

All Power to the Banks! The Winners-Take-All Regime of Emmanuel Macron

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A ghost of the past was the real winner of the French presidential election. Emmanuel Macron won only because a majority felt they had to vote against the ghost of “fascism” allegedly embodied by his opponent, Marine Le Pen. Whether out of panic or out of the need to feel respectable, the French voted two to one in favor of a man whose program most of them either ignored or disliked. Now they are stuck with him for five years.

If people had voted on the issues, the majority would never have elected a man representing the trans-Atlantic elite totally committed to “globalization”, using whatever is left of the power of national governments to weaken them still further, turning over decision-making to “the markets” – that is, to international capital, managed by the major banks and financial institutions, notably those located in the United States, such as Goldman-Sachs.

The significance of this election is so widely misrepresented that clarification requires a fairly thorough explanation, not only of the Macron project, but also of what the (impossible) election of Marine Le Pen would have meant.

From a Two Party to a Single Party System

Despite the multiparty nature of French elections, for the past generation France has been essentially ruled by a two-party system, with government power alternating between the Socialist Party, roughly the equivalent of the U.S. Democratic Party, and a party inherited from the Gaullist tradition which has gone through various name changes before recently settling on calling itself *Les Républicains (LR)*, in obvious imitation of the United States. For decades, there has been nothing “socialist” about the Socialist Party and nothing Gaullist about The Republicans. In reality, both have adopted neoliberal economic policies, or more precisely, they have followed European Union directives requiring member states to adopt neoliberal economic policies. Especially since the adoption of the common currency, the euro, a little over fifteen years ago, those economic policies have become tangibly harmful to France, hastening its deindustrialization, the ruin of its farmers and the growing indebtedness of the State to private banks.



This has had inevitable political repercussions. The simplest reaction has been widespread reaction against both parties for continuing to pursue the same unpopular policies. The most thoughtful reaction has been to start realizing that it is the European Union itself that imposes this unpopular economic conformism.

To quell growing criticism of the European Union, the well-oiled Macron machine, labeled

“En Marche!” has exploited the popular reaction against both governing parties. It has broken and absorbed large parts of both, in an obvious move to turn *En Marche!* into a single catch-all party loyal to Macron.

The destruction of the Socialist Party was easy. Since the “Socialist” government was so unpopular that it could not hope to win, it was easy to lure prominent members of that party to jump the sinking ship and rally to Macron, who had been economics minister in that unpopular government, but who was advertised by all the media as “new” and “anti-system”.



Weakening the Republicans was trickier. Thanks to the deep unpopularity of the outgoing Socialist government, the Republican candidate, François Fillon, looked like a shoo-in. But despite his pro-business economic policies, Fillon still cared about preserving France, and favored an independent foreign policy including good relations with Russia. It is unknown who dug into old records to come up with information about the allegedly fake jobs Fillon gave to his wife and children in past years, and how they were passed on the weekly *Canard Enchaîné* to be revealed at a critical moment in the campaign. The uproar drowned out the issues. To an electorate already wary of “establishment politicians”, these revelations were fatal. The impression that “politicians are all corrupt” played into the hands of Emmanuel Macron, too young to have done anything worse than make a few quick millions during his passage through the Rothschild Bank, and there’s nothing illegal about that.

In France, the presidential election is followed by parliamentary elections, which normally give a majority to the party of the newly elected president. But Macron had no party, so he is creating one for the occasion, made up of defectors from the major defeated parties as well as his own innovation, candidates from “civil society”, with no political experience, but loyal to him personally. These “civil society” newcomers tend to be successful individuals, winners in the game of globalized competition, who will have no trouble voting for anti-labor measures. Macron is thus confirming Marine Le Pen’s longstanding assertion that the two main parties were really one big single party, whose rhetorical differences masked their political convergence.

The Macron victory demoralized Republicans. Weakening them further, Macron named a Republican, Edouard Philippe, as his Prime Minister, in a government with four Socialist and two Republican, alongside his own selections from “civil society”.

