

French pseudo-left seeks to block opposition to Socialist Party's austerity agenda

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As France's Socialist Party (PS) government pushes the European Union's (EU) agenda of austerity and deregulation, in the law presented by PS Economy Minister and former Rothschild banker Emmanuel Macron, the pseudo-left parties are playing the key role to suppress rising social opposition.

The Macron Law would enforce large-scale privatizations of assets such as airports; further emasculate labor law in favor of big business; deregulate professions such as notaries, pharmacists, and lawyers; and ease restrictions of Sunday store hours.

Despite broad revulsion with the PS in the working class, the only overt opposition to the law has come from middle class professional organizations targeted by the bill. Associations of notaries and pharmacists organized mass protests against the deregulation of their professions, fearing that the prices of services they deliver will be gutted. However, the most important social force targeted by the law—the working class—has not been heard from.

Central responsibility for this situation rests with the pseudo-left parties such as the New Anti-capitalist Party (NPA) and the Left Party (PG). They are doing everything they can to block a political mobilization of the working class against the EU and the PS, insisting that all opposition must be controlled by France's discredited, pro-PS union bureaucracies and oriented to supporting a faction of the government itself.

Calling for a one-day protest against opening shops on Sundays, former PS minister and PG official Jean-Luc Mélenchon told *Le Monde*, "It would be up to the trade unions to lead this mobilization," adding that the unions could "agree to gather us together for a weekend."

For its part, the NPA also complained that the unions

were not carrying out more activities. It wrote, "The union organizations, instead of organizing the fightback, are either adapting to the government's policies or remaining passive and taking no initiatives like the CGT," the Stalinist-led General Confederation of Labor. It stressed, "The unions must be instruments so workers can organize and defend themselves and build the fightback without fearing a confrontation. We must urgently build a big mobilization against the Macron Law and the government's policy."

What a fraud! The unions, which have completely lost their base in the working class and are empty shells financed by big business and the state, support PS austerity measures and will organize no struggle against them. The comments of Mélenchon and the NPA, while couched as a tactical criticism of the union bureaucracies, in fact aim only to promote illusions that the working class can rely on these discredited and reactionary bureaucracies to defend it.

Despite broad popular disillusionment with the PS government—which wholeheartedly supports the EU's austerity agenda and is waging imperialist wars in the Middle East and Africa, while backing NATO war threats against Russia—the pseudo-left still insist that the aim of social protest must be to strengthen the hand of various PS forces. They peddle illusions in the so-called "frondeur" ("rebel") faction of the PS legislators, which have made tactical criticisms of President François Hollande, defending austerity but advocating a more confrontational policy against Berlin.

According to Mélenchon, "There will be no audacious left opposition in the parliament if there is not one in the streets."

On December 12 on Radio Classique, long-time NPA spokesman and former presidential candidate Olivier

Besancenot called for a “large-scale movement,” consisting of “the frondeurs of the Socialist Party, the organizations of the non-governmental left, and unions opposed to the Macron Law.”

This perspective of a movement bringing together the PS with its petty-bourgeois pseudo-left satellites offers nothing to the working class but more misery. The language of Mélenchon and Besancenot, who describe these organizations as “audacious” or “left,” is a tissue of political lies. The PS, the PG, and the NPA are not left parties, and strengthening the “frondeur” wing of the PS would not lead to any significant change in the austerity measures raining down on workers in France and across Europe.

As for the pseudo-lefts, their criticisms of the PS are empty and hypocritical. They endorsed Hollande in the second round of the 2012 presidential election despite acknowledging that he would conduct pro-business policies. Their current, impotent criticisms of Hollande are in direct continuity with their previous endorsement of him two years ago. As European capitalism sinks under the weight of EU austerity and the war drive against Russia, the pseudo-lefts are terrified of rising anger against Hollande and are desperately seeking to channel it back behind the PS.

Workers have carried out mass strikes against austerity in Belgium and Italy, and the extreme weakness and unpopularity of the Hollande government invites an eruption of class struggle in France. The unions are desperately seeking to crush working class opposition—calling off the main strike movement of the fall, the Air France pilot strike, in order to betray the strike and sign a sellout contract imposing large wage and benefit cuts for workers in the low-cost Transavia airline. They were seeking to head off a strike victory that would have led to an explosion of strikes and wage demands by European workers.

This rank betrayal underscores that the working class can only defend itself by mobilizing in political struggle against EU austerity and the militarist policies of Hollande and NATO. The task is to bring down Hollande’s anti-democratic government and its sister regimes throughout Europe, in a struggle against capitalism uniting the European working class on a socialist program.

The pseudo-lefts, on the other hand, insist that workers struggles must be controlled by the bankrupt

trade unions, which negotiate social cuts with Hollande and sell out strikes. While they claim that they are appealing to the unions to organize a movement, their goal is not to mobilize working class at all. They aim to demoralize workers as much as possible, by suggesting that the only way forward for the working class is to support the type of impotent one-day protest marches and union sellouts that have led workers to leave the unions in droves and to ignore the unions’ calls for *pro forma* protest marches.



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