



*ADVANCE SHEET – February 4, 2022*

## President's Letter

We here present the next to last chapter of the final volume of General De Gaulle's Memoirs, published in France in 1962, interesting for his reflections on the American Constitution and on modern changes in French society, together with his outline for the remainder of the volume, which he did not live to complete. (Next issue we will present the final chapter which we had hoped to include in this issue, but space considerations prevented us from doing so. - J.B.)

George W. Liebmann



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Would all of you soccer moms and dads please raise your hands? Now would all of you parents who have ever had to comfort a child after a bad test score with “As long as you tried your hardest, that’s all that matters” do the same? We try to instill in our children, whether on the soccer field or classroom, that effort truly does matter. The best lawyers I have known were not necessarily the brightest, but the ones who worked the hardest, the ones whose mom, dad, coach or teacher would have said “A+ for effort.”

Here at the Bar Library sometimes we win, sometimes we lose, but always we give it our best try.

Nothing gives Mike (my fellow employee for almost thirty years) and I more satisfaction than providing a Library user what they need to advance their case or whatever it might be they are working on. It makes us feel that in some small way we are contributing to the judicial process.

What I would ask all of you is help in carrying on that mission. In 1840, when the City and State had neither the will nor desire to establish a law library in Baltimore City, the lawyers, in the best traditions of America, established their own Library, this Library. Over the years its actions represented the best ideals of the nation including welcoming to membership the first African-American admitted to practice Everett J. Waring and the first woman admitted to practice Etta Hanie Maddox at a time when each was turned away by a multitude of groups and associations.

I would ask that you please look in your wallet and see whether you are in possession of a Bar Library membership card. If not, I would ask that if possible you join the Library. With substantially fewer cases being filed and firms feeling the pinch of what has transpired over the last few years, the economic situation of the Library has been significantly impacted. We need your help in the way of a membership, and/or if you are so inclined, a contribution. The Library is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit, which means that your contribution is in fact tax deductible.


The Library has not only survived two World Wars but also a Civil War, a Great Depression, and the Pandemic of 1918. Now, along with all of you, we are several years into COVID-19. We would not have survived any of that which we faced in the past without your help. I ask for it again in saving our Library.

Thank you, take care and I hope to see you soon.

Joe Bennett



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# **Charles de Gaulle Memoirs of Hope: Renewal and Endeavor**

Translated by Terence Kilmartin

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# Chapter 1



In the year of grace 1962, France's revival was in full flower. She had been threatened by civil war; bankruptcy had stared her in the face; the world had forgotten her voice. Now she was out of danger. The State had succeeded in rescuing her by virtue of a complete change whereby it now incorporated a supreme authority legitimized by events and backed by the confidence of the people. But the present does not guarantee the future. An edifice whose soundness depends on the presence of a single man is necessarily fragile. Since danger was no longer in sight, many of our countrymen were immediately tempted to return to their easy-going ways. Some, in particular, found it more and more difficult to accept a government which governed. Tomorrow, unless the dyke was well cemented, the tide might sweep away what now seemed firmly established. All the more so because in the course of time storms would inevitably rage, whether blowing in from outside, or rising within the confines of a country which, since the Gauls, has been periodically the stage for those "sudden and unexpected upheavals" which astonished Caesar. In order that France should recapture and preserve, not for a brief period only, but on a lasting basis, the unity, the power and the status without which she would be doomed, the regime which governed her must remain steadfast and coherent. Having never ceased to think and act in accordance with this national imperative, it was clear to me that the State, at present well-ordered, must remain so in

the future. This required that it must never again become a prey to the multifarious, divergent and devouring factions which had dominated, debased and paralyzed it for so long.

The old monarchy had achieved continuity at the cost of a centuries-long struggle against the vassals, but nothing less than heredity, anointment and absolutism had sufficed. The two empires had succeeded for a time in preventing disintegration, but only by means of dictatorship. Thereafter the Republic, although it originally incorporated a few theoretical safeguards, abandoned itself to the parties and became a perpetual power vacuum. Its ultimate dereliction in face of national crisis and the fact that I chanced to have been pre-ordained as the country's savior, had enabled me, with the direct concurrence of the people – that is to say on a pre-eminently democratic basis – to establish institutions designed to span the future. For the higher and permanent interests of France had their instrument and guarantor therein in the person of the Head of State. Yet how could one doubt that this profound transformation, which had given the Republic a Head that organically it had never had before, would eventually be undermined by all the vested interests? How was it to be endowed with a distinctive enough character to enable it to be maintained in law and in practice when the dramatic circumstances and the exceptional person that had imposed it in the first place had disappeared?

For a long time I had felt that the only way was the election of the President of the Republic by the people. If he alone was chosen by Frenchmen as a whole, he would be "the nation's man", invested thereby in the eyes of all, and in his own eyes, with a paramount responsibility precisely corresponding to the role assigned to him in the Constitution. In addition, of course, he would need the will and the capacity to fulfil this charge. That, obviously, the law could not guarantee. For the virtues of an institution have never at any time or in any sphere been able to compensate for the irremediable infirmity of a leader. Conversely, success is possible only if talent is provided with its instrument, and nothing is worse than a system in which quality wastes away in impotence.



It is true that, speaking at Bayeux in 1946 about the regime which France needed, and then directing the proceedings and debates in which the Constitution was elaborated in 1958, I had not yet specified that the Head of State should be elected by universal suffrage, and had at first been content to have him chosen by a broadly-based electoral college which on the national level would be similar to those by which senators were elected on the departmental level. For it seemed to me desirable not to do everything at once. Since I was asking the country to wrest the State from the control of the parties, by deciding that the President instead of parliament should henceforth be the wellspring of power and policy, it would be as well to postpone the final completion of this vast mutation. I may add that, at the time, in order not to alienate the almost unanimous movement of national support, I deemed it advisable to take into consideration the passionate prejudices which, since Louis-Napoleon, the idea of a plebiscite aroused in many sectors of opinion. When experience of the new Constitution had shown that the supreme authority wielded power under its terms without any suggestion of dictatorship, it would be time to propose the ultimate reform to the people. Moreover, I myself intended at the outset to assume the functions of Head of State, and, by reason of past history and present circumstances, the manner of my accession would be no more than a formality with no bearing on my role. However, for the sake of the future, I was determined to finish off the edifice in this respect before the end of my seven-year term.

Meanwhile, the instinct of self-preservation was keeping the parties on the alert. Suspecting my design, they felt that it was yet another reason for getting rid of me before I had accomplished it, or at least weakening me enough to force me to abandon it. Hence, gradually, as the problem of Algeria was settled, as the loyalty of the Army was incontrovertibly affirmed, as terrorist subversion was suppressed, the various strands of opposition began to combine and reinforce one another. It became evident that the relative neutrality which they had observed up to then was about to cease, that more and more

obstacles would be raised at every turn, and that the actions and intentions of General de Gaulle would become the target of their recriminations. There was reason to believe that all the political factions would patch up their differences and connive to bring the latent crisis to the boil. Continual harassment, a well-timed censure motion in the National Assembly against the government, and if need be against any other which might succeed it; general elections, either at the normal time or following a dissolution, bringing back to the Palais-Bourbon their disparate but unanimously hostile majority, the launching of campaigns in different directions, but all equally disparaging, by virtually all the newspapers and networks – by these various means they would aim to put me in grave difficulties, to persuade me to abjure either my functions or my supremacy, to undermine in the public mind the idea that the Head of State should actually be one, and, in any event, to place future presidents in the situation which was formerly that of a “guest in the Elysée”.

