

French neo-fascists issue death threats to Mélenchon voters

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On Monday, Jean-Luc Mélenchon organized a press conference to denounce death threats made against his voters by the far-right YouTube video poster Papacito. Papacito had posted a video in which he kills the effigy of an Unsubmissive France (LFI) voter with an assault rifle, and then again repeatedly stabs it.

Visibly shaken, Mélenchon said: “I warn, and I choose my words carefully, against the verbal violence around us, and which can sometimes lead to us being permanently designated as targets [...] We cannot allow ourselves to arrive at the point, in this country, where we accept now or in the future, physical violence, to the intellectual terrorism which always precedes physical terrorism. I cannot nor wish to hide the effect this has had on me, nor that of all my friends.”

In effect, Papacito’s threats are not those of a neo-fascist video channel alone. They bear the mark of the police state and powerful sectors of the financial aristocracy. They follow on the heels of threats presented in the neo-fascist magazine *Valeurs actuelles* by thousands of active service and reservist French army officers to intervene in France in an operation that would kill thousands.

In the video, Papacito approaches a dummy wearing a shirt inscribed with racist and homophobic insults as well as the inscription: “I am a communist.”

Before proceeding to the simulated murder of the LFI voter, Papacito says: “Today we are going to test whether leftism is bulletproof. You know there six percent [sic] of people who vote for Jean-Luc Mélenchon’s party. Perhaps they will be defenseless if something untoward happens to them, and that could happen, in the coming years. We are going to see if the stuff that a guy who votes for Mélenchon’s party is made of, if it enables him to resist a potential terrorist attack on our country.”

Having left the dummy decapitated and shot through with holes, Papacito says: “Tolerance is good, very good, it is necessary in the world. But it is always good in addition to apply tolerance with a gun.”

Mélenchon said that not only had Papacito rejected his

demand to withdraw the video from YouTube, but that the police had rejected his request to investigate. “The PHAROS system [Platform for analyzing and recovering notifications] had not reacted,” he said. In plain language the police-state is sending an unambiguous signal that it will protect those who issue death threats against Mélenchon or any other person labeled “communist.”

Eric Zemmour—the far-right polemicist, convicted inciter of racist hatreds and promoter of the Nazi-collaborationist Vichy regime who is a permanent host on CNews, the TV news channel owned by billionaire Vincent Bolloré—reacted by defending Papacito: “Jean-Luc Mélenchon says Papacito is my friend. I like Papacito a lot. He’s a nice, intelligent guy.”

Such comments constitute despicable death threats against 20 percent of the electorate who voted for Mélenchon in the 2017 presidential election. The International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) and its French section have documented their principled political differences with Mélenchon’s and LFI’s petty-bourgeois populism. The Socialist Equality Party (France) calls however for the defense of Mélenchon, the members of LFI and their electors against the threats and violence of fascists, the media and French police apparatus.

These threats are part of an international collapse of democratic norms following decades of austerity and war, and currently the murderous official handling of the pandemic. The ruling class is not only discredited because of unsustainable levels of social inequality, but criminalized by its underhand support for the Islamist militias in Libya and Syria, and its refusal to carry out a scientific policy to combat the coronavirus. Everywhere, factions of the state apparatus are mobilizing far-right forces against mounting working class anger.

In the USA, outgoing President Donald Trump launched an unprecedented attempted coup on January 6, launching a horde of neo-fascists on the Capitol in Washington to prevent the electoral certification of his rival, Joe Biden. In Spain, the party allied to Mélenchon, Podemos, is in power.

But high ranking army neo-fascists, protected by Podemos ministers, have threatened to launch a coup and massacre “26 million” Spanish people for having left-wing views.

Against this menace, it is not enough, as Mélenchon claims, to piously hope that the far right will stop before public opinion. Nearly 90 years after Hitler was installed in power, a violent far-right movement is again being built, with the support of a police apparatus with vast powers. The only viable strategy against the installation of a fascistic police-state across Europe and America is the construction of an international political movement in the working class, the vast majority of the population, to defend social and democratic rights.

Significantly, Mélenchon, in his press conference Monday, briefly referred to Papacito’s threats as being a reaction to his interview on France Inter last Sunday. Mélenchon chose not to clarify this remark, but it is obvious that through Papacito, the ruling class is sending a message to Mélenchon that he has gone too far in certain criticisms of the police’s influence in French political life.

On France Inter, Mélenchon had warned of a repetition in 2022 of the 2017 election. He said that France’s “oligarchic system” could find “another little Macron” after which, “no one knows who it is, then bingo he gets elected. It is the system which invents him.” He then raised the issue of the state’s role in the murder of police officer Xavier Jugelé in 2017, just before the presidential election, by an Islamist known to the secret services, Karim Cheurfi.

Cheurfi had been arrested for threatening to kill police officers and had amassed a large collection of firearms. However, the police released him, claiming that he was not sufficiently “dangerous.” He then assassinated Jugelé on the Champs-Élysées, unleashing a law-and-order propaganda campaign in the press which forced the cancellation of the last presidential TV debate, stopped Mélenchon’s growth in the polls and pushed his voters towards Macron. The WSWWS commented at the time:

“As facts emerge about the background of the alleged gunman, it is virtually impossible not to conclude that this shooting was a provocation involving elements of the security forces, over half of whom plan to vote for Marine Le Pen’s neo-fascist National Front (FN).”

Mélenchon, visibly unhappy with the circumstances of his defeat in 2017, told France Inter: “In the same way, you will see that in the last week of the presidential campaign, we will have some serious incident or a murder. There was Mérah in 2012 [the perpetrator of terrorist attacks in Toulouse and Montauban], then there was [in 2017] the attack in the last week on the Champs Élysées [...] all that is written in advance.”

If nothing is “written in advance,” outside of the class

struggle, Mélenchon had however by his fatalist remarks committed an unpardonable crime in the eyes of the French bourgeoisie: he had drawn attention to the anti-democratic role of the police-state.

Social-democratic and pseudo-left circles responded by launching a concerted campaign, not against the far right, but against Mélenchon. *Libération* denounced Mélenchon’s press conference Monday describing it as a “diversion” aiming to cover up his error on France Inter. Socialist Party (PS) First Secretary Olivier Faure insisted that in 2022, Mélenchon could not be “the one to unify the left and ecologists [...] what Jean-Luc Mélenchon says is unacceptable, because the left has never been about populism, nor conspiracy theories.”

The *Révolution Permanente* web site of the New Anticapitalist Party (NPA) denounced the press conference, describing it as “an irresponsible and deliberate outburst by Mélenchon.” It said that he uses “some rhetorical aspects to directly feed conspiracy theories, which is not acceptable coming from a political leader who aspires to represent progressive ideas.”

The NPA is attacking Mélenchon not from the left, but from the right. Having covered for the collaboration between the French secret services and Islamist militias in Libya and Syria, by claiming these wars were “democratic revolutions,” the NPA is now covering for the threats posed by the police apparatus to democratic rights in France.

The defense of democratic rights necessitates the construction of an international movement of the working class, independent from all the petty-bourgeois forces linked to the police state. Within this movement, the Socialist Equality Party will strive to explain the necessity for a socialist political struggle for the transfer of state power to the working class.



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