Macron administration wages far-right campaign against “Islamo-leftism”

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In the wake of the October 15 terrorist attack that killed French school teacher Samuel Paty, the Macron administration is seeking to brand opposition to its racist police-state attacks on Muslims as “Islamo-leftism” and essentially criminal.

In an interview with Europe1 last Thursday, Education Minister Jean-Michel Blanquer declared that broad sections of the “left” were accomplices for terrorism. “The intellectual complicity of terrorism is what I would like to underscore,” he said. “What is called ‘Islamo-leftism’ is ravaging the universities [and] is ravaging organizations like UNEF and CEDA.” He added that in Unsubmissive France, the party of Jean-Luc Mélenchon, “you have people who are quite simply of this current of thought and openly state it.

“In this affair there is not simply a lone killer,” Blanquer continued. “It is a killer who has been conditioned by those who are in some sense the intellectual authors of this murder.…” He referred to the more than 50 Muslim organizations that the Macron government is in the process of dissolving, noting that here “you have people who do not commit a crime but who encourage this intellectual radicalism, and they are in fact intellectual accomplices of the crime.

“If you have the fish poisoned by the head, as one says, these are ideas … [like] communalism, which come from elsewhere, from models of society that are not our own.” Blanquer added that “our society has been far too permeable to these currents of thought.”

This was only the latest in a wave of similar statements over the past week. Two days earlier, Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin, who controls the police and security services, told BFM-TV that he had “always been shocked to walk into a supermarket and see an aisle with the cuisine from some community and some other on the other side,” referring to halal, kosher and other foods that satisfy religious requirements. He said, “That is how communalism begins.”

In the same interview, Darmanin targeted Edwy Plenel, the editor of Médiapart and former member of the predecessor of the Pabloite New Anti-Capitalist Party. He denounced the left as “responsible for this atmosphere, this temperature that permits individuals to pass to the act [of terrorism] by excusing everything.”

Manuel Valls, an interior minister of François Hollande’s Socialist Party (PS) government, attacked “a section of the left, Islamo-leftism, which has demonstrated very great complicity with regards to political Islam.” He named Jean-Luc Mélenchon, who joined a November 2019 protest against attacks on Muslims, as “very complicit. He has a great responsibility for everything that has happened, in the entire relationship of the left in the fight against Islamism.”

In an October 17 interview with *Le Parisien*, former PS Prime Minister Bernard Cazeneuve denounced “Islamo-leftism, that looks lovingly upon certain communalist organizations that have defiance, not to say a form of hatred, towards the Republic.”

The Macron administration and the PS from which it emerged are working to promote and rehabilitate far-right and fascistic politics in France. Denunciations of the “permeability of France” to foreign ideas, attacks on Muslim and Jewish cuisines, the assertion that the “left” is complicit in the promotion of terrorism and subverts “the Republic” all have the character of a far-right promotion of police-state measures.

The charge of “Islamo-leftism” is now being used to slander anyone who defends the democratic rights of Muslims and immigrants and opposes French imperialism as criminals and accomplices of terrorism. The term was previously confined largely to the

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extreme right but was adopted more broadly within the political establishment in the past two decades to legitimize attacks on Muslims. This period saw the banning of Islamic headscarves in public schools in 2004 and the burqa in public places in 2010.

The real "accomplices" of terrorism are not Muslims and those who defend them but the French ruling class and its political representatives. France, historically a colonial oppressor of much of Africa and the Middle East, has joined imperialist wars from the Sahel to Libya, to Afghanistan and Syria, to install puppet governments and control the region's geo-strategic positions and profits. The greatest refugee crisis since World War II has emerged, and hundreds of thousands have been killed, including countless defenseless civilians.

Not only have these acts of neocolonial aggression affected domestic political life within all the imperialist countries.

As part of its regime-change wars in Syria and Libya, France helped fund and arm right-wing Islamist forces and groups linked to Al Qaeda and used them as proxy forces. In successive terrorist attacks in Europe, including the 2015 Charlie Hebdo attacks, the attackers had been known to and followed by the intelligence agencies before the attack. In every instance, the terrorist attacks have been used by the ruling elite to shift politics to the right, divide workers along ethnic lines, and justify sweeping inroads into democratic rights.

The present campaign is no different. Its real target is not sections of the political establishment such as Mélenchon, but millions of workers and youth opposed to the policies of the French ruling class. Macron's "anti-separatism" law, which is due to come before parliament next month, grants sweeping powers to the state, including the dissolution of any organization not in line with supposedly "Republican values," as defined by the interior ministry.

Macron, who declared that Nazi-collaborationist dictator Philippe Pétain was a "great soldier," has worked to build up a police state, assaulting strikes and "yellow vest" protests with police violence since 2018. This is now being accelerated by the pandemic, as France reported more than 50,000 cases on Sunday, with warnings by health officials that the country faces a second wave deadlier than the first. Fully aware of rising popular anger at its murderous policies in the pandemic, the ruling class is seeking to prepare a neofascistic, authoritarian regime to try to suppress popular opposition.

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