

Macron Stays in Power



by Bruce Bawer

On Sunday evening, as the minutes ticked by until 8 P.M., when the French polls would close and the results of the presidential election would be announced, a correspondent for the English-language service of France 24 stood outside Emmanuel Macron's campaign headquarters and said that the 1300-odd international journalists who were gathered there exuded an "optimism" that the incumbent "has this in the bag." Well, at least they were honest about the fact that Macron was very much the candidate of the establishment to which they belong. Back in the France 24 studio, to be sure, one of the panelists present expressed concern that the reportedly high turnout was "maybe not good for French democracy," meaning not good for Macron – for in France, as in the Anglosphere, when journalists use the word "democracy" nowadays, they mean keeping the left in power and erecting a *cordon sanitaire* around the "populists." In the end, they need not have worried: although there were hopes that Marine Le Pen might pull an upset, Macron won, as expected, this time by a

vote of 58.2% to 41.8%. Yes, the margin between the two was half as wide as when they faced each other in 2017. But a win is a win.

For those whose chief concern is the advance of Islam in the West, the significance of that victory is manifest. During the latter part of Macron's term, they heard, on the one hand, the cringing statements by Emmanuel Macron's appointees: the ambassador to Sweden who in 2020 called France "a Muslim country" and the Foreign Minister who, shortly thereafter, on a visit to Egypt, assured Muslims of his "deep respect" for Islam. On the other side, there were the defiant members of the French military – more than a thousand of them, including no fewer than twenty generals – who, last year, sending a message that was consistent with Le Pen's own, declared in an open letter that France is endangered by Muslim enemies within who "despise our country, its traditions, its culture, and who want to see it dissolved by removing its past and its history." And there was also Pierre Brochand, former director of the DGSE (France's CIA), who [told](#) *Le Figaro* just a few weeks ago that "the type of immigration we have been experiencing for half a century" is "without precedent in our history," bringing to the shores of France armies of immigrants who are filled with a "spirit of post-colonial revenge" and, loath to mix with native Frenchmen, produce children who are "even less integrated...than their parents."

This drama has been going on – and intensifying – for years, amid much hand-wringing, speechifying, and dissembling, but little in the way of productive action. Over and over again, polls have shown that a large majority of the French people believe that their country will, before too long, find itself under a sharia government; and yet those same people, In election after election, have rejected presidential candidates who might conceivably have prevented that fate in favor of empty suits who they know will do nothing. So it was that on April 10, in the first round of this year's presidential

balloting, voters rejected the bid of Éric Zemmour, who spoke eloquently and passionately about the need to rescue France, turning the second round of voting into a rematch between Macron and Le Pen.

Last Thursday, the two faced each other in debate. One need not have been a French citizen, or to know very much about the specific conditions in France today, to make sense of their two-and-a-half-hour exchange. Any American, observing their demeanor and listening to their arguments, would have figured out soon enough that Macron, like Hillary Clinton or Joe Biden, was the voice of the professional, globalist urban establishment, which favors mass immigration, and that Le Pen, like Donald Trump, was the voice of the “deplorables” – the workers, farmers, and others who’d been burned by globalism as well as by their country’s steady Islamization. Brits, for their part, would’ve recognized a vote for Macron as a rough equivalent of a vote for Remain, and Le Pen as the Gallic counterpart to Brexit.

As with the Democrats in the U.S. and the Remain cause in Britain, it was, as noted, Macron who enjoyed the support of the media. The panel of journalists and commentators who took part in [France 24’s](#) English-language panel discussion prior to the debate were at pains to remind viewers, who’d heard it all a thousand times before, that while Macron is “centrist,” Le Pen is “xenophobic” and “far-right” (in fact, leaving aside her stand on immigration, she’s very much a woman of the left) and that, as one pundit put it, she’s guilty of “disinforming” (sic) her supporters on the issues. There was no suggestion, needless to say, that the endlessly slippery Macron had ever misled anybody about anything, and no mention of the tyrannical manner in which he’d enforced lockdown rules. Also supporting Macron – *quelle surprise!* – were French Muslim leaders. The head of Paris’s Grand Mosque urged fellow believers to vote for the incumbent, as did the Organization of Muslims of France. Yes, Macron has given stirring speeches

in which he's promised to fight Islamization – notably an October 2020 address in which he vowed to defend French secularism from “Islamist separatism” – but Muslim leaders knew that it was all talk.

