

## Monopoly Finance Capital's Alternative – Macron

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Emmanuel Macron was elected as the youngest President of France. The bourgeois media of the West called it as a triumph of liberalism. German foreign minister Sigmar Gabriel said that Macron “overcame right-wing extremism and right-wing populism”. Yet, the fact of the matter is that the French monopoly bourgeoisie brought him to the fore and elevated him as an alternative.

As in many European countries, French economy is in deep crisis; unemployment reached high levels; real wages of the workers is falling. Hollande’s government took harsh austerity measures and unleashed attacks on the rights of working people. He declared the state of emergency showing terrorist attack as excuse and suspended democratic rights.

In the European Union’s recent survey of hundreds of thousands of European youth, 61 per cent of French under 34 years said they could be willing to participate in a “large-scale uprising” against the political system. Over 60 per cent of youth gave the same answer in Britain, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Italy, Spain, Greece, Portugal, Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania.

This mood of the people got reflected in the first round of Presidential election. Neither of the two parties which have run the French government for the past 50 years – the socialist Party(PS) and the Gaullist party now called as The Republican (LR) – will have a candidate in the second round.

Macron was a merchant banker and was appointed as the economy minister by the PS government in 2012. He helped the Hollande government to formulate the labour law that stripped many rights away from workers including access to public health and pension, won by European workers over generations of struggle. After this he left Hollande’s government in 2016 and started his own party - En Marche – to contest in the election to President. Before he never contested in any elections.

Macron is an ally of Berlin and Democratic Party in Washington. He supports the NATO’s war on Syria and North Korea and is calling for a return of draft into military service. On the domestic front, he is for continuing the state of emergency and use of labour law against the working people.

Jean-Marie Le Pen founded National Front. It is the descendent of France’s Nazi collaborationist regime in the Second World War and is openly neo-fascist in its programme. It took anti-semitic, racist, anti-Muslim, and anti-immigrant positions in a virulent form. Its ‘youth’ leaders carried out these positions with violence against people.

Marine Le Pen replaced her father as leader of NF in 2011 and began using soft tone on these positions without totally abandoning them and disowning the violence being perpetrated by its ‘youth’ leaders. She hailed Donald Trump’s election on his “America First” programme of war and protectionism and called for France to abandon EU and Euro currency. At home, she is ready to use the PS government’s state of emergency to set up a fascist dictatorship, ban immigration, carry out mass raids and end free schooling for non-French children.

It is clear that both the candidates represents the interests of finance capital and unleash attacks to suppress the working people. Beyond its borders, they resort to imperialist wars. In the second round the ruling PS and the LR supported Macron.

The discontent and anger of the working people of France got reflected in the voting pattern. Macron won nearly 66 per cent of the vote, but he did so with highest rate of abstention since 1969 and record number of spoiled votes.

Both candidates were unpopular. Abstention in the second round reached 26 per cent. Fully 12 per cent of voters, a record 4.2 million people, cast blank or spoiled ballots. Thirty-four per cent of voters aged 18 to 24, 32 per cent of voters aged 25 to 34, 35 per cent of unemployed and 32 per cent of manual workers abstained. This shows the apathy towards both the candidates.

The Presidential election cannot solve the economic and political crisis that confronts the working people of France. Macron does and did not represents the liberal tradition of French polity. He is clearly a neo-liberalist support-ing intensified austerity policies along with suspension of rights enshrines in the French Consti-tution including revoke of citizen-ship. He is not a “lesser evil” than the neo-fascist Le Pen.

Macron’s election resolves nothing. It subjects working people of France to more exploitation and oppression, while at the same time extending its imperialist wars in Francophone Africa and support-ing US’s aggressions with escalated military expenditure and draft into military service.

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