France while consolidating resistance outside of the National Assembly to the proposed measure. The traditional enemies of post-secondary reform were the alumni associations of the *grandes écoles*, the *Confédération des*

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<sup>110</sup> F. d'Aubert, *JO* (1983), 1843, 1844. B. Bourg-Broc, *JO* (1983), 1842. A. Madelin, *JO* (1983), 1841. A. Savary, *JO* (1983), 1844-1845.

*grandes écoles* (Confederation of *grandes écoles*; CGE), the *Syndicat autonome* (Independent Union of Professors), the *Union nationale inter-universitaire* (Inter-University National Union; UNI); the liberal and right wing student groups (CNEF and CELF), students in the professional UER, the *patronat*, and the academic elite in general. The alumni associations and the CGE were contrary to any measure threatening the status of the *grandes écoles*, whether by reducing them to the condition of the French universities, or by raising the universities and their associated schools and institutes to a comparable level. The *Syndicat autonome* fought for the privileges of educators of magisterial rank (*maîtres de conférences* [senior lecturer] and above) as they were after the abrogated Sauvage Law and before the Faure Law, most notably to restore professors to the unquestioned status as heads of establishment and leaders of the universities. The liberal student unions, most often within the professional UER (the health sciences and legal and business studies), schools, and institutes (IUT especially), fought for the Gaullist and Giscardian vision of the universities that emphasized the importance of their future careers over those students languishing in the ghetto of liberal arts (*lettres*; arts) UER. Students in the health sciences (medicine, dentistry, and pharmacology) and in legal and business studies UER were becoming increasingly vocal. The Health Ministry endeavoured to reform university hospitals and internships around the same time that the National Education Ministry struggled to pass the bill on higher education causing widespread agitation against both government departments. The *patronat*, consisting of *cadres* (loosely, management) formed within *grandes écoles* or the professional UER, or who were socio-economically sympathetic to those groups, were opposed to the broadening of higher education fearing the potential further devaluation of their diplomas and certificates. The academic elite sought to protect the privileges they had acquired, whatever their party-political affiliation might be.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> The strength of this opposition forced the government to publicly declare no changes would be forced on the

The main procedures employed to delay the passage of the bill to the Senate were those usually practised by an Opposition faced with little capacity of changing the government's opinion. First, there was the sheer weight of obstructive amendments. Second, the right wing deputies used the Lower House's procedures against the government. There were motions for rulings on the Standing Orders of the National Assembly against real or perceived infractions by the governing Socialist Party or its Communist allies. There were requests for divisions rather than public votes in the Lower House. Opposition deputies, at least in the first week-and-a-half of the debate, frequently exceeded their allotted speaking time, and often repeated arguments whether or not such pertained to the amendment or article in question.

The obstructionist amendments employed five tactics: deletion and selective redrafting of titles, articles and parts thereof; redrafting articles or parts thereof to contradict the rest of the text; repetition of amendments; production of similar or identical amendments; use of contrasting amendments; and proposing grammatical corrections. The RPR and UDF deputies even went so far as to present amendments arguing for the deletion of all of the government's articles that sometimes would be replaced by redrafted articles or paragraphs. Where those amendments failed and the articles in question consisted of more than one paragraph, the opposition would regularly demand the excision of each paragraph within the offending article.<sup>112</sup>

Many of the numerous amendments involved criticism of the language of the bill, especially of terms associated with dangerous ideas. The particularly troublesome new terms brought in by the bill were *post-secondaire* instead of *enseignement supérieur* or *post-*

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*grandes écoles*. Thierry Bréhier, "Les grandes écoles ne seront pas intégrées contre leur gré," *Le Monde* (31 May 1983), 9.

<sup>112</sup> It is not possible within the confines of this text to note all of the requests to amend or suppress entire articles, paragraphs, or clauses thereof. F. d'Aubert, *JO* (1983), 1687. F. d'Aubert, C. Millon, Clément, *JO* (1983), 1708. A. Madelin, *JO* (1983), 1685, 1691. RPR, *JO* (1983), 1682.

*baccalauréat*, *enseignant-chercheur* (educator-researcher) to cover both educators and researchers, *usager* (user) rather than *étudiant* (student), and *unité de formation et de recherche* (Instruction and Research Unit; UFR) rather than UER. One UDF deputy, Masson, argued for scrapping both UER and UFR in favour of the even older ‘faculty’ as it both implied tradition and was more internationally recognisable than the other two terms. The Opposition considered *post-secondaire* a hopelessly American term unsuited for application to French higher education, an argument the Minister and the Standing Committee’s reporter found unsound. *Enseignant-chercheur* was a catch-all term and implied that an educator was not a researcher before the passage of the bill. Savary replied to this accusation by asserting that some educator-researchers educated more than they researched so they were indeed *enseignants*, others did the reverse so were more aptly categorized as *chercheurs*, while another group performed both tasks, thus *enseignants-chercheurs* was a good collective term for all three and emphasized the government’s continued focus on research. *Usager* was, in the opinion of the right, a demeaning word that was unnecessarily vague for even auditing students were students. The government replied that middle-aged and elderly students desired a term that would truly include them since *étudiant* implied young people starting their post-secondary education. The switch from UER to UFR was, somewhat understandably, thought pointless. It was even joked the next university reform would see the UFR become UGR. Even the proposal to establish a secular public service for higher education similar to that which already existed for primary and secondary education appeared to the Opposition to be fraught with danger.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> F. d’Aubert, *JO* (1983), 1454. B. Bourg-Broc, *JO* (1983), 1438, 1443. J. Foyer, *JO* (1983), 1368. G. Gantier, *JO* (1983), 1439, 1471. R. Lebel, *JO* (1983), 1347. A. Madelin, *JO* (1983), 1419, 1440, 1455, 1477-1478, 1919, 2274-2275. J-L. Masson, *JO* (1983), 1446, 1459, 1471, 1477. Charles Millon, *JO* (1983), 1438, 1447, 1454, 1936 (*UGR* was next in alphabetic progression). A. Savary, *JO* (1983), 1452.

Part of the cause for the rightists' unease regarding the extension of that term to higher education was Savary's plan to incorporate private primary and secondary schools receiving the majority of their funding from the state into the public education service. The ensuing result would have been an *école unique* taught by secular instructors. As the majority of the private schools in question were religious, predominantly Catholic, the intended secularism was considered a great threat. Several of the private universities were also founded and operated by the Catholic Church. The rightists felt that, in defence of the law of 1875 on the freedom of higher education, secularism within higher education had to be opposed. Savary had, however, stated that the bill would not consider private institutions of higher education unless those establishments requested association with the state apparatus and in a manner jointly decided by the institution in question and the Ministry. Furthermore, he noted that the law of 1875 guaranteeing the freedom of private bodies to establish places of higher education had not been repealed and would continue to be in force as long as it was necessary, and that the existing process of the Ministry granting special dispensation to qualified members of the clergy to teach in public institutions would persist as well. Still, the Opposition deputies worried, at least in their presentations before the National Assembly, that those guarantees were still insufficient without the removal of the word 'secular' from the description of the public service.<sup>114</sup>

The notion of a public service for higher education was itself dangerous to the rightists as they believed such a plan would reduce educators to the status of mere state functionaries. The refrain was an old one that arose every time the term 'public service' was applied to any state organization. Savary noted that the term did not detract from the educator-researchers' vocation or purpose. Instead, the term was intended to generate a sense