Transforming France

Macron won in part because older voters in particular were frightened by his opponents’ hints at leaving the European Union, which they have been indoctrinated to consider necessary to prevent renewal of Europe’s old wars. But only the hysterical anti-fascist scare

can explain why self-styled leftist “revolutionaries” such as François Ruffin, known for his successful anti-capitalist movie “Merci Patron”, could join the stampede to vote for Macron – promising to “oppose him later”. But how?

Later, after five years of Macron, opposition may be harder than ever. In recent decades, as manufacturing moves to low wage countries, including EU members such as Poland and Rumania, France has lost 40% of its industry. Loss of industry means loss of jobs and fewer workers. When industry is no longer essential, workers have lost their key power: striking to shut down industry. Currently the desperate workers in a failing auto-works factory in central France are threatening to blow it up unless the government takes measures to save their jobs. But violence is powerless when it has no price tag.



Emmanuel Macron has said that he wants to spend only a short time in political life, before getting back to business. He has a mission, and he is in a hurry. If he gains an absolute majority in the June parliamentary elections, he has a free hand to govern for five years. He means to use this period not to “reform” the country, as his predecessors put it, but to “transform” France into a different sort of country. If he has his way, in five years France will no longer be a sovereign nation, but a reliable region in a federalized European Union, following a rigorous economic policy made in Germany by bankers and a bellicose foreign policy made in Washington by neocons.

As usual, the newly elected French president’s first move was to rush to Berlin to assert loyalty to the increasingly lopsided “Franco-German partnership”. He was most warmly welcomed by Chancellor Angela Merkel, thanks to his clear determination to force through the austerity measures demanded by the Frankfurt budget masters. Macron hopes that his fiscal obedience will be rewarded by German consent to a European investment fund for stimulating economic growth, but this implies a degree of federalism that the pfennig-pinching Germans show little sign of accepting.

First of all, he has promised to complete the dismantling of the French labor code, which offers various protections to workers. This should save money for employers and the government. For Macron, the ruin of French industry and French farming seem to be welcome steps toward an economy of individual initiative, symbolized by startups.

The Macron program amounts to a profound ideological transformation of the French ideal of *égalité*, equality, from a horizontal concept, meaning equal benefits for all, to the vertical ideal of “equality of opportunity”, meaning the theoretical chance of every individual to rise above the others. This is an ideal easily accepted in the United States with its longstanding myth of the self-made man. The French have traditionally been logical enough to understand that everyone can’t rise above the others.

Horizontal equality in France has primarily meant institutional redistribution of wealth via universal access to benefits such as health care, pensions, communications and

transportation facilities, allocations for families raising children, unemployment insurance, free education at all levels. These are the benefits that are under threat from the European Union in various ways. One way is the imposition of “competition” rules that impose privatization and favor foreign takeovers that transform public services into profit-seekers. Another is the imposition of public budget restrictions, along with the obligation of the State to seek private loans, increasing its debt, and the loss of tax revenue that all end up making the State too poor to continue providing such services.

Very few French people would want to give up such horizontal equality for the privilege of hoping to become a billionaire.



Macron is sufficiently Americanized, or, to be more precise, globalized, to have declared that “there is no such thing as French culture”. From this viewpoint, France is just a place open to diverse cultures, as well as to immigrants and of course foreign capital. He has clearly signaled his rejection of French independence in the foreign policy field. Unlike his leading rivals, who all called for improved relations with Russia, Macron echoes the Russophobic line of the neocons. He broke tradition on his inauguration by riding down the Champs-Élysées in a military vehicle. A change of tone is indicated by his cabinet nominations. The title of the new foreign minister, Jean-Yves Le Drian, who served as defense minister in the Hollande government, is “Minister of Europe and of Foreign Affairs”, clearly giving Europe preference in the matter. Sylvie Goulard, an ardent Europeist who has remarked that “she does not feel French”, has been named Minister of Armies and Minister of Defense. Clearly national defense is an afterthought, when the main idea is to deploy the armed forces in various joint Western interventions.