The first couple of hours of the debate were less than electrifying. The candidates traded barbs on taxes, welfare, housing, retirement arrangements, and the like. In a brief flash of amity, Le Pen praised Macron's efforts to help Ukraine. Accused by him of being in thrall to Russia, she professed: “I am a patriot. I have been a patriot my whole life.” He was testy, irritable, arrogant, imperious, smug, as if he resented even having to talk to her or defend himself before a national audience; at times he even seemed rattled (or perhaps this is just how he behaves when in the presence of a vibrant, self-assured older woman). Le Pen, for her part, came off throughout as relaxed, by turns amused and ardent, consistently in command of the facts and unafraid of telling voters exactly where she stood. What mattered less than the details was her fundamental charge, to which he could offer no cogent reply: namely, that he lacks concern for the ordinary French citizen. Indeed, even as she made the charge, he stood there radiating an imperial indifference, as if to prove her right.

On the subject of the EU she was fervent. As a member of the European Parliament, said Le Pen, she'd observed that Germans in Brussels defend their own interests, but the French never do. Why not? “How come France doesn't defend its farmers, its businesses, its industry?” She denied wanting to take France out of the EU, but insisted: “I want to overhaul the European Union from the inside.” When he said something implying that the EU is a superstate, she shot back at him impressively: “There is no European sovereignty, because there is no such thing as a European people. France is a sovereign country because France has a people...You replaced the French flag with the EU flag at the Arc de Triomphe!” And she pushed further:

“Your vision of things stunts France...We are a global power.”

But all this was mere prelude. In the game's last quarter, the candidates took on Islam. Well, Le Pen did. “Our country is in dire straits,” she pronounced.” And I'm mincing my words...We are faced with barbaric behavior. Things are getting wilder and wilder. Everywhere I travel, even deep into the countryside, I have people telling me, ‘We can't keep doing this anymore.’” Stating that “unbridled, mass-scale immigration is a problem that we must resolve,” she called for an immigration referendum, insisted on the need to deport illegal aliens and immigrant criminals (“you have deported absolutely nobody!”), the need for firmer and more visible policing, the need for tougher sentencing and fewer probations and more prison cells. The more dauntless she sounded, the more Macron seemed to fade into the background.

France, she maintained, is at risk from “Islamist ideology,” which “seeks to impose sharia law,” and which therefore needs to be “fought by a republic that is proud of itself.” Radical Muslims must be deported; radical mosques must be closed. Furthermore, she called for “banning hijab in public areas,” quite rightly describing it as “a uniform that is imposed on women by Islamists.” Such a state of affairs, she stated, “is unacceptable in our country. We need to free those women. We need to push back against islamism.” There are, she pointed out, Islamic countries that have stronger hijab laws than France does. All this was too much for Macron, who finally pushed back, although at first not very coherently. “What I find concerning with your train of thought,” he said, “is where it leads.” That “train of thought,” he continued, “doesn't really hold up....If you go down your avenue, you will ban all forms of religious signs.” Yes, he conceded, it's appropriate under the French constitution to ban veils in schools. But in streets? In suburbs? If you go that route, he warned, “then you are just going to create civil war.”

And there it was. The key sentence of the whole debate –

indeed, of the whole election.