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<sup>114</sup> F. d'Aubert, *JO* (1983), 1438, 1441. R. Barre, *JO* (1983), 1378. G. Gantier, *JO* (1983), 1441-1442, 1471, 1944. A. Madelin, *JO* (1983), 1419, 1440, 1455, 1477-1478. J-L. Masson, *JO* (1983), 1471, 1477-1478. Charles Metzinger, *JO* (1983), 1456. C. Millon, *JO* (1983), 1438, 1454. A.Savary, *JO* (1983), 1435, 1455, 1470-1471.

of community amongst higher education's diverse components, notably the professoriate, the administration, and the ATOS personnel. The Opposition did not, however, find the establishment of a university community to be sufficient justification to require the establishment of a public service for higher education, but eventually relented when other matters required greater attention.<sup>115</sup>

The Opposition also targeted sections of the text requiring further elaboration by subsidiary legislation (regulations, ministerial decrees, orders, etc.) or those serving as a foundation for future legislation. It decried the amount of statutory instruments that would be required to properly enact the bill once it became a law, and that the majority of those measures were to be ministerial decrees rather than orders of the Council of State. The Council of State, as the primary authority on administrative law, was sufficiently objective to avoid any government efforts to politicize higher education as the Opposition feared. However, on certain issues the Opposition echoed the concerns of the government and declared the process of referring matters to the Council of State as being too lengthy, arguing that a ministerial decree was all that was required. Thus, wherever the text indicated a ministerial decree, the Opposition demanded an order from the Council of State and, on occasion, vice versa.<sup>116</sup>

Deputies from both Opposition parties regularly, whether by accident or design, produced similar or identical amendments on the same parts of the text. In the opening week of the debate, both sides defended their amendments through their spokespeople, often using similar arguments as well, and would often go beyond the time allotted to them despite admonitions from the Speaker of the National Assembly (*président de l'Assemblée nationale*;

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<sup>115</sup> R. Lebel, *JO* (24 May 1983), 1347

<sup>116</sup> F. d'Aubert, *JO* (1983), 1563. B. Bourg-Broc and other RPR deputies, *JO* (1983), 1563, 1773, 1934, 2014, 2017. J. Foyer, *JO* (1983), 1563, 1564. G. Gantier, *JO* (1983), 1844, 2017. A. Madelin, *JO* (1983), 1459, 1779, 1865, 1866, 1934. C. Millon, F. d'Aubert, Perrut, *JO* (1983), 1843. A. Savary, *JO* (1983), 1966.

Speaker). As time passed and students prepared for the summer holidays, thereby minimizing the prospect of vocal unrest to be covered by the media, the Opposition relented and would simply permit two or more amendments to be supported by the same argumentation. The Opposition may have also been using the time they appropriated to prepare the rightist-dominated Senate (the reasons for this discrepancy in political outlook between the two Houses will be discussed below) for its assault on the bill. The practice of exceeding time limits extended to the preliminary discussion of each article, though this too diminished as the debates progressed. By the last few days of the debates, the Opposition scarcely defended any of its propositions or used their opportunity to speak against the bill and declared that the bill was being railroaded through the National Assembly by an undemocratic governing coalition.<sup>117</sup>

Though the Opposition deputies frequently defended similar amendments, the same deputy or deputies had, on occasion, prepared a proposal to redraft an article or part thereof that contradicted an earlier effort. When told of the fact by the Minister, his secretary of state, or the reporter of the Standing Committee, the rightist deputy in question would often proclaim he was merely defending another facet of his argument.<sup>118</sup>

Lastly, the Opposition criticized the government's grammar. Rightist deputies who were academics or jurists maintained that the bill had not been written in proper, educated French, that certain terms were neither French (for instance, *post-secondaire*) nor had any basis within French law since the term was either a neologism or too recent a term or turn of phrase to deserve preservation within the law. These demands for the maintenance of tradition frequently fell on the deaf ears of the government and its Communist allies. On rare

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<sup>117</sup> F. d'Aubert, *JO* (1983), 1509, 1515, 1666, 1721, 1866. J. Blanc, *JO* (1983), 2042, 2044, 2046. B. Bourg-Broc, *JO* (1983), 1444, 1496. J. Foyer, *JO* (1983), 1560, 1811, 1950. G. Gantier, *JO* (1983), 1627, 1758, 1809, 1821, 2266. G. Hage, *JO* (1983), 1827. A. Madelin, *JO* (1983), 1618, 1637, 1668, 1699, 1719-1720, 1820, 1822, 1953, 2043. J-L. Masson, *JO* (1983), 1356, 1359, 1485, 1487, 1497, 1513, 1922. C. Millon, *JO* (1983), 1447, 1810, 1821.

<sup>118</sup> *JO* (1983), 1713.

occasions, however, certain grammatical corrections were required and were adopted by the National Assembly.<sup>119</sup>

When the Government seemed to be making some headway in the early days of the debates, the Opposition resorted to manipulating the regulations (standing orders and regulations) governing the business of the National Assembly to its ends. Every so often, the Opposition would demand a recorded vote (*scrutin public*) rather than a vote by a show of hands to rule on an amendment.<sup>120</sup> This process not only took longer time but may also have provided an opportunity to instil party discipline, though according to the parliamentary record no such imposition of party authority was necessary. Further time was spent on frivolous motions for rulings on an action contravening the Standing Orders of the House. The usual demands for those rulings were founded on either the defamation of character (by government spokespeople insulting or ridiculing their Opposition counterparts) or demanding that the Minister or his representative, or the responsible member (generally the reporter) for the Standing Committee explain their rejection of an amendment more fully. On one occasion, the Speaker upheld the request of an Opposition deputy and called for the reporter of the Standing Committee, Jean Cassaing, to apologize for his comments.<sup>121</sup> Furthermore, in the early days of the debate the Opposition requested brief breaks for time to strategize at the end of each title or series of articles.

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<sup>119</sup> Emmanuel Aubert, *JO* (1983), 1469, 1493. F. d'Aubert, *JO* (1983), 1525. F. d'Aubert, C. Millon, Clément, *JO* (1983), 1459, 1591, 1789, 2037. R. Barre, *JO* (1983), 1380. B. Bourg-Broc, *JO* (1983), 1491, 1495, 1584, 1588-1589, 1673. B. Bourg-Broc and other RPR deputies, *JO* (1983), 1525, 1596, 1599. J-C. Cassaing, *JO* (1983), 1489, 1576. J-C. Cassaing and F. d'Aubert, *JO* (1983), 1934. J. Foyer, *JO* (1983), 1368, 1561, 1654. J. Foyer and other RPR deputies, *JO* (1983), 1654, 1671, 1672. Jean-Paul Fuchs, *JO* (1983), 2016. J.-P. Fuchs and Barrot, *JO* (1983), 1724. R. Galley, *JO* (1983), 1394. R. Galley and other RPR deputies, *JO* (1983), 1789, 2064. G. Gantier, *JO* (1983), 1444, 1459, 1461, 1466, 1468, 1488, 1491, 1500, 1511, 1519, 1521, 1576, 1583, 1598-1599, 1621, 1649, 1670, 1774, 1789, 1947, 2026, 2028. Gengenwin, *JO* (1983), 1789. R. Lebel, *JO* (1983), 1347. A. Madelin, *JO* (1983), 1417, 1467, 1500-1501, 1574, 1590, 1597, 1612, 1619, 1620, 1649, 1670, 1723, 1777, 1976, 1981, 1982, 2016, 2037, 2065. J-L. Masson, *JO* (1983), 1454, 1460-1470, 1488. C. Millon, *JO* (1983), 1488-1489, 1492. E. Pinte, *JO* (1983), 1784. A. Savary, *JO* (1983), 1436, 1452, 1489, 1597.

