

NPR fawns over neo-fascist Marine Le Pen

Andre Damon
19 November 2015

National Public Radio (NPR), the main public radio station in the US, ran a fawning interview Monday with Marine Le Pen, head of the neo-fascist French National Front (FN).

The interview is part of a drive to legitimize far-right politics on both sides of the Atlantic, with the aim of promoting militarism and attacks on democratic rights. Positions that were once considered beyond the pale are now being promoted as part of the political “debate.”

Conducted at the FN’s headquarters in Paris as part of NPR’s evening news broadcast “All Things Considered,” host Robert Siegel referred to the FN as “the largest political party in France in 2014,” without mentioning its history of anti-Semitism and holocaust denial.

In fact, Siegel did not make a single critical comment or ask any pointed question, referring only in passing to the “far-right National Front” and pointing to its “long-term opposition to immigration.”

The report begins as follows: “One of President Francois Hollande’s political rivals says his response to last Friday’s attacks is insufficient and unworkable.... The idea that even one person responsible for the assault would be a Syrian admitted to the European Union and consequently to France as a refugee is grist for her party’s long-term opposition to immigration... I asked Le Pen what the French response to last Friday night’s attacks should be.”

This provides Le Pen a platform to spout her reactionary critique of France’s political establishment using terms such as “reestablish[ing] our own borders,” and “restor[ing] the institutions of the army, the police and the justice system.” “We must eradicate Islamic fundamentalism on our soil,” Le Pen declared, with ominous implications.

While providing a political platform for Le Pen, NPR fails to inform its listeners of her party’s political history. The FN was formed in 1972 by former

supporters of the World War II Nazi collaborationist Vichy regime. It is notorious for its anti-Muslim and anti-Semitic racism, its rabid nationalism, and its violent attacks on political opponents.

The Party’s founder, Jean-Marie Le Pen (the father of Marine Le Pen), has said that the Nazi gas chambers were a “detail of history” and repeatedly defended French collaboration with Germany during World War II.

On Tuesday, the day after NPR ran its interview, *Time* magazine published an op-ed by Le Pen in which she called for closing down Mosques and stripping French nationals of their citizenship if they are accused of being “jihadists.”

The promotion of such figures in both France and the United States should be considered a warning about the type of politics that the ruling class considers legitimate, and what forces it is preparing to mobilize in response to growing opposition to social inequality and war.



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