If they succeeded, once more it would be as though the revival of the State was to be but a temporary phenomenon destined to cease when the danger was past. Once more, in the face of a national emergency whose primary cause was the incapacity of the regime of the parties, the latter would have made a show of abdicating in favor of a demiurge entrusted overnight with the country's salvation: in 1914 Joffre; in 1917 Clemenceau; in 1940 Pétain, and then, the error having been recognized, de Gaulle; in 1958 de Gaulle again – with the intention, the crisis over, of reappearing armed with pretensions and demands commensurate with the degree of their erstwhile discredit and humiliation. Once more, exploiting the limitless capacity for forgetfulness of the electoral clienteles, the time-honored French proclivity for splitting up into garrulous factions and indulging in political games – as though they were circus tricks or fair-ground competitions – and the aversion of organized interests for a strong central power, the parties would re-establish their supremacy and resume the downward path. Needless to say, I was determined to foil their attempt. But this presupposed

that the French people gave me their backing against them all.

They could do so, and thereby resolve both the political problem and the constitutional question, if, at my request, they voted for the election of the Head of State by universal suffrage. In this way they could give the lie to the parties as a whole in the immediate context, and consolidate the new institutions for the future. It was only from the mass of the nation, and certainly not from parliament, that it was possible to hope for the adoption of such a measure, for two-thirds of the deputies and nine-tenths of the senators would not accept it at any price. And in any case it was a basic principle of the Fifth Republic and of my own doctrine that the French people must themselves decide in matters that concerned their future. I therefore intended to propose this decisive confirmation to them directly, and I must do so without delay since, with the sole exception of the UNR,<sup>1</sup> all the parliamentary groups had opened hostilities.

From the beginning of 1962, before I had revealed my plan, I was already under fire. The application of Article 16 of the Constitution, which I had invoked at the time of the rebellion of the four generals in Algiers, had already aroused a great deal of feigned alarm and artificial agitation in political circles, until the liquidation of the OAS induced me to decide on a return to normal. In March, on the eve of the Evian negotiations, the National Defence Committee of the Palais-Bourbon took up the cudgels and loudly expressed its disapproval of the recall of two Army divisions and all the Air Force combat units from Africa to metropolitan France at my orders. Immediately after the referendum on Algerian independence, the attack sharpened and spread. On April 17 the Pompidou ministry, in which no fault could have been found since it had only just come into being, obtained a vote of confidence from only 259 deputies, while 247 voted against it or abstained. On May 15, five MRP<sup>2</sup> ministers withdrew from the government, using as their pretext a press conference in which, once again, I had

<sup>1</sup> *Union pour la nouvelle république*: Gaullist party.

<sup>2</sup> *Mouvement républicain populaire*: Christian Democratic party.



advocated the union of Europe through organized co-operation between States, and rejected integration. It is true that two of them, Pierre Pflimlin and Maurice Schuman, who had only been in it for a month and, in fact, were to opt that very day between their ministerial portfolios and their seats in parliament, could claim to have been surprised by my remarks. But the other three, Robert Buron, Paul Bacon and Joseph Fontanet, had been members of my government from the beginning, and had accepted quite happily both the form and substance of the directives which I had always given to the policy of France. The truth of the matter was that if the five were suddenly parting company with me, it was because their party in turn was joining the hostile coalition. On May 22 the Independents followed suit, summoning the four ministers who were members of their group to tender their resignations and expelling them when they refused.

To cut short the war of attrition, I decided to take the initiative and the offensive. Speaking on the radio on June 9 I announced to the nation that "by means of universal suffrage, we must eventually ensure that in the future, over and above the men who come and go, the Republic can remain strong, orderly and continuous." No political soothsayer could fail to understand what this meant. Consequently, on the 13th of the same month, as a deliberate demonstration against me, 296 deputies in the National Assembly, who described themselves as "Europeans" signed a declaration condemning the plan for political co-operation, which I had proposed to the member States of the Common Market and which had just been rejected by Holland, Belgium and Italy, and demanding the supranational "solution" instead. The signatories represented a large majority in the House, and moreover the ten Communist deputies, who did not subscribe to the declaration, condemned me no less strongly. Scarcely had this wave broken than another arose. The day after the final Algerian referendum, I recognized the independence of Algeria in the name of France, in accordance with the solemn pledges we had undertaken. Consequently, the mandate of the Algerian members of the French parliament

having no further object, I put an end to it by ordinance, under the powers with which I had been formally vested by the referendum law. A storm of protest at once broke out in the Palais-Bourbon and the Luxembourg which had not the slightest justification in law but was simply an expression of the hostile attitude of the majority. There could be no doubt that a merciless struggle would begin as soon as I had formulated my constitutional proposal.

The opportunity to join battle, and a warning that there might not be much time to lose were suddenly provided by the assassination attempt at Petit-Clamart on August 22. This, after the previous one near Pont-sur-Seine which had almost succeeded, and with the prospect of further attempts in the offing, brought home to an alarmed and agitated public the question of what might become of the State if de Gaulle were suddenly to disappear, and made it clear to me that the eventuality could arise at any moment. I therefore deemed it desirable to hasten matters. On August 29 the Cabinet was informed that "I contemplate proposing an amendment to the Constitution with a view to ensuring the continuity of the State," and the news was published. However, in order not to confuse matters, I did not finally show my hand until after my State visit to Germany. But as soon as this was over, a communiqué was issued on September 12, after the weekly Cabinet meeting, announcing that "General de Gaulle has confirmed his intention to submit to a referendum a proposal that the President of the Republic should henceforth be elected by universal suffrage."

On September 20, in a radio and television talk, I explained to the nation why I was asking it to carry out this essential reform, and how it would be enabled to do so. I observed that "the institutions in force for nearly four years have replaced the chronic confusion and perpetual crises which bedevilled the action of the State by continuity, stability, efficacy and balance in the powers of government"; that "no one doubts that our country would soon be plunged into the depths of disaster if, unhappily, we were to abandon it once more to the sterile and contemptible games of yesterday"; and that "the keystone of

our regime is the institution of a President of the Republic chosen by the reason and sentiment of the French people to be the Head of State and the guide of France." Having recalled the functions and responsibilities which were his under the terms of the Constitution, I declared that "in order that he may effectively fulfill such a charge, he needs the explicit trust of the nation." As far as I myself was concerned, I went on to say, "I felt on resuming the leadership of the State in 1958 that events had already done what was required, and for that reason I agreed to be elected otherwise. But the question will be very different for those who, not having received the same national distinction, come after me one after the other to assume the position which I at present occupy . . . . In order that they should be fully empowered and totally bound to carry the supreme burden, however onerous, and in order that our Republic should thus continue to have a good chance of remaining sound, effective and popular in spite of the demons of our divisions, they must receive a direct mandate from the citizens as a whole." Then came the statement of the proposal I was putting to the country: "When my own seven-year term is over, or if death or illness interrupt it before it runs out, the President of the Republic will thenceforward be elected by universal suffrage." But by what means should the country express its decision? I answered: "by the most democratic means, the referendum, which the Constitution provides for in a very simple and clear manner by laying it down that 'the President of the Republic may submit to a referendum any bill', I repeat any bill, 'dealing with the organization of the public authorities.'" I ended by saying to the French people: "As always, I can and will do nothing without your support. As always, I shall soon be asking you for it. As always, it will be for you to decide."