<sup>120</sup> Gilbert Gantier, UDF, *JO* (1983), 1442, 1465. RPR, *JO* (1983), 1362, 1371, 1617, 1765, 2053, 2075. RPR and UDF, *JO* (1983), 1487, 1524, 1619. UDF, *JO* (1983), 1562, 1604, 1618, 1757, 1787, 1872, 2009, 2052, 2064, 2075, 2077.

<sup>121</sup> J-C. Cassaing, *JO* (1983), 2359.

An exceptional argument arose in the first week of June when the RPR pleaded for an extended break to conduct party business as it did traditionally on the first Thursday of the first full week of the month.<sup>122</sup> The reporter for the Standing Committee argued that it was simply another obstructionist ploy by the Opposition. Eventually, however, the Speaker granted the right wing parties the extended recess. On other occasions, however, the government and reporter for the Standing Committee admonished the Opposition for their demands, but the Speaker usually acquiesced in the rightists' requests providing the recess was not exceptionally long.

The Opposition's disruptive tactics aided its attempts to present an alternative vision of higher education in France. As noted above, the RPR and the UDF intended to limit the bill's scope to public universities alone, to extend the autonomy of those institutions along American lines while ensuring the independence of other establishments (notably the STS, CPGE, and *grandes écoles*), and to reduce the challenge to the socio-educational elite. By limiting the Savary Bill to the public universities, the right wing parties wanted to ensure that the *grandes écoles* and their CPGE would remain untouched. With the *grandes écoles* and the CPGE unmolested, the traditional process of reproducing the socio-educational elite could continue unhindered. The socio-educational elite derived its status by virtue of the highly placed jobs its members obtained after graduation from the elite schools. Frequently, the newcomers to the elite came from elite families, meaning that the reproduction was direct rather than through adoption.

The model of the American universities was writ large in the Opposition's plans. The right saw those universities as bastions of administrative, financial, and pedagogical autonomy. In the Opposition's view, institutions in the United States determined who could register, the curriculum, the terms of graduation, and the fees their students owed. Those

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<sup>122</sup> B. Bourg-Broc, *JO* (1983), 2203. A. Madelin, *JO* (1983), 2203.

establishments could also secure funding from external sources (i.e. corporations) without reference to the state. As noted throughout this work, French public universities depended almost entirely upon the state for funding. Likewise, the state determined the curriculum, granted the diplomas, and insisted that all those who possessed the correct *baccalauréat* could register in a French university. The right averred that the discrepancy in autonomy between the American and French universities rather than any cultural differences – particularly the absence of institutions competing at the same level as the *grandes écoles* – was responsible for the declining fortunes of higher education in France.<sup>123</sup>

In support of the first aim, the Opposition raised concerns that the bill might be extended to private institutions – a notion that Savary declared, as noted above, was not the case – while it attacked the notion of a secular public service for higher education. Receiving little more assurance from the government than the Minister's word and the bill itself that a private establishment would have to willingly associate itself with the public sector of higher education in order to be governed by any aspect of the bill, the right wing turned its gaze to those public institutions that might be threatened by the proposed measure. In March of 1983, Alain Savary declared that the bill would *not* consider the *grandes écoles*, particularly the private ones, beyond the broadest possible provisions. In other words, the public *grandes écoles* would retain most if not all of the autonomy they enjoyed before the passage of the bill, with any loss of autonomy being the collective decision of the school in question, its governing ministry, and the Ministry of National Education. The Opposition was not satisfied with this statement and was unnerved by the bill's suggestion of the establishment of an interministerial commission to examine the operation of all public post-secondary

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<sup>123</sup> F. d'Aubert, *JO* (1983), 1705, 1944. B. Bourg-Broc, *JO* (1983), 1704-1705, 1783. J. Foyer, *JO* (1983), 1783. J. Foyer and B. Bourg-Broc, RPR, *JO* (1983), 1786, 1788. G. Gantier, *JO* (1983), 1704, 2265, 2276. E. Hamel, *JO* (1983), 1704, 1706. A. Madelin, *JO* (1983), 1705, 1784, 1788, 2234, 2265, 2273, 2277, 2291, 2294. C. Millon, *JO* (1983), 1783, 1784, 1787. Jean Natiez, *JO* (1983), 2271.

institutions. Again, the Minister averred that no public institution other than the universities and their associated schools and institutes would be subject to all the provisions of the bill. He stated that other public institutions might voluntarily become subject to the bill provisions in accordance with agreements between the institution in question, the government department to which that institution belonged, and the Ministry of National Education. No matter how often Savary and Cassaing protested, the Opposition declared that the mere suggestion of allowing all institutions to eventually fall under the dominion of the Ministry was tantamount to condemning the entirety of public post-secondary education to the conditions suffered by the universities. The irony that both the RPR and the UDF had presided over the decline of the universities was not lost on either the governing Socialist Party and its Communist allies or the Opposition. While the left sought to improve the status of the universities by incorporating them into a broader vision of public higher education, the right's stated desire was to improve the universities by making them entirely separate entities free from state control though that still received state funding, the levels of which could not be altered arbitrarily by the state. Though this viewpoint contrasted with the right's policies before the 1981 general election, it allowed the Opposition to portray the Government as domineering and acting contrary to academic and institutional independence.<sup>124</sup>

The idea of separating the universities from the government's broader scheme and from themselves was rooted in the liberal (i.e. Giscardian) design for higher education. Instead of the *Université de masse*, right wing administrations after 1968 – most notably

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<sup>124</sup> R. Barre, *JO* (1983), 1378, 1381. Philippe Bassinet, *JO* (1983), 1569. J-C. Cassaing, *JO* (1983), 1570, 1794, 1812. J-H. Colonna, *JO* (1983), 1407. Raymond Douyère, *JO* (1983), 1381. C. Evin and F. d'Aubert, *JO* (1983), 1685. J. Foyer and J-C. Cassaing, *JO* (1983), 1369. J. Foyer, G. Ducoloné, J. Santrot, *JO* (1983), 1946. R. Galley, *JO* (1983), 1393. J. Giovannelli, *JO* (1983), 1697. G. Hage, *JO* (1983), 1395. Guy Hermier, *JO* (1983), 1388. L. Lareng, *JO* (1983), 2074. A. Madelin, *JO* (1983), 2017. C. Millon and G. Hage, *JO* (1983), 1456. Vincent Porelli, *JO* (1983), 1600. A. Savary, *JO* (1983), 1350, 1435, 1813. J-P. Sœur, *JO* (1983), 1760. Yves Tavernier, *JO* (1983), 1405. P. Zarka, *JO* (1983), 1370. The right's avowed aim, as opposed to their pre-election policies, was to remove the state from the direct administration of the universities (i.e., to decide their curricula) while obliging the state to maintain funding at existing levels, which meant in many cases leaving the universities in the hands of university presidents appointed during Saunier-Seïté's ministry.

under Saunier-Seïté – sought to create centres of excellence. The concept of a select number of great universities harkened back to the original plans in the Law of 1896. Saunier-Seïté had strangled the universities, in particular the smaller ones, by refusing to grant them *habilitations* for the second and third university cycles, by reducing funding steadily throughout her time in office, and by supporting the further separation of research and technological institutions from the universities, notably the removal of the National Library (*Bibliothèque nationale de la France*) from the Education Ministry. Certain centres of excellence did exist already, however, most notably in Paris. Within an extended notion of centres of excellence that encompassed the provinces, the Opposition’s statements envisioned universities administered completely autonomous from the state – yet still funded by the national government – contrasting with the centralization that dominated Saunier-Seïté’s administration. This right wing vision for the universities was very far from the reality either the RPR or UDF wished to impose.<sup>125</sup>

