

The political Right in France has a long, freighted, and complex history, knowledge of which is essential to understand its current transformation.

The Political Right(s) in France

Patrick Chamorel

A crisis long brewing in French politics is coming to a head in the run-up to the 2017 presidential elections. For decades, France's political elites have failed to solve the country's major problems—most notably its anemic economic growth, high and chronic unemployment, the regulation of immigration, and the integration of immigrants. Both the Right and the Left, in their current forms, are showing signs of exhaustion. The French, who since the Revolution have trusted politics to make sense of their lives as citizens, no longer do. Of course, the terrorist attacks that killed 130 in Paris on November 13 compounded the sense of crisis gripping French society.

The sole beneficiary of this situation is the Front National (FN), a populist rightwing party that is now entrenched in French political life. The party's rise, well before the events of November 13, is both a symptom of France's worsening problems as well as the result of the party's exploitation of a rightward shift in attitudes over the past 25 years, by focusing on law and order, immigration, and the debate over

French identity. Those issues are made even more relevant and urgent by the recent terrorist attacks. After moving toward the Left for most of its history, is French politics now turning to the Right?

What makes the French Right so singular in a country long identified with a dominant Left culture? How has a resurgent far Right been able to challenge the moderate Right as well as the Left to transform today's political landscape? Is the Front National, led by Marine Le Pen, destined to remain a protest party, or is it en route to government? How central is ideology in its identity and appeal? Can the Right and far Right eventually reconcile? To answer these questions we have to understand the historical context that shaped the French Right's trajectory and identity.

The invention of the political concept of the Right and Left stands among the most significant and enduring legacies of the French Revolution. The division stemmed from the debate about the royal veto in the 1789 Constituent Assembly. Defenders of the veto gathered to the right of the podium, as was the custom for the friends of the King, and opponents gathered to the left. The ensuing revolution not only put the Left and its ideals of "Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité" on the

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right side of history, but entrenched its values deep into the national political culture. What better illustrates the moral superiority of the Left than, for example, David's painting "Gift of Liberty to the World" or Victor Hugo's account of the 1830 revolution in *Les Misérables*? The most revered of French political figures, including Gambetta, Jaurès, and Clémenceau were on the Left; the most reviled on the Right, like Marshal Pétain, or classified as such for having repressed popular revolts, like Guizot in 1848 or Thiers in 1870 against the Paris Commune.

By contrast, born counter-revolutionary, the Right started off with a chip on its shoulder and never quite overcame its original legitimacy deficit. In fact, for most of France's political history, the Right remained on the defensive, as the Left drove the movement of ideas as well as their institutionalization into political parties. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, all three issues that had pitted the Right versus the Left were eventually won by the Left: the Republican form of government prevailed over the monarchy, Catholicism and religion were largely removed from politics and education, and egalitarian economic ideas counterbalanced the free market.

By the same token, new political parties all originated from the extreme Left of the political spectrum before moving toward the center-Left or even the moderate Right. It was said that there were two types of Left parties: the authentic ones, and Right parties pretending to be on the Left. The two Napoleons, Marshal Pétain, Général de Gaulle, and even the leaders of today's Front National, both Jean-Marie and Marine Le Pen, all rejected being labeled as Right.

The French Right is also singular for its lack of ideological as well as institutional stability over time. This might seem paradoxical in a country not only where Right and Left were invented but also where both have characteristically defended irreconcilable interests and ideologies. For example, political issues have shifted across the political spectrum, most often originating on the Left and ending up on the Right, for example, in the cases of economic liberalism, the idea of the nation, colonization, and, today, secularism (*laïcité*).

Beyond general inclinations for the defense of political and social order, including private property, on one end, and equality and progress, on the other, the Right and Left eluded definitions based on intrinsic and permanent differences. Instead, both kept reinventing themselves by responding to the specific challenges of each period. The Right has historically been opportunistic, disinclined to be guided by doctrines and constrained by stable political parties.

Indeed, the vision of the Right and Left as two unified blocs engaged in ideological warfare has to be balanced by the revolutionary myth of national unity, which frowned upon factions, including political parties. The late and reluctant adoption of parliamentary democracy also weighed against the formation of stable political parties like the British Conservative Party or the GOP. All the dominant issues that have divided French society have actually split the Right and Left as much as they pitted one against the other, such as the Dreyfus Affair, Vichy, decolonization, Gaullism, the institutions of the Fifth Republic, and even the revolts of May 1968, abortion, and the death penalty. Today, the same applies to liberal reform of the economy, the control of immigration, as well as the role of *laïcité* and national identity in the integration of immigrants.

