

Macron names government to implement social counterrevolution in France

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Prime Minister Edouard Philippe, named May 15 by newly elected French president Emmanuel Macron, made public his cabinet choices yesterday. It is a government in which all the dominant factions of the political establishment, particularly the so-called moderate wings of the Socialist Party (PS) and The Republicans (LR), come together to prepare a social counterrevolution.

The presentation of the cabinet had been delayed 24 hours to make certain that none of the nominations would embarrass Macron, who has pledged to “moralise” public life and end tax evasion by officials. He wants to give a veneer of legitimacy to his policies, which continue and intensify those of his discredited Socialist Party predecessor, François Hollande: austerity, war and attacks on democratic rights.

The strategic ministries (the interior, foreign affairs, defence, justice and economy) will be occupied by longstanding pillars of the political establishment and proponents of the policies implemented in France under right-wing President Nicolas Sarkozy of LR or Hollande and the PS.

In the second round of the presidential elections, a race between Macron and neo-fascist Marine Le Pen, the *Parti de l'égalité socialiste* (PES) stressed that workers could not stop the rise of militarism and police state rule by voting for Macron, whose programme was profoundly reactionary. The PES proposed instead an active boycott to arm workers with an independent, revolutionary and socialist perspective for the struggles against Macron that were to come.

The team presented by Macron and Philippe confirms this analysis of Macron's presidency against all those, like Jean-Luc Mélenchon or the New Anti-capitalist Party, who signaled their sympathy for arguments that voters should pick Macron to block Le Pen. The new

government is preparing imperialist war abroad and class war against the workers at home.

At the beginning of the week, Macron announced that Patrice Strzoda, the former chief of staff of PS Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve, would be his own chief of staff.

Strzoda organised the brutal police repression of protests against Hollande, including the systematic and deadly use of “flash-ball” rubber bullets. As prefect in Brittany from 2013 to 2016, he oversaw the police operations and the use of assault grenades that in 2014 cost the life of ecological protester Rémi Fraisse. His nomination is a sign that Macron and Philippe will stop at nothing to repress the explosive opposition that their policies will provoke.

Jean-Yves Le Drian (PS) is France's new minister of foreign affairs. As defence minister under Hollande, he played a critical role in French imperialism's aggressive policy in Syria and Africa, and against Russia as part of the NATO alliance. He also supervised the deployment of the army on French soil in the context of the prolonged state of emergency, which suspends basic democratic rights.

According to press reports, Le Drian worked closely with Hollande to identify and approve targets of the PS's “homicide operations.” These extra-judicial murders, “targeted assassinations,” including of citizens, were carried out by the French state abroad in flagrant violation of the French constitution, which forbids the death penalty. His chief role in a new government will be to carry out the reorganisation and remilitarisation of European foreign policy, carried out in close collaboration with Berlin.

Gérard Collomb, the PS mayor of Lyon, is now interior minister. He is a founding member of the PS. According to Luc Rosenzweig, a former journalist at *Le*

Monde and *Libération*, Lyon under Collomb—due to the close collaboration between the PS and business circles—was “a laboratory of Macronism even before Macron tried to play in the big leagues of the political arena.” After the November 13, 2015, attacks in Paris, Collomb decreed the arming of Lyon’s municipal police.

Another pillar of the political establishment, right-wing politician François Bayrou of the Democratic Movement (MoDem), is now justice minister. Bayrou has regularly been a minister of reactionary governments since the 1980s. A practising Catholic, he tried as education minister to introduce a law that would allow stepped-up financing of private schools. In 1994, nearly a million protesters marched to oppose this plan.

He will be tasked with implementing Macron’s “zero tolerance” plan, which includes 15,000 more prison berths, increasing the number of youth detention centres and toughening sentences for petty crime, including with the introduction of so-called immediate fines levied by police.

The defence ministry has been given to Sylvie Goulard of Bayrou’s MoDem, who has close ties to the European Union after advising European Commission chief Romano Prodi between 2001 and 2004. She is charged with implementing Macron’s militarist programme, including increasing military spending to 2 percent of GDP and reintroducing the draft.

Macron has done everything to indicate that preparing for war and supporting the army are among his highest priorities, traveling down the Champs-Élysées on his inauguration day on a military vehicle. He will participate in the NATO summit in Brussels on May 25 and visit, either today or tomorrow, French troops deployed in Mali and the broader Sahel zone in Africa.

The new labour minister, Muriel Pénicaud, is close to Macron. She was the CEO of many major public and private French enterprises. The *Voix du Nord* daily called her “the salesman of France to foreign investment.” She has the job of coordinating Macron’s attempts to attract foreign investment via historic attacks on wages, employment and social spending based on massive deregulation.

Pénicaud will supervise the destruction of the Labour Code announced by Macron, based on Hollande’s deeply unpopular labour law, imposed without a vote in

parliament and after the harsh repression of protests against it.



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