Starting with the administration of the Opposition’s plan for autonomous universities, the right proposed that an institution’s president or director be the unquestioned administrator of that institution (presidential administration) rather than in conjunction with the councils (conciliar or ministerial style). Presidential administration permitted a university, school, or institute to follow a single grand vision for an extended period, permitting the specialization of that establishment differentiating it from other universities. Also, presidential administration avoided the plethora of councils, which the Government planned on increasing from two to three, easing the bureaucratic stresses on the professoriate somewhat. The presidents and chancellors of the universities would be separate from the rectors of the

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<sup>125</sup> F. d’Aubert, *JO* (1983), 1568, 1693, 1911, 1936. B. Bourg-Broc, *JO* (1983), 1567, 1807. R. Barre, *JO* (1983), 1377, 1379. J-C. Cassaing, *JO* (1983), 1694. R. Galley, *JO* (1983), 1573, 1592. G. Gantier, *JO* (1983), 1612, 1651, 1695, 1936, 1808-1809, 2119. G. Hage, *JO* (1983), 1869. A. Madelin, *JO* (1983), 1569, 1694, 1695, 1955, 2029, 2061, 2136, 2157. J-L. Masson, *JO* (1983), 1356, 1573. Jacques Toubon, *JO* (1983), 1695.

*académies*, thereby reducing the level of direct political control. The university councils would be responsible for the allocation of resources and for securing funds beyond those granted by the state. The institutes, schools, and UFR, especially the professional UFR, would each have their own version of presidential administration headed by a director and would be able to decide how the money they received would be spent, albeit with some degree of control from the overall university administration. The professional UER, whose curricula were defined by the requirements of other ministries had, in the Opposition's opinion, to operate under their own specific rules and requirements rather than those governing the operation of other UER. The Government, in line with the Jeantet Commission's recommendations, considered the proposed health sciences UFR separately from the other UFR owing to the specialized knowledge the teachers required, the need for external representatives to ensure the medical knowledge taught within was up-to-date, and the presence of a form of *sélection* by a *numerus clausus* (restriction on student admissions in line with Government requirements for physicians and other health professionals). Furthermore, there was also the question of contracts between institutions and their components and external bodies.<sup>126</sup>

The Opposition thought contracts could be made between individual UER and external agencies, subject to annual administrative audit. The Government's plan of allowing such contracts to undergo the scrutiny of the state and a university's three administrative councils was, in the rightists' estimation, dangerous. First, in the Government's scheme the members of the three councils and the heads of establishment had differing terms of office

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<sup>126</sup> F. d'Aubert, *JO* (1983), 1835. R. Barre, *JO* (1983), 1380. J. Blanc, *JO* (4 June 1983), 2042, 2073. J. Foyer, *JO* (1983), 1365, 1650-1651. J. Foyer and other RPR deputies, *JO* (1983), 1650. Jacqueline Fraysse-Cazalis, *JO* (1983), 2069-2070. R. Galley, *JO* (1983), 1597, 1598. G. Gantier, *JO* (1983), 1652, 1691, 1696. The Government, "Article 30," *JO* (1983), 2039. G. Hage, *JO* (1983), 2040. E. Hamel, *JO* (1983), 2043. L. Lareng, *JO* (1983), 1392, 2041. R. Lebel, *JO* (1983), 1347-1348. A. Madelin, *JO* (1983), 1597-1598, 1674, 1915, 2009, 2043, 2061. J-L. Masson, *JO* (1983), 1357. C. Millon, *JO* (1983), 1519, 1835. E. Pinte, *JO* (1983), 1406, 1408, 1699. Rossinot, Barrot, J. Blanc, *JO* (1983), 2022. A. Savary, *JO* (1983), 1436, 2069, 2070, 2074. J. Toubon, *JO* (1983), 2042.

which could potentially switch dramatically in the course of an agreement leading to a breakdown in the operation of the contract. The Government might itself change during the contract's term. The Opposition argued that a new administration might not honour an existing contract, leading to the contract's quashing thereby invalidating the process. Second, there was the concern regarding state funding of public institutions. The state, or more precisely the central government, was the primary contributor to the budgets of the public institutions. Should those contributions become inconsistent, potential investors would be driven away. The Opposition used the uncertainty generated by their previous administrations about the level and consistency of state allocations to raise such concerns. Third, the Opposition raised the question of why the money from such agreements would go to the university as a whole rather than directly to the component institution that inspired or sought the grant or contract. Thus, funds intended to finance research into a particular field might be spent to do something completely different, further diminishing any interest external investors might have for a return on investment. The Opposition also declared that the Government's purported mission to oblige the UER to conduct interdisciplinary studies rather than support the *unités* in that effort would lead to further dispersal of such potential financing. Without direct investment, the rightists stated, the possibility of obtaining and retaining such contracts was unlikely at best.<sup>127</sup>

The question of funding was linked to that of supporting the ever-growing numbers of students. It was also linked to a volatile world economy, starting with the Oil Crisis of the 1970s and continuing on well into the 1980s. The nation's dedication to Fordist, labour and capital intensive industries and practices exacerbated the effects of those economic crises,

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<sup>127</sup> B. Bourg-Broc, *JO* (1983), 1842. J. Foyer, *JO* (1983), 1367, 1811. J. Foyer and other RPR deputies, *JO* (1983), 1676. G. Gantier, *JO* (1983), 1841, 2040, 2065. Muguette Jacquaint, *JO* (1983), 2040. R. Lebel, *JO* (1983), 1348. A. Madelin, *JO* (1983), 1676, 1841, 2009. J-L. Masson, *JO* (1983), 2065. J-L. Masson and other RPR deputies, *JO* (1983), 2065. C. Millon, *JO* (1983), 1461, 1810. C. Millon, F. d'Aubert, Perrut, *JO* (1983), 1676. Odru, V. Porelli, Jacques Brunhes, *JO* (1983), 2065. A. Savary, *JO* (1983), 1351. J. Toubon, *JO* (31 May 1983), 1825, 2050.

further reducing the state's ability to fund the extensive changes envisioned in the Savary Bill. The Socialist Party's Keynesian attempts to spur economic development through increased government funding failed miserably. The Government's solution was to continue down the Keynesian path by pumping increasingly larger sums of money into the Ministry of National Education and to broaden the population base able to enter into higher education whether as starting or continuing education students. The belief was that an increase in educated people would stimulate cultural and economic development. The RPR and the UDF argued that such a program entailed disaster as it devalued diplomas and certificates by refusing to accept the simple relation between supply and demand. Instead, the Opposition presented the dreaded concept of post-*baccalauréat sélection* based on grades, one's school dossier, and, if required, one's portfolio. The right noted that if the Government truly wished to raise the status of the universities, it would have to allow those institutions to enact admission standards similar to those of the *grandes écoles* rather than the existing anti-meritocratic first-come, first-serve method of registering baccalaureates used by French universities outside of the capital.<sup>128</sup>

Tied to this notion of *sélection* was the right's motion against what it perceived as the Government's effort to regionalize the universities. Students within an *académie* or one of France's twenty-two regions would be directed towards regional universities based on proximity rather than allowing the student to select the French university of his or her choice. The Government advanced the plan with the intent of making the universities somewhat more accountable to regional development, and to interest local authorities in the