But as always, too, the very principle of a direct decision by the people was anathema to all the old political groups. Moreover, my possible success would, for the moment, put paid to the hopes they cherished of seeing me depart. Above all, the adoption of my proposal would greatly reduce their chances of returning to the old ways. For there was no doubt that once I



had gone, unless my successors enjoyed a unique mandate by virtue of the fact that they had received it from the nation as a whole, the parties intended to find ways and means of reverting to the previous system. Their pressures and their influence on the college of notables which elected the President, the pledges they would be able to extract from the presidential candidates, and then, once the victor was installed, a particular way of interpreting the constitutional texts, a little juridical sleight of hand, a few amendments effected through parliament, would quietly restore them to complete possession of the Republic. But first of all they would have to defeat me. Hence, in the struggle which was now beginning, not a single political faction, whether of the Left, the Right or the Center, was missing from the opposition camp, and there was to be no abatement in the concerted virulence of their actions and speeches.

As is so often the case in our political battles, the question at issue was not in itself the subject of the debate. Since to the mass of the French people the idea that they themselves should elect the President of the Republic seemed perfectly natural, since it also seemed to them quite normal for the Head of the State actually to run it, and since they thought that de Gaulle was right to prepare for his succession, the army of the "Noes" was careful not to challenge the actual principle of a reform which was so evidently popular. Their accusations were directed against the juridical conditions in which I was proposing it and which were inevitably obscure to the majority of the people. So the country was to witness a frenetic campaign, apparently inspired by the defence of the law, but in reality directed against me personally and aiming to prove, by a flood of imputations stemming from every point of the political compass, supported by all kinds of committed jurists, repeated *ad nauseam* by virtually the entire press, that General de Gaulle was violating the Constitution in order to set up a dictatorship. The argument put forward was this: Article 89 provides for the possibility of constitutional revision through parliamentary channels; no other article is specifically devoted to revision; to initiate it through a referendum is, therefore, contrary to the law.



Inured as I was to the specious charges which had been levelled against me for so long, it seemed to me that this one overstepped all bounds. For in submitting the reform to a direct popular vote, I was merely applying a constitutional provision as glaringly simple and clear-cut as it could possibly be. What, after all, could be plainer or more categorical than Article 11 which prescribed that "the President of the Republic may, at the proposal of the government, submit to referendum any bill dealing with the organization of the public authorities"? Was there anything which, by nature and by definition, could have a more obvious bearing on the organization of the public authorities than the Constitution, and, in particular, what it laid down as regards the method of electing the Head of State? Had this not always been admitted in legal doctrine and parlance, so much so that the Constitution of 1875 which inaugurated the Republic was precisely called: "Law concerning the organization of the public authorities"? Why, in this Article 11 which covered the constitutional sphere no less unquestionably, should it have been necessary to mention what was self-evident, to wit, that it might open the way to revision? If, by an extraordinary denial of his own text, the legislator intended the opposite, how could he have failed to specify it? In what way could the power to resort to a referendum in order to amend the constitutional law be regarded as inconsistent with the procedure laid down in Article 89, the latter being operative when the public authorities deemed it preferable to use parliamentary channels? Did it not stand to reason, moreover, that in such a grave matter both should be available depending on the circumstances, and was this not the meaning of Article 3 which stated: "National sovereignty belongs to the people who exercise it through their representative and by way of referendum"? Finally and above all, since the 1958 Constitution derived from the direct suffrage of the people, by what authority were they to be denied the power to alter what they had themselves created?

I must say that the stubborn insistence of the parties on interpreting the Constitution in such a way as to deny the

people a right which belonged to them, seemed to me all the more high-handed in that I myself was the principal inspirer of the new institutions, and it really was the height of effrontery to challenge me on what they meant. In particular, if the referendum system existed in our law, it was because I had had it adopted in 1945 by universal suffrage. If it had been applied in order to call the 1958 Constitution into being, it was because I had imposed this testamentary clause on the dying Fourth Republic. If there was an Article 11, it was because, being legally and expressly mandated to draw up and submit the Constitution to the country, I had wanted it to include just such an article, in that place with that meaning and scope. Moreover, when I examined this part of the draft on June 26 and 30, 1958, at a meeting attended by Michel Debré, the Minister of Justice, who was in charge of drawing up the Constitution, and the Ministers of State Guy Mollet, Pierre Pflimlin, Louis Jacquinot and Félix Houphouët-Boigny, I had insisted that the country as a whole must be given all the power which the referendum enabled it to exercise in every sphere and, above all, that of constitutional amendment. All of them had pointed out, and I had acknowledged, that the text of Article 11 gave me complete satisfaction on this point. The fact that the former political leadership now shamelessly concurred in ignoring the principles, the spirit and the origin of the Constitution, in refusing to read what was written therein or, having read it, in refusing to admit that the words meant what they said, would finally have enlightened me, had I needed enlightening, not, of course, on their good faith since I expected none from them, but on the unquenchable nostalgia which an absurd past inspired in them.

Meanwhile, my talk on September 20, which made matters absolutely plain, put an end to the preliminary skirmishes and opened the pitched battle. It is true that, almost at the same time, elections on a restricted suffrage to renew a third of the Senate seats took place with no apparent emotion. But notwithstanding the calm which surrounded this formality, all the parties were entering the fray and closing ranks with an eye to the forthcoming national consultation. On the 23rd the

Socialists announced: "A new and glaring violation of the Constitution is about to be consummated . . . . The election of the President of the Republic by universal suffrage is simply a demagogic means of giving plebiscitary sanction to the successive encroachments on the prerogatives of government and parliament." On the same day the Communists called for "the union of all republicans to fight the common enemy, personal power, which is gradually evolving towards a *de facto* dictatorship." On the 25th, the PSU<sup>1</sup> proclaimed "its unanimous hostility to the President of the Republic's plan for a plebiscitary referendum." On the 30th, the Radicals, meeting at Vichy for their annual congress, gave an enthusiastic ovation to a fiery speech by Gaston Monnerville who declared: "To the attempt at a plebiscite which is about to develop, my answer is No! . . . . To allow the violation of the Constitution is to allow anything." And the President of the Senate urged the National Assembly to pass a motion of censure, adding: "This would be a direct, legal and constitutional retort to what I consider an abuse of power." Without waiting for October 8 and 9, the dates theoretically fixed by the MRP and the Independents to announce their decisions, everyone knew that they had thrown in their lot with the opposition. Even the Republican Center, the Poujade Movement, the Algerian Repatriates<sup>2</sup>, joined the "Noes."

