

Macron publishes platform for European elections calling for EU police state

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On Tuesday, French President Emmanuel Macron published a column in media and newspapers across Europe, laying out his program for the upcoming European elections of May 23-26.

Coming after he hailed fascist dictator Philippe Pétain last November, and amid mass “yellow vest” protests demanding his removal from office, Macron’s column abandons the threadbare pretense that he is advocating a liberal development policy for Europe. The article, titled “Renewing Europe,” still criticizes nationalism and Brexit and hails the European Union (EU), but it does so in terms virtually indistinguishable from those of the far right. He hails the EU as the ideal framework to build Europe as a world military power and police state defending its external borders.

Pledging to fight “tirelessly” for the EU, he writes: “We have shown that what we were told was unattainable, the creation of a European defence capability and the protection of social rights, was in fact possible. ... Europe is not just a market. It is a project. A market is useful, but it should not detract from the need for borders that protect and values that unite.”

Macron and his orientation to the EU were always deeply reactionary. He campaigned on a viciously right-wing platform, advocating harsh austerity, police-state measures and an escalation of militarism including the return to universal military service. Masses of people understood him to be so right-wing that millions of voters—facing a choice between him and neo-fascist candidate Marine Le Pen in the 2017 French presidential run-off—boycotted the vote.

Macron’s hailing of the EU as a military power aggressively policing its borders is a signal received loud and clear by neo-fascistic politicians across Europe. Last year, Macron denounced far-right, anti-

immigrant Eastern European politicians like Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban as “crazy minds” and denounced their nationalist politics for creating “division” inside Europe. He had also denounced the far-right Italian government of Interior Minister Matteo Salvini as a “leprosy” spreading across the body of European politics.

Yesterday, however, Orban welcomed Macron’s propositions, saying that now that Macron’s column has been published, it is “high time to discuss seriously of Europe’s future.”

Orban emailed a statement to Reuters about Macron’s column, declaring: “This could mark the beginning of a serious European debate. ... On details, of course we have different views, but what is far more important than these different views is that this initiative is a good point of departure for a serious and constructive dialog on the future of Europe.”

If Orban is endorsing Macron’s proposals, it is because Macron’s police-state proposals are compatible with the far-right policies pursued by capitalist regimes across Eastern Europe.

On law enforcement, Macron calls for ratcheting up measures targeting immigrants while also deepening police cooperation between the EU member states. He calls for “stringent border controls,” as well as “a common border force and a European asylum office, strict control obligations and European solidarity to which each country will contribute under the authority of a European Council for Internal Security.”

These policies are to be supplemented with a major escalation of EU political censorship. Echoing the campaign of the Democratic Party in the United States blaming Trump’s presidential victory on Russian political meddling, Macron called for a campaign to censor the Internet, ostensibly in response to the threat

of unspecified foreign meddling in EU elections.

Macron warns that “foreign powers seek to influence our vote at each election. I propose creating a European Agency for the Protection of Democracies, which will provide each member state with European experts to protect their election processes against cyber-attacks and manipulation. In this same spirit of independence, we should also ban the funding of European political parties by foreign powers. We should have European rules that banish all incitements to hate and violence from the Internet, since respect for the individual is the bedrock of our civilisation of dignity.”

Particularly amid the “yellow vest” protests, whose statements against Macron the media routinely slander as hate speech, this is an open-ended invitation to censor political opposition to EU policy. It would grant extraordinary powers to unelected “European experts” to censor the Internet, on the model of the collaboration between Paris and Facebook, in whose offices French officials work to monitor and suppress content. Significantly, Macron does not even bother to cite an example of electoral meddling in Europe to justify his assertion that these policies are needed.

The other main concern in Macron’s column is the EU’s development as a major military power. He declares that “Europe is not a second-rank power.” He continues, “Substantial progress has been made in the last two years, but we need to set a clear course: a treaty on defence and security should define our fundamental obligations in association with NATO and our European allies: increased defence spending, a truly operational mutual defence clause, and the European Security Council with the United Kingdom on board to prepare our collective decisions.”

Macron also advocates a protectionist policy, proposing “the adoption of European preference in strategic industries and our public procurement, as our American and Chinese competitors do.”

Macron’s claim that this hyper-militarist policy is compatible with social rights and entitlements is a political fraud. In fact, the pledges of hundreds of billions of euros in new military spending made by EU countries in recent years have come overwhelmingly at the expense of the working class, which has suffered a decade of intense EU austerity and public-sector wage freezes since the 2008 Wall Street crash. Amid the greatest economic crisis of capitalism since the 1930s,

the EU has worked to throw the working class back decades.

Indeed, despite defining the EU as a “historic success” accomplishing “the reconciliation of a devastated continent in an unprecedented project of peace, prosperity and freedom,” Macron admits the EU “failed to respond to its peoples’ needs for protection from the major shocks of the modern world.”

Not only did the Stalinist dissolution of the USSR and the restoration of capitalism in 1991 economically and socially devastate much of Eastern Europe, but it set the stage for eastward EU and NATO expansion that have left NATO and Russia on the brink of war. Last year, both Russia and NATO carried out the largest military exercises since the Cold War and, in Russia’s case, since World War II. And at the same time, a wave of strikes and protests against EU wage freezes and austerity has shaken not only France, but Portugal, Belgium, and Germany in recent weeks.

Faced with this growing working class opposition, Macron is reacting by turning to military-police and anti-immigrant rhetoric, in line with the rest of the ruling elite. This is a warning: the ills of the European Union will not be remedied by attempts to rewrite its founding treaties or other panaceas. The only way to deal with a crisis rooted ultimately in the bankruptcy of European and world capitalism is a turn to the working class and a revolutionary struggle to replace the EU with the United Socialist States of Europe.



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