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<sup>128</sup> F. d'Aubert, *JO* (1983), 1466, 1503, 1515, 1676. F. d'Aubert, C. Millon, Clément, *JO* (1983), 1678, 1686. R. Barre, *JO* (1983), 1379. B. Bourg-Broc, *JO* (1983), 1496. B. Bourg-Broc and other RPR deputies, *JO* (1983), 1676. J. Foyer, *JO* (1983), 1364, 1366, 1390. J. Fraysse-Cazalis, *JO* (1983), 1466. J-P. Fuchs, *JO* (1983), 1445. R. Galley, *JO* (1983), 1393. G. Gantier, *JO* (1983), 1657. R. Lebel, *JO* (1983), 1348. A. Madelin, *JO* (1983), 1417, 1418, 1470, 1623, 1660, 1664, 1669, 1678, 1837, 1838. Claude-Gérard Marcus, *JO* (1983), 1655. J-L. Masson, *JO* (1983), 1356, 1446, 1466, 1467, 1497, 1838. J-L. Masson and other RPR deputies, *JO* (1983), 1676, 1685. C. Millon, *JO* (1983), 1518. E. Pinte, *JO* (1983), 1406, 1681. Jean Royer, *JO* (1983), 1658, 1665. A. Savary, *JO* (1983), 1352.

universities' evolution. The plan would also reduce the costs for students and their families by not forcing them to relocate. The Opposition complained that it was another failed effort to instil a sense of uniformity among the French universities that it argued was already vanishing, and for the best. Foreign as well as many French students were being dissuaded from applying to some – mostly Parisian – universities. With *sélection*, the better universities could be distinguished and the burden of ever-increasing numbers of students would be reduced to an acceptable level. After all, health sciences UER with their *numerus clausus* (restriction on the number of registered students based on state requirements) and other professional UER, schools and institutes would, on occasion, have their own additional requirements for entry. Universities in the deprived provinces might be left to languish, however, which is precisely why the Government was opposed to *sélection*. Furthermore, the Government noted that it was not forcing students to go to local universities, simply making it easier for them to attend those located nearby.<sup>129</sup>

The Opposition also proposed that if the universities were to control their administration, their funding, and the registration of students, they should also be granted full rights of accreditation. The RPR and UDF recommended scrapping the national university diplomas – not those covering *agrégation* or the other *concours*, of course – in favour of institutional university diplomas (*diplômes universitaires*). This switch in the authority for granting diplomas would establish the universities as truly autonomous institutions, as legitimate centres of excellence. Already, informally at least, recognition of the skills or reputation of several universities had given them the reputation of better preparing their students for the job market. The Government countered that the bill already permitted

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<sup>129</sup> F. d'Aubert, *JO* (1983), 1442, 1670, 1683, 1692. B. Bourg-Broc, *JO* (1983), 1793. J. Foyer, *JO* (1983), 1772. J. Foyer and other RPR deputies, *JO* (1983), 1683, 1772. R. Galley, *JO* (1983), 1615, 1616. G. Gantier, *JO* (1983), 1503, 1679, 1683, 1686, 1695, 1773, 1792. J. Giovannelli, *JO* (1983), 1407, 1656. Colette Goeuriot, *JO* (1983), 1793. Joseph Gourmelon, *JO* (1983), 1791. Guy Hermier, *JO* (1983), 1657. A. Madelin, *JO* (1983), 1417, 1465, 1659, 1664. Claude-Gérard Marcus, *JO* (1983), 1656. J-L. Masson, *JO* (1983), 1357. C. Millon, *JO* (1983). E. Pinte, *JO* (1983), 1682, 1683, 1691, 1693. A. Savary, *JO* (1983), 1350-1351, 1664, 1690, 1696.

universities to develop their own diploma programs that might be extended nationally should such curricula become popular and that the national university diplomas would continue, as before, to provide a guarantee on the uniform quality of education. Savary noted, however, that the Government planned to have third cycle diplomas indicate the university that had granted them, especially after the doctoral cycle was reduced from three levels to one. The Opposition simply viewed that last proposal as another assault against the socio-educational elite.<sup>130</sup>

The defence of the socio-educational elite was of major importance to the RPR and the UDF. The senior professoriate – those educators of the rank of senior lecturer (*maître de conférences*) and above – generally supported the right’s educational policy if not the liberal general economic and social policy. The right wing parties protected the professors’ privileges as experts in their respective fields of study and as those most knowledgeable about the universities’ needs. The abrogation of the Sauvage Law was a telling defeat of the Opposition’s effort to restore the senior professoriate to the authority those professors enjoyed before 1968.

The RPR and the UDF were, therefore, greatly alarmed by the Government’s proposal to institute a *collège unique* (single electoral college for university elections) for all members of the professoriate, from full professors to probationary lecturers (*assistants*). Furthermore, senior posts within the administration, including university presidencies, would be open to all ranks. The senior professoriate would be outnumbered by their juniors in each election ensuring either demagoguery or rule from below. The Opposition raised concerns that in such instances the posts of senior professors could not be guaranteed, especially as the

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<sup>130</sup> F. d’Aubert, C. Millon, Clément, *JO* (1983), 1655. R. Barre, *JO* (1983), 1378-1379. B. Bourg-Broc, *JO* (1983), 1759. B. Bourg-Broc and other RPR deputies, *JO* (1983), 1771. J-C. Cassaing, *JO* (1983), 1762. J. Foyer, *JO* (1983), 1366, 1761, 1762, 1763. J. Foyer and other RPR deputies, *JO* (1983), 1772. G. Gantier, *JO* (1983), 1772, 1773, 2026. G. Hermier, *JO* (1983), 1388. A. Madelin, *JO* (1983), 1641, 1761, 1772, 2026. A. Savary, *JO* (1983), 1763, 1773.

proposed tripartite university councils would have greater influence in deciding the careers of academics. The right preferred that the educators be elected by college according to their rank, guaranteeing the ascendancy of the full professors. With students able to add their opinions regarding their education, not simply within the councils but also by way of student evaluations similar to those used in North American universities, the threat of demagoguery increased. The Government also suggested that students from the third cycle ought to be involved in selection process for new academic staff in the universities. The ensuing instability within the universities would ensure their decline rather than their progressive improvement as the Government had intended. According to the Opposition, only if the Government permitted the senior professoriate to conduct their own affairs could the stature of the University be assured. Despite the violence of the attacks both by the Opposition and by senior academics from both the right and left, the Government persisted in its vision insisting that such internal auditing by ‘users’ would curb some of the worst excesses committed by academics that had not been remedied by the Faure Law.<sup>131</sup>

Even worse than the involvement of students in university administration and the careers of academics was the involvement of ATOS personnel that reinforced the Opposition’s fear the universities would be overrun by unions. The Communist and Socialist student unions and those of the left wing professors (especially the more junior educators) were grating enough to the RPR and UDF. In the eyes of the right, the presence of significant numbers of ATOS personnel on the administration council (*conseil administratif*) and the council on studies and university life (*conseil d’études et de la vie universitaire*)

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<sup>131</sup> F. d’Aubert, *JO* (1983), 1911, 2021. F. d’Aubert, C. Millon, Clément, *JO* (1983), 1961. R. Barre, *JO* (1983), 1380-1381. B. Bourg-Broc and other RPR deputies, *JO* (1983), 1960, 1961, 2017, 2065. J.-C. Cassaing, *JO* (1983), 1636, 1956, 1966. Pierre-Bernard Cousté, *JO* (4 June 1983), 2065. J. Foyer, *JO* (1983), 1367-1369, 1952, 1957. J. Foyer and other RPR deputies, *JO* (1983), 2021, 2022. J.-P. Fuchs, *JO* (1983), 1445. R. Galley, *JO* (1983), 1445. G. Gantier, *JO* (1983), 1677, 1679, 1778, 1953, 1957, 2020, 2021, 2066. R. Lebel, *JO* (1983), 1348. A. Madelin, *JO* (1983), 1616, 1778-1779, 1961, 1976, 1978, 2017, 2019. J.-L. Masson, *JO* (1983), 1359, 1957. C. Millon, *JO* (1983), 1455, 2022. E. Pinte, *JO* (1983), 1406. Jean Proveux, *JO* (1983), 1396. A. Savary, *JO* (1983), 1352, 1436, 1956. Robert-André Vivien, *JO* (1983), 2019.

threatened the collapse of the university administration beneath the weight of union oppression.<sup>132</sup> The Government, however, stressed that all members of the University community had to have a voice in university administration.