Pluralism is another fundamental characteristic of the French Right. Certainly, the Left also has been pluralistic, with liberal (the French prefer to say "Republican"), radical (communist, for example), and anarchist strains, but it has shown greater ideological and electoral integration. In his seminal study of the Right(s) in France, the historian René Rémond identified three lineages in the Right from its origins to the 21st century, which he labeled "traditionalist," "liberal," and "Bonapartist." Rémond later acknowledged a fourth strain, called "Revolutionary Right," coined by the Israeli historian Zeev Sternhell. Today's four Rights are only updated and composite versions of those formed in the 19th century.

The "traditionalist" strain was first defined by the reactionary Right, which dominated the restoration of the monarchy after

Napoleon's demise. It advocated the alliance of the throne and altar and the return to a corporatist society based on family, parish, and trade; like Burke, it rejected abstraction, but also the values of individualism, democracy, and progress inherited from the Enlightenment. The "traditionalists" resurfaced during the Third Republic, established by the liberal Left in 1870, first under the conservative presidency of Marshal MacMahon, who instituted a Catholic "Moral Order," symbolized by the Basilica of Sacré Coeur in Paris. Second, it manifests itself in the form of influential reviews and grassroots political organizations ("leagues") such as "L'Action Française," inspired by monarchist, Catholic, anti-parliamentary, nationalist, and anti-Semitic intellectuals, including Maurice Barrès and Charles Maurras. Fuelled by the 1870 defeat by Prussia and later the Dreyfus Affair, its extreme nationalism and anti-Semitism spanned both world wars. Today's Front National encapsulates most of what remains of that strain of the Right, especially its vocal, albeit shrinking, constituency of Catholic fundamentalists. Recent legislation on gay marriage triggered an unexpectedly strong, largely Catholic grassroots opposition.

The liberal strain of the Right, which dominated the constitutional "Monarchy of July" (1830–48) contrasts strongly with its traditionalist rival. Liberals such as Lafayette and Tocqueville welcomed the legacy of the Enlightenment. They tended to be agnostic and promoted individual liberty, parliamentary democracy, and separation of power, but stopped short of supporting universal suffrage. Most liberals represented the business interests of the rising bourgeoisie. King Louis-Philippe's Prime Minister, François Guizot, famously encouraged the French to get rich ("Enrichissez-vous!"). Liberals in France have consistently failed to nurture support among the masses and the middle class, and remain an elite group. By contrast, the liberal "Republican" Left has been widely influential, with its emphasis on people as citizens rather than individuals seeking liberty from government. Over the past two decades, the elitist liberal Right has been largely discredited after the Left successfully associated it with the ills of globalization.

The "Bonapartist" political tradition refers to the leadership styles of both Napoleons (the first and the third), Général Boulanger (nicknamed "Général Revenge" following the defeat against Prussia—he never governed), and Général de Gaulle. The aspiration of these leaders was to achieve national unity under a strong leader and executive, and to restore the state's authority. They sought to balance the need for political order with popular sovereignty and plebiscites. Of course, the Bonapartist political tradition still permeates the institutions of the Gaullist Fifth Republic, as well as the inner culture and workings of the Gaullist party. It stands as the most singular French political tradition on the Right, since traditionalism and liberalism alone have dominated the Right in most other Western democracies.

Zeev Sternhell's "Revolutionary Right" refers to what was known as fascism in Italy and Nazism in Germany. France's version of fascism blended nationalism with the anarchist tradition of late 19th-century unionism best expressed by Georges Sorel. It combined anti-statist socialism, anti-capitalism, and the anti-Semitism of the Left. Its revolutionary character derived from its goal of replacing traditional bourgeois society with a new social and political order, as well as from attempts to mobilize impoverished masses and glorify violence.

However, this strain of the far Right remained marginal in France. The nationalist "leagues" had traditionalist rather than revolutionary aspirations, as had the Vichy Regime, promoting a return to an agrarian and corporatist society under the slogan "Work, Family, Country." French fascism was mostly confined in the 1930 and 1940s to Jacques Doriot's Parti Populaire Français, and to the second half of the Vichy regime. Doriot was a former communist leader turned pro-Nazi; he advocated a break with the bourgeois order to his mostly proletarian base, but had no electoral success. The Vichy regime of Marshal Pétain was staffed with traditional conservatives, fascist collaborationists, Left-leaning pacifists, and former officials of the leftwing Front Populaire government. It gradually shifted from the reactionary Révolution

Nationale to a form of fascism based on heightened anti-Semitism and an affection for a police state.

