

French student speaks out on election “catastrophe”

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WSWS journalists interviewed Clémence, a student in Amiens and a job seeker, about the French presidential elections and the Socialist Equality Party’s (SEP) call to mobilize the working class against both candidates and prepare to oppose the next president.

Clémence said that after the first round she felt “great dismay. The fact that Macron, who has openly embraced the far right, and Marine Le Pen are in the second round is a catastrophe. There was also a big abstention which shows the lack of confidence in the political ruling class.”

Clémence criticized the calls from the PS (Socialist Party), the Greens and the PCF (the French Communist Party) to vote Macron: “The instruction to block the far right from the left and the avowed right is hypocritical, because his government has taken xenophobic, Islamophobic and politically racist measures. I am thinking in particular of [Gérald] Darmanin, a royalist minister who is violently Islamophobic. Big business calls the shots, and it all leads to an atmosphere of hypocrisy and destruction of our most basic rights.”

She added that the PS is “very hypocritical” when it “calls to support Macron. All the satellites of the bourgeois state have adopted the same views without questioning the fact that Macron has taken reactionary far-right measures to always reduce democratic rights. And police violence is set to increase.”

Clémence also noted the protests that broke out at universities and high schools in Paris and across France after the first round. She said, “The police let through the fascist thugs of the far-right youth movements who attacked the students blockading the Political Science university. It’s interesting, the call ‘Neither Macron, nor Le Pen’ launched by the students: in their protests they called for wider struggles, and for maximum solidarity with the masses so as not to be isolated and so that it doesn’t lead to failure.”

On the regroupment organised by LFI (Unsubmissive

France) with the PCF, the Greens and other pseudo-left parties after the first round, Clémence said it was an “opportunist” alliance and a “bourgeois coalition measure.” She stressed that it is a milieu that “has betrayed the interests of the working classes and the working class that it claims to represent.”

About the Lutte Ouvrière (LO, Workers Struggle) candidate, Clémence said: “Nathalie Arthaud, who calls herself a revolutionary communist, has not uttered the words ‘socialism’ or ‘revolution’ in her remarks. For them these elections are just a springboard to make themselves heard.”

On issues such as the pandemic, Clémence added, these parties “talk about it a little bit but often from fraudulent angles, such as removing the wearing of masks, health standards, against a Zero COVID policy. They make extremely little mention of internationalism, or of creating an internationalist party.”

Clémence highlighted the demoralising impact of these organisations on young people: “There is a massive rejection of politics within the bourgeois framework, but they lack perspective. Many are demoralised and no longer believe in anything or in other social perspectives because this system promotes capitalist ideology. And even if we are aware that capitalism is not adequate and validates the cause of the destruction of the planet and living conditions, many young people are lost.”

Clémence expressed her interest in the active boycott policy advocated by the PES and explained how she understands it.

She said, “It means not registering to vote, showing our disagreement with the capitalist system in place that only favours the leaders of this class that exploits and oppresses us. It also means organising mass demonstrations, strikes, independent mobilisations, outside the traditional trade union framework, contrary to what LO advocates for example. Above all, it means

appealing to our brothers and sisters in the international working class, holding meetings to propagate revolutionary and deeply socialist and communist ideas.”

Clémence applauded in particular the idea of creating action committees and other organisations of struggle that would be independent of the national trade union apparatus.

She said, “The current trade union framework is being eaten up by parasites, by bureaucracies. Even the CGT did not support the railway workers, even though it was the longest strike since May ’68, nor did they support the Yellow Vests. It’s also very important to organise outside of these political bodies in terms of the pandemic, and the danger that this represents for children and to act to protect the population from this virus that is so transmissible.”

Clémence emphasised in particular her agreement with the idea that neither candidate has anything to offer workers and young people.

After the elections, she said, “There will be more economic precariousness for students and youth. Macron will make the ‘Active solidarity income’ (RSA, a minimum income for those not working) conditional on compulsory internships and that is criminal for those who only have that to survive. And the far right has similar plans. The perspectives in common are ecological perspectives, we don’t have to earn profit on the exploitation of nature. Currently according to reports there are three years left to make concrete ecological actions to reduce greenhouse emissions.”

She added, “The most important thing now is to organise, to create a strong working class organisation with the aim of acting, informing, giving a real socialist and Marxist anti-capitalist perspective to improve living and working conditions and above all to allow a revolution that will allow the destruction of the ossified system that has nothing left to offer to anyone except for the billionaires and wealthy property owners.”



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