

# French economy minister launches movement preparing for PS' disintegration

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The initiative of Economy Minister Emmanuel Macron to create his own movement, “Forward March,” on April 6 in Amiens comes amid a series of similar initiatives from politicians in and around France’s ruling Socialist Party (PS). They come amid rising concerns in ruling circles that the PS could disintegrate after the 2017 presidential elections.

Macron did not build a new political party, and his movement has no observable political differences with the PS government, in which Macron remains as a key minister imposing austerity measures on the workers. He denied that he planned to run against PS President François Hollande in 2017, adding that he was definitely thinking about the post-2017 period.

His main declaration was to stress that his movement was “neither right nor left,” which definitely places him on the political right and, though he is not associated with the far right, in the traditions of those forces who seek to violently suppress the class struggle. The “Forward March” association is headquartered in the apartment of the director of the Institut Montaigne, a think tank close to the Medef business confederation.

Macron, 37, stresses his “young entrepreneur” style to give a veneer of modernity to the PS’ brutal attacks on social and democratic rights. His “citizens” appeal, whose principal qualities are supposedly “sincerity” and youth, relies on all the clichés and stereotypes of French bourgeois politics. He informs the public that he wants a “dynamic France” and will stay clear of “political politics” and “bureaucracies.”

The right-wing *Le Figaro* sees in him a future presidential candidate. Leaders of the right-wing The Republicans (LR) party, including former prime ministers François Fillon and Jean-Pierre Raffarin, have stressed that they feel close to Macron’s ideas. Medef leader Pierre Gattaz enthusiastically praised Macron’s

initiative.

Macron, who has never won an election, has reportedly been in discussion with “numerous elected officials,” suggesting that he is looking for an official position to fall back on after 2017.

The PS is in deep crisis that emerged openly after Hollande abandoned an amendment to inscribe the state of emergency and a deprivation of nationality policy in the constitution. This stunned broad sections of the media, who responded by predicting an electoral disaster for the PS in 2017.

It is not, however, only a matter of the current crisis produced by Hollande’s unpopularity and opposition to his agenda of war, austerity, and police-state measures. In line with growing economic crisis and social opposition, the political mechanisms that underlay the construction of the PS after the May-June 1968 general strike, as a “left” bourgeois party defending capitalism, are collapsing.

Macron is only the latest of a series of PS politicians who decided to create “movements” that are nominally independent from it. After the eruption of the 2008 economic crisis, the first person to take such an initiative was former PS minister Jean-Luc Mélenchon. He launched his Left Party, which he rapidly attached to the political and trade union apparatus of the Stalinist French Communist Party (PCF) to strengthen his electoral position.

Then in November 2015, Pouria Amirshahi, a “rebel” PS deputy in the National Assembly, built his “Common Movement,” a “citizens” platform appealing to identity and gender politics and making no reference to socialism.

The proposal for a presidential primary of the “left” presented in January and backed by forces like Green politician Daniel Cohn-Bendit was also a reaction to

the PS' crisis. It aimed to provide political cover for the PS, calling for a "reconquest of the institutions by the citizens."

In February, Cohn-Bendit signed an editorial with leading PS member Martine Aubry, the mayor of Lille, which attacked Hollande for "weakening the country" by exposing too crassly his support for far-right measures.

The movements emerging from the PS are anticipating its upcoming demise. They seek to position themselves not to challenge the PS, but to best pick up whatever pieces may fall their way when the PS disintegrates—that is, the parliamentary groups or seats, official functions, networks, influence, and resources accumulated over decades as a party of government. But they will inherit above all its reactionary politics as a party of the financial aristocracy.

It is important to note that none of these movements emerging from the PS make any reference to socialism. If Macron is more explicit in his hostility to the working class and his promotion of the interests of the financial aristocracy, Mélenchon proclaimed in 2014 the death of the left and of socialism, and the political irrelevance of the working class. Manuel Valls, the current prime minister, has repeatedly called for renaming the PS to avoid referring to socialism.

With Macron's open sympathies for the Medef and his anti-worker opinions—he recently made the provocative statement that a CEO's life is harder than a worker's—Macron no doubt calculates that he will find a lot of support inside the PS.

According to certain newspapers, his initiative provoked "gnashing of teeth" inside the government and the PS, because Macron is making all too clear the class character of the PS.

One minister complained, "We tried to set up a government that dealt with reality, but that had values. And Macron is sending mixed messages again."

In fact, Macron's initiative makes clear that the PS is a big-business party that, despite its name, is hostile to socialism and to the working class. The exposure of its true character, and of pseudo-left organizations like the New Anti-capitalist Party that have promoted it for decades, is driving fears in ruling circles that the struggle for socialism—that is, revolutionary struggle by the international working class—will soon return in force.



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