Having inherited this DNA, what does the Right look like today? The Right and far Right were understandably discredited after France's liberation from Vichy and the Nazis. Ideas of the Left, communism included, dominated. However, the instability and weakness of the left-leaning Fourth Republic, in particular its inability to solve the Algerian crisis, gave Général de Gaulle the opportunity to return to power in 1958, solve the Algerian crisis, and establish new institutions. Although de Gaulle placed himself above the Right/Left divide and rejected the "Right" label for the sake of national unity, the new institutions of the Fifth Republic, his own upbringing and military career, as well as his leadership style and priorities, clearly revealed the imprint of the Right, mostly in the "Bonapartist" mold. In fact, the Fifth Republic has been the first and only Republic not founded and dominated by the Left; it has also been the longest and most successful of all, including the Third. Five of the seven presidents of the Fifth Republic have been on the Right—including four Gaullists! For the first time, the Left, more dominant than ever on the intellectual scene, suffered a deficit of political legitimacy until it won the presidency in 1981.

De Gaulle marginalized the remnants of the Vichy and pro-"French Algeria" far Right; their candidate scored a mere 5 percent in the 1965 presidential election. But the Gaullist party failed to absorb its small independent-minded liberal and Christian Democratic allies. Liberal Valéry Giscard d'Estaing became President in 1974, and Christian Democratic candidates achieved as much as 15 percent in 1965 and 18 percent of the votes in 2007. These parties typically seek to weaken executive power in favor of parliament and are more pro-European and market-oriented, but with a more elitist character than the more populist Gaullists. Almost invariably, presidential elections have pitted a mainstream Gaullist against a more liberal candidate from the Gaullist, liberal, or

Christian Democratic ranks, and the former usually wins. However, intense personal rivalries and lasting divisions have taken their toll within the Right's electorate.

In addition to its pluralism and more pragmatic than ideological inclination, the Right's emphasis on personal rivalries induced by France's strongly presidential system has prevented it from developing a clear and stable doctrine to challenge the legitimacy of the ideas of the Left. Instead, the French Right has chronically suffered from an ideological dependency with respect to the Left, sometimes extending even to foreign policy. This inferiority complex is partly explained by the Gaullists' shared statism with the Left, and the liberals' elitist guilt. Whereas the Right's discourse is anti-Left in opposition and at election time, it is "Left Lite" in government. The Right did not challenge the radical Left's ideas after the fall of communism, even condoning the financial rescue of the communist daily *L'Humanité* by a socialist government on the grounds that it was "part of France's heritage"! The Right backed off from its promise to suppress the wealth tax and 35-hour week. It has shunned supply-side economics, preferring to follow the Left's habit of spending ever more public money. Jacques Chirac had to campaign on a left-leaning message to become President in 1995, having attributed his 1988 loss to a series of privatizations "à la Thatcher." In fact, since the revolts of May 1968, the Right has, in vain, tried to "buy social peace" with taxpayers' money, in constant fear of being destabilized by violent street protests and public sector strikes. As de Gaulle said: "in France, reforms end up in revolutions."

The Right's watershed moment was Nicolas Sarkozy's election in 2007. Sarkozy shed the Right's guilt and tapped into the deep French aspiration for change, advocating a "rupture" with a failed "social model" and the excesses of 1960s culture. His other breakthrough consisted in lifting the Right's self-imposed taboo on the issues dear to the far Right Front National—and a growing fraction of the electorate: law and order, immigration, and national identity. As a result, Jean-Marie Le Pen's electoral score shrank to

10 percent from 17 percent in the previous cycle.

Alas, what could have opened up a new path for the Right and French politics altogether instead turned into a missed opportunity. Sarkozy's decision to involve the Left and the unions in devising economic reforms (the "big bang" method backfired in 1995) led to mini-reforms that disappointed his electorate. Likewise, he did not muster the necessary courage to address the sensitive issue of immigration. At reelection time in 2012, Sarkozy's Right-leaning campaign lacked credibility: his Right flank felt betrayed, and his Left flank found his campaign to be excessively tough.