In the midst of all this, the bill to be submitted to the nation, which was drawn up in accordance with my directives under the auspices of the Prime Minister, was submitted in the normal way for examination by the *Conseil d'Etat*. The latter, instead of confining itself to proposing any textual amendments which it considered desirable, set itself up improperly as judge of the way in which the Head of State, the protector of the Constitution, had decided to apply it, and formulated an opinion which was unfavorable to the appeal to Article 11 and the use of the referendum. Now this body, composed of officials who held their appointments by governmental decree and not by election, was

<sup>1</sup> *Parti socialiste unifié*: left-wing socialist group.

<sup>2</sup> *Répatrés d'Algérie*: party formed by French settlers repatriated to France after independence.



qualified to give the executive power the legal opinions which were requested of it, but in no way to intervene in political matters nor *a fortiori* in the constitutional sphere. Knowing the views of the Council, whose meetings, in the absence of those of its members who had been seconded to me or the government, were noisily dominated by notorious and avowed partisans, former ministers or members of parliament and future political candidates, I was not in the least surprised by the attitude of its assembly. Nor was I surprised to learn that in defiance of all the obligations and traditions of the Council, the secrecy of its deliberations and its vote was betrayed the moment the sitting was over; for without the slightest delay the news agencies published its conclusions, and the parties seized on them as ammunition for their campaign. For this reason, when the Vice-President, Alexandre Parodi, came to convey them to me after I had already read them in the newspapers, I replied that I would pay no attention to an "opinion" of this sort, which in any case was not legally binding. The following day the Cabinet adopted the text of the bill. I asked each member in turn whether he endorsed it. All of them did so unreservedly with the exception of Pierre Sudreau, who, consequently, left the government.

So that the proprieties should be observed to the uttermost on my side, on October 2 I addressed a message to parliament in which I formally made known the decision I had taken and the reasons which justified it. After pointing to the fact that "the institutions which the French people adopted four years ago, in the aftermath of a grave crisis and on the eve of further perils, have succeeded, thanks to the stability of government and the continuity of its policies . . . in resolving difficult problems and overcoming severe trials," I declared: "We must now see to it that these institutions remain. This means that, in the future and over and above the men who come and go, the State must have at its head an effective guarantor of the fate of France and the Republic. Such a role presupposes . . . that the man who fulfills it should enjoy the direct and explicit confidence of the nation." I pointed out the corollary — a bill



providing for the election of the President of the Republic by universal suffrage which was to be submitted to a referendum – and added: “I consider that there is no better means of effecting the amendment which is called for in the text adopted by the French people in 1958, an amendment which affects each individual citizen.” Finally, referring to the recent assassination attempts, I concluded: “The nation, which has just been brought abruptly face to face with an alarming prospect, will thus have the opportunity to confer on our institutions a new and solemn guarantee.”

My message having been listened to in complete silence by both Houses, all the parties, Right, Left and Center, at once launched their declaration of war. A motion of censure on the government was put down in the National Assembly, signed jointly by the delegates of the Socialists, the Radicals and their associates, the MRP and the Independents. Although the Communists were not signatories, it was certain that they would vote in favour of the motion. In accordance with the law, the debate would open two days later. No one could doubt that a crisis was about to explode, that the country would have to decide, and that it could mean either the end of de Gaulle, his historic role, his policies and his Republic, or else a new lease of life for them.

On October 4, without waiting for the debate and the vote on the motion of censure, the decrees concerning the referendum – the text of my proposal and the summons to the electors – were published in the *Journal Officiel*. That same day, before the deputies began their sitting, I addressed the French people directly by radio and television. I expressed myself in the most categorical terms. Recalling that it was the people themselves who had chosen the new Constitution “in the aftermath of a crisis which all but plunged France into disaster and destroyed the Republic,” I compared the striking results which it had enabled us to achieve to the bankruptcy of the regime of the parties: “Our public life, which yesterday presented the spectacle of the intrigues, maneuverings and crises with which everyone is familiar, today bears the stamp of stability and

efficiency. Instead of a sick currency, finances in deficit, a threatened economy being a constant source of anxiety and humiliation, we are now advancing along the road of prosperity and social progress on the basis of a sound franc, an external trade surplus and balanced budgets. Whereas we were in the process of destroying our national unity and squandering the elements of our military power as a result of the failure to achieve decolonization, to put an end to the Algerian conflict and to crush the subversive movement which was planning to overthrow the State, we have now established co-operation between France and her former colonies, Algeria has joined this association in its turn, we can set about modernizing our Army, and the dire conspiracies which threatened the Republic have been reduced to the shameful and futile expedients of robbery, blackmail and assassination. Finally, if until recently our country was regarded as the 'sick man' of Europe, today its influences and prestige are recognized throughout the world."

Emphasizing that this beneficent Constitution made the President of the Republic the effective "Head of State and guide of France," that it was this essential character "which the partisans of the discredited regime are naturally anxious to deprive him of," because then we would relapse into the conditions of yesterday, I went on to declare that "in order to be, *vis-à-vis* himself as well as others, in a position to fulfill such a mission, the President needs the direct confidence of the nation . . . ." This confidence, "which I myself implicitly enjoyed in 1958 for exceptional historic reasons," must henceforth be expressed through universal suffrage.

I did not hesitate to draw attention to the dramatic circumstances in which the people were being invited to adopt my plan. "From the beginning," I said, "I knew that I should have to propose this change to the country before the end of my seven-year term. But pressing reasons have induced me to take the initiative here and now, as is my right and duty." And I recalled "the attempts against my life, either perpetrated or planned, which make it incumbent upon me to ensure to the best of my ability that the Republic is established on a firm basis."

I described "the general disquiet provoked by the dangers of chaos which France might suddenly incur" and which must prompt the nation to show by a massive vote "that it intends to maintain its institutions, and has no desire after de Gaulle's departure to see the State once more delivered over to political practices which would lead to a hideous catastrophe, this time without hope of redemption." I outlined what we were accomplishing, internally in terms of the economic and social progress of our country, externally in terms of world peace and co-operation between East and West; "this whole immense enterprise requiring that the French people themselves be provided in the years to come with the means of choosing those who one after the other, at the head of the State, shall be answerable for their destiny."

Finally, as to my "clear, simple and straightforward" proposal on the subject of which they were about to avail themselves of the referendum procedure, I asked all Frenchmen and Frenchwomen to give me a vote of confidence: "It is your answer on October 28 which will tell me if I can and if I must pursue my task in the service of France."

