

It would be foolish to ignore the thirty four per cent of French voters who have voted for fascists in the first round of the their parliamentary elections.

It would be foolish too to ignore the folly of the arch neoliberal, President Emmanuel Macron, who gambled on calling this election, somehow thinking that the disaffected people of rural France, in particular, would vote to continue support for the political indifference for their best interests that his supposed centre-right party delivers.

It would be foolish too not to note that Keir Starmer claimed last night that he would defeat the rise of the far-right in the UK by deeds rather than words when, as far as anyone can tell, there are no deeds that might come remotely near doing so on his agenda.

The far-right won in France because the classic fascist policy of blaming an 'other' group in society has worked amongst those least likely, as is always the case, to actually encounter members of that 'other' community. Blatant Islamophobia is being used by the far-right in France to fuel hatred and division. It works best in rural areas, rather than the towns and cities where most Moslems in France live. But wherever it prevails, it is not based on truth.

It should be noted that around two thirds of French people rejected fascism. There may be some deal making to do as a result, because under the French electoral system there is another round of voting to go through in most seats, and unity candidates from the centre / left might be presented in some cases.

That said, the reality cannot be ignored. A centre-right party in France has laid the ground for a fascist by government by promoting the failed neoliberal myth that government run for the benefit of the wealthy, big business and the political establishment that is located in the capital and major cities can be of benefit to the majority when it is very clear that the whole purpose of such governments is to redirect wealth upwards in society. That neoliberal policy goal inevitably leads to inequality,

alienation and despair. The rise of fascism is the consequence.

It is not clear what will happen in France as yet. It may avoid a fascist government. If it gets one it will have a far-right perspective very different to that of Giorgia Meloni's far-right government in Italy. The Italian government is actively engaging with the EU. The French far-right hates the EU. What that provides is evidence of how divided the far-right itself is: dissatisfaction with neoliberalism is a many faceted thing, but there is relatively little comfort in that unless, maybe, you are in Brussels. The second round of voting has to be watched with care in that case.

Whatever happens though, the message is clear. Voters have had enough of the failure of neoliberalism and are falling for the allure of those who are building false narratives about the alternatives to it.

True alternatives are needed.

Meanwhile, Labour is telling the UK that 'stability is change', which is code for 'we'll manage neoliberalism better than the Tories did'. There are those who think that this will guarantee them a super-majority and decades in power. The reality is that Labour might, unless something radical happens, last five years at most in office if that is their plan. Supporting a failing status quo, like Macron has done, is not a strategy. It's a recipe for failure. Labour really should take note. So far there is no sign that they have.