

European far right hails Trump's win

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Far-right parties and politicians across Europe yesterday hailed the surprise victory of Donald Trump in the US presidential elections, seeing it as proof that they could also rise and take power.

France's neo-fascist National Front (FN), which itself could come to power in next year's French presidential elections amid mass anger at the Socialist Party (PS) government's policies of austerity and war, praised Trump's victory for hastening the FN's rise in France.

"What happened tonight is not the end of the world, it is the end of a world," declared FN leader Marine Le Pen. She added, "The decision of the American people must be interpreted as the victory of liberty... The election of Donald Trump is good news for our country."

Her father, former FN leader Jean-Marie Le Pen—a convicted Holocaust denier who led parachutist units that tortured Algerian independence fighters in the 1954-1962 war against France—called Trump's victory a "fantastic kick in the ass to pro-globalization political-media systems, including in France." He added, "Today, the United States, tomorrow, France. Bravo!"

Jean-Pierre Chevènement, a former PS minister who now advises FN number two Florian Philippot, celebrated: "The victory of Donald Trump is most certainly a defeat for the establishment."

Such remarks were echoed throughout Europe. Nigel Farage, the leader of the UK Independence Party (UKIP) and a leading campaigner for Britain's exit from the European Union (EU), who also campaigned for Trump in the United States during the summer, hailed Trump's victory before the final results were even announced. "I thought the Brexit was big but boy, this looks like it's going to be bigger," Farage told ITV News.

He wrote on Twitter: "Looks like 2016 is going to be the year of two big political revolutions: Donald Trump would be bigger than Brexit."

Similar remarks came from far-right politicians in the Netherlands and in Germany. Beatrix von Storch of the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) called Trump's victory "historic," downplaying warnings from top German officials that conflicts will emerge between Washington and Berlin under a Trump presidency.

"This is a surprise only for the establishment, from my standpoint it was to be expected," she told *Die Welt*, adding: "Much of what Trump said during the election campaign should be seen critically. But it will not be eaten as hot as it was cooked. Even if Trump is supposedly an outsider, he first has to show that he wants a new start for the United States, particularly through the foreign policy restraint he promised."

Geert Wilders, the leader of the Dutch far-right Party for Freedom (PVV), who has denounced Islam as "fascist," enthused on Twitter that Trump's victory was an "enormous stimulant for parties such as ours."

Hungarian President Viktor Orban—who played a leading role pressing for the EU's aggressive policy against migrants, that has led to thousands of drownings of refugees fleeing Middle East or African wars in the Mediterranean Sea—unsurprisingly endorsed Trump's victory. Hungary's far-right president had long supported Trump, declaring in July, "The migration and foreign policy advocated by the Republican candidate Mr Trump is good for Europe and vital for Hungary."

In response to Trump's victory yesterday, Orban wrote on his Facebook page, "Congratulations! What great news. Democracy is still alive."

The fact that Trump's victory is being hailed by such anti-working class organizations is a warning that American workers will soon confront vicious attacks from a Trump administration.

The collapse of democracy in America revealed by the election of a demagogic billionaire and charlatan as

US president is, however, also progressing rapidly across the Atlantic. Trump's victory illustrates how far-right parties across Europe could exploit mass discontent that is building across Europe, eight years after the Wall Street collapse and the onset of a deep economic and social crisis, in order to come to power.

By denouncing Muslims and foreign countries and demagogically appealing to mass sentiment that America is beset by economic decline, Trump exploited mass hostility to the Obama administration and Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton. Obama, who had come to power promising "hope" and "change," waged unending wars and attacked workers' living standards, without any meaningful opposition from the US trade union bureaucracy.

Democratic candidate Bernie Sanders played a particularly pernicious role, posturing as a "socialist" and pledging to wage a "political revolution" against the "billionaire class," then endorsing Clinton, the stooge of Wall Street. The strangling of left-wing sentiment proved to have disastrous consequences. Having cynically exploited a surge of opposition to Obama that the Democratic Party neither expected nor wanted, Sanders left the field open for Trump to profit from social anger by demagogically posturing as a friend of the little man.

It takes no great insight to see that the European far right is using a similar playbook as Trump in order to progress in the polls. After eight years of deep economic slump and austerity policies imposed by social-democratic parties, from the PS in France to the German Social Democrats and the PASOK party in Greece, there is explosive anger in the European working class.

In this, they were abetted by the various trade union bureaucracies, who at most mobilized a few symbolic protests while workers in Greece, Spain, Ireland and beyond suffered double-digit falls in their income, and mass unemployment emerged across the continent.

The primary obstacle was the role of a layer of reactionary pseudo-left parties, who have postured as an alternative while working to integrate themselves into the state and the political establishment. This took the most striking form with the experience of Syriza (the Coalition of the Radical Left), which took power in Greece last year pledging to end EU austerity and then imposed unprecedented austerity measures, trampling

repeated votes of the Greek population opposing austerity.

To the extent that such parties are allowed to block the emergence of genuine struggles by the working class, while supporting or imposing austerity measures themselves, this paves the way for forces like the FN, UKIP, or the PVV to demagogically posture as a populist alternative.



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