

Jean-Luc Mélenchon hails Mexican government as embodiment of “citizens’ revolution”

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Last month’s visit to Mexico by Jean-Luc Mélenchon, the leader of Unsubmissive France (LFI), spoke volumes about his politics and the nature of any government he would lead were he to win the French presidential elections in 2022.

Mélenchon travelled as an official guest of the ruling Morena party of President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador (referred to as AMLO). During the two-week trip beginning July 13, he met with leading Morena members of both houses of Congress, lectured to its internal conferences and public meetings, including on his most recent book, *Era of the People*, and held a two-hour private meeting with AMLO.

The trip itself was a sign that, despite mounting strikes and “yellow vest” protests against President Emmanuel Macron in France, Mélenchon himself intends to pursue right-wing, anti-working-class policies. While in Mexico, he repeatedly hailed the Morena administration as the living embodiment of his own political program put into practice. In one of four video blog postings to his followers throughout the trip, he called the AMLO government a “particular form of the formulation of the citizens’ revolution.”

Given that Mélenchon himself holds up the Morena administration as an example of what he would like to achieve were he to take power in France, it is worth examining what the results of this “revolution” have been for the Mexican and international working class.

Acting at the behest of the Trump administration, AMLO has vastly expanded attacks on immigrants. In its first six months of office, his government deported over 82,000 people, an increase of 245 percent. By June—one month before Mélenchon’s visit—AMLO deployed over 21,000 soldiers to patrol the country’s northern and southern borders, where they effectively serve as an extension of the fascistic US Border Patrol Command at the US-Mexican border.

The Mexican military catches and detains thousands of refugees, who are now being imprisoned at a rate of around 1,000 people per day for deportation. Thousands of workers are imprisoned by Mexican police forces, on AMLO’s orders, in what can only be described as concentration camps.

This record has won AMLO the personal praise of Donald Trump and his thuggish secretary of state, Mike Pompeo. While Mélenchon was in Mexico City, Pompeo was there as well on July

21 to meet with his counterpart Marcelo Ebrard, hailing “significant advances” in immigration policy under AMLO. Ebrard boasted to Pompeo that Morena had cut the number of refugee arrivals at the US-Mexico border by 44,000 in one month.

Morena has also continued the austerity policies against the Mexican working class of his predecessors, pursuing pro-business education reforms and denounced striking teachers. AMLO opposed the massive wildcat strikes that erupted in the border city of Matamoros at the beginning of 2019 against sweatshop conditions in the maquiladoras auto parts manufacturing hubs—urging workers who make as little as \$10 per day to “consider the companies’ situation” and sending troops to assault workers on the picket lines.

Mélenchon fraudulently praised this record as a “fourth transformation” now supposedly underway in Mexico. When he referred to growing left-wing, working class opposition to AMLO, it was only to denounce it. The Mexican president’s collaboration with the Trump administration had “cost him dearly among leftists, who will label it an immediate surprise,” Mélenchon complained. But it was “better to avoid a frontal clash” with the US, and “this is what AMLO is trying to do.”

Mélenchon’s endorsement of AMLO underscores that an LFI government would implement a no less anti-working-class program than his Mexican counterpart. Mélenchon made clear that he shares AMLO’s anti-immigrant program, telling senators in Mexico City that he too was “not a supporter of free migration,” and that national “borders have a vital function as a cell to structure and organize.”

Mélenchon doubtless hopes his association with Morena will boost his own political fortunes, amid a collapse in electoral support for his party. Having secured 20 percent of the vote in the 2017 presidential elections, it fell to just over 6 percent in this year’s European election polls after having failed to give any meaningful political support of organize protest actions in defense of “yellow vest” protesters attacked by Macron.

On his trip, Mélenchon tried to dismiss the significance and implications of this electoral debacle. He noted that Morena had been defeated in two elections before winning a landslide victory in 2018, in which AMLO became the undeserving beneficiary of a rising tide of left-wing political opposition among workers and young people. He secured by far the largest vote of any president

in Mexican history.

What the events both in Mexico and in France have revealed, however, is the deepening class gulf separating workers and immigrants from capitalist politicians like Mélenchon and AMLO.

