In the Court of the Centrist King
Emmanuel Macron and Authoritarian Liberalism

On July 3, 2017, France experienced an unusual spectacle. With all the regal pomp that the French state and the Palace of Versailles can accord, newly elected President Emmanuel Macron addressed both houses of parliament, only the fourth such address since 1873.

Macron used his speech to lay out a program of severe transformations: breaking labor and enacting economic “reforms”; decreasing the number of parliamentarians; minimizing legislation and legislative oversight; and making permanent aspects of the constitutional “state of emergency” France has been under since the 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris. In other words, far from the image of a liberal democratic savior painted by the Anglo-American press, Macron outlined a program to maintain and consolidate minority-government rule. In terms that hovered between self-parody and pure mysticism, Macron called this an “efficient,” new “contractual republic.” From the dais of the Sun King, Macron proclaimed that we are all human capital now.

Macron’s program is anti-democratic in everything from its rejection of civil rights and equal protection to perfected neoliberal economic “reforms.” It even takes aim at the democratic institutions of the state itself. In structure and even aesthetic, “Macronism” presents a postmodern pastiche of hyper-modern technocracy and ancien regime all at once. Understanding why this program is so attractive to the political center, and to liberals more broadly, is vital in order to understand the volatile political climate on both sides of the Atlantic. As with the supposedly “boring” political situation in Germany, where the neo-fascist Alternative für Deutschland party will now be the first Far Right party to enter its parliament since the end of WWII, Macron also represents a rightward trend: a brand of authoritarian liberalism that emboldens the Right, facilitating its political maneuvering, and allowing even small radical right-wing movements outsized influence over national policy.

And yet, Macron’s election was met with near universal acclaim among nominally left-of-center politicians and media commentators across Europe and North America. “About as exciting and theatrical as electoral politics gets,” exclaimed The New York Times. Macron’s movement was held up as an exciting prospect, a new “revolution” from the center, a response to “Trumpism” the world over. This despite the fact that, just as in the Netherlands and Austria, the French Far Right, while not winning the election, still received higher support in the national contest than ever before.

Political scientists Yascha Mounk and Roberto Foa have recently argued, citing public opinion polling data, that there are decreasing levels of support for liberal institutions and liberal democracy itself. Such commentators do focus on the existential threat the Far Right poses. But their arguments go further: if push comes to shove, better the “traditional” Right than the emergent Left. Mounk and likeminded thinkers imply that there is little difference between, say, enthusiastic English Labour Party supporters chanting for Jeremy Corbyn and torch-bearing, hypermasculine behaviors during the hypermasculine behaviors during the 2016 presidential election, and rightly so. Yet Macron’s similar behavior makes it easier for the Right to shake with him was not innocent...but a moment of truth,” he’d later explain.

In another strange episode, he engaged in a “handshake battle” with President Donald Trump in May 2017. “My handshake with him was not innocent...but a moment of truth,” he’d later explain. “We must show that we will not make small concessions, even symbolic ones.” Macron caused another scene a couple months later at a G20 photo-op where he awkwardly hugged, kissed, and elbowed his way to the front, right next to Trump. There are dozens of critiques of Trump’s hypermasculine behaviors during the 2016 presidential election, and rightly so.
hardly a blip, and when it does, is often noted approvingly by center-left commentators. In addition to mirroring Trump’s performance-art version of politics, Macron also rivals his U.S. counterpart in sheer narcissism and “will to power,” comparing his rule to that of Jupiter, King of the Gods; and openly regretting the fall of France’s monarchy in the French Revolution and, sounding quite a bit more like the conservative Edmund Burke or reactionary Joseph de Maistre than liberal John Rawls, openly lamenting democracy’s inability “to fill this void.”

An apples-to-apples comparison of France and the U.S. is difficult. Even if Macron’s wish list for curtailing French labor laws and welfare provisions comes to pass, what remained would still be envious compared to the U.S. In basic social provisions—from welfare to healthcare, public housing to paid leave—the United States lacks anything more than the most rudimentary forms of these vital social guarantees. But the importance of understanding Macron lies in the appeal of his political tendency—what Macron represents to so many delighted commentators—and the political formation he is trying to create: an anti-democratic, “authoritarian liberalism” as a possible future for “liberalism” itself.

