

Stalinist PCF discusses French national unity government with Macron

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After President Emmanuel Macron's "Together" coalition lost its absolute majority in the National Assembly in Sunday's legislative elections, a crisis of rule has emerged in France. Now Macron is desperately looking for reliable allies to form a parliamentary majority to impose his policy of social austerity and imperialist war against Russia. With this purpose, he met on Tuesday with Stalinist French Communist Party (PCF) Secretary General Fabien Roussel.

In an interview with *Le Parisien* yesterday morning, Roussel cynically tried to justify his meeting with Macron and, while acknowledging the workers' anger against the "president of the rich," said he was leaving the door open for a "Together"-PCF coalition government.

About Macron, Roussel said: "He is considering either the constitution of a government of national unity, if there were the parties to participate in it," or "to seek support on a case-by-case basis" each time he presents a bill to the Assembly.

Both strategies involve integrating the PCF and other parties in the New Popular Ecological and Social Union (NUPES) led by Jean-Luc Mélenchon into Macron's planned onslaught on the working class. In the first case, Macron would need allies outside the 246 seats won by "Together" to obtain a majority of 289 seats in the Assembly. In the second case, the opposition parties would vote for his bills "on a case-by-case basis" and tacitly support him by refusing to call for a motion of no confidence against his government in the Assembly.

Roussel said he would prefer the second option but that he was open to a government alliance with Macron. He told *Le Parisien*: "Emmanuel Macron asked me if a government of National Union was a solution. ... I immediately told the president: 'There is such a climate of mistrust against you that it is not conceivable.' It

wouldn't be understood."

In reality, the obstacle Roussel sees is not that workers would not understand the Macron-PCF alliance, but that they would understand too well what it signifies about the PCF. A party that could consider making such an alliance is a tool of imperialism. The PCF's passage into the camp of Macron would impose on workers in struggle against Macron the necessity of breaking with all the parties and trade union bureaucracies linked to the PCF and the NUPES.

Indeed, Roussel immediately added that, were it not for his fear of workers' reaction, the PCF would unite with Macron. Referring to the PCF's entry into capitalist government after the collapse of the Nazi collaborationist regime at the end of the Second World War, he said: "We already participated in a government of national unity in 1945 with General de Gaulle; it's not something that shocks us."

This reference to the struggles of the Liberation is a cynical attempt to give a false "left" cover to maneuvers with Macron.

In 1945, the PCF was neither revolutionary nor Marxist but Stalinist. From the formation of the Popular Front in 1935 to the Stalinist bureaucracy's liquidation of the Soviet Union in 1991, it was the ally of the bureaucracy that had usurped power in the USSR. Based on its nationalist perspective for stabilizing French capitalism, it blocked a revolution in 1945, dismantling the militias and workers' committees that had formed the bulk of the Resistance. It hunted down and murdered Trotskyists, after having participated in Stalin's plot to murder Trotsky in Mexico.

However, Macron's program today has nothing to do with the social reforms, financed with US Marshall Plan aid, adopted in France with the help of the PCF after the Second World War: social security, public

pensions, nationalizations of industry. Macron, the president of the rich, has no reforms to make. Instead, he is plundering the workers to finance the imperialist war against Russia and the massive enrichment of the possessing classes.

This policy, implemented in all the NATO imperialist countries, is provoking intense, international working class opposition. The national rail strike in Britain has turned into a direct confrontation with the hated Boris Johnson government. Across Europe, airport and health care workers are on strike against the fallout from the disastrous official handling of the pandemic. In France and internationally, struggles are opposing inflation, setting into motion a political offensive of the working class against all capitalist governments.

In this context, Roussel's rallying to a possible "national union" with Macron marks yet another violent turn of the PCF to the right. Since 1991, deprived of its working class social base and allied with the bourgeois Socialist Party from which Macron emerged, the PCF apparatus has been an empty shell run by petty-bourgeois operatives financed by the state and big business. Fearing any working class offensive that would threaten its place in the established order, it is instinctively on the side of the existing order.

As the "yellow vests" protests began, the General Confederation of Labor (CGT) bureaucracy, closely linked to the PCF since the Second World War, violently denounced them. Echoing the Stalinist smears against the Trotskyists, which the PCF called "Hitler-Trotskyist," CGT boss Philippe Martinez kept repeating that "brown" (i.e., neo-fascist sentiment) was hiding under the yellow vests.

Today, Roussel openly declares his support for the police and is working to make Marine Le Pen's neo-fascist National Rally (RN) party the leading opposition group to Macron in the Assembly.

On Tuesday, Roussel joined the PS leadership in rejecting Jean-Luc Mélenchon's call to form a united NUPES parliamentary group. This would have made the NUPES the leading opposition group to Macron in the National Assembly, with 142 deputies, ahead of the RN's 89. But Roussel said he refused to organize a NUPES parliamentary group because he was offended by Mélenchon's criticisms of the police.

Denouncing Mélenchon's comments that the police "kill," after police murdered motorists in the middle of

Paris, Roussel said he "did not recognize himself in certain remarks made in the name" of the NUPES. Calling Mélenchon's comments an "amalgam" slandering the police, he accused Mélenchon, whose presidential campaign attracted 7.7 million mainly urban voters, of being of interest to "a part of France, the part of the cities and not the part of the countryside."

He added: "I can feel that in my country, in rural France, these [Mélenchon's] comments offend French people, which are not understood."

Roussel, like the whole of the NUPES, is hostile to the class struggle and the accelerating turn of the working class to the left. They do nothing to mobilize the millions of workers who voted for them in strikes or protests. Indeed, they fear the electoral support they have obtained in the working class and react by trying to demoralize their voters as much as possible. So Roussel crawls in front of the cops and, by signaling his complicity with Macron, gives Le Pen an opening to keep falsely presenting herself as the only opposition to Macron.

The struggle against war, austerity and the rise of the far right can only be waged by the international class struggle. Roussel's comments are yet another warning of the bankruptcy of all the organizations, including NUPES, which ally with Stalinism. The alternative is the building of the Socialist Equality Party, the French section of the International Committee of the Fourth International, as a vanguard fighting, amid the upsurge of the class struggle, to win workers to the perspective of a socialist transfer of power to the working class.



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