In the 1980s, neither the Right nor the Left could have anticipated the return of the far Right in French politics. Jean-Marie Le Pen founded the Front National in 1972 by merging several rightwing activist groups. He had been a paratrooper in Algeria and Indochina, and was elected to the National Assembly in 1956 as a representative of a populist, anti-tax, and anti-supermarket party led by small businessman Pierre Poujade. However, it was not until the 1980s that Le Pen's new party broke into the national political scene, with surprising double-digit results in local and European elections. As a presidential candidate, Le Pen scored 14 percent in 1988, 17 percent in 2002 when he elbowed out the socialist candidate to qualify for the run-off, and 10 percent in 2007. His daughter Marine reached 19 percent in 2012. How have the Front National and its leaders risen so fast?

From the outset, Jean-Marie Le Pen pushed immigration as his signature issue. In 1974, President Giscard d'Estaing triggered a new wave of immigration by making the switch from a job-based system to one favoring family reunification. The parallel rise of immigration and unemployment gave the Front National its slogan, "One million jobless are one million immigrants too many." Just as aptly, Le Pen took advantage of increasingly negative public opinion on Europe by exploiting the themes of national sovereignty, the ravages caused by a liberal Europe open to global competition, and, of course, immigration

encouraged by European leaders. After long enjoying strong but shallow support, Europe, since the 1980s and 1990s, has become the focal point of all the anger and frustration associated with a sputtering economy, chronic unemployment, massive immigration, and now unprotected borders to Syrian refugees, even jihadist terrorists.

Le Pen's own charisma and populist, anti-elitist rhetoric were the perfect vehicles to deliver his message. Yet the Front National could not have grown so fast without the perfect political storm that for several decades has been gathering over France: declining economic growth, high and chronic unemployment, exploding levels of crime, massive immigration, and a consequent identity crisis. The inability of mainstream political parties solve the country's problems led to an ever-deeper distrust of politics. The Front National's political space opened as the Gaullist and Socialist parties converged toward liberal economic reforms that workers typically reject. Simultaneously, the emerging issues of immigration and law and order moved public opinion to the Right. Instead of positioning itself on these issues, the Right chose to treat the Front National as a pariah party and its agenda as taboo. They attempted to delegitimize the FN, in other words, hoping it would go away. Instead, voters cried foul, and the Front National secured a quasi-monopoly on these crucial issues.

In the 1980s and 1990s, the collapse of the Communist Party, the traditional protest party of French politics, further aided the Front National. The working class has been more exposed to unemployment, crime, and immigration than any other group. Today, the FN is the leading party among workers (28 percent), farmers (37 percent), independent workers, the young, and the unemployed; its supporters have the lowest level of education and income of any political party. The Socialist Party, too, has been emptied of its popular constituents and has increasingly embraced unpopular liberal economic policy. Its culturally liberal elites have too often been tempted to consider white working people as close-minded, racist, and Islamophobic. In a recent YouGov/Hoover Institution "Multinational

Partisanship Study,” 31 percent of French respondents said they felt closest to the FN, versus 26 percent and 24 percent to the Gaullist and Socialist parties, respectively. The FN draws as many voters from the Left as from the Right. In the economically depressed northern and eastern parts of the country, the Left used to dominate; in its other regional stronghold, the Mediterranean southeast, immigration has radicalized the traditional Right, made up in part by former Algeria colonists.

Beyond its choice of issues, the Front National has shown a remarkable ability to adjust to a changing environment. After taking over from her father in 2011, Marine Le Pen undertook to turn the party from a protest to a governing party, including publicly condemning her father’s anti-Semitic rhetoric. A second adjustment consisted of an economic platform more consistent with the party’s base. When Jean-Marie Le Pen’s core constituents were independent workers challenging corporate France, the message was clearly liberal and anti-statist. By contrast, today’s broader but often-distressed social base seeks the protection of the state against the globalized economy that implies saving the welfare state from the burden of undeserving immigrants. The Front National’s economic platform, which includes exiting the Eurozone, opposing spending cuts, and bashing the rich, smacks of the far Left.