If Macron is the bulwark against a looming authoritarian nightmare, why does his program look like an assault on the foundations of democracy?

French cultural issues and even its increasingly bellicose foreign policy seem secondary to the goal of outright consolidation of political power around Macron’s weak, unpopular government, of maintaining minoritarian rule, and expanding state power of the police, intelligence, and military. This political consolidation is the means to enacting a series of “free” market reforms—a kind of massive neoliberal catch-up plan. And if it sounds familiar to American readers, it should. In a Venn diagram of the Republican Party and Trump’s political objectives, Macron represents the vast area of agreement.

**STATE OF EMERGENCY**

France had been in a technical “state of emergency” since the 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris. The emergency suspended constitutional protections for citizens and residents and granted sweeping powers to executive bodies, from the president to the police. Then-President Hollande’s declaration was the first of its kind in six decades, since the presidency was granted new powers during France’s colonial war against Algerian independence in 1955. Despite an election framed explicitly around the threat of fascism, it remains remarkably unreported that for two years France has already technically been in a period of constitutional abeyance: one of the textbook warning signs for more legal understandings of fascism and authoritarianism.

Under the state of emergency, thousands of warrantless raids have been conducted and hundreds of people placed under house arrest—overwhelmingly French citizens and residents of Muslim background and racial minorities. Police were given nearly limitless power of surveillance, search, and seizure. After these searches, only twenty actual charges were ever filed. And although people remain under house arrest to this day, no emergency house arrest has led to any charges. Human rights NGOs like Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International have warned that these developments indicate that the rule of law in France is deteriorating. The emergency measures have been used not only for racial profiling but also to combat political dissent, such as at the COP21 treaty negotiations, in which protests were banned and 24 ecological activists preventatively detained to ensure the smooth negotiation of the market-friendly climate change treaty. One need not imagine how these powers could be used to suppress French unrest over changing labor laws or other political and economic reforms; since 2015, emergency powers have been explicitly invoked 155 times to prevent public demonstrations. Beyond the Muslim dragnet, 639 known political activists have been individually barred from public participation in assemblies and 574 of those cases targeted labor activists. In early July 2017, the state of emergency was extended until November and on October 3, the first institutionalization measures were passed. Although Macron campaigned on lifting the state of emergency, it is clear he is doing so in...
name only. His proposals—which have already sailed through the French Senate—codify the power of the executive to ban public gatherings, close places of worship, search individuals, and confine people to house arrest, all without judicial oversight. A speedy judicial procedure—akin to the American FISA court—allows police to additionally raid any space, but the executive has full and absolute control over all information the court sees. A new national counter-terrorism agency has been promised, intelligence-gathering powers enhanced, and a 10,000-officer expansion of police forces proposed. This codification—and in some cases intensification—of emergency rule provides a classic case of nearly every political philosophy argument against the very idea of states of emergency. But while Donald Trump has been stymied in fulfilling many of his promises to suspend or abridge U.S. civil liberties, Macron, the supposed avatar of ideological opposition to Trumpism, is pulling it off with speed and efficiency in France.

CRUSHING LABOR

The French Center-Left and Right have long dreamed of breaking the near legendary power of French labor unions. France has followed the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Coordination (OECD) trend in decreased participation in organized labor—moving from a mid-1970s high of around 30 percent of the workforce to a current level of approximately 11 percent, heavily dominated by public sector unions. This is almost a mirror of labor union participation in the United States (while as of 2014, Scandinavian countries have above or even well above 50 percent, the UK about 25 percent, and the OECD a nearly 17 percent average). However, what has distinguished French labor even amid this relatively low level of union participation is its militancy. Although the French propensity to strike may be the butt of many jokes, its vital labor protections and admirable working conditions (not to mention its standard 35-hour workweek) were largely secured and maintained through fierce union struggle.

France’s economic situation today is dire. Unemployment has held steadily at around 10 percent for many years. One in four French youth are unemployed, with a similar level of unemployment found among immigrants. Nearly half of all unemployed citizens are long-term unemployed. Because of its extensive social welfare system, France has not yet faced the extraordinary decline in quality-of-life indicators that are seen in the U.S. But the overall structure of the European Union will likely soon make many of these social provisions increasingly difficult to maintain. For example, France has been in violation of European GDP-to-debt ratio rules since 2009. While France’s political and economic position as the key “second” power in Europe (after Germany) has given it considerable room to maneuver, recent EU and European Community (EC) reactions—particularly to the Greek debt crisis and Brexit—have demonstrated the EU’s ongoing commitment to a strictly neoliberal austerity regime. It’s difficult to foresee a future in which French social provisions are not sharply curtailed without a revolutionary transformation of the European Union.