I had spoken at one o'clock in the afternoon. Two hours later the session opened in the Palais-Bourbon. The position of the parties revealed itself to be as completely hostile towards me as mine was firm towards them. Paul Reynaud and Bertrand Motte on behalf of the Independents, Guy Mollet and Francis Leenhardt on behalf of the Socialists, Paul Coste-Floret on behalf of the MRP, Maurice Faure on behalf of the Radicals, Jean-Paul David on behalf of the other Center parties, and Waldeck Rochet on behalf of the Communists, all addressed the House in identical terms. Whatever Georges Pompidou and the orators of my persuasion, Lucien Neuwirth and Michel Habib-Deloncle, might say, everyone's mind was made up. Basically it was a clash between two Republics, the Republic of yesterday whose hopes of a re-birth were discernible behind the bitter diatribes of the partisans, and the Republic of today which was personified by me and whose survival I was endeavoring to ensure. But I had seen to it that the decision would



not be taken in those precincts, and the censure motion, which was carried by 280 votes out of 480 deputies, in no way affected my determination to achieve victory elsewhere.

Yet such were the habits and illusions in political circles and the organs of information that, judging by what they said and wrote, it might have been thought that the Assembly's vote represented a defeat for me. Glancing through the Parisian press, I found it to all intents and purposes unanimous on this point. Thus *L'Aurore* affirmed, in the words of Jules Romains: "The Republic is saved!"; *Le Figaro* proclaimed with André François-Poncet: "Parliamentary democracy is the only true democracy"; *Paris-Jour* warned me of the risks I would incur if I dissolved the Assembly; *Combat* considered that proof had been given that I could not dispense with the parties, and that I must draw the obvious conclusions; and *Le Monde* predicted "a constitutional crisis" unless I gave in. All this made me more than ever inclined to demonstrate that it was the National Assembly itself which would suffer the consequences of what it had just done against me. Deliberately ignoring the crisis, I spent the whole of October 5 attending military maneuvers in the Mourmelon area. It was not until noon on the 6th that I received Georges Pompidou, who in conformity with the Constitution came to tender his resignation and whom I forthwith invited to continue in office together with all his colleagues. Publicly, of course, I made ready to pronounce the dissolution of parliament and, as the Constitution enjoined, consulted the presidents of the two Houses to this end. My meeting with Jacques Chaban-Delmas was cordial and lasted half an hour; that with Gaston Monnerville took two minutes without even a handshake. On October 10 my decision was published, together with the decree which fixed the general elections for November 18 and 25. Just as in 1958, although in circumstances that were clearly very different, I was calling upon the country first of all to pronounce judgment on our institutions, and then to provide itself with a new Chamber.

The referendum campaign was marked by the same unanimity among the parties as they had shown in parliament. It is



true that some of their members, while passionately advocating a negative vote, loudly protested – tactics or conviction? – that they had no desire to return to the old ways and put forward proposals which were to all appearances constructive. For example, Paul Reynaud, who in spite of all the vicissitudes, historical, political and personal, of his long career had never ceased to place the life, the oratory and the preponderance of the Palais-Bourbon above everything else, but who seemed to admit that its vices needed to be kept under control, ventilated the idea of “one parliament, one government”. In his view, whenever the National Assembly was elected, a ministry would be formed on the basis of the majority and reflecting its composition and would remain in office for as long as the deputies themselves retained their seats. If they happened to overthrow the government, the Assembly would be *ipso facto* dissolved and new elections would be held. The former Prime Minister considered that this would suffice to avoid the endemic ministerial crises which had brought the Third and Fourth Republics into disrepute. But what Paul Reynaud, no doubt, had in mind was that the right of dissolution would thereby be abolished, together with any possibility of intervention by the President, and that parliament would thus once more become sovereign. It was my conviction, however, that under such a system, as a result of the eclipse of the Head of State, the sole means of asserting and, if necessary, imposing the higher permanent interests of the country would once more disappear. As for believing that wisdom would prevail in the Assembly once it knew that it would be condemned to present itself for re-election if it explicitly withheld its confidence from the government, this would be to disregard the adroit subterfuges which the parties would use to get rid of ministers without overthrowing the government or provoking a dissolution. For what sort of cohesion could a government formed of their own delegates and on the basis of their maneuverings possibly have, if they thought fit to disown or withdraw those of their members whom they had seconded to it? The ingenuity of the caciques would be applied to settling political crises by the breaking up

of ministries rather than by the dismissal of the deputies. This would provide plenty of fodder for the intrigues of the caucuses, but what would become of the efficacy and dignity of government?

Other political tacticians, equally theoretical, for instance Paul Coste-Floret and Gaston Defferre, also professed their anxiety to remedy the abuses which the impotent omnipotence of parliament formerly displayed for all to see; but, anxious above all to make the National Assembly inviolable, they advocated the so-called "presidential system" on the American pattern. According to them the Head of State, who would be at the same time the Head of Government, could be elected directly by the people. But he would not have the power to dissolve the Assembly, any more than the Assembly would have the power to overthrow him. Executive and legislature would thus go through the whole duration of their respective mandates without either of them ever being able to coerce the other. For my part I was convinced that such a system, which is in any case known to have its drawbacks in the United States, would be at variance with the political nature and the character of the French people, which make them disinclined to tolerate a real government except in times of crisis and which, in the absence of indisputable safety valves, impel their representatives to strive to subdue it, in other words to annihilate it.

Since becoming an independent State, America has been through one civil war – more than a century ago – but has never suffered revolution or foreign invasion and, thus, never experienced the chronic divisions which such tragedies leave in the depths of the national consciousness and which make government a permanent object of suspicion and prejudice in the eyes of many categories of people. It has only two parties, which are opposed on none of the fundamental issues – nationhood, moral law, institutions, defense, freedom, ownership. It is a federation of States each of which, with its governor, its representatives, its judges and its officials – all elected – takes upon itself responsibility for a large part of the immediate business of politics, administration, justice, public order, economy, health, education,

etc., while the central government and Congress normally confine themselves to larger matters: foreign policy, civic rights and duties, defense, currency, overall taxes and tariffs. For these reasons, the system has succeeded in functioning up to now in the north of the New World. But where would it lead France, a country beset by the after-effects of the convulsions inflicted upon it by so many internal and external crises, a country in which everything, in the political, social, moral, religious and national spheres, is always totally in dispute, a country whose people are in the habit of splitting into irreconcilable factions, a country the demands of whose unity coupled with the perpetual threats from outside have induced to centralize its administration to the utmost, thus making it *ipso facto* the target of every grievance? How could one doubt that, with us, the fact that the two powers were erected face to face behind theoretically impregnable ramparts, would lead to intransigence on both sides, parliament refusing to vote the laws and budgets for any recalcitrant government, and the latter, in consequence, overstepping the bounds of legality for lack of any recognized outlet to their conflicts through dissolution on the one hand or a vote of censure on the other? The inevitable result would be either the submission of the President to the demands of the deputies or else a pronunciamiento. How then could one speak of balance? It must be added that, our country being what it is, common sense forbids the merging in a single person of the supreme office of Head of State, responsible for the fate of the nation, in other words the long-term and the continuous, and the secondary role of Prime Minister, whose function it is to run the executive, to direct current policy and to deal with day-to-day contingencies.

