

## Segolène Royal (2)

Jordi Pujol  
Editorial / November 21, 2006

**The reason for giving over this editorial to Ségolène Royal is not out of opportunism because she won the French socialist primaries. We already devoted the editorial of [May 16](#) to her. And also, in part, the editorial of [May 2](#) (“Are progressives reactionaries?”).**

Ségolène Royal is currently making headlines. It's worth recalling why. Recalling why she has defeated the highest-ranking figures of the French Socialist Party and why she has real possibilities of becoming the next president of France.

The reason is that she has broken the back of the ideological framework of French socialism, even the opinion and attitudes of France as a whole. She has even introduced a new way of speaking to the people. With new optimism.

Her language and some of her proposals have been scornfully branded by the old-guard of the French left – and a large segment of the socialist party apparatus – as social-liberal, even neo-liberal, or – worse still – Blairism. But they respond far more to the problems and concerns of the voters and to France's economic and social challenges than those put forward by the French left, and in large part those of the right, also hostages of an unyielding interventionist and state-run political system.

Ségolène Royal has been brave enough to address issues such as the family, a more demanding system of education, improved social integration for immigrants, better policing, and the moral of effort and the fact that there should be rights but also duties, etc. In other words, everything that has been disdained during the long reign of the self-proclaimed progressive hegemony. She has endeavoured to understand people's problems and fears. Rather than mollycoddle them, she seeks to provide them with more and better tools with which to overcome these fears.

She has voiced all of this in the face of stiff opposition and she has prevailed. Probably because France is aware that it needs a breath of fresh air to overcome the existing confusion, grumpiness and scepticism towards politics and political parties. France needed someone to put an end to the inertia of old dogmas and entrenched attitudes, and it has been Ségolène Royal.

It is also worth mentioning that her probable presidential rival, Sarkozy, has done likewise. He has also made a break with the ingrained ideology of French society, stagnated and rigid, and has proposed daring reforms to put an end to this obstinacy. As one Italian commentator remarked, “with Ségolène and Sarkozy the country of both the revolution and conservatism [France] may discover the advantages of reformism”. By the way, both Ségolène Royal and Sarkozy do not hide the fact that to a certain degree they are inspired by Tony Blair, to the

indignation of the rank and file of the Socialist Party.

We can add another point regarding Ségolène Royal's outlook: she has injected emotion and optimism into her proposal. She has won the affection of the people'. That is important, as we wrote in the editorial of the 13 of this month, one cannot build anything (or collectively) without sentiment. Without the right balance between rationality and emotion. It would appear that Ségolène Royal has this balance