The Divided Opposition

Unless the June parliamentary elections produce stunning surprises, the opposition to Macron’s catch-all governance party appears weak and fatally divided. The Socialist Party is almost wiped out. The Republicans are profoundly destabilized. Genuine opposition to the Macron regime can only be based on defense of French interests against EU economic dictates, starting with the euro, which prevents the country from pursuing an independent economic and foreign policy. In short, the genuine opposition must be “*souverainiste*”,

concerned with preserving French sovereignty.



Two strong personalities emerged from the presidential election as potential leaders of that opposition: Jean-Luc Mélenchon and Marine Le Pen. But they are drastically divided.

Mélenchon ran a spectacularly popular campaign, leaving the Socialist Party far behind (the party he personally left behind years ago). Initially, as he seemed to be taking votes away from Le Pen as well as from the Socialists, he got friendly media coverage, but as he came closer to making it to the decisive second round, the tone started to change. Just as Le Pen was finally knocked out as a “fascist”, there is little doubt that had Mélenchon been Macron’s challenger, he would have been increasingly denounced as “communist”.

Mélenchon is intelligent enough to have realized that the social policies he advocates cannot be achieved unless France recovers control of its currency. He therefore took a stand against both NATO and the euro. So did Marine Le Pen. Mélenchon was embarrassed by the resemblance between their two programs, and contrary to other eliminated candidates, refrained from endorsing Macron, instead calling on his movement, *La France Insoumise*, to choose between Macron and abstention. Finally, 25% of Mélenchon voters abstained in the second round, but 62% voted for Macron— almost exclusively motivated by the alleged need to “stop fascism”. That compares with the final total results of 66% for Macron and 34 % for Le Pen.

That vote confirmed the impossibility of forming a unified *souverainiste* opposition and allows Marine Le Pen to strengthen her claim to be the leader of a genuine opposition to Macron. She has admitted her own mistakes in the campaign, particularly in her debate with Macron, who beat her hands down with his arrogant performance as the economic expert. But despite her mere 34%, she retains the most loyal base of supporters in a changing scene. The problem for Mélenchon is that his electorate is more versatile.

Despite his loud appeal to “youth”, Macron was elected by France’s huge population of old people. Among voters over 65, he won 80% against 20% for Le Pen. Marine Le Pen did best with the youngest age group, 18 to 24, winning 44% against Macron’s 56%^[i].

The differences were also significant between socio-professional categories. Macron won a whopping 83% of the votes coming from the “superior socio-professional categories” –categories where the “winners” in competitive society are largely ensconced. But in what are described as “*categories populaires*”, a French term for ordinary folk, with less education, the vote was 53% in favor of Le Pen. And she confirmed her position as favorite candidate of the working class, winning 63% of workers’ votes.

Note that the “superior socio-professional categories” are where the significance of these results will be defined. Individuals from that category – journalists, commentators and show business personalities –are all in a position to spread the word that this vote indicates that the workers must be “racist”, and therefore that we have narrowly escaped being taken over by “fascism”.

One of the many odd things about the latest French presidential election is the rejoicing among foreign “leftists” over the fact that the candidate of the rich roundly defeated the candidate of the poor. It used to be the other way around, but that was long ago. These days, the winners in the competitive game comfort themselves that they morally deserve

their success, because they are in favor of diversity and against racism, whereas the less fortunate, the rural people and the working class, don't deserve much of anything, because they must be "racist" to be wary of globalization.

The fact that Paris voted 90% for Macron is natural, considering that real estate prices have pushed the working class out of the capital, whose population is now overwhelmingly what is called "bobo" – the bohemian bourgeoisie, many of whom are employed in various branches of the dominant human rights ideology fabrication business: journalists, professors, teachers, consultants, the entertainment industry. In these milieux, hardly anyone would even dare speak a positive word about Marine Le Pen.

What if Marine Le Pen had won?