In any case, the champions of parliamentary government and those of the presidential system, who indignantly rejected the resort to a popular vote to amend the Constitution, were well aware that neither the Senate nor the Chamber of Deputies would ever adopt either of the two proposals. If they ventilated them, none the less, on the eve of the national ballot, it could only be to create a diversion. For them as for all the other



partisans, it was simply a question of foiling my plan, as was proved on October 10 at a joint press conference given by the leaders of what was called "the Cartel of the Noes". Under the prestigious chairmanship of Paul Reynaud, who a few days before had declared that "President de Gaulle has violated the Constitution and insulted parliament," and with the active concurrence of Guy Mollet who for his part had written: "If the people answer 'Yes', de Gaulle will inevitably lead them into civil war," the Independents, the Socialists, the MRP, the Radicals, the Democratic Entente, the Liberal European Party, combined to express their passionate hostility. At the same time the PSU announced a determined "No" to "the Gaullist monarchy". Earlier, Gaston Monnerville, who had been re-elected President of the Senate by a unanimous vote – the UNR group having abstained – declared to frantic applause from the assembly that "the Constitution is being violated," that "the people are being misled," that what de Gaulle was proposing was "not democracy, but at best a sort of enlightened Bonapartism," that it was, in fact, "the negation of democracy," that "the struggle may be long and hard, but the Republic will be saved". Meanwhile Vincent Auriol, making himself the champion of errors which not so long ago he had been the first to recognize and deplore, wrote: "The referendum is an act of absolute power . . . . While ostensibly making obeisance to the sovereignty of the people, it is, in fact, an attempt to deprive the people of its sovereignty for the benefit of one man . . . . I vote 'No!'" At the same time, the Communists called on Frenchmen and Frenchwomen "to answer 'No' in order to prevent de Gaulle from taking a further step on the road to dictatorship, destroying the last vestiges of democracy . . . and intensifying his policy of reaction and war." Lastly the CNR,<sup>1</sup> created by Georges Bidault and Jacques Soustelle and linked to what remained of the OAS, advised its followers to vote "No."

This joint offensive of all the parties was emulated by a number of professional organizations which, though strictly speaking they had no business to involve themselves in political

<sup>1</sup> *Conseil national de la Résistance.*



debates, hastened to take part in this one. For instance the CGT enjoined its members "to demonstrate by an unequivocal 'No' their rejection of the blank check which de Gaulle was asking the French people to sign"; the Paris branch of the association of *Force Ouvrière* unions announced that, "like its general committee," it was calling on the workers "to answer 'No' in the referendum"; the National Committee of the CFTC, while declaring that it had no intention of influencing the voters, endorsed "the unfavorable verdict on the referendum reached by the Confederal Council"; the *Ligue de l'Enseignement*<sup>1</sup> proclaimed: "In order to remain the master of its destiny and safeguard the future of democracy, the people will answer 'No'"; the *Syndicat national de l'Enseignement technique* declared itself "unanimously in favor of voting 'No'"; the *Syndicat national de l'Enseignement secondaire* urged its members "to answer 'No' to this attempt to destroy basic liberties"; the *Union française universitaire* called on all its members to vote 'No'; the Executive Committee of the FNSEA<sup>2</sup> condemned "the procedure imposed on the country, the project as presented, the underlying objectives of the President of the Republic and the moral pressures exerted by the authorities"; the Central Committee of the MODEF<sup>3</sup> called on farmers "to declare themselves against the government's agricultural policy by voting 'No' in the referendum," etc.

The *Conseil d'Etat* provided a shrill reminder that it was not to be excluded from this chorus of opposition. On October 21, a few days after its ruling against the President of the Republic on the subject of Article 11, it returned to the charge. Its judicial assembly issued a judgment under the terms of which the Military Court of Justice set up by ordinance on June 1, in pursuance of the legislative or rule-making powers conferred on me by the April referendum on Algerian independence, was simply annulled. Created to empower the government

<sup>1</sup> Main State teachers' organization.

<sup>2</sup> *Fédération nationale des syndicats d'exploitants agricoles*: main peasant pressure group.

<sup>3</sup> *Mouvement de défense de l'exploitation familiale*: left-wing small-holders' group.

to have the OAS criminals summarily tried, this court had been fulfilling its functions for nearly five months, and had passed sentence in a number of cases without its validity being questioned by the *Conseil d'Etat*. The Council had now suddenly chosen to do so, with the intention of challenging my authority a week before the national consultation. The particular occasion was the case of a certain "Canal", the Treasurer of the OAS, who had just been convicted. The Council proclaimed itself competent in this matter on the ground that it fell within "the administrative sphere"! Having examined the case, it declared that the procedure laid down for the functioning of the court was "not in conformity with the general principles of law" because it did not provide for the right of appeal, and that consequently my ordinance was *ultra vires*. The Council therefore pronounced the Court of Justice dissolved and its sentences quashed.

To accept such an injunction, especially in a matter of this kind, would clearly be to acquiesce in an intolerable usurpation. As Head of State, invested by the stern test of history, by the terms of my office and by the people's vote in a referendum with a legitimacy, a mandate and a legislative mission which were not and could not be amenable to the jurisdiction of a body in no way empowered to question them, I considered the ruling of the *Conseil d'Etat* to be null and void. It was clear that political influences within the Council had caused it to exceed its powers. Besides, in what way were "the general principles of law" violated by the fact that certain cases were not submitted to the Court of Cassation, when the sovereign people had decided that they should be exceptional and expeditious to the extent of empowering me to set up through the law a special tribunal to try them? In circumstances of war or public danger, had not French justice, military or civil, like that of every other country, frequently been organized in such a way as to act swiftly without higher authority being called upon to intervene in each case? Had the *Conseil d'Etat*, in the hundred and sixty-two years of its existence, ever raised any objection to this? Had it even done so in the case of the Military High Court

which had preceded the Court of Justice and whose sentences had also not been subject to appeal? Finally, was it not scandalous that this body, created to assist the State, should draw attention to itself in such a way in connection with the cause of a notorious criminal? Three days later the Cabinet roundly condemned "the character of an intervention which clearly lies outside the sphere of administrative justice which is that of the *Conseil d'Etat*, and which both by its object and by the time and circumstances in which it has arisen, is calculated to hinder the action of the public authorities in regard to the criminal subversion which has not yet been suppressed." At the same time it was decided to bring about the reform that was clearly called for in this overweening body. But the position adopted by the areopagus in the Palais-Royal<sup>1</sup> and loudly trumpeted by all the organs of opinion, was exploited to the utmost by the "Cartel".

The latter, indeed, in denouncing de Gaulle's "arbitrary" behavior and the alleged infringement of the Constitution by the resort to a referendum, enjoyed the support of the press in a way that was frequently blatant, sometimes veiled, but on the whole determined. Almost all the Parisian and provincial newspapers sought to persuade public opinion and the electorate to reject my proposal. They did so either by declaring themselves openly in favor of voting "No" or by publishing prominently the views of the spokesmen of the hostile political groups and unions, or by exclusively calling attention to the opinions of politically committed jurists, stuck fast in the notion of the parliamentary system such as it existed when they had read their law, or by producing more and more disparaging appraisals, anecdotes and caricatures concerning me.

