

Socialist Party appoints anti-worker interim government in France

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Jean-Marc Ayrault, appointed interim prime minister of France by newly elected President François Hollande of the Socialist Party (PS), unveiled France's new interim government yesterday. It will rule until the results of the June 17 legislative elections are known.

If the PS and its allies achieve a majority in these elections, it is likely that many of the 34 ministers will be retained. Appointments will depend on the size and influence of the representation in parliament of the contending bourgeois "left" parties, such as the Left Front and Europe Ecology-the Greens, and the deals they will have made over who would be standing in the different constituencies.

The first action of the council of ministers, when it met yesterday, was to pass a series of symbolic measures—cutting the president's and ministers' pay 30 percent, and adopting a "Charter of Best Practices" to guard against official corruption. This was apparently intended as a dig at Hollande's conservative predecessor President Nicolas Sarkozy, who provoked widespread anger by increasing his own pay. Such decisions do not in any way affect the fundamentally anti-working class character of the incoming government.

Drawn from more openly right-wing layers inside the PS, it will try to continue imposing austerity measures in response to the economic crisis in Europe, and imperialist wars abroad. It is yet another indication of the political bankruptcy of the petty-bourgeois "left" forces, such as the Left Front and the New Anti-capitalist Party (NPA), who called for an unconditional vote for Hollande in the May 6 presidential run-off elections.

PS veteran Martine Aubry, the first secretary of the party, was passed over for the post of prime minister

and then for any ministerial position whatsoever. This decision, taken within the narrow confines of the PS's pro-business politics, is a political signal. Aubry—the daughter of former European Commission chief Jacques Delors, and who has built a bureaucratic power base in industrially devastated northern France—is nonetheless considered on the "left" of the PS.

The author of a subsequently repealed law reducing the workweek to 35 hours, she criticized Hollande during the PS presidential primaries for representing "the soft left." While Aubry bases herself on the interests of finance capital no less than Hollande, her comment sought to appeal to popular intuition that a Hollande government would be totally devoted to the interests of big business.

As the identity of the ministers in the interim government makes clear, this is precisely what has come about.

The choice of Laurent Fabius as foreign minister—officially, the number two position in the government—is highly symbolic. Fabius was PS President François Mitterrand's prime minister from 1984 to 1986 and earned deep unpopularity in the working class for his industrial restructuring and social austerity measures. He escaped all criminal responsibility for his government's role in blocking the use of US technology to test for the AIDS virus in French blood banks, a decision that led to the infection with AIDS and the death of virtually all of France's hemophiliacs.

As minister of industry and then prime minister, he rigorously applied the "modernization" of nationalized industries such as coal and steel, beginning the de-industrialization of now-devastated working class heartlands in northern and eastern France. It was under his watch that, in 1985, Greenpeace's Rainbow

Warrior ship was sunk by French special forces when it protested French nuclear tests; one person was killed.

A figure with deep connections in the business community, Fabius can be counted upon to carry out whatever policies French imperialism requires. In line with Hollande's declaration that he had no criticisms of former President Nicolas Sarkozy's foreign policy, Fabius has raised no objections to the explosion of French militarism represented by Sarkozy's military interventions in Ivory Coast, Libya, and Syria.

Manuel Valls took the powerful post of interior minister. A right-wing figure, he has pushed for the PS to drop the word "Socialist" from its party name. He also championed law-and-order hysteria and racist appeals to anti-immigrant sentiment.

In 2002, as mayor of Evry, he closed down a shop selling halal meat in a working class estate—a theme taken up by both neo-fascist Marine Le Pen and then by Hollande himself during the presidential elections, in an attempt to outflank Sarkozy on the right. Valls doubled the police force in Evry, also spreading the use of video cameras, tasers and firearms.

The web site Médiapart cites Valls' book *Law and order, the left can change everything* as advocating "the creation of law and order priority zones keeping experienced policemen through financial inducement, the use of surveillance cameras, the creation of more prison places, and more immediate sanctions for young delinquents."

Financial matters will be in the hands of two supporters of former International Monetary Fund (IMF) chairman Dominique Strauss-Kahn—Minister of Economy and Finance Pierre Moscovici, and Budget Minister Jérôme Cahuzac. This indicates the government's firmly anti-working class intentions.

Arnaud Montebourg was named minister of the restoration of production. Médiapart said that his appointment aims to "add a little left feel" to the government—a comment that indicates primarily the chauvinist character of what passes for the French "left."

Depicted as a "left" by the media and petty-bourgeois "left" parties, Montebourg visited factories facing closure during the primaries campaign, preaching economic nationalism and denouncing Germany. The agenda for his ministry is to work with the unions to

boost French capitalism's competitiveness and production by cutting labor costs and attacking the workers.



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