The threat of union domination came not only from the overt presence of ATOS staff on the university councils but also from external representatives (externals) that the Opposition feared would mostly include workers' unions from industry.<sup>133</sup> The Government countered that the percentage of externals on the institutional councils would be dependent on the needs and character of each institution, thus was not to be fixed. Technical and professional institutions or UFR would have a greater percentage of externals on the councils so the institutions could link themselves closer to the local economy and society. Despite the Government's assurances, the right wing parties insisted that the percentage of externals on the councils be reduced, especially in the council on studies and university life.

The council on studies and university life in particular irritated the Opposition. The right insisted that the administrative and scientific councils governing a university's policies and operations functioned perfectly well before. A further council was simply an additional burden requiring students and professors to waste more time in meetings rather than studying, teaching or performing research. The right felt that the council had far too much influence on determining the careers of academics despite the Government's assurances that questions of research and promotion would be discussed primarily before the scientific council. Thus, to protect the professoriate from the council's machinations, the Opposition pressed unsuccessfully for its removal from the bill. Such efforts failed, of course, against the overwhelming majority of the Government and its Communist allies.

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<sup>132</sup> F. d'Aubert, *JO* (1983), 1443, 1954. B. Bourg-Broc, *JO* (1983), 1386. J-C. Cassaing, *JO* (1983), 1822. J. Foyer, *JO* (1983), 1367. G. Gantier, *JO* (1983), 2020. G. Hage, *JO* (1983), 1976. A. Madelin, *JO* (1983), 1778. E. Pinte, *JO* (1983), 1405. J. Proveux, *JO* (1983), 1395.

<sup>133</sup> R. Barre, *JO* (1983), 1380-1381. B. Bourg-Broc, *JO* (1983), 1975. R. Galley, *JO* (1983), 1445. G. Hage, *JO* (1983), 1975, 1976. A. Madelin, *JO* (1983), 1976. E. Pinte, *JO* (1983), 1406. A. Savary, *JO* (1983), 1353.

On 10 June 1983, the National Assembly (lower house) adopted the bill for passage to the Senate (upper house) after seventeen days of debates. Two-thirds of the National Assembly (325 deputies), consisting of the governing Socialist Party (281 of 286 deputies, with five abstentions) and the Communist Party (forty-four deputies), voted for the Savary Bill. Of the two right wing parties and the nine independents, only one member (Mr Vuillaume, RPR) abstained. The rest (160 deputies in total) voted against the bill. Since only 243 votes were required to pass the bill, the governing Socialist majority could have carried the bill alone with its 281 voting members. The Socialist government knew it needed to ensure the support of its Communist allies for future, equally controversial bills, such as Savary's bill to incorporate certain private secondary schools within the public system.<sup>134</sup> That the entire Communist representation voted in favour of the bill was a show of faith not only in the bill on higher education but also in the Government. Communist support was also important in view of the Senate's guaranteed hostility towards the bill.

In the Senate, the right wing parties were in the majority. The Gaullist constitution of 1958 ensured that the Senate retained the small-town conservatism of earlier French upper houses. An electoral college composed of deputies, members of the *département's* general council, and delegates from the municipal councils indirectly elected the senators, guaranteeing that small cities and rural areas were overrepresented. Furthermore, senatorial districts electing five or more senators used the d'Hondt system of proportional representation with unmodifiable slates, a process favouring the party receiving the largest number of votes. As the electorate tended to vote overwhelmingly for the right, right wing senators dominated in each Senate election. Similarly, the exceptionally long term of senate classes – nine years with one-third renewed every three years – facilitated the retention of conservative senators elected in the succession of right wing governments since the

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<sup>134</sup> Sofia Oberti, *op cit.*

Constitution was enacted in 1958. This composition determined why the Senate voted so stridently against the Government's proposals. Thus, while the Government and its few senators supported the proposed measure as best they could, the Senate reversed in their entirety all the innovations within the bill, reduced the number of articles contained therein by twenty-four, and approved all of the Opposition's recommendations. After six days of deliberation, the Senate returned the measure to the National Assembly on 15 November 1983.<sup>135</sup>

In accordance with the Constitution, the bill, as an urgent measure, was recommended to a joint committee composed of equal numbers of deputies and senators (*comité mixte paritaire*; joint committee) to study the proposed legislation. If the joint committee had agreed on a compromise text, then it would have been presented to both houses subject to amendment only at the behest of the Government. The joint committee to study the Savary Bill first met on 1 December. It soon decided the task was impossible as both deputies and senators refused to budge from the majority opinions of their respective houses. This stalemate permitted the Government to put forward a second reading of the bill on 9 December that corrected all of the changes the Senate made. The second draft did, however, amend certain portions of the text that were found to be too controversial, notably questions of external representatives (externals) and the *collège unique*. The Communists, who were not members of the Government, did not support these reversals by the governing Socialist Party, but abstained on those contentious amendments after admonishing the Socialists' craven acceptance of the *status quo* of no *corps unique*, no *collège unique*, and a reduction in the representation of externals in the university councils. The National Assembly adopted the bill on 10 December, which was once again presented to the Senate.

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<sup>135</sup> *JO*, 2<sup>nd</sup> sitting, (1983), 6243. J.A. Laponce, *The Government of the Fifth Republic: French political parties and the Constitution*, (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1961), 277-279.

In one sitting on 15 December, the Senate rejected the text. On 20 December, the National Assembly gave the bill its *pro forma* third reading in accordance with article 45, paragraph 4 of the Constitution, permitting the proposed measure to pass directly to the President of the Republic. On the demands of the rightist parties, the constitutionality of the bill had to be studied by the Constitutional Council prior to its promulgation. After the Constitutional Council declared that the bill conformed to the Constitution, President Mitterrand promulgated the Act on Higher Education (no. 84-52; Savary Law) on 26 January 1984. The Savary Law has provided the framework for public higher education ever since.<sup>136</sup>

Yet the Savary Law did not achieve many of the goals set for it. The problems of high dropout rates, poor working and studying conditions, inadequate materials, desultory professional outcomes for the “popular” UER (i.e., those of arts and the sciences), and the failure of the universities to become either centres of academic excellence or motors for regional development continued until the turn of the twenty-first century. The very vagueness of the Law ensured that the measures it introduced, initially worded as commands then reduced to suggestions (e.g., interministerial cooperation on higher education or the *comités consultatifs régionaux*), permitted those innovations to be completely disregarded. The Law thwarted the independence of the universities by failing to answer whether the universities operated in accordance with the presidential or ministerial principle – in other words, whether the director or the councils guided the institution. This administrative confusion and the politicization of the universities caused by the battles over the Law forced the Minister into his former role as chief administrator rather than as distant overseer as intended. About three years after the Law’s promulgation, only about half of the universities bothered to enact the reforms. Opposition from the right, from within the ministry, from left

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<sup>136</sup> France. Parlement. *Constitution de la Cinquième République française*, Article 45, paragraph 4 (4 October 1958). A. Savary, *JO* (1983), 1352.

wing professors, and from the President ensured that the Law would not attain the expectations of the measure's other detractors, the left wing students' and educators' unions. The effort to harmonize the strands of higher education failed, as Savary had been forced to abandon tying the *grandes écoles* to the bill except as a faint possibility, the effort to alter the three university cycles faltered, and the professoriate undermined his attempts to force open the universities to the wider world.<sup>137</sup>

Part of what Savary had attempted to achieve with his reform, the autonomy of the universities, began to be realized in 1988. That year, Lionel Jospin, another newly appointed Socialist Minister of National Education issued a ministerial circular that succeeded where Savary and those reformers before him had failed. The measure relieved the Ministry of National Education of the responsibility of apportioning funding to each UFR. From 1989, the state granted funds to each public university, which then distributed that money amongst its constituent UFR. As the professors now had to look to the local university administration for grants, the old patronage networks tying academic success to Paris began to rupture.<sup>138</sup> Diversification and specialization resulted as professors learned to adapt to the new fiscal climate. This transformation of the *universitaires'* mindset brought with it social change. With specialization came increased expectations professors had for their students. Research progressed and universities began attracting students from across France. It became increasingly difficult for those from disadvantaged backgrounds to succeed in academic higher education. Thus, for every success that arising from the Savary Law, there was a concomitant failure.

