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978-0-521-43149-1 - The French State In Question: Public Law and
Political Argument in the Third Republic

H. S. Jones

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THE FRENCH STATE IN QUESTION

The French state in question places the idea of the state back at the heart of our understanding of modern French history and political culture, and challenges the accepted view of the Third Republic as a 'weak' state. At its core is an examination of a central problem in French politics of the *belle époque*: should the employees of the state have the right to join trade unions and to strike? Stuart Jones shows that the intractability of that issue has to be understood in the light of a profound cultural preoccupation with the state and its purposes – a preoccupation that is largely alien to British and American political cultures. In this important and innovative essay in the history of French political ideas, Stuart Jones shows how during the Third Republic legal thinkers engaged in a vigorous rethinking of the idea of the state, and assesses their significance for the development of French political discourse. The study thus seeks to rectify previous historians' neglect of the place of law in French political culture.

H. S. JONES is a Lecturer in French History at the University of Manchester.

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Preface

In composing this work I have accumulated a number of debts which it is a pleasure as well as a duty to record here. For permission to use manuscript collections I am grateful to MM. François Paul-Boncour and Jean Cahen-Salvador. I am indebted also to the librarian of the Conseil d'Etat, and to M. Louis Fougère, sometime Conseiller d'Etat, who assisted me in the use of the archives of the Conseil. I have a more diffuse sense of obligation to the staff of the many libraries I have used: principally the Bodleian Library, Nuffield College library, the British Library, and the Bibliothèque Nationale.

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of Nuffield College; the Economic and Social Research Council; the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique; the managers of the Bryce, Read, Zaharoff and Chester funds of the University of Oxford; and the Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, which awarded me a P. M. Williams studentship.

Hilary Nelson saw me through the final stages of composition of the manuscript; but she will not mind my recording that the greatest of my obligations is to my parents, and it is to them that the book is dedicated.