

# The French Socialist Party and its Radical Ambiguity

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in French Politics, Culture & Society

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3167/fpcs.2011.290303>

Keywords: [SOCIALISTS](#); [LEFT](#); [FRANCE](#); [MITTERRAND](#); [JOSPIN](#)



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The French Socialist Party has maintained a deeply ambivalent relationship with political radicalism. Throughout its long history, political radicalism has been experienced both as an internal political contest (hence as a form of intra-party struggle for influence) and as a relationship within (and beyond) the broader party system. This article identifies three levels of analysis as heuristics to facilitate a study of the French Socialist Party over the long term. From the perspective of the party as a whole, the party evolves according to its own eco-system, and is shaped by deeply embedded cultural and political traits. A different level of analysis frames the question of political radicalism organizationally, in terms of relations within and beyond the party. Finally, one can also understand the party's relationship with political radicalism instrumentally and strategically, in terms of electoral alliances. Though there is a tension between these three approaches, each contributes to understanding why the French Socialist Party is sometimes considered a European exception.



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With just 6% of the vote, the French socialist party of outgoing president François Hollande came a d  
infighting and party factionalism. It has experienced nasty episodes of civil war, most notably at a 19  
referendum on the EU constitution, which saw it split in the middle. Enter Hamon. He had a much m  
country for five years with limited economic and social results to show for it. Hamon may have left th  
Hollande's presidency. The Socialist Party (French: Parti socialiste [paʁti sɔsja'list], PS) is a social-de  
French centre-left. The PS is one of the two major contemporary political parties in France, along wit  
Section of the Workers' International (SFIO) in 1969, and is currently led by First Secretary Jean-Chris  
Socialists (PES), the