Recording reveals pseudo-left La France Insoumise collusion with Macron in 2016

Francis Dubois
14 December 2019

The recording of a September 12, 2016 discussion between the current deputy for Amiens and prominent leader of La France Insoumise (LFI—Unsubmissive France), François Ruffin, and the current president, Emmanuel Macron, published by *Le Figaro* last week, help unmask the anti-worker nature of this pseudo-left formation. It demonstrates the need for workers to organize their struggles independently of Jean-Luc Mélenchon and his disreputable LFI.

The 2016 dialogue took place at Macron's headquarters at the Tour Montparnasse in Paris. We hear Ruffin, with a team from his satirical magazine *Fakir* and union delegates from the Ecopla factory which was in liquidation, proposing to Macron a cynical charade featuring Ruffin, as a workers' champion, holding Macron, the candidate, accountable for his "mistakes." The meeting was initiated by Ruffin.

Ruffin: "I think that if we think about strategy, you need to be strongly challenged, and publicly, by Ecopla's employees, it will be an episode. And then, you respond to them by saying: 'I'm ready to go to the factory, and there's a second episode.'"

Macron: "Okay. Okay (...) One: we have an exchange about the dossier. Two: we keep you informed of progress. Three: you, you stop me publicly. Four: we agree upon a travel date together. On October 5, or in late September—and we see how we communicate on it together."

Ruffin concludes by saying: "And I think we should leave here looking unhappy," to which Macron agrees.

Ecopla, a factory in the Isère region with some 80 employees was then in liquidation. A group of employees, conducted by the CGT and the Communist Party (PCF), then by LFI, went around to the various candidates in the 2017 presidential elections in search of support for resuming production. Ruffin, who already knew he was LFI's candidate for the legislative elections in Amiens, had taken the lead in this campaign and was using it for media exposure.

Macron had just left Socialist Party President François Hollande's cabinet as Minister of the Economy and created his electoral vehicle called "En Marche" for his presidential campaign. His ministry had already received the largest shareholder in Ecopla, who was profiting from state aid, without doing anything to stop the liquidation.

On the evening of September 12, a "confrontation" took place between Macron, on the one side, and Ruffin in the company of Ecopla workers, on the other. This was staged in the presence of the media, in front of a restaurant on rue Montmartre where Macron was standing with young people from En Marche. In this little comedy, Macron was then able to "recognize his mistakes" and by so doing wash away some of the political dirt still sticking to his name and impress the media with his calm in front of the agitation of the Ecopla workers and Ruffin. The youth from En Marche then started to shout, "Macron president!"

Macron could then, at the end of September, discreetly visit the employees of the plant in question and show interest in and listen to them. All of this was stage-managed for public consumption.

On October 5, the Grenoble Commercial Court decided to close the plant. A few months later the cooperative project was abandoned, and the workers laid off. Macron twice repeated the manoeuvre in 2017 with visits to the relocated Whirlpool plant in Amiens, including one in April. In May, he was elected France's president. In June, Ruffin was elected LFI MP for Amiens.

Ruffin has taken offence at the comments about his political fraud and asked that "his sincerity not be called into question." Who is he kidding? It was his own collusion behind the backs of voters with Macron, a president now hated by the overwhelming majority of French workers, that inevitably calls in question his

© World Socialist Web Site

political sincerity.

As for Mélenchon and the leadership of LFI, their silence on this matter is deafening. They were aware of it and participated in the manoeuvre, because Eric Coquerel, one of LFI's leading figures, was part of Ruffin's delegation in Montparnasse in 2016.

This underlines the fact that LFI has been complicit in the attacks suffered by workers over the past three years under Macron.

Ruffin's political scam not only allowed Macron to launch his election campaign around the defence of industry and jobs and assisted in the creation of the image of an "honest" and "dynamic" politician, concerned for the good of the people. It also helped to put over the fraud of Macron as an alternative to the neo-fascist Marine Le Pen, and politically disarmed workers in the face of the danger of his whirlwind offensive against social and democratic rights that took place after his election. In May 2017, Ruffin explicitly called for a Macron vote.

Ruffin offered Macron this charlatanry because he and LFI were essentially in agreement with Macron's policy. In 2016, Mélenchon and LFI praised their Greek political ally Syriza, which had already betrayed its 2015 election promises and formed a coalition with an extreme right-wing party. Syriza carried out the massive destruction of the Greek working class's standard of living and social rights to impose the brutal austerity demanded by the European Union, the banks, Hollande and Macron. Greek pensioners' incomes had been reduced by a third, and half of workers under 25 were unemployed.

The recording published by *Le Figaro* only confirms the right-wing, nationalist and anti-working class character of LFI and its anti-socialist fraud of "left-wing populism."

LFI was from the beginning a movement representing the well-off petty bourgeoisie, adopting Syriza in Greece and Podemos in Spain as its models, and built on the explicit basis of the anti-Marxist theories of Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau, as a pro-capitalist populist party. The party has a large part of its social base in the police and the state apparatus. Since its formation, LFI has constantly headed to the right.

Both between the two rounds of the presidential election and after Macron's election, Mélenchon proposed becoming Macron's prime minister to guide the latter in implementing his policy. "It must be shown that this young man must be tempered in his follies by the wise hand of a wise man who knows which side the people's happiness is on," Mélenchon ludicrously asserted.

Despite the opposition of the majority of his constituents to the attempt to blackmail them with a choice between Macron and Le Pen, Mélenchon refused to oppose the media consensus in favour of Macron between rounds of the 2017 presidential election. Only the Party for Socialist Equality (PES), the French section of the International Committee of the Fourth International (CIQI), opposed both Macron and Le Pen during the presidential election.

Under Macron, Mélenchon has conducted a policy thoroughly in line with Syriza's reactionary policies in Greece. The LFI leader has applauded the military and rearmament, denied France's responsibility in the Vel'd'Hiv roundup during World War II [mass arrests of Jews, for deportation and extermination, by the French police at the behest of the Nazi occupiers and collaborationist French authorities], covered up the sabotage of workers' struggles by the unions, defended the CRS riot police in the Benalla case and demanded the "right" of his party to be Islamophobic.

Faced now with a mass mobilizations and strikes, Mélenchon has moved farther to the right. On December 5 in Marseilles, he congratulated Marine Le Pen, the leader of the favorite party of the police mobilized by Macron against strikers. He described Le Pen's granting permission for her party's members to join the demonstrations as "great progress."

"She's making some kind of progress towards humanism, I'm not going to complain about that," he said, adding that "RN [extreme-right National Rally] members [are] welcome."

This amounts to a warning that if they were to come to power, Mélenchon and Ruffin would apply the same type of anti-worker and repressive policy as Macron and the far right. Against the pseudo-left and their union allies, who collaborate with the oligarchy represented by Macron, workers must create their own economic and political bodies of struggle, action committees independent of the trade unions, aimed at bringing down Macron. This struggle will require a determined political struggle against the pseudo-left forces that work cynically with Macron.

To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact

© World Socialist Web Site