Macron’s initial round of labor laws, put into swift effect by presidential decree, weaken national collective bargaining, end sector-wide union representation, allow for swift and easy firing of employees, particularly employees at smaller French firms (over 50 percent of the workforce), and broadly circumvent unions and encourage “modern,” “flexible” employment.

Macron’s labor and economic reforms will have the twin effect of bringing France closer to overall EU compliance and, to some extent, alleviating aspects of its dire economic portrait. Liberalizing the job market should bring unemployment down, but almost certainly through an explosion of American-style precarious employment for not only youth and the long-term unemployed reentering the workforce, but also for a significant portion of the currently stable labor sector as well. Macron is aware of this, acknowledging in 2014 that his proposed labor reforms mean “young people will experience ten to twenty changes in their careers, they will work longer, their wages will not increase, not all the time.” Already, the initial reforms Macron helped pass under the government of former President François Hollande have produced a pattern where 86.4 percent of new hiring is for temporary employment. This increase in precarious employment—and in social precarity overall—is not simply an economic hardship for French workers. It has an additional, fundamental political impact: a more precarious society quite literally has less time and fewer resources for democratic participation.

Macron seems likely to secure his policy victories with the same sorts of measures that have been used in the U.S.—those pioneered by American Republicans and emulated by the DLC-style Democrats of the 1990s and their contemporary successors. His tax and welfare reduction policies—couched in retro-chic Reaganite language, fretting about “the weakest” becoming “wards of the state”—are another near pitch-perfect imitation of Republican policies, promising to starve the state into “proper” form. If successful, a more precarious society is precisely what he will get.

ENDING CHECKS AND BALANCES

Perhaps the most audacious of Macron’s plans is his proposal to overhaul the French parliament altogether, decreasing its number of deputies, oversight, and even the amount of legislation it should consider. This parliamentary reform remains the vaguest part of Macron’s program, but he has promised to reduce the size of both houses by a third, to introduce measures to speed legislation through more quickly, and even to move some powers either to the executive or to subcommittees which could bypass parliament altogether. In an echo of U.S. Republicans’ demands to “deregulate,” he used his simulacrum State of the
Union address to call on France to “try to put an end to the proliferation of legisla
tion.”

Macron’s popularity—ginned up by
his image as the foil to Marine Le Pen—is already plummeting. He knows very
well that his party is new and untried and
that, as many neoliberals before him have noted,27 his program will never find
broad support beyond the technocratic and professional elite. While he has not
quite reached Trumpian levels of popular
disdain, Macron’s support stands at
the lowest all-time for a new French presi
dent: 42 percent as of late October 2017.
And so it seems he sees labor repression,
emergency powers made permanent, and a “kinder, gentler” semi-authoritarian
state as the key legs of Macronism into
the future.

THE DEMOCRATIC VOID

The Austrian economist and key neo-
liberal theorist Friedrich Hayek was ever
fearful of the encroachment of democrat-
ic majorities on “individual liberty”—a
concept he carefully distinguished from
“political liberty” (which he defined as
“the participation of men in the choice of
their government, in the process of legis-
lation, and in the control of administra-
tion”). What Hayek and modern-day
neoliberals value above political liberty
is a vision of human beings as completely
free within the market and further, since
the 1970s, as themselves “human capi-
tal”: existing as objects for “investment”
to generate profit and not the full, rights-
bearing citizens envisioned by classical
liberalism.29 The threat that democracy
poses for private property is one of the
key foundations of neoliberalism.

Democracy, for Hayek et al., is not
about majority rule, self-governance, and
certainly not achieving egalitarian
outcomes (or even equal opportunity).
Democracy in this sense is purely func-
tional. It allows for a smooth transition
of power and provides the necessary
checks on majoritarian power and other
citizens for the flourishing of property,
as cultivated by entrepreneurs. As Hayek
once said in an interview:

Democracy has a task which I call “hy-
gienic,” for it assures that political pro-
cesses are conducted in a sanitary fash-
ion. It is not an end in itself. It is a rule
of procedure whose aim is to promote
freedom. But in no way can it be seen
as the same rank as freedom. Freedom
requires democracy, but I would prefer
temporarily to sacrifice, I repeat tem-
porarily, democracy, before having to
do without freedom, even if temporar-
ily.30

One must keep in mind that “freedom”
for Hayek and for his later followers
means market freedom above all.

