

French pseudo-left party *Lutte Ouvrière* aligns with right-wing anti-vaccine protests

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The French pseudo-left organisation Workers Struggle (*Lutte Ouvrière*—LO) has sought to cover up the role of far-right forces in demonstrations demanding the ending of coronavirus restrictions. In doing so, it has sought to legitimise opposition to a scientific response to the coronavirus. LO has endorsed the protests organised by the far-right, claiming that they defend the interests of the working class.

Explosive anger is growing in Europe and internationally against the ruling class, which has refused the necessary sanitary measures to stop the spread of the virus. After more than 110,000 deaths in France and 1.1 million in Europe, the emergence of the delta variant threatens a new wave of deaths. This crisis raises the possibility and urgency of an independent intervention of the working class to impose a scientific health policy.

LO, like the other pseudo-left parties, is trying to align angry and desperate healthcare workers behind the far right. *Revolution permanente*, the publication of the Morenoite tendency that recently split from the New Anti-capitalist Party, does not hide the role of neo-fascists in the protests, yet it calls for participating in them nonetheless. LO, on the other hand, presents the mobilizations against mandatory vaccinations as a working-class movement, to which the far-right is attempting to latch on.

In an article published on July 21, entitled “Health pass and mandatory vaccination: No!”, LO writes:

“The rejection expressed in the demonstrations against the health pass is not only sustained by conspiracy and anti-vaccine ideas. It also expresses opposition to Macron’s policies and distrust of a government that is complicit in the worst actions of the capitalists. So we must fight to ensure that this anger is not exploited by far-right demagogues like [Stand up

France leader Nicolas] Dupont-Aignan and [Patriots Party leader Florian] Philippot, who do not care about the rights of workers. The world of labour can and must give it a way out by defending a program corresponding to the interests of all workers.”

There is widespread popular anger against the Macron government, but this is nonetheless a falsification of the origins of the protests against Macron’s “health pass.” Contrary to what LO claims, the protests were launched by the far right (including Marion Maréchal Le Pen, Philippot and Dupont-Aignan), and libertarians within Jean-Luc Mélenchon’s Unsubmissive France, such as François Ruffin. They are opposed to a scientific health policy against the pandemic.

As always, LO addresses all of its appeals to the union bureaucracy, of which it itself is a faction. LO’s claim that the union bureaucracies would launch a struggle to defend the interests of workers during the coronavirus pandemic is particularly absurd, given that these pro-business organisations have spent more than 18 months supporting Macron’s policy of letting the virus spread unhindered throughout the population, and opposing any strike action for a scientific health policy. For this reason, LO says nothing about the actual role of the trade unions throughout the pandemic.

Moreover, by denying the role of the far right in the anti-vaccine protests, LO tries to conceal its alignment with the initiatives of the far right. Like *Révolution Permanente*, it wishes to promote the illusion that a movement that has been organised by the far right, that is hostile to mass vaccination and the defence of workers’ lives, is—or can become—a progressive struggle.

In its different analyses of the protests, LO—far from opposing the anti-vaccine hysteria of the neo-fascists

and Macron’s policy of letting the virus spread—seeks to reinforce the hold of the union apparatuses.

LO criticizes the neo-fascist arguments of the supposed defense of “individual liberties” that are advocated up by Unsubmissive France and *Révolution Permanente* to give a false, left-wing veneer to their arguments legitimizing the right-wing protests. They write:

Many opponents of the health pass and the vaccine obligation put forward the defense of ‘individual liberties’. Defending ‘individual liberties’ also means recognizing the freedom of the boss to exploit and fire as he wishes, and it is no coincidence that this slogan is brandished by extreme right-wing figures! The workers will only be able to conquer their freedom by becoming aware of their class interests in order to impose them on the capitalist class and its political stooges.

LO also denounces the lack of resources for hospitals:

To justify itself, the government invokes the need to respond to a fourth epidemic wave. This is cynical, because this threat was foreseeable and, for a year, the material and human resources of hospitals, nursing homes and the entire health system have not been increased at all.

Despite these pro forma criticisms, LO is not defending the interests of the working class. This pseudo-left organization is aligning itself with anti-scientific “opposition” to Macron, on his right. Vaccination is a basic health measure and elementary requirement of self-defense for the working class, allowing a limiting of the number of deaths from the virus. The additional means provided to hospitals would not stop mass deaths in hospitals of patients who would become infected because of the lifting of sanitary restrictions.

The pandemic has unmasked the nature of the pseudo-

left organizations. Fearing social opposition, they turned toward the right, expressing itself in the support by LO, among others, for far-right protests. This underscores the necessity for workers to break with these anti-working class organizations.

What LO defends, in the final analysis, is the policy of “herd immunity” of the banks and the Macron government. It speaks for the more affluent strata of the middle classes, for whom public funds should not be wasted on the implementation of social distancing, containment and mass vaccination measures that would stop the pandemic. From these social interests comes the demand that workers learn to “live with the virus” and thus with the tens or even hundreds of thousands of additional deaths that the virus will cause. At the same time, European public funds are being used to boost stock market prices and thus the value of the stock portfolios of the upper middle class.

The “health pass” is used by the Macron government as justification for the ending of essential social distancing measures. The Socialist Equality Party opposes the law as being part of a policy of the ruling class across the European Union to let the virus spread, in defiance of scientific recommendations. However, the PES insists that the fight against the pandemic is an international struggle to be conducted scientifically, including through universal vaccination. To do this, it is necessary to mobilize the working class independently of the capitalist parties and the trade union apparatus.

This implies the closure of non-essential workplaces and the expropriation of the financial aristocracy, to protect the population, and permit mass vaccination. To carry out such a policy requires a social revolution that would place power in the hands of the working class not only in France, but throughout Europe and the world.



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