The Macron administration, which has slashed labor rights, pensions social spending and taxes on the rich, and brutally repressed “yellow vest” protests with police violence, is widely and justifiably hated by the working class and youth. The Socialist Party, from which Macron and his party directly emerged, is despised as a big business party because of its role in imposing austerity and launching neo-colonial wars over decades, including its support, like Mélenchon himself, for the 2011 Libyan war. The trade unions, which have strangled and suppressed the class struggle for decades, are pro-corporate shells, which were openly hostile to the “yellow vests.”

Under these conditions Mélenchon is aware of the necessity of a new “left” nationalist trap to head off the development of an international revolutionary socialist movement in the working class and committed to the defense of capitalist property and the geostrategic interests of French imperialism. Having served within the Socialist Party for decades until 2009, he formed the Left Front and then La France Insoumise with this aim. His trip to Mexico was a signal to the ruling class in France that he can be trusted to impose its policies of austerity and militarism against growing working-class opposition.

Mélenchon chose while in Mexico City to visit the Leon Trotsky Museum located in the city’s borough of Coyoacán. The museum is located in the house where the great Russian revolutionary, who in 1917 co-led the October Revolution with Vladimir Lenin and in 1938 founded the Fourth International against the Stalinist degeneration of the Soviet Union and the Communist (Third) International, lived for one year before his assassination on August 20, 1940, at the hands of Stalinist agent Ramon Mercader.

In his blog account of the visit, Mélenchon presented Trotsky’s titanic struggle against the counterrevolutionary and nationalist Stalinist bureaucracy as a matter of purely academic interest without any particular contemporary relevance. “In the 21st century, we can clearly listen over again to all our lectures on how we interpreted the events” of the Russian Revolution, he said, to “adhere, as for me in my youth, to Trotskyism,” and know if really what Leon Trotsky proposed was needed, “rather than this or that, etc.”

This would not lessen the loyalty of “those like me” to the “memory of absolute rebels like Trotsky, who was an absolute Unsubmissive because he never submitted to Stalin.”

What a fraud! It is absurd to compare a leader of the October Revolution and the founder of the Fourth International to Mélenchon, the former Socialist Party minister and ally of the pro-austerity Syriza (“Coalition of the Radical Left”) government in Greece. Mélenchon, it is well known, has declared that the working class and socialist revolution are politically irrelevant and that the current epoch demands populist politics. That is, Mélenchon takes as his point of departure vitriolic hostility to the classical Marxist outlook of which Trotsky was a most brilliant representative.

Mélenchon’s claim to condemn the assassination of Trotsky is

similarly grotesque and sinister, as his political career has involved a long collaboration with the French Communist Party—a party closely involved in setting up the international Stalinist murder ring that organized and prepared the assassination of Trotsky, as well as the murders of his closest co-thinkers, including his son Leon Sedov, and the secretary of the Fourth International, Rudolf Klement.

Despite Mélenchon’s claim to have been a Trotskyist in his youth, the reality is that he never belonged to a Trotskyist party. His political career began in the *Organisation Communiste Internationaliste* (OCI) after its 1971 split from the International Committee of the Fourth International and the OCI’s ensuing break with Trotskyism. Drawing the conclusions from the OCI’s nationalist orientation to the big-business Socialist Party (PS), Mélenchon then abandoned the OCI and took up a career in the PS.

Mélenchon was a key operative in the Union of the Left of the PCF and the PS, led by Francois Mitterrand, that was backed by the OCI. He then served as an adviser to Mitterrand and a minister in the PS government led by Lionel Jospin, who was himself another OCI member working inside the PS.

If Mélenchon now tries to associate his own party with the name of Trotsky, it is because he is aware that Trotsky’s name and struggle against Stalinism continue to arouse the interest and admiration of the most politically conscious sections of the working class and youth. That interest will only grow amid the deepest crisis of global capitalism since the 1930s that is once again propelling millions of workers into revolutionary struggles.

Today, Trotskyism is represented only by the Socialist Equality Party in France and the International Committee of the Fourth International, which has waged a protracted struggle over more than 65 years to defend the program and principles of genuine Trotskyism against all forms of revisionism that assigned a progressive historical role to the Stalinist bureaucracy, Social Democracy and bourgeois-nationalist organizations in the colonial countries, and on that basis opposed the fight to build an independent revolutionary party of the working class.



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