

Macron launches obscene rant against the unvaccinated as COVID-19 soars

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5 January 2022

On Tuesday evening, in a live-chat interview to *Le Parisien* on the 2022 presidential elections and the COVID-19 pandemic, French President Emmanuel Macron launched an obscene rant against the unvaccinated.

“Well, now, the unvaccinated, I really want to cover them in sh*t,” Macron said, using the phrase ‘emmerder.’ Denouncing the unvaccinated for being irresponsible, he added: “An irresponsible person is no longer a citizen.”

He rejected lockdowns and social distancing measures key to halting infections, even as France posted a record 271,686 COVID-19 infections Tuesday and 332,252 yesterday. He said, “our line is simple: it’s vaccination, vaccination, vaccination and a vaccine pass,” referring to his government’s attempt to get the National Assembly to adopt legislation creating a document to deny access to bars, theaters, cinemas or restaurants to anyone who is unvaccinated. “The idea is to place many constraints on the unvaccinated and, collectively, to encourage behaviors to limit spread.”

Macron’s degraded outburst was a statement of intent to let the virus spread unchecked, no matter the cost in lives. French hospitals’ emergency wards are already 73 percent full, even as over 600,000 people in France and 2.4 million in Europe were diagnosed with COVID-19 in the last two days. Yet, long after scientists have confirmed that vaccinated individuals can catch and spread the disease, showing the urgent need for social restrictions, European governments all advocate a vaccine-only policy and washing their hands of any attempt to halt the wave of death.

As COVID-19 is transmitted through the air, relying on individual behavior like mask wearing and staying one meter away from others will not reliably prevent contagion. The Macron government, demanding that

workers in non-essential production go to work and that students return to classes or sit by the hundreds in crowded exam rooms, is simply creating conditions for countless super-spreader events in France and across Europe.

To distract attention from the predictable results of his irresponsible policy, Macron tried to stir up hatred against those most obviously vulnerable amid mass infection: the unvaccinated.

Vaccination against COVID-19 is an essential public health measure, substantially cutting the risk of dying or getting seriously ill with COVID-19, and which should be universally adopted in line with professional medical advice. However, it is apparent that the Macron government itself bears heavy responsibility for the fact that several million people in France are still not vaccinated against COVID-19.

As Macron ranted against the unvaccinated, he ignored the fact that millions of those he was denouncing as he consigns them to mass infection are very young children who cannot legally obtain the vaccine. Sixty-four children in France are currently on life support, fighting COVID-19. Other unvaccinated people are elderly residents of remote areas who, partly due to Macron’s cuts to rural train services, find it difficult or too costly to get to a vaccination center.

Yesterday, LCI cited pollsters estimating at 2 percent the proportion of the French people that refuses on principle to obtain a COVID-19 vaccine.

Even this, it must be said, is due in no small part to the fact that Macron and his ministers abstained from campaigning publicly to explain the necessity of vaccination. Yet Macron today—echoing his comments denouncing opponents of his pension cuts as old-style “Gaulish people obstinately refusing change”—again blames the population for the results of his own

reactionary policies.

After Macron's outburst against the unvaccinated, he turned, significantly, to his inability to announce whether or not he is running for re-election in the April 2022 elections. On this subject, he told *Le Parisien*: "I want to run. As soon as health conditions permit and as I have clarified this issue, in my feelings and in terms of the political equation, I will say what is going on with the same freedom as always, because I do not want to deny myself anything."

Macron cryptically added: "If I take a position today, what will be my ability to handle the peak of the health crisis?"

Macron's argument is that in order to pursue his health policies, which are costing thousands of lives, he cannot tolerate even a symbolic acknowledgment that he is answerable to the French people in the form of a statement that he is seeking re-election. Such a remark testifies to a deep-going breakdown of French democracy revealed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The only way to halt the staggering wave of infections now underway in France, across Europe and internationally is the independent organization and political mobilization of the working class for a general strike against the reactionary policies of Macron and the European Union (EU). Such a struggle depends on a political break with the entire French political establishment.

The parties in the National Assembly debating Macron's plans for a health pass criticized his obscene outburst from the right. Reprising their role in promoting protests against mandatory vaccination last summer led by the neo-fascists, several of them attacked Macron not for refusing to protect the population from the virus, but based on the reactionary assertion that there is a "right" to ignore life-saving public health policies during the pandemic. This assertion, which is tantamount to asserting the right to contract and infect others with a deadly illness, is a political lie.

"It is clear, the vaccine pass is collective punishment aimed at individual liberty," said Jean-Luc Mélenchon, the leader of the Unsubmissive France (LFI) party and presidential candidate of the Popular Union coalition.

"The guarantor of the unity of the nation is obstinately working to divide it and to treat the non-vaccinated as second-class citizens," declared neo-

fascist presidential candidate Marine Le Pen.

As for the right-wing The Republicans (LR), they criticized Macron only for alienating the public. "One can encourage vaccination without insulting anyone or encouraging radicalization," said LR Senator Bruno Retailleau, who criticized Macron for "humiliating a section of the French people for electoral purposes."

None of these parties made the essential point that Macron's policy is facilitating the infection of millions of French people and tens of millions of Europeans, who risk death and long-term debilitation from COVID-19. This is because these parties and their affiliates across Europe—from Spain's ruling Podemos party, linked to Mélenchon and LFI, to UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Conservatives linked to LR—are advancing the same reckless, vaccine-only policy of ending all attempts to halt viral contagion.

No less than Macron, the former investment banker and "president of the rich," these forces are tools of the financial aristocracy, doing everything to keep workers on the job and students in school so that profits continue pumping into the coffers of the banks.

Faced with this abdication of all responsibility to defend public health by the entire European ruling elite, rank-and-file committees must be organized in workplaces and schools to defend health and politically mobilize the working class against the capitalist governments. This would allow for the preparation and organization of a general strike to compel scientific public health policy, and take state power out of the hands of the financial aristocracy.



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