The third adjustment relates to the Front National’s core immigration and identity message. The Front National has recently shifted its emphasis from immigration to the integration of immigrants, as well as the threat of Islam: Islam, not the FN, should be perceived as the major threat to democracy, it says. In fact, the FN has long been vocal (and largely unheard or rejected beyond its ranks by those who consider it to be more dangerous than the alleged Islamist threat it denounces) about the growing threat of radical Islam in French society. Unfortunately, these threats were confirmed by the terrorist attacks of January and November 2015, perpetrated by radicalized Muslims born and raised in France and Belgium. Shifting the battlefield to the religious and cultural

domain, a realm of deep anxieties in French society, required the party to embrace *laïcité*, the French version of separation of church and state. This represents a major realignment in French politics: The far Right has always defended France’s Catholic foundations, in contrast to the Left, which, by inventing *laïcité* more than a century ago, sought to protect politics and education from too much Catholic influence.

Why the turnaround? In order to argue, for example, against the building of mosques with public money, against women-only doctors in hospitals, separate hours in swimming pools, and against alternative lunch menus in public schools, the Front National needed a tool as widely legitimate in French culture as *laïcité*. Meanwhile, the Left is now split on *laïcité*. Multiculturalists defended *laïcité* as long as it constrained Catholic influence in the public sphere. But when it comes to Muslims, the new dispossessed class, “bobos,” immigrant groups, and the far Left are more inclined to advocate for oppressive diversity rather than *laïcité*.

But what about the Front National’s ideology? Is it another racist and fascist party, as the Left wants us to believe? Has ideology been a draw or an obstacle to its success so far?

There is no denying the central role that typical nationalist and anti-Semitic far Right ideology played around Jean-Marie Le Pen. His core supporters were anti-communist, anti-Gaullist, and apologists for Vichy if not also the Third Reich, and for keeping Algeria French. They often shared the militarism, conspiracy theories and cult of political violence of the most extreme “leagues” of the Third Republic. Le Pen never believed in racial equality and infamously said that the Holocaust was “a detail of history.”

Yet these constituencies and their ideology, formed in the battles of the past, became a major handicap for the party’s identity and future growth. The FN under its new leadership has come a long way toward breaking with its original ideological obsessions, such as anti-Semitism. In a dramatic turn of events, Marine Le Pen went as far to exclude her own father from the very party he founded and led for forty years. It would increasingly be a

mistake to caricature the FN as essentially an anti-Semitic party out of the 1930s. It is now permeated by a more diffuse political culture, accommodating a much broader and diverse rank and file.

The FN has always had mixed fascist, “Bonapartist,” and “traditionalist” traits. A majority of FN supporters reject the Right/Left dichotomy and what they see as an altogether corrupt political class that goes with it. They believe that France is in deep decline, has too many immigrants, and needs a strong leader to restore order. For many of them, the world is changing too fast and in the wrong direction, and they perceive a need for the state to protect them. The party’s inclination is to bring back an idealized past more than to invent a radically new social order. It nurtures a traditionalist and Catholic proclivity and yet is split on gay marriage in part in reaction to Islamist obscurantism. In foreign policy, it is not unlike the former “paleo-conservatives” of Pat Buchanan in the United States, with an isolationist, protectionist, anti-immigration, and traditionalist message. A stronger national defense is not a priority. Like so many European extremist parties, the Front National has expressed its admiration for Vladimir Putin’s nationalist and traditionalist values, his cult of order and authoritarian leadership. The FN and the Tea Party share a nationalist message and populist style, but the former is “Bonapartist” and statist while the latter is libertarian.

Is the Front National more racist than fascist? As part of a broader shift of public opinion to the Right, it represents a radicalized version of what a majority of the French people think: 99 percent of its supporters think there are too many foreigners in France, versus 70 percent in the rest of the population; 94 percent believe Islam is incompatible with French values, 20 percent more than the national average. Yet according to the latest Pew Global Attitudes survey, undertaken, it should be noted, before November

13, positive attitudes of Muslims in France are 72 percent, versus 27 percent negative. For Jews, the figures are 89 percent versus 10 percent. These attitudes, among the least prejudiced in Europe, certainly do not reflect those of the FN or the much more pervasive anti-Semitism found in the banlieues among the Muslim youth and the far Left. Scholars, even on the Left, have shown that the white working-class has been leaving the immigration-dominated banlieues not out of racism, but as a consequence of crime.