While the history of liberal thought
includes many cautions about simple
majoritarian rule—sometimes war-
ranted, as for the protection of minor-
ity racial, religious, sexual, and ethnic
groups from potential bigotry—Hayek’s
chief concern is with preventing any rule
of the majority to demand a change in
the overarching social contract. In this
conception, humans are bound forever
to the only true vision of freedom—mar-
ket freedom—and the state’s role is in
enforcing that “freedom.” As with small
government arguments—from Hayek
to “state’s rights”—the rhetoric is decep-
tive. The state, under his vision, won’t
necessarily shrink. It may, in a technical
sense, become not clearly sovereign, but
its coercive apparatus—through policing,
surveillance, and programs to promote
business—may, in fact, expand.

Macronism seeks to fill what he calls
the “emotional abyss” of democracy, dug
apparently by the French Revolution,
with a neo-feudal monarchical spirit of the
“free market.” Instead of liberté, égalité,
fraternité, Macron seeks to instill a busi-
ness-friendly alternative: the “efficien-
cy, representativity and responsibility”
of his “contractual republic,” all under
his careful, well-educated, “Jupiterian”
gaze.31 In the heart of technocracy, one
finds a postmodern ancien régime.

What Macron cannot change is the
fundamental nature of the neoliberal
project. Capitalism extended its lifespan
with deregulated finance, the return of
boom and bust cycles, and the squeez-
ing of any remaining value out of a nearly
fully commodified society—but it can no
longer artificially prop up growth rates
nor solve the long-term productivity cri-
sis in the economy. Having once intensi-
ﬁed the life of post-war capitalism past
the crises of the 1970s, neoliberalism
has become increasingly tenuous since
its heyday in the 1990s, when there truly
“was no alternative” between the feel-
good brands of Blair and Clinton or the
more hardnosed, “law and order” vari-
eties of Major and Bush. Since the 2008
financial crisis—in which the state was
forced to reveal its vast role in both main-
taining the economic status quo and ex-
plicitly failing to intervene for the vast
majority of individuals and communi-
ties—the neoliberal political project has
held together largely through continued
market and political consolidation, and
subsequently, greater direct coercion
and repression.

What lies at the center of Macronism is
the lesson the U.S. Right learned nearly
50 years ago and that Hayek and his fol-
lowers have always known: this political
program, fully exposed, could never gain
popular support. In the U.S., Republicans
have responded to this reality by work-
ing, since the 1960s, to decrease the size
of the electorate, disenfranchise racial
minorities, and make voting as difficult
(and pointless) as possible for poor and
working-class Americans.32 Democrats
eyeing Macron as a model for sustained
commitment to the neoliberal program
must know full well that they would be
embracing Republicans’ outlook on dem-
ocratic participation and rights.

For weary spectators across the Atlan-
tic, Macron looks like a welcome relief
from rising right-wing monsters and shear gross incompetence. But while
liberal commentators like Mounk see
Macron as shoring up support for liberal
democracy,33 they fail to understand that
Macronism cedes the entire “democracy”
side of the equation—sometimes even
the very idea of popular government—to
the Far Right. Simultaneously, the Left is
denigrated as expressing populist anti-
liberal attitudes that might undermine
the one right—property—that is the
raison d’être for the regime. For Mounk,
for example, popular European Left par-
ties like Spain’s Podemos or Greece’s
SYRIZA offer “simplistic” solutions and
“inflammatory rhetoric.”34 They have
the dangerous temerity to question the
realities of “meritocracy.” They seek to
“overthrow” the system unlike, well, Em-
manuel Macron.

