

The French Elections



April 23
Jack and Ron,

It seems that the French elections will result in a rejection of the far right (but then again, we all predicted a Trump defeat). However, regardless of the outcome, the first round suggested a rejection of the status quo (both of the finalists are 'outsiders'). This has now occurred in the British, USA and French elections.

It seems that the far right program is articulated far more clearly, and popularity, than any far left program (including our own). That said, the liberal (capitalist) center seems to be holding its own against the far right.

Rod



April 23
Rod and Jack,

I think only part of the electorate has rejected the status quo, and not even a majority.

Leaving aside national and cultural traditions, I think one of the reasons the far right program is more clearly and popularly articulated than the far left program, at least in the United States, is because a libertarian far left program is, aside from a handful of tiny groups, not being articulated at all.

The vast majority of the left, including most of the anarchist movement, constitutes a tail of the capitalist liberals on many important questions, e.g., expansion of the federal government, including reliance on the federal government to impose political correctness, affirmative action, identity politics, and increasingly, freedom of speech. A truly libertarian left hardly exists.

Ron

April 23

We may learn more in two weeks when Macron and Le Pen have their runoff. This is a male Clinton vs. a smarter and female Trump.

I agree that there's barely a libertarian left. So, yesterday, we had the March for Science, calling for restoring state funding for research, with the left mum on the fact that most of such funding in biomedicine and bioengineering goes towards research controlled by Big Pharma; chemical research benefits Dow, agricultural research benefits agribusiness (interlocking with Big Pharma), etc. So without raising this, we had a March for the Democrats, in my opinion.

Jack

April 24
Jack and Rod,

The whole movement has turned out to be little more than a movement for Democrats.

Ron

April 24
Jack and Ron,

I agree overall with the comments you have both made.

The reason I spoke of a rejection of the status quo is that Macron is described as an 'outsider,' and Le Pen and Melenchon are far right and far left, respectively. Taken together, the three won 65% of the vote; the two establishment parties, the Republicans and the Socialists, won only 27% combined. Perhaps this is stretching a point, since Macron, though he is an outsider, has mainstream, (neoliberal?) politics.

Rod

April 24

Macron is a centrist. His vote count does demonstrate a loss of faith in the traditional center left (French SP) and center right parties that have swapped power for decades. But he is center center.

Melenchon is left of the French SP. But he's not very far left. Again, loss of faith in the traditional parties, but not a rise of a revolutionary current. Le Pen, on the other hand, is indeed far right, with her core base among working class in France's rust belt.

Jack

April 24
Jack,

I think this states things correctly.

Rod

April 25
Rod and Ron,

Last year, there was some speculation (by David Brooks, among others) about a realignment into three main political parties -- right populist (Trump and his base), left populist / "socialist" (Sanders and his base) and centrist (the globalists -- Obama, the Clintons and most mainstream Democrats plus the traditional mainstream Republicans including the Bushes, McCain and even Romney). That's not there yet in the U.S. But France may be close to that. Macron is a textbook centrist globalist (state imposed austerity plus "free trade", etc.), and he is building a new party that's drawing from the center left French SP and from the center right Republicains. Le Pen on the far right has a significant base apart from Paris. There's no counterpart on the French far left, although the Mandelite candidate was allowed into the last debate and made fools of Le Pen and Fillon -- but he only received one percent of the vote.

Jack
