

# Who Dominates Whom?

Recent [broadsides](#) from the French government, and most conspicuously from French President Emmanuel Macron, against the American woke Left and U.S. cancel culture drew a mixed reaction from me. Frankly, I find no reason as a European historian to believe that French journalists and academics are any less infected than our own with political correctness.

Looking at *Le Monde*, one can imagine reading *The New York Times en francais*. An attack on Western civilization and French national institutions has been underway in France since the native Left's outcry against colonialism and the glorification of Third World revolutionaries after World War II. That was also the time when French intellectuals were talking up the Stalinist side in the Cold War and doing everything humanly possible to undermine any defense against a Soviet takeover of Europe. Raymond Aron's [Opium of the Intellectuals](#) unmasked the antibourgeois radical mindset of the French intelligentsia back in the 1950s. One is struck by a remarkable overlap between these loonies and our own woke crowd.

Moreover, Macron's party la République en Marche faces persistent opposition from the Right in the form of the Rassemblement National, which does not hide its French patriotism and its detestation of woke intellectuals. Macron and the head of the RN, Marine Le Pen, are now [running neck and neck in polls](#) as they prepare for next year's presidential election.

The recipe for electoral success for the French globalist establishment has been to pick off votes from the Right by sending agreeable messages in that direction before elections. This powerful force works to stay in power, by seeking the votes of the working class and rural Frenchmen as well as those of affluent urbanites. In runoff presidential elections,

the French establishment solicits support from the multicultural Left, which stands in fierce opposition to the immigration-critical Right.

Macron is playing the same game as other French centrist politicians, who have complained insincerely about things that concern the Right—e.g., North African immigration—as a timely electoral strategy. Jacques Chirac, while still mayor of Paris, delivered a controversial speech in Orléans in 1991 in which he mocked the [“sound and odor” of North African immigrants](#). But once Chirac moved up to become French president, he worked together with the French Left to keep the rightist National Front from winning any representation in the French assembly.

Despite what I think is the dishonest electoral intent of Macron’s lament, what he is saying is essentially true. The French government is bewailing exactly what I have been [saying in books](#) and articles for decades, to the dismay of the American conservative establishment. Since the end of World War II, the United States has dominated the Western world not only militarily and economically but also in terms of popular and academic culture. The notion that American culture fell to the anti-Western Left because of alien German and French ideas, a theme popularized partly through Allan Bloom’s bestseller [The Closing of the American Mind](#), overlooks our capacity to generate our own bad ideas.

In [The First Universal Nation](#), which the late Ben Wattenberg published in 1991, we encounter this astonishing but well-documented fact: the U.S. exports cultural products to Europe relative to what it takes back at the rate of 50-1. From my visits to European and Canadian bookstores, it seems that Wattenberg’s exchange rate has tilted even more decisively in our favor.

It is amusing listening to Canadian or French academics explain how their country differs morally and philosophically

from the reactionary American empire. Unlike us, these non-Americans feature feminism and gay rights and are vigorously opposing white racism. Why should I believe that we borrowed such stuff from French postmodernists or, as Bloom argues, from exposing youth to the (right-wing) writings of Friedrich Nietzsche and Martin Heidegger? Enough has been going on within our borders to explain the presence of cancel-culture and why we are afflicting ourselves with politically correct nonsense.

Having spent over 40 years in American universities, it is obvious to me that we have a superabundance of home-grown lunatics to account for these disorders.

I would also like to think that we have enough going for us as a country to overcome this prolonged bout of insanity. I am especially heartened by the fact that about half of our voting population seems unaffected by the madness that Macron has complained about. That percentage is higher than the roughly one-third of the French electorate that will likely cast its vote for the RN in next year's presidential contest. It is also over 35 percent higher than the percentage of those beleaguered non-leftists who vote for the right-of-center AfD in Germany. In Canada, I am still looking for evidence of a non-leftist electorate, unless I factor in the misnamed Conservatives.

What I am suggesting is that we in the United States not only created much of the poison from which other Western countries are now suffering, we may also be among the very few who can offer an example of recovery.

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