For years, critics of Islam, myself included, have warned that unless major policy changes were made on the Islamic front *tout de suite* – that is, if Western Europe continued to experience a high level of Islamic immigration, and if current demographic trends prevailed, and if official efforts at integration persisted in being utterly disastrous – then Western European societies and cultures would become increasingly Islamized, in ways big and small (a process that is already well underway), and these countries' systems of laws would steadily come under the influence of sharia. Eventually, either the natives would simply give way fully to a new Islamic order (as chillingly depicted in Michel Houellebecq's brilliant novel *Submission*) or there would be urban and suburban pockets of Islam inside otherwise secular national entities and/or armed conflicts over control of different areas. Such predictions – which are nothing more than commonsensical extrapolations – have been routinely mocked by legacy media, academics, and establishment politicians as “conspiracy theories.” Yet there was Macron, the president of France, live on national television, saying that a mere ban on women wearing hijab in public would cause a civil war.

It was striking. Stunning. He didn't even pretend to make a principled argument, one way or another, on the subject of hijab. He simply made the colossal admission that in France, in the year 2022, it's too late in the day for his government to prohibit the wearing in public of an item of clothing that symbolizes not just a religion but an authoritarian ideology – because that ideology already wields too much power. Macron's implication, then, was that in the struggle to resist Islamization, France has already lost. Surely Macron didn't go into the debate intending to admit this; he may not even have grasped quite what he was saying even as he was saying it.

But he said it.

Le Pen challenged him: did he really think that so many people would refuse to accept such a law? Macron replied that France would be the first country in the world to enact such legislation. Le Pen agreed, adding that France has been the first country in the world to enact *many* kinds of legislation. Yes, he said, but those laws were made in the name of freedom. And there she had him. On previous occasions, he'd acknowledged that being forced to wear hijab was a matter of being *denied* one's freedom. She asked whether he still believed that, given that it now sounded as if a hijab ban would amount to a restriction on individual freedoms. "Or have you changed your mind again?" she asked. In reply, he had nothing but feeble nonsense to offer: "We mustn't mix up Islam and Islamism...We have French citizens who wouldn't be able to go into the public arena under your proposal."

So it went. For one brief shining moment, the mask slipped. Macron, who in the last couple of years had made pretty little shows of boldness on this issue in the name of political expediency, had shown his true colors, presenting the French electorate with a clear choice between two distinct alternatives. No, she's definitely no gift from heaven. And he's far from the worst European leader to come down the pike in recent years. (She opposes NATO; he supports it.) But still, on the things that matter most, the difference was stark. In their closing remarks, Macron lamented that they hadn't had a chance to discuss "gender equality" (maybe when the Muslims take over), while Le Pen admirably summed up her platform: "France is the only country we have...We are seeking to protect our identity, our landscape, our language, our culture and to do it without any inhibition." She even quoted Lincoln: "I believe in government for the people, of the people, by the people." How could the contrast have been more obvious? Voters could opt for acquiescence – for persisting in the gradual surrender to Islam that has been the unspoken French policy for years – or they could choose patriotic defiance.

Well, they chose surrender. Why? Can so many French voters be so unaware of what their country's ongoing Islamization portends? Are they in denial about it? Are they scared even to admit the facts to themselves? Could it be that they actually believe their legacy media? Granted, if you take a quick look around the Western world, the French electorate's myopia – if that's *le mot juste* – is scarcely unique. Why, one might just as well ask, isn't Geert Wilders the prime minister of the Netherlands? Why do the Swedes keep electing Social Democrats, even as their country burns down around them? How can the Canadians have returned the vile yet ridiculous Justin Trudeau to power? Yes, Californians are crazy, but even so – with their economy going down the tubes, their cities turning into homeless encampments, and their middle class fleeing *en masse* to Texas and Arizona – how could they have failed to recall the avatar of disaster that is Gavin Newsom?

Eh bien. In her concession speech, Le Pen looked forward to the National Assembly elections on June 12, after which she and her supporters sang a patently heartfelt *Marseillaise*. Shortly thereafter, to the strains of the European Union anthem, the *Ode to Joy*, Macron made his way to a stage erected outside the Eiffel Tower, where, delivering a platitudinous address to an audience of his voters, he promised to make France “a great green nation.” I don't think he was alluding to the key role of the color green in Islam, but you never know. His speech was followed by a lovely performance of the *Marseillaise* by a professional singer. Some of Macron's fans sang along, although it felt, shall we say, rote.

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