

Emmanuel Macron inaugurated as president of France

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15 May 2017

Yesterday, a week after his victory in the runoff against neo-fascist candidate Marine Le Pen, Emmanuel Macron was inaugurated as president of France in the Elysée palace.

As he takes office, the program of France's eighth president since World War II already faces the opposition of the vast majority of the French people. Sixty-one percent of the population says it wants to deny him the majority in the National Assembly he would need to carry out his program of militarization and imposing deep social austerity by decree, based on the previous Socialist Party (PS) government's labor law. His reactionary program has no democratic legitimacy.

The atmosphere of yesterday's ceremony resembled more that of the coronation of a monarch than of the entry into office of an elected magistrate. With the financial aristocracy hoping to use Macron and France's perpetually renewed state of emergency to ram through its policies and crush social protest, the new president and the media were seized by the militarist and monarchist hysteria that is rapidly spreading in the ruling elite.

Macron arrived at the Elysée in an ACMAT military truck that stopped on the Champs-Élysées at the location where an Islamist murdered policeman Xavier Jugelé on April 20, three days before the first round of the presidential elections. This bow to the armed services, and Macron's actions when he stopped on the Champs-Élysées, provoked boundless and absurd enthusiasm in the media.

"People came up to him and sought refuge in his arms. In another epoch, the kings touched their subjects suffering from scrofula after their coronation. There is a bit of that in this," said a TV pundit on France2, while *ex-Le Monde* editor Eric Fottorino explained that

Macron was not made of the same stuff as ordinary men: "Steel mills make specialty metals. He is made of another metal."

Macron then gave a speech directed entirely to the banks, the army and the intelligence services. "The French people chose hope and the spirit of conquest on May 7," he began, proceeding to sketch an imperialist foreign policy whose megalomania rivals that of the colonialists of 19th century France. "We have an immense role," Macron explained, "to correct all the excesses of the ways of the world. That is our calling."

He said France needs a European Union that is "more efficient, more democratic, more political because it is the instrument of our power and sovereignty. I will work on this."

After hinting at the vast economic and geostrategic appetites of French imperialism, Macron said that France "has doubts about itself" and feels "threatened." The solution he proposed was radical free market shock therapy—"work will be deregulated, enterprises will be supported, initiative will be encouraged"—together with the incitement of the law-and-order hysteria stoked up by Macron's PS predecessor, François Hollande.

"Everything that makes France a safe country, where one can live without fear, will be built upon," he said. "Republican secularism will be defended, our police forces, our intelligence agencies, and our armies will be reinforced and supported."

The media were overjoyed at this banal declaration by an ex-Rothschild banker that he intends to continue and intensify Hollande's unpopular policies of war and austerity. "He wants to cut to the chase," enthused BFM-TV editorialist Ruth Elkrief, who praised Macron's "will to make things different."

Another journalist of the 24-hour news channel could not restrain his enthusiasm: "We will all remember this

spectacular image of Emmanuel Macron on a military vehicle.”

This type of militarist delirium is the product of a bankrupt social order. After decades of austerity, the capitalist class has nothing to offer to the workers and feels surrounded on all sides by crises for which it has no solution. The “Republican salute” Macron gave to Le Pen, the political descendant of the Nazi-collaborationist Vichy regime, in his victory speech on election night reveals not only the frame of mind of French ruling circles, but the type of police state regime Macron intends to set up.

If journalists put forth visions of Macron as a king miraculously curing France of scrofula, it is because the ruling class knows it has no solution to the social crisis and is itself desperately looking for some sort of miracle that will make Hollande’s right-wing, free-market agenda popular.

The election of Macron—Hollande’s former economy minister, who never won elected office before becoming president of France—cannot, however, overcome the crisis of capitalism. It will solve nothing. By extending Hollande’s discredited policy agenda, which only intensified war, unemployment and the refugee crisis, the French and European bourgeoisie will only intensify under Macron the crises they could not resolve under Hollande.

Macron is flying to Berlin today to deal with the explosive conflicts over financial policy that are tearing apart the euro zone, and, in particular, its Franco-German axis. After naming his prime minister today and the ministerial cabinet tomorrow, Macron will travel at the end of the week to Mali, a country devastated by a neocolonial war launched by Hollande in the aftermath of NATO’s imperialist war in Libya in 2011.

Macron named Philippe Etienne, a former French ambassador to Germany and then Russia, to the influential position of the Elysée’s diplomatic councilor. This underscores the importance for Paris of the European crisis where, as Hollande admitted after NATO’s decision to topple a pro-Russian government in Ukraine with a fascist putsch, there is the danger of “total war” with Russia, the world’s second-largest nuclear power. However, Macron is proposing a major military escalation, increasing military spending to 2 percent of GDP and bringing back the draft.

The circumstances of Macron’s inauguration vindicate the call of the *Parti de l’égalité socialiste* (PES) for an active boycott of the presidential runoff between Macron and Le Pen.

The PES alone issued this call. It insisted that the critical question was to elaborate a politically independent, revolutionary perspective for the working class, to prepare for the struggles that will erupt in the aftermath of the election. It opposed those who cited the mortal dangers posed to the working class by Le Pen to justify giving support to Macron, whose militarist and authoritarian policies also pose mortal threats to the working class.

The PES’s perspective contrasted sharply with the parliamentary orientation and thinly disguised support for Macron of forces such as Jean-Luc Mélenchon’s Unsubmissive France (UF) movement and the New Anti-capitalist Party. Today, as Macron and the media work together to shift the political atmosphere far to the right, their accommodation to the media’s lies that Macron was the “lesser evil” is starkly exposed.

What will emerge in France and internationally is a collision of revolutionary dimensions between the working class and a ruling elite set on a policy of war and dictatorship. Four million voters in France spoiled their ballots or submitted blank ballots out of opposition to both candidates, and 70 percent of the population opposed the PS’s labor law when it was rammed through last year in the face of mass protests. The critical issue now is the political preparation of a revolutionary leadership in the working class to oppose the drive to dictatorship and war.



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