



The Divine Left: A Chronicle of the Years 1977-- 1984 (Semiotext(e) / Foreign Agents)

Jean Baudrillard

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First published in French in 1985, *The Divine Left* is Jean Baudrillard's chronicle of French political life from 1977 to 1984. It offers the closest thing to political analysis to be found from a thinker who has too often been regarded as apolitical. Gathering texts that originally appeared as newspaper commentary on François Mitterand's rise to power as France's first Socialist president and the Socialist Party's fraught alliance with the French Communist Party, *The Divine Left* in essence presents Baudrillard's theory of the simulacrum as it operates in the political sphere.

In France, the Left, and even the ultra-Left, had been seduced by power. This scenario -- dissected by Baudrillard with deadpan humor and an almost chilling nonchalance -- produced a Socialist Party that devoted itself to rallying the market economy and introducing neoliberalism, and replaced an intellectual class with the media stars and hyper-professionals of the spectacle. Starting from the elections of 1977, Baudrillard analyzes -- in "real time," as it were -- how the Left's taking of power had in fact been an enaction of not just its own death throes, but those of power itself. *The Divine Left* outlines a simulation of politics that offers discomfiting parallels to our political world today, a trajectory that has only grown more apparent in recent years: the desire and intention to fail.

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