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<sup>137</sup> Day, "The Socialists in Power, 1981-1993," *Schools and Work*, 14

<sup>138</sup> Musselin, *La longue marche des universités françaises*, 21-22.

## CONCLUSION

Alain Savary's inability to produce the reforms he had envisioned is reminiscent of his predecessors, Louis Liard and Edgar Faure. All three sought wide-ranging changes to the existing structures of higher education falling under the purview of the ministry responsible for education. Louis Liard worked to establish a few university centres from the host of arts and science faculties as well as the few law and health sciences schools within the *académies*. Opposition from the schools, the affected communities, and those connected with the *grandes écoles* – similar groups to those that thwarted Savary – condemned Liard's vision of a few well-funded universities that could compete with those in Germany to a number of loosely associated establishments collected within each *académie*. Though Liard's Law of 1896 revived the term *université* to denote a single organization comprised of faculties, ministerial involvement was still required to enact curriculum changes and to direct other local matters.

Presented with the wholesale rejection of the universities in the May riots of 1968 as institutions unable to adapt to contemporary needs – in particular, the declining value of university arts degrees and the ever-increasing student enrolment, Edgar Faure shattered the existing universities, forcing them, with some firm guidance, to recreate themselves. He dissolved old faculties, and with them their former universities, and in their place formulated the *unités d'études et de recherche* (UER). The number of universities blossomed fourfold from almost twenty to almost eighty. His reforms gave the students and junior teaching staff a voice on the institutional administrative councils. As with Savary's later attempt to amend higher education, politicization undermined the intended democratization, rendering those councils unrepresentative and ineffective. The new universities were no better able to evolve with the times and still needed direct ministerial intervention to allocate funding to each

programme and to decide which programmes would be offered by which institutions. This continued dependency on central control of decision-making authority as well as the incapacity of the new democratic councils to either reflect the student body or to impel institutional specialization placed the universities at the mercy of later ministers, such as Alice Saunier-Seïté.

The entrenchment of senior professors as institutional leaders and the diminution of student and professorial democracy by Saunier-Seïté did reduce the multiplicity of views on which course each institution should chart. She had little intention of granting institutional independence. Her direct, often brutal decisions on which, professors, programmes and establishments received ministerial favour deepened politicization while diminishing an institution's scope of operation. She based ministerial directives on political aims and placed an ever greater emphasis on ministerial authority.

Savary was determined to break with Saunier-Seïté's policies and return to those of Faure and Liard. Under the worried gaze of President François Mitterrand and Prime Minister Pierre Mauroy, Savary could not hope to follow the expectations of the left-leaning student and instructor's unions as did the Socialist's education critic, Louis Mexandeau. Instead, Savary had to chart a middle course, adopting the possible, the feasible, and the tried. The first form of his bill on higher education to the National Assembly mentioned the possibility of a *collège unique* of senior and junior professors, a sop to the SNE-Sup and the SGEN-CFDT, but pressure from Mitterrand, Mauroy, and leftist senior professors, as well as his own realization that a *collège unique* would cause unnecessary instability within the administrative councils, obliged Savary to mute and finally to discard any reference to a joint electoral body of professors. His aim to craft universities capable of decisions independent of direct ministerial intervention was thwarted by confusion about decision-making authority

throughout the process and fears among academics that differentiated universities would offer different degrees that would be less respected than those granted by the state.

One piece of Savary's reform in which he did achieve some success was the rationalization of the third *cycle*. Rather than two doctorates – the *doctorat d'université* granted by the resident university and the more prestigious *doctorat d'État* granted by the state – the Savary Law established but a single doctorate, awarded by the state but embossed with the name of the granting university. That one small victory of rationalizing the two doctorates into one was hotly contested within Parliament and the universities, battles that revealed how closely linked academic achievement was (and is) with the state, the dependency of the universities on the state's beneficence and the power of the socio-educational concept of meritocracy in France.

Where Savary and his predecessors failed was by trying to redraft higher education, in particular the universities, in their totality by primary legislation – public bills – rather than the much more successful process of secondary legislation (circulars, regulations, orders, etc.). Liard laid the foundation for the Law of 1896 with subordinate measures (*arrêtés*, circulars, regulations), but when he sought to re-establish the term *université* in law as something removed from the Napoleonic *Université*, the groundwork could not support the weight of his ambition. He left France with a collection of regional universities little different from the faculty councils introduced before the Law. Faure, confronted by wide scale unrest but also a political leadership – notably President Charles de Gaulle – who had little or nothing to gain from radical social change, likewise had to resort to primary legislation to establish universities that were more democratic and potentially better able to adapt locally to changing circumstances. Faure's successors, such as Saunier-Seïté, predominantly used subordinate legislation or powers conferred by Faure's Law to the minister responsible to reverse large sections of the Law of 1968.

Like Liard and Faure, Savary faced grave constraints that forced him to use primary legislation. First was the need to contrast the new Socialist government with the previous Giscardian liberal government. Secondary legislation was (and is) inherently undemocratic and authoritarian as it required no parliamentary review. Savary needed an open process to demonstrate that his party was able to accept dissent and use it to improve the final draft of the bill and to hopefully make ardent (i.e. rioting) opponents to the bill seem unreasonable. His bill had to have a wide scope because the number of problems that had arisen under the previous administration, such as the status of rank within the professoriate, stalled professorial careers, private intervention in public education, actions taken against foreign students, the refusal of *habilitations* on supposedly economic grounds, etc., all of which were interconnected and none of which could be adequately covered by a single piece of secondary legislation. While it is true that Savary achieved some of these aims and settled some of those issues, his vested desire to remodel French universities into something comparable to those academic bodies in the United States, the United Kingdom, or West Germany failed completely. The universities he redrafted fell into the same category as Faure's collections of UER: politicized and requiring ministerial micro-management in order to ensure proper operation.

The parliamentary right suggested the possibility that the state was incapable of handling the onerous task of the fiscal administration of the universities and their associated institutes, positing the necessity of removing the minister from the financial decision-making process. Neither the previous minister responsible for Higher Education, the Giscardian liberal Saunier-Seïté, nor her rightist predecessors ever contemplated removing the state from direct and absolute control of university administration, nor did they relinquish such authority once back in power. However, before she left office, Saunier-Seïté had engineered the appointment of several university presidents and selected directors of institutes favourable to

her vision for higher education. Many of those heads of institution remained in office after Savary became the Education minister. Faced with institutional administrations that might hold a contradictory vision for the universities to the left's own, the Socialist government became reluctant to hand that much democracy to the universities and institutes. Likewise, the right viewed those heads of institution as bastions of resistance against the Socialist state, making the emancipation of those establishments and administrative councils from central authority a valid option in the right's eyes. Confronted by such political choices, Savary's law failed in its attempt to provide the universities any true autonomy within its many articles. Instead, it produced a conflicting array of responsibilities divided between the university presidents, the administrative councils, the minister, and occasionally the Council of State that could lead to specialized universities.

