



Mitterrand: A Study in Ambiguity

By Philip Short

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A definitive biography of one of the twentieth century's most glamorous, complicated political figures.

As a politician and as a man, from the 1930s until his death in 1996, François Mitterrand was the incarnation of the mercurial, contrarian France which Britain and America find so perennially frustrating to deal with.

A prisoner of war and an escapee, he was subsequently both decorated for his service to the Vichy government and a servant of the Resistance; he was a right-wing firebrand in the 1940s, a centrist in the 50s and 60s, before devoting the rest of his career to the left. He was accused of leaking secrets to Moscow, of faking an assassination attempt against himself, of countless other intrigues. And yet he possessed a quality of greatness and a charisma which left his opponents in the shade.

To understand Mitterrand is to understand France in all its ambiguities and contradictions, its cowardice and glory, its turpitudes and tragedies. This is a life packed with drama.

Mitterrand was a man of great gifts and infinite shades of deviousness, an aesthete and intellectual, a sensualist, a crook. And what Philip Short gives us is a human as much as a political biography -- the life of an exceptionally talented and exceptionally flawed man who made his career in politics by chance and went on to become France's longest-serving head of state in a century.

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Editorial Review

Review

- "[Mitterrand] remains an endlessly fascinating figure, and Philip Short tells the story expertly in this deeply researched and marvellously readable biography." --David A. Bell, *Guardian*

About the Author

PHILIP SHORT is the author of acclaimed biographies of Pol Pot and Mao Zedong. He worked for several years as the BBC's Paris correspondent and lives in France.

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