Macron demonstrates what it will take for the “center to hold”: nothing short of one-party, technocratic “liberal” authoritarianism, of the kind many OECD countries have been sliding towards for 40 years. But as a political program to extend capitalism through crisis conditions, sluggish growth, and growing instability, such a project must become increasingly coercive, short-lived, or both. It would seem that the only opposition it can tolerate—in a version of Hayek’s ersatz democracy—is that of the Far Right. But if the neoliberal center can offer up only ever closer approximations to the right-wing project, there are few other possibilities it can pursue (and ever decreasing political prospects). As the great political economist and socialist organizer Rosa Luxemburg proposed in the 20th Century, the choice was simple—socialism or barbarism. This, the 21st Century center tells us, is oversimplified. There is also the choice of extended misery.

THE CORBYN-MACRON PARADOX

During the ecstatic trans-Atlantic jubilation for Macron there was another election right around the corner. Following the Brexit referendum, UK Prime Minister Theresa May called early elections to solidify the position of her new, hard-right nationalist Tory formation. May, who has become one of Trump’s leading international supporters, had married David Cameron’s austerity program with the nativist elements from Nigel Farage’s UK Independence Party. That orientation made it strange that many liberal commentators who’d welcomed Macron as an antidote to the Far Right were either silent about the contest between May’s Conservative Party and Jeremy Corbyn’s newly recommitted left-wing Labour Party, or openly contemptuous of Corbyn.

The liberal response to Corbyn is all the more strange given that he and similar political figures of the reinvigorated Left are more consonant with liberal tradition writ large than their faux-liberal counterparts of the increasingly authoritarian center. Corbyn’s 2017 Labour Manifesto was the most full-throated major party platform to call unequivocally for both economic democracy and full liberal rights of the individual; for investment in universal public goods and identity-focused programs that specifically addressed the unique social repression faced by women, racial and religious minorities, LGBTQ people, and the disabled. It did so within a coherent political framework as well: the flourishing of individuals through the flourishing of society, understanding the interconnection of formal liberal equality claims and demands for recognition, and the social equity and democratization necessary for their realization. Corbyn was not attacking basic liberal rights or the democratic process; Theresa May was. And yet the self-appointed defenders of “liberal democracy,” who had championed Macron and his authoritarian liberalism, were silent.

The irony of the Corbyn-Macron paradox, for those in the business of carving out a future for liberal democracies, is that only with policies like Corbyn’s can those phantasmagorically ascribed to Macron possibly come to fruition.

LATE TO THE FUTURE

“America is the original version of modernity. We are the dubbed or subtitled version,” the French postmodernist Jean Baudrillard wrote in his 1986 travelogue America. “We are condemned to the imaginary and to nostalgia for the future,” he continued. “What we see here [in the U.S.] are merely the inescapable results of an orgy of power, and an irreversible concentration of the world that has followed upon its extension.”

Although Baudrillard’s arguments are slippery, he stumbled onto a truth, almost a funhouse mirror anticipation of Francis Fukuyama’s post-Cold War declaration that here, in Reaganite and Thatcherite “liberal democracy,” was the “end of history.” Baudrillard proposes instead that America is already the future. It is where the “idea of history, where Geist, already landed. And—in good postmodern fashion—Macron proves him both right and wrong. Macron is the overdubbed Ronald Reagan, several decades late and better educated. He’s the subtitled Bill Clinton, without the popular appeal or charm. But for once the French—perhaps because, as

the work of Thomas Piketty and Emmanuel Saez reminds us, vestigial feudalism has finally caught up with the times—are indeed ahead. Macron is the centrist vision for a baroque future better suited to the Palace of Versailles than the gleaming skyscrapers of New York. The greatest irony of all: for all this consolidation of power, for all the pomp and delusions of grandeur, Macron is auditioning himself, and France, for, at best, a number two role, to be forever in hock to Germany through the current mechanisms of the EU. Macron will truly be a king without a crown.

Without substantive advances for actual democracy, liberal rights lose even their formal meaning. They become charity bestowed by benevolent autocrats, by Jupiterian kings of the center, parcelled out or withheld on whim. There is a dialectic of technocracy and its fruition is a new feudalism. Hiding within every good technocrat is a feudal lord who catches the scent, in Baudrillard’s phrase, of the “primitive future”—of a new-old barbarism just on the horizon. Macron’s appeal to political actors and thinkers is that he is the distilled essence of this spirit; he represents a future, hollowed-out liberalism relieved of all but the most cosmetic vestiges of democracy.