Since the Socialists worried that successfully navigating a controversial government bill through Parliament without resorting to a *vote bloqué* or other 'undemocratic' procedures might only have exacerbated the violent opposition with which they were eventually confronted, they considered such compromises necessary. Once the bill became law, the Socialists could elucidate their intentions for the universities through secondary legislation (ministerial circulars, orders, or regulations), much as Savary's antecedents had done to undermine and alter the vision of the Faure Law of 1967. Besides, had the Savary Law granted greater autonomy to the universities and their associated institutes, it would have been hindered by the politicization of the universities and institutes, the resistance to change presented by the senior professoriate, and the inevitable student protests.

Another problem facing the Socialists was that the professoriate endeavoured to thwart any attempt at institutional specialization, at least so long as specialization adversely affected the professors' professional status. As stated above, professors worried about the loss of standardized state diplomas, fearing that such a move by the education minister would

undermine their collective status by permitting the programmes within each university to evolve naturally according to local needs and aptitudes. They were also concerned about the loss of homogeneity between institutions that could challenge the mobility of their careers (i.e. transferring from provincial to Parisian universities).

The professors were less concerned about the prospect of establishing schools within the university in accordance with article 33 of the Savary Law. The article permitted not only the institution of such schools within their parent universities, but allowed them to practise *sélection* as well, giving them a quasi-independent status that again undermined the Law's intent of granting wider access to higher education and promoting the mobility of both students and the transference of knowledge. In effect, those who drafted the Law had offered the professoriate the means of flouting its aims.<sup>139</sup>

Eventually, the government foisted decision-making authority upon the administrative councils. By means of a ministerial circular, Lionel Jospin, the Socialist education minister from 1989 to 1993, drafted a ministerial circular on 24 March 1989 that granted the universities precisely that authority to decide where the money they received went.<sup>140</sup> That simple measure of secondary legislation forced the universities to look inward, to no longer appeal to the state with their grievances, but to understand what was possible and to address the concerns of their staff and students; in other words, to become like universities elsewhere.

Jospin's ministerial circular was merely the start of the broader process to redraft the purpose of higher education in France that had begun with the Savary Law. His special counsellor during that time, Claude Allègre, became Minister of National Education, Research and Technology from 1997 to 2002. Allègre was filled with a similar ambition to

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<sup>139</sup> Jacques Attali, *Pour un modèle européen d'enseignement supérieur: rapport de la Commission présidée par Jacques Attali* (Paris, Fr.: Stock, 1998), 19.

<sup>140</sup> Musselin. *La longue marche des universités françaises*. 19.

democratize and modernize higher education. On 27 July 1997, he commissioned Jacques Attali, Councillor of State, to study the state of the post-baccalaureate education in France and propose ways of improving it in relation to the country's European Union peers as well as successful universities in the United States and Japan. Attali notes in his report that universities, institutes, and the *grandes écoles* should no longer only be for the reproduction of the elite, but to offer the students with the means of securing a career as well as furthering knowledge in all fields.<sup>141</sup> Despite reports such as Attali's condemning French institutional intransigence, the universities, institutes, and *grandes écoles* resisted change.

Pressure to reform higher education came from the European Union as well as within France. Although originally an economic organization, the European Union began emphasizing the standardization of social policy as well. Most Western European universities offered the first diploma after three or sometimes four years of study. In France, the state granted first post-baccalaureate degree, the DEUG, for two years of university, with the *licence* offered after an additional successful year.<sup>142</sup> Attali's report argued for what became known as the *licence-master-doctorat* (LMD) format for university education, with the *licence* offered after the baccalaureate plus three years (*bac + 3* in common parlance), the *maîtrise* after another two years, and the *doctorat* following a further three years of study.<sup>143</sup> The Commission's aim was to move towards that standardized European model to improve the competitiveness of French universities amongst the world's educational institutions and to reduce the unnecessary complexity of France's educational structure. Neither Attali's nor the Ministry of National Education's plans intended the integration of the successful and esteemed *grandes écoles* and their CPGE into the universities, although the Attali

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<sup>141</sup> Jacques Attali, *Pour un modèle européen d'enseignement supérieur: rapport de la Commission présidée par Jacques Attali* (Paris, Fr.: Stock, 1998), 12-13.

<sup>142</sup> The baccalaureate is the first post-secondary diploma.

<sup>143</sup> Min. Ed., "Les études doctorales."

Commission did recommend that the *grandes écoles* relinquish their grip on senior state offices, open themselves to a broader range of students, and demonstrate their dedication to practical research.<sup>144</sup>

In 1998, the Sorbonne introduced this format as part of a broader vision of a European University consisting initially of four nations, France, Germany, Italy, and England. The *arrêtés* (ministerial orders) of 23 and 25 April 2002, following decrees 99-747 (30 August 1999), 2001-295 (4 April 2001), 2002-481, and 2002-482 (8 and 10 April 2002), established the new structure of higher education throughout France, finally dispensing with the DEUG. The Ministry retained the DUT and BTS for those students in professional and vocational studies, as well as the *licence professionnelle* for those unwilling or unable to continue their studies in the academic stream.<sup>145</sup>

These important changes to the structure of higher education in France did not replace the Savary Law, but enhanced that legislative measure's potential. The act that Alain Savary shepherded through Parliament still governs higher education in France today. The aforementioned secondary legislation introduced by Socialist ministers of Education to his legislation brought French universities closer to his vision of those institutions as bodies of learning, research, and meritocracy capable of competing in the world's educational marketplace. That written, the capacity of French universities to achieve the lofty aims envisioned by Savary, Jospin, Allègre, and Attali is entirely dependent on the political will of the Presidency and Parliament, as well as sufficient funding and a continuing commitment to quality higher education open to the greatest number of possible students.

The *grandes écoles* and CPGE will remain part of the nation's educational establishment thanks to their success in reproducing the socio-educational elite and their

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<sup>144</sup> Attali, *Pour un modèle européen*, 13.

<sup>145</sup> Min. Ed., "Les études doctorales."

importance to the French state and society for many years to come. Their continued presence and their ability to gather what one might argue is more than their fair share of state funding serve as impediments to the advancement of French universities. Pressure from the European Union to standardize social policy will likely mitigate some of the advantages that the *grandes écoles* have heretofore enjoyed, including perhaps the independence from the Ministry of National Education some of them have, but whether French universities will remain as open to most social classes as they are today or as they were in 1984 is debatable.

What can be noted is that the Savary Law by itself failed to produce any significant concrete changes to higher education in France. It did not address the issues of the large number of students who withdrew from higher education before completing their first post-baccalaureate diploma, to satisfactorily improve their chances of transferring to another institution (e.g. to a *grande école*), to hand over effective administrative responsibility to the universities, or, arguably, to make French higher education more competitive in comparison with that in other countries. The secondary legislation that began the process of giving autonomy to the universities and their users and of reducing the unnecessary yet increasing complexity of post-baccalaureate education in France fell outside the scope of Savary's law. If Law 84-52 succeeded in anything, it was that the minister who sponsored it managed to provoke the questions and the political will to improve the accessibility and quality of higher education. Savary Law opened the way to change, especially to professionalization, regionalization and more university self-government. Subsequent socialist ministers and governments continued what Savary had begun under the aegis of the Savary Law. Even if the system is far from democratic today, it is more open and flexible than it was 25-30 years ago.

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