In the long run I had become impervious to this attitude on the part of the press. I realized, moreover, that in view of the contumacious, resentful and jaundiced climate of opinion characteristic of our time, criticism of government must seem *a priori* more expedient and more profitable to publishers and editors than support for an arduous and ambitious national

<sup>1</sup> Headquarters of the *Conseil d'Etat*.



enterprise. I realized that those whose job it was to deal with "news" had personal reasons for regretting the departure of the previous regime which, far more than the present one, provided them with contacts, preferment and influence. I realized, also, that as far as I myself was concerned, although I read the newspapers and listened to the radio, although I always took an interest in the talents displayed there, although I used the pen and the microphone as much as anyone, it was part of my nature and a precept of my office invariably to keep my distance, an attitude which did not endear me to the professionals of the media. Yet, armored though I was against their arrows, I was none the less pained by their excesses – for instance, when the journalists of the radio and television service joined in the demonstrations of disapproval which had been mounted against me, by declaring a strike a few days before the ballot. They, too, complained of injustice, on the grounds that broadcasting time allocated to the parties in the referendum campaign was inadequate. Yet these same people had not raised the slightest protest when for more than twelve years the governments of the day had kept de Gaulle off the air.

Truly it was high time to prove that all the political, professional and journalistic vested interests added together did not express the will of the people, any more than they defended its collective interests. That so many men of so many different kinds, by no means lacking in merit, having lived through the atrocious confusion of the recent past, should wish to return to a regime which they knew to be disastrous; that having witnessed the country's evident revival they should do their utmost to halt its progress and set it once more on the downward path; that having seen, heard and known General de Gaulle for a quarter of a century and, whatever schools of thought they belonged to, participated in his national effort at one time or another, and even in some cases been members of his government, they should show nothing but mistrust and aversion towards him as soon as they were no longer afraid – all these were facts which naturally saddened me but nevertheless strengthened my determination. Rationally as well as humanly,

the success of their coalition would be fatal to the State and unworthy of France.

It was for this reason that I committed myself to the uttermost. The talk which I delivered to the country on October 18 once more put the issue in the plainest possible terms. Were we to return to the system of the past, or were we to ensure the future of our institutions? Just as I had done at the time of the Algerian question, I indicated point-blank what personal consequences I would draw from the ballot. 'If your answer is 'No,' " I said, "as all the old parties wish, in order to re-establish their calamitous regime, as do also all the agitators in order to launch into subversion, or if the majority in favour of 'Yes' is slender, mediocre, aleatory, it is quite obvious that my task will immediately and irrevocably be brought to an end. For what could I do afterwards without the whole-hearted trust of the nation? But if, as I hope, as I believe, as I am certain, you give me once more a massive 'Yes', then I will be confirmed in the trust which I bear; then the country will be settled, the Republic secure and the horizon clear; then the world will finally be persuaded of France's great future!" On October 26 I repeated to the people that "whether my historic task is brought to an end or allowed to continue" depended on them.

No doubt, at a time when the country had only just emerged from a period of turmoil, and was alarmed by the recent assassination attempts, circumstances may well have seemed disquieting enough to many people for the prospect of my departure to influence their votes. But had I the right to conceal from my fellow-citizens how matters stood as far as I was concerned, since this was obviously an important factor in the verdict they were about to reach? Yet a number of opposition spokesmen complained of "plebiscitary blackmail" and went so far as to deny me the right to withdraw if my proposal was rejected. Of course this way of looking at things was explicable at the level of professional politics, where in any contest the sole aim is to obtain or keep a place, whatever fate may afterwards befall the ideas one has upheld. It was explicable from the viewpoint of the former regime, under which the Head of

State, whatever his own convictions, simply had to put up with what was submitted to him for signature. It was explicable in terms of the conventions of the past, in accordance with which the hero or heroine did not leave the stage until he or she was strangled by "the sultan's janissaries". But on the national plane which was his, how could de Gaulle continue to answer for France if the French people, consulted by him in an urgent and solemn manner on a subject which affected their entire future, were to decide against him? In the unimaginable event of his choosing to stay should such a contingency arise, what would be left of his honor and authority, since he himself had made direct accord between the French people and their guide the origin, the basis, the mainspring of the new Republic?

On the eve of the referendum, interested commentaries proliferated on what precisely would constitute the "slender, mediocre, aleatory" majority with which I would refuse to be satisfied. For among the leaders of public opinion there were cautious and calculating people who did not yet want to see my downfall but who hoped that my success would be as limited as possible, so that I should be placed in a precarious situation and their critical interventions would regain some of the weight they had had in the past. For instance Pierre Brisson, the well-informed editor of *Le Figaro*, was certain, as he wrote to an eminent correspondent, that "if de Gaulle goes now, it will mean disaster," that "the elements which were at large at the time of Clamart, and are still at large, are terrifying," that "arrangements have been made for a total and immediate amnesty, absolving the killers and bringing back Bidault and his henchmen," that "the phrase 'abuse of power' used by Monnerville was a key phrase," and that "to vote 'no' at this time in these circumstances is to vote for the worst." But he nevertheless declared to the readers of his newspaper that he himself was not taking sides and would put a blank voting paper in the ballot box.

On October 28, 1962, the French people decided by a considerable majority that the President of the Republic should henceforth be elected by universal suffrage. Out of 28,185,000



registered voters, 21,695,000 voted. Of these 13,151,000 voted "Yes" – more than sixty-two per cent – 7,974,000 voted "No" and there were 500,000 spoiled papers. Considering that, for the first time since the days of the RPF, and unlike the three previous referenda, the parties had united to join battle with me without reserve and without exception, I had made up my mind that a positive percentage somewhere in the sixties, relegating the "noes" to the thirties, would satisfy me. This was the case. I must, therefore, carry on. However, on the opposition side, it seemed at first that, faced with the published result, people could not believe their eyes and ears. The President of the Senate publicly called upon the Constitutional Council to declare the vote of the French nation null and void. Vincent Auriol, who was an *ex-officio* member of the Council in his capacity as a former President of the Republic, but who up to then had never appeared there, suddenly took his seat in order to support Gaston Monnerville. Their motion was naturally rejected. But that such declared and professional "democrats" should have no hesitation in flouting the will of the people was eloquent proof of the dictatorial lengths to which the spirit of partisanship can lead.

Meanwhile the coalition, swallowing its discomfiture, at once pinned its hopes on the forthcoming general elections. These of course, would be very different from a referendum in which the matter was settled at one stroke between de Gaulle and the nation. The contest would be split up among four hundred and eighty-two constituencies in each of which, in very varied circumstances, the personal standing of candidates, the well-established voting habits of the electoral clienteles, the position of local political notables – senators, deputies, departmental councillors, mayors, mostly linked to the parties – the influence of the local press which was nearly always attached to the customs and the men of yesterday, would all play their part. The majority in the previous National Assembly had been largely made up of opposition elements. Should this majority increase or even hold its own, de Gaulle, through his government, would be faced with severe parliamentary difficulties,

aggravated by the fact that under the terms of the Constitution he could not dissolve the new Chamber for a year. In order for a ministry to survive and for a budget to be passed, he would either have to give up the struggle, or surrender to the parties, or take exceptional measures which in the absence of public danger would appear unjustifiable. With this prospect in view, the old political formations, determined on revenge, decided to bury the hatchet and join forces against "the Association for the New Republic". The latter, created under the ardent aegis of André Malraux for the express purpose of upholding my cause, included, in addition to the UNR and the UDT,<sup>1</sup> which were already merged, a few elements detached from several other groups. Since the question at issue in the contest which was about to open, as in the referendum, was the safeguarding of the new institutions and, in particular, of the power of the Head of State, this time I was induced to enter the electoral fray myself. I did so without attacking anyone in particular and without ever naming any of those who heaped personal abuse on me. But I did so vigorously enough to exorcize the system whence the assailants had sprung and to which they would inevitably return if they succeeded in defeating me.