When Margaret Thatcher was asked about her greatest achievement, she replied: “New Labour.” In that she was both witty and incisive. It was only with the capitulation of the Center-Left that neoliberalism truly became entrenched as the only alternative to the Right. While Macron reshapes France into the perfect European vassal state and centristscramble around the world applause, I can imagine the Iron Lady laughing as she wonders just how much more the Front National wins the next time around.

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1. Neoliberalism, broadly construed, is a form of capitalist politics and governance which intensifies market relations in all aspects of society. Sometimes confused with a purely libertarian “market fundamentalism” (which it rhetorically often advances) or simply “more capitalism” (which is true but incomplete), neoliberalism extends the life of capitalism past endemic and external crises. So while the “shrinking” of the state, in fact state power is increased in its coercive functions while it is simultaneously decreased in its definitional sovereignty. One can think of this as a fundamental restructuring of the state in favor of unmitigated capital interests. For a more precise and thorough definition see Philip Mirowski, Never Let A Serious Crisis Go to Waste (2014) and Nancy Maclean, Democracy in Chains (2017).


3. The Chicago School economist Gary Becker popularized the concept of “human capital” in the 1960s. Since then the concept has become prevalent in policy discussions and popular discourse. It is part of a two-fold transformation of the subject as found in classical liberal political philosophy. On the one hand, beings are conceptualized as “human capital,” like fixed capital—say, machines or buildings. You can invest in them for greater return on investment; they are changeable, movable, and above all to be understood in their capacity to generate profit. On the other hand, human beings are consumers and all meaningful choices can and should be expressed through the market or market-like mechanisms. This is a far cry from the robust, rights-bearing citizen one finds in the pages of classical liberal political philosophy.


5. Nancy Maclean, Democracy in Chains, 87. As argued by Marija Straus (“Faith/Washing Right-Eye Economics: How the Right is Marketing Medicare’s Demise,” The Public Eye, Fall 2015), Republicans have also been enormously successful at mobilizing, within this diminished electorate, populist ideas via Christian moralism and theology of profit as a sign of grace, work as a moral imperative, and capitalism itself as in some ways divinely ordained. As Kari Work and others have noted—drawing on the seminal work of Max Weber—this “Protestant ethic” can serve a profound role in justifying and reproducing capitalisms while creating crushing commitment to work for the sake of work. Democrats and many who would consider themselves on the Left also often demonstrate a manic commitment to “Protestant ethic” values.


7. Yasha Mounk, “European Disunion.” “Simpistic” is a fanciful description of either Podemos or SYRIZA, regardless of one’s place on the political spectrum.


12. This series of developments would seem to confirm the classic Schmittian thesis about executive overreach and emergency exception being the true constitution of sovereign power. However, it is interesting to note that Macron is not fully sovereign in a Schmittian, Hobbesian, or any other traditional definition of the word. In the realm of the economy he is only able to “reform” as pre-determined by the EU and, even there, where sovereignty lies is not entirely clear. This sets up a series of questions about the nature of states and sovereignty in the globalized era that goes far beyond the scope of this paper. Carl Schmitt was a noted jurist and legal philosopher in the Weimar and Nazi era in Germany. Although a far-right thinker—and an enthusiastic Nazi—his views are still often influential in a wide spectrum of political thought to this day.


17. One should recall that various formulations of “neither right nor left”—while more recently popular with centrists—were a frequent self-description of European liberal democracy. One can think of this as a fundamental restructuring of the state in favor of unmitigated capital interests. For a more precise and thorough definition see Philip Mirowski, Never Let A Serious Crisis Go to Waste (2014) and Nancy Maclean, Democracy in Chains (2017).


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24. Macron-Policies-Beliefs-Philosophy. Macron’s words.

25. Nancy Maclean, Democracy in Chains, 87. As argued by Marija Straus (“Faith/Washing Right-Eye Economics: How the Right is Marketing Medicare’s Demise,” The Public Eye, Fall 2015), Republicans have also been enormously successful at mobilizing, within this diminished electorate, populist ideas via Christian moralism and theology of profit as a sign of grace, work as a moral imperative, and capitalism itself as in some ways divinely ordained. As Kari Work and others have noted—drawing on the seminal work of Max Weber—this “Protestant ethic” can serve a profound role in justifying and reproducing capitalisms while creating crushing commitment to work for the sake of work. Democrats and many who would consider themselves on the Left also often demonstrate a manic commitment to “Protestant ethic” values.


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