Since politics is largely fantasy, we may as well try to imagine the unimaginable: what if Marine Le Pen had won the election? This was never a realistic possibility, but it is worth imagining.

It could have had one, perhaps only one, extremely positive result: it could have freed France from its paralyzing obsession with the nonexistent "fascist threat". The ghost would be exorcised. If the word has any meaning, "fascism" implies single party rule, whereas Marine Le Pen made clear her desire to govern by coalition, and selected the leader of a small Gaullist party, Nicolas Dupont-Aignan, as her prospective prime minister. Poof! No fascism. That would have been an immeasurable benefit for political debate in France. At last genuine issues might matter. Real threats could be confronted.

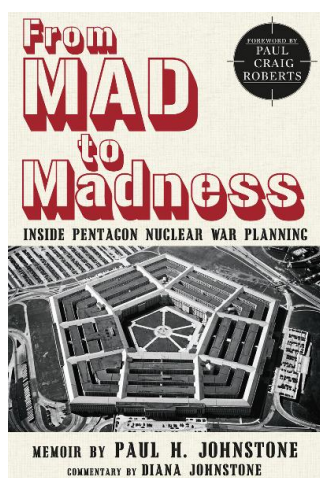


Another advantage would have been the demise of the National Front. Since Marine Le Pen took over the notorious party founded by her reactionary father, it has kept a precarious balance between two opposing wings. There is the right wing in the southeast, along the Riviera, the bastion of the party's founder, Jean-Marie Le Pen, a region represented in the outgoing parliament by his conservative granddaughter Marion Maréchal Le Pen. In the old industrial northeast region, between Arras and Lille, Marine Le Pen has built her own bastion, as champion of ordinary working people, where she won a majority of votes in the presidential election.

This is not the only time in history when an heiress has gone away with the heritage to join someone of whom her father disapproves. All those who want to cling to their comforting hatred of the left's official Satan have trouble believing that Marine Le Pen broke with her reactionary father to go her own way (just as U.S. hawks couldn't believe in Gorbachev). This

change owes everything to her encounter with Florian Philippot, an intellectual who gave up on the ability of the Socialists to face the real issues. Marine has the personal qualities of a leader, and Philippot provided the intellectual substance she needed. Marine has decisively chosen Philippot as her advisor and co-leader, despite grumblings by Jean-Marie that she has been led astray by a gay Marxist. Had Marine won, her left wing would have been strengthened enough to enable her and Philippot to scrap the National Front and found a new “Patriot Party”. However, by scoring below 40%, she has weakened her authority and must try to hold the troublesome party together in order to win seats in the new parliament – which will not be easy.

Marine Le Pen would have tried to enact measures to save French industry and the jobs it provides, provide various benefits for low-income people, withdraw from NATO, and even promote a peaceful world, starting with friendly relations with Russia. She would even have begun to prepare her compatriots for escape from the euro.



But not to worry, none of this “fascist” program would ever have come to pass. If she had won, bands of protesting “antifascists” would have invaded the streets, smashing windows and attacking police. The outgoing Socialist government was preparing to use the resulting chaos as a pretext to stay in power long enough to manage the parliamentary elections[2], ensuring that President Marine Le Pen would be held in check. A “color revolution” was ready to be stirred up. The deep state is vigilant in NATOland.

Diana Johnstone is co-author of [“From MAD to Madness: Inside Pentagon Nuclear War Planning”](#), by Paul H. Johnstone, her father. (published by [ClarityPress](#)).

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Notes

[1] According to poll of 7,752 representative voters by Le Figaro/LCI, <http://opinionlab.opinion-way.com/dokumenty/OpinionWay-SondageJourduVote-Tour2Presidentielle2017-7Mai2017.pdf>

[2] “Si Le Pen avait été élue... le plan secret pour ‘protéger la République’”, Le Nouvel Observateur, May 17, 2017 <http://tempsreel.nouvelobs.com/presidentielle-2017/20170516.OBS9474/si-le-pen-avait-ete-elue-le-plan-secret-pour-protoger-la-republique.html>

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