A year and a half before the 2017 presidential elections, it is increasingly clear that the Front National has transformed French politics. It is one of three large parties, alongside the Gaullists/liberals and the Socialists. With the Left in decline, the FN is engaged

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in a fratricidal competition with the moderate Right, which is now squeezed between the Left and the Far-Right, an uncomfortable position given the bi-polarizing effects of a two-round electoral system (in the United States, primaries too have this effect). With momentum on its side even before November 13, it dominates the debate on the leading issues, and it is at the heart of the other parties’ electoral strategies.

What political aftershock is to be expected from the recent terrorist attacks? How much more is the electoral cursor likely to move towards the FN? The December regional elections, a mere week away at the time of writing, may be a guide. The FN expects to win at least two out of 13 regions (thanks to the female candidates from the Le Pen family, Marine and Marion), and the FN seems likely to gain momentum.

The new political context brought about by the Paris terrorist attacks make the 2017 presidential ballot even more uncertain. Marie Le Pen has been edging slightly higher in

the polls, around the 30 percent mark at the time of writing. But who will she face in the run-off election? Polls are still giving the edge to the candidate of the re-Christened Gaullist Party (Les Republicains, LR) who will win their primaries (probably former President Nicolas Sarkozy or former Prime Minister Alain Juppé). Yet, incumbent Socialist President François Hollande might be back in the race to qualify for the run-off, provided he can turn his improved approval ratings into a durable electoral strength. However, his remote chances would probably disappear entirely in the event of new terrorist attacks. In the run-off, the LR candidate would win against either Le Pen or Hollande; only if the latter faced each other, could any of them possibly win. The pressure exerted by the Front National is such that it has forced the moderate Right to organize primaries for the first time in its history, to preclude multiple candidacies. The primaries are of the utmost importance, since the LR candidate, whoever he is, should ultimately win the presidency. As in the past, the two leading candidates of the Gaullist party, Sarkozy and Juppé, illustrate its “Bonapartist” and liberal tendencies, respectively. The recent terrorist events in Paris seem to call for a “tougher” Sarkozy.” Yet a more open primary would favor Juppé, since support for Sarkozy is concentrated among core activists.

But more importantly, the ideological shades of the candidates reflect the conflicting strategies with respect to the Front National that have torn the moderate Right since Sarkozy’s failed re-election campaign. Sarkozy’s strategy (which won in 2007 and lost in 2012) is to retain voters tempted by the Front National at the risk of legitimizing some of its issues and ideas. It involves a tough discourse on values, law and order, immigration, and national identity. His rivals, including Alain Juppé, prefer to criticize and discredit the Front National’s ideas and to pursue a centrist platform, including a more positive view of immigration and multiculturalism. A possible outsider, Bruno Le Maire, stands between them. Sarkozy possesses the most personal handicaps: most people do not want such a polarizing figure back, and he might

face competition from Juppé ally Christian-Democrat François Bayrou in the first round of elections. Unlike Juppé, he would receive minimal support from the Left in a run-off against Marine Le Pen.

Whoever the next President is, the problem of relations between the two Rights will rise anew. Even if Marine Le Pen is elected, the Front National won’t be able to elect enough legislators to form a majority in the National Assembly; she will need the support of a fraction of LR legislators. At the elite level, Gaullists, liberals, and Christian democrats have a history of fierce antagonism with the far Right. Yet both sides are well aware of the porosity that exists between their electorates on issues of immigration, integration, and law and order. In exchange for concessions on Europe and economic policy from the Front National, part of the LR could be enticed to join forces with its rival on a few selected issues. Of course, the risk for the center-Right would be to lose support from its more moderate wing. This is why the Front National is unlikely to turn its fantasy of absorbing the “moribund” LR into reality. In France, the Right and far Right have never been united in a single party, and the ideological span they cover has seldom been wider.

If Sarkozy, Juppé, or Le Maire becomes the next President, it will probably be the moderate Right’s—and the country’s?—last chance to succeed. The legitimate concerns of ordinary citizens will have to be addressed head on. Reducing immigration and better integrating immigrants (by, among other things, fighting discrimination) should be among the new President’s priorities. A bridge between a Right that is too soft and a far Right that is too extreme could be provided by a renewed intellectual leadership, which is no longer the Left’s monopoly. This group includes journalist Eric Zemmour, philosopher Alain Finkielkraut, and novelist Michel Houellebecq. If the upcoming presidency is yet another failure, the specter of a Front National victory the next time around will rise, and with it the risk of a civil war pitting the far Left and immigrant groups against the government and the far Right. 🇫🇷

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