On November 7 I told the nation that the decision it had taken ten days earlier was "of the greatest significance for the future of France." Moreover, I went on, "the referendum has demonstrated beyond the shadow of a doubt a fundamental principle of our time: the fact that the parties of yesterday do not represent the nation. They gave clear and terrible proof of it in 1940, when their regime abdicated in the midst of disaster. They illustrated it once more in 1958, when they ceded power to me on the brink of anarchy, bankruptcy and civil war. They have now confirmed it in 1962."

I then recalled what had recently happened: "Now that the nation was forging ahead, its coffers full, the franc stronger than it had ever been, decolonization finally achieved, the Algerian drama brought to an end, the Army completely restored to discipline, French prestige re-established throughout the

<sup>1</sup> *Union démocratique du travail*: Left Gaullist party 1958-62.

world . . . . we saw the parties of yesterday turn against de Gaulle . . . . we saw them unanimously oppose the referendum. . . we saw them, without a single exception, join forces first of all in parliament to pass a vote of censure on the government, then before the country to persuade it to vote 'No.' Now their coalition has been repudiated by the French people . . . . Thus it is a fact that to identify the parties of yesterday with France and the Republic would today be utterly absurd."

Then I pointed out what must now be done: "By voting 'Yes' in spite of them, the nation has just disclosed a large majority in favor of political renovation . . . . It is absolutely essential that this majority should become enlarged and consolidated and, above all, that it should establish itself in parliament . . . . For if parliament were to reappear tomorrow dominated by the old factions, it would inevitably wallow in obstruction and plunge the public authorities into the sort of confusion with which we are all too familiar, until sooner or later the State became engulfed in a new national crisis . . . . On the other hand, think what a role parliament could play if, shaking off the pretensions and illusions of the partisans, it decided to lend its resolute support to the work of recovery which has been pursued over the past four years!"

Finally I launched my appeal: "Frenchmen, Frenchwomen, on October 28 you sealed the condemnation of the disastrous regime of the parties . . . . But on November 18 and 25 you will be electing the deputies. It is my earnest wish that you ensure that this second confrontation does not contradict the first. In spite of local habits and traditions and sectional considerations, it is my wish that you confirm by your choice of men the decision which in voting 'Yes' you made as to my own destiny . . . . I ask you to do this, taking my stand once more on the only ground which matters to me, namely the good of the State, the fate of the Republic and the future of France."

The first ballot on November 18, 1962 revealed what the commentators called "a Gaullist tidal wave": thirty-two per cent of the electors voted outright for candidates of the UNR and five per cent for those who were explicitly associated with it.



In the previous elections, in 1958, which at the outset had produced what was regarded as a startling success for the grouping which had been put together to support me, the percentage obtained did not exceed twenty-two. As normally happens under a voting system based on a simple majority, the results were massively accentuated at the second ballot, the more so because the parties, unanimous in opposing, were not unanimous in reaching agreement with each other. On November 25 the "Association", receiving forty-three per cent of the votes on the second ballot, won a triumphant victory. Out of four hundred and eighty-two seats in the National Assembly, the UNR, which had gained sixty-four, would now occupy two hundred and thirty-three, constituting the largest group ever seen in the Palais-Bourbon, and it would be regularly reinforced by some forty other deputies who had pledged it their support in order to get elected. To crown all, for the first time in the history of universal suffrage, every Paris constituency – there were now thirty-one of them – was won by the same formation, that which had been created to support the policies of General de Gaulle.

On December 7, once the bureau of the new National Assembly had been elected and its committees set up, I re-nominated the government as a matter of form. It was to all intents and purposes identical to what it had been before. Georges Pompidou remained Prime Minister, with André Malraux, Louis Jacquinot, Louis Joxe and Gaston Palewski at his side as Ministers of State respectively in charge of Cultural Affairs, Overseas Territories, Administrative Reform and Scientific Research and Atomic and Space questions. The ministerial departments were distributed as follows: Justice: Jean Foyer; Foreign Affairs: Maurice Couve de Murville; Interior: Roger Frey; Armed Forces: Pierre Messmer; Finance and Economic Affairs: Valéry Giscard d'Estaing; Co-operation: Raymond Triboulet; Education: Christian Fouchet; Public Works and Transport: Marc Jacquet; Industry: Maurice Bokanowski; Agriculture: Edgard Pisani; Labour: Gilbert Grandval; Construction: Jacques Maziol; Ex-Servicemen: Jean

Sainteny; Posts and Telecommunications: Jacques Marette; Information: Alain Peyrefitte; Repatriates: François Missoffe. Two State Secretaries attached to the Prime Minister, Jean de Broglie for Algerian Affairs and Pierre Dumas for Relations with Parliament, one attached to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Michel Habib-Deloncle, and one for the budget, Robert Boulin, completed the executive. Of its twenty-six members only three were newcomers, Jacquet, Sainteny and Habib-Deloncle. Two former ministers left the government: Roger Dusseaulx, who was elected chairman of the UNR in the National Assembly, and Georges Gorse who became Ambassador to Algeria.

Thus the political storm which the parties had unleashed in vain, with the object of preventing the edifice of our institutions from being consolidated and at the same time of wresting power from my hands, had had no effect on the government. As before, the Head of State had nominated the ministers who composed it so that they could carry out together the task which he himself had laid down. He had chosen the first among them to be his second-in-command. He had appointed the others on the basis of their abilities and their personalities without accepting any conditions. None of them was delegated by any extraneous authority or subject to any outside allegiance. Allowing for inevitable and commendable human divergences, this group of men formed around him and by his choice, linked by the ambition to play a prominent part in the progress of our country, presented a cohesion which had no precedent in the annals of the former Republics. Parliament for its part gave evidence of having undergone an unbelievable transformation, not only theoretically but in actuality. It is true that the Senate, having failed as yet to find a modern economic and social function and hence an effective responsibility, enclosed itself in an attitude of hostility which was as morose as it was futile. But the National Assembly, which alone in the last resort had the power to make law and supervise the government, had become representative of a French public opinion which, in spite of residues of malignancy, gave every indication of having

adopted the new regime. There now existed in the Palais-Bourbon a majority, compact, homogeneous and resolute enough to give its steadfast support and confidence to one and the same policy and to give it legislative effect to the exclusion of political crisis until the end of its mandate.

Had the State ever known such continuity and stability without the slightest infringement of our liberties? When had the world last witnessed such an appearance of assurance and serenity in our organs of government? Had I not served France well in leading her people to this profound transformation?



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