

A Letter from the Publisher

The election of President François Mitterrand last month and the subsequent success of the Socialists in National Assembly contests proved once again what students of Gallic culture have known all along: in France, politics is both passionate and unpredictable. Observes Paris Correspondent William Blaylock: "French politics plops across the ideological platter like a dropped soufflé. Candidates seem to have no shared opinions, no established rules of fair play. Nor do they seem to want any." Correspondent Sandra Burton interviewed government officials and French sociologists to assess the impact of the new administration and was struck by the blasé way most Frenchmen greeted the Socialist victory in the parliament. Says Burton: "The only turmoil in Paris on election night was the traffic jam caused by Parisians returning from sunny weekends in the country."

For Paris Bureau Chief Henry Muller, this week's cover story culminates four years of reporting on France and the paradoxical ups and downs of Mitterrand's career. Says Muller: "I arrived just as the Socialist-Communist alliance engineered by Mitterrand was breaking up. I am leaving just as his star reaches

its apex." Muller, who is moving to New York as an associate editor, will be replaced by Jordan Bonfante, no stranger to Europe's ways. Bonfante was a LIFE correspondent in both Paris and London and served as TIME's Rome bureau chief from 1973 to 1979. He has been a writer and editor on the World section for the past two years. After working on this week's cover story, Bonfante concluded that the French are "outwardly calm but actually excited about their political sea change."



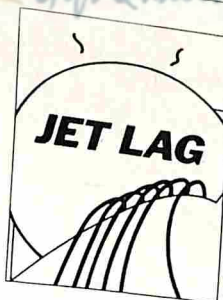
Muller and Bonfante in Paris

Historian Sancton: "I see Mitterrand in the tradition of the 19th century socialist reformers, neither Marxist nor revolutionary, who sought to make *égalité* a real thing."

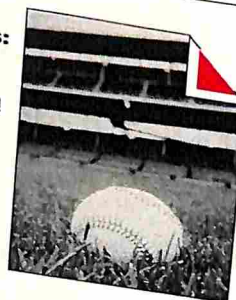
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Cover: Illustration by Richard Sparks.

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JUNE 29, 1981

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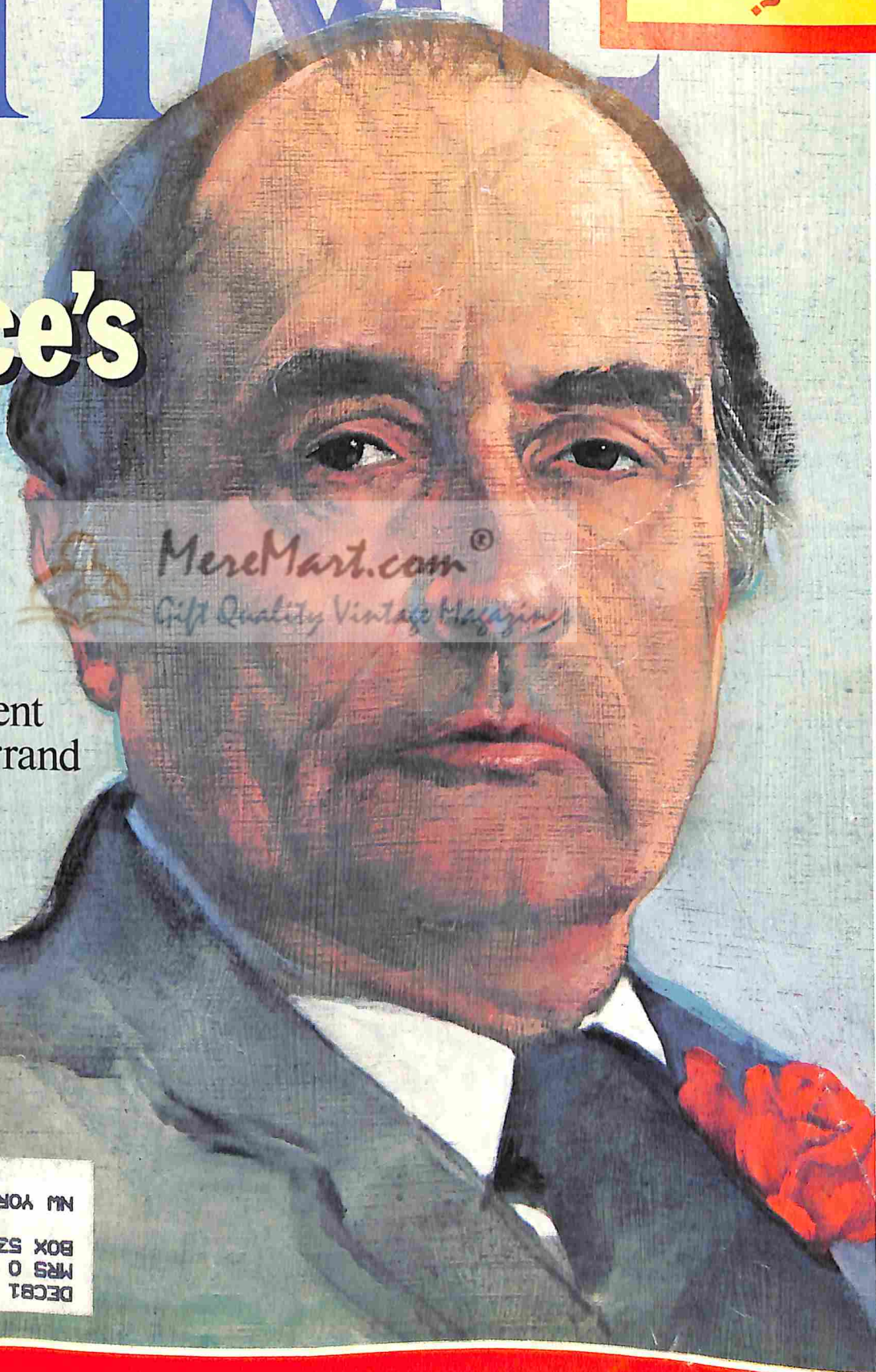
TIME

Is There Life
After
Baseball?



France's New Look

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