# With hospitals overflowing, Macron defends his “herd immunity” against the virus

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Yesterday, the *Journal du dimanche* (JDD) published an interview with Emmanuel Macron in which he defended the European Union’s (EU) catastrophic management of the COVID-19 pandemic and continued to refuse a lockdown, while hospitals are completely overwhelmed.

A few pages later, the JDD informs its readers that hospitals in the Paris region are starting to choose which patients are given life-saving intensive care treatment. Faced with an influx of serious cases, health workers are being forced to choose which patients to treat, condemning to death patients they would otherwise have saved. Nevertheless, as Europe passes the 900,000 death mark and France overtakes Russia and the UK as the country with the most cases of COVID-19 in Europe (4.5 million), Macron says he will not change his failed health policy.

In an article entitled “I assume completely,” Macron displayed a blatant disregard for the lives of the French people: “For the next few days, we will look at the effectiveness of the braking measures, and if necessary, we will take those that are required. But at this time nothing has been decided.”

However, this so-called “braking” is a debacle, as the number of daily cases of COVID-19 has risen from 25,000 to over 40,000 in one month. Already 95,000 people have died of COVID-19 in France, and only 3.8 percent of the French are fully vaccinated. Macron, however, intends to make the population suffer a new pandemic peak, long predicted by scientists, due to the generalisation of the English variant.

Macron insisted that despite the predicted death toll, he refuses any even temporary closure of schools and non-essential workplaces: “We are doing everything to strengthen health protocols so that we can keep schools open.” As deaths on a horrific scale loom, Macron hammered home the point that closing schools, the focus of any real lockdown policy to stop the virus, “must remain a last resort.”

Yet it was by September 2020 at the latest that the “last resort” should have been put in place, as the resurgence of the virus following the premature lifting of the March 2020 containment had already been confirmed. Now that the virus has spread out of control and there is a clear danger of a collapse of the medical system, Macron refuses a containment to break the contagion’s momentum.

A letter from 41 Parisian hospital doctors, entitled “We will be forced to triage patients,” announced in the JDD the imminence of the total overflow of hospitals, in “the next fortnight.” They declared:

“(W)e wish to explain transparently the situation we will have to face and how we will deal with it. In this disastrous medicine situation, where there will be a clear mismatch between needs and available resources, we will be forced to triage patients to save as many lives as possible. This triage will involve all patients, Covid and non-Covid, especially for access to critical care for adult patients.”

They note that this triaging has already begun, “since major medical and surgical deprogramming has already been imposed on us … We have never experienced such a situation, even during the worst periods in recent years.”

Another op-ed by a doctors collective, entitled “By forcing carers to decide which patient should live, the government is hypocritically abdicating responsibility,” warned of the social and moral catastrophe the government is unleashing. The triage strategy, they wrote, “as a consequence of the current health response strategy ... is far removed from the elementary rules of ethics, which advocate that admission to intensive care

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should be assessed on a case-by-case basis, in the sole interest of the patient."

They add that as the carers are "forced to act in an unethical manner, they will certainly not come out of this unscathed. It is likely that many of them will be left with permanent psychological scars."

When, in March 2020, hospital wards in northern Italy were overwhelmed and began to triage their patients, the barbarity of the process shocked the world. Spontaneous walkouts in the automotive, steel and machine-tool industries in Italy, which spread in Europe and to the US, compelled governments to enact lockdowns. The French employers association worried over the "extremely brutal change of attitude of the workers," while Macron adopted a strict lockdown and claimed to declare "war" on the coronavirus.

Workers, fighting to defend lives, were met with criminal indifference by the financial aristocracy and its political representatives, who were advocating a policy of profits and death. While the EU showered the banks and big business with trillions of public funds in bailout packages, the financial aristocracy pushed for a return to work and school as soon as possible to ensure a continuous flow of profits to the financial markets.

One wonders today: if this is the "war" Macron claims to be waging on the coronavirus, what would capitulation and collaboration look like?

For months now, scientists have been warning of the risks to the public from Macron's inaction. In January, the president of the National Scientific Council, Jean-François Delfraissy, warned of the danger posed by the variants then raging through the UK: "We realise that if we continue without doing anything more, we will find ourselves in an extremely difficult situation beginning in mid-March."

Dominique Costagliola, an epidemiologist who had also highlighted the need for strict lockdowns in January, said in March: "It's naive to pretend Macron is an epidemiologist." She asked, "Why did we not listen to Jean-François Delfraissy when, on 24 January, he explained that the new variants were a game changer?"

The Macron government, which was clearly pursuing the herd immunity policy advocated more openly by Trump and Johnson, while denying this reality in front of the media, has been turning a deaf ear to scientists for months.

On March 22, Health Minister Olivier Véran explained that the government had coldly predicted weeks or months of death in hospitals: "I remain very worried about the health situation. ... We will have to face a very large wave in the hospitals that will take weeks to die down. We're going to have some difficult images to endure in the hospital."

Macron, in his interview with the JDD, permitted himself the luxury of shedding a few crocodile tears over the fate of patients to whom his government is preparing to block access to treatment. He said, "It is not said enough, but many people in intensive care come from modest backgrounds. There's a lot of unfairness in the way the disease hits."

Yet it is precisely because the coronavirus hits working people hardest that Macron intends to leave patients to their fate. In his indifference to the pandemic, the "president of the rich" obeys the same class hatred that has marked his entire term in office.

This confirms the central lesson of all the struggles waged by workers against Macron: there is nothing to negotiate with him, and the trade union apparatuses and their political allies who play this game are only complicit in his political criminality. It is a question of organising the mobilisation of workers throughout Europe and internationally, independently of the unions, in order to impose a scientific policy against the coronavirus. The aim of this movement must be to transfer political power to the workers, and to expropriate the financial aristocracy that has organised this disaster.

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