

The Financial Elite Created France's New President, Emmanuel Macron

Interview with Diana Johnstone

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On Sunday French voters went to the polls and chose Emmanuel Macron rather than Marine Le Pen to be France's next president. Macron, a former investment banker and economics minister in the hugely unpopular government of President Francois Hollande, was endorsed by Barack Obama, Angela Merkel and the rest of the global elite who favor the unfettered reign of global capital. As economics minister, he succeeded in passing anti-labor legislation that caused rioting in French streets. He supports the privatization of social services like health care and education, NATO hostilities on Russia's border, and President Donald Trump's direct missile strikes on the Syrian government of Bashar al-Assad.

Marine Le Pen called for France's departure from both NATO and the European Union, restoration of the French franc as its currency, and "intelligent protectionism" to defend the living standards of French farmers and workers. She favors detente with Russia, she condemned Trump's missile strikes on Syria, and she has pushed for restricting immigration and deporting citizens of other nations who are on France's terrorist watch list. She was endorsed by prominent British Brexit campaigner Nigel Farage and praised by Donald Trump.

Both Macron and Le Pen called for prison capacity expansion, but Macron was reported to have called for fewer new cells than Le Pen.

American author and Counterpunch writer Diana Johnstone says that elites whipped up mass hysteria that Le Pen is a fascist to put the neoliberal globalist Macron in power. I spoke to Diana in Paris where she has lived most of her adult life.

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Ann Garrison: There's so much furious determination to identify Marine Le Pen as a fascist that it's difficult to have a rational conversation about it.

Diana Johnstone: Tell me about it. I've stopped trying to talk about it to Americans because they're just not interested, and the myth is so delightful that no one wants to give it up. Everybody likes to believe they're fighting fascism.

AG: Well, I can't even tell what they mean by that. The word's being used very vaguely and self-righteously.

DJ: That means Hitler coming back to life and putting minorities in Auschwitz and then the gas chambers.

AG: So they mean extremely racist and genocidal.

DJ: Well, that's the implication, but there's no sign that she's a racist and there's no threat of institutionalized racism here. She is extremely hostile to Islamic fanaticism but Islamic fanaticism is not a race.

AG: To be a real fascist, wouldn't she have to want to shut down the media and suspend the French constitution?

DJ: Well, you can list everything that characterizes fascism and nothing on the list applies. That's one of them, but there's nothing fascist about her. This is just propaganda that is being spread not only by the French establishment but also by the whole Western, NATO establishment.

The real issue here is that there is a growing criticism of the European Union (EU) in France, and the whole Western establishment is panicked about this. Ever since the Brexit, they've been afraid that this pro-national sovereignty tendency in France, which manifests across the whole political spectrum, could gain momentum and that France might leave the EU and NATO. And of course the whole globalizing elite absolutely don't want this to happen, so they went all out to invent their own special candidate, who is supported by everybody in the elite. Merkel, Obama, all of the billionaires, all of the banks, and all of the media, which of course is owned by the billionaires. They went all out to create panic that Marine Le Pen might win. This was just theatre calculated to elect a person who is responsible for the most unpopular economic policies of the Hollande government.

Hollande was so unpopular that he couldn't run for a second term. His approval rating in polls was down to single digits. So the whole elite and its press invented Macron to take his place. The press all started saying that Macron was going to be the next president as soon as he left the government and said he was going to create his new political movement.

All of this is to reinforce the policies that were so unpopular in the outgoing Hollande government, but behind a new young face. This is a total charade, but Macron is even worse because when he was economics minister, he managed to get some very anti-labor legislation passed, then made it clear that he was leaving that government because he hadn't been able to push it far enough. So he's virtually promised to make things worse for working people, but nobody paid any attention to that because so many people were screaming, "Fascism! Fascism!" It was really grotesque.

AG: Simply posting any questions about who Marine Le Pen is has been enough to trigger tirades on social media pages.

DJ: I don't know why these people are so enraged. Where do they get their information? How are they so sure of what they're saying? What are their sources? What are they talking about?

AG: What would Marine Le Pen have to do to qualify as a fascist, from your point of view?



DJ: Well, she'd have to be in favor of a single party. She'd have to be resorting to violence and various other things, but the point is that her economic policies are actually very left wing. They are very close to those of the left leader, Jean Luc Mélenchon.

AG: Well, the propaganda was so effective that I even saw a news video of Greenpeace hanging an anti-Le Pen banner off the Eiffel Tower that read “#Resist” and “Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité.”

DJ: Yes, I know. Have you ever heard of mass hysteria?

AG: Yes.

DJ: Well, this is mass hysteria. All these people in the power elite will praise one another. It's a great power club. Now they're saying that Macron's election saved us from fascism, and people are buying it, both inside and outside France.

AG: I've seen the press comparing him to JFK, and you said that French people will see his face on magazines whenever they go to the hairdresser or the doctor.



DJ: Yes, he's been made by the press. As soon as he left the government and said that he was going to form this new movement, “En Marche,” all the magazines put his picture on the cover. The American “Foreign Policy” magazine ran an effulgent article right at the start about what a genius new leader he was and how certain he was to be the next French president.

AG: Someone at a gathering of French farmers hit Macron in the head with an egg.

DJ: Yes, it's not hard to understand why and that may happen more. Of course, Marine Le

Pen appealed to the farmers and workers who are really suffering in the European Common Market, but the human rights people decided some time ago that workers, farmers, and poor people who are complaining must be complaining because they're racists. They don't say they're racists, they don't act like racists, but they must be racists. That's the human rights ideology, so the working class which used to be the favorite of the left is now its hobgoblin, and they're saying, "Look at all these racist workers and farmers supporting Marine Le Pen." In fact workers and farmers supported Le Pen because they're losing jobs, they're losing security, and their social services are going down the drain. Many of them supported Le Pen because she is going against the policies of the European Union and globalization.

AG: Just to make it quite clear what we're talking about here, Macron and the rest of the globalist elite are advancing an order in which global capital can freely chase the cheapest labor all over the world, including industrial farm labor, then come back with products with no tariffs imposed upon them, and even sue any government that becomes inconvenient for them.

DJ: That's about it. What Le Pen and others have said is that they want some "intelligent protectionism" and that goes against the whole neoliberal program, which is to make the whole world safe for investment capital.

Certain countries will just be wiped out by this. France has a tradition of pretty good social services. In fact they've been excellent, though they're now getting worse because of the current government. The French are very attached to their social services, but if you privatize them all and then international financial capital says, "Hmm, we can make more profit in something other than transportation, health care or other services," then they'll just go and invest somewhere else. So, if you just have unfettered capital like that, you can't necessarily preserve the existence of your country. Resisting globalization is just the most basic self preservation impulse; people want to preserve their countries as places where you can live decently. That is demonized as being nationalism and nationalism is demonized as fascism and racism.

AG: When I spun off my little description of globalization, I should have included the privatization of everything.

DJ: Yes, that's right. And Europe is already the frontline of globalization. It's been opened up as a playground for financial capital, and Macron was made by financiers. The financial elite found him to be a talent; they brought him into the Rothschild Bank and in no time, he'd made a few million dollars. Once someone finds out how fast they can make money like that, it's like they're being initiated into the club and they're going to defend its interests in every possible way.

Diana Johnstone is the author of "The Politics of Euromissiles: Europe's Role in America's World," "Fools' Crusade: Yugoslavia, Nato, and Western Delusions, and "Queen of Chaos: The Misadventures of Hillary Clinton." Her essay "The Main Issue in the French Presidential Election: National Sovereignty and the Future of France," appears on the Counterpunch and Global Research websites.

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