

Parti de l'égalité socialiste intervenes in Paris student meeting to call to bring down Macron

Our reporters
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On Tuesday night, members of the *Parti de l'égalité socialiste* (PES) spoke at the “Inter-facs” Inter-university coordinating assembly, at Saint Denis University north of Paris.

The Inter-facs assembly has students active in university politics across Paris. Its members come from Sorbonne-Panthéon, Tolbiac, Nanterre, Saint Denis, Gustave Eiffel, Paris-Lumière, Créteil, and Saclay universities, which account for most of the over half-million university students in the Paris area. The assembly and its chairing committee include members of the middle class New Anti-capitalist Party (NPA), the Morenoite *Révolution permanente* party, and anarchist groups.

In Saint-Denis, the PES proposed to the Inter-facs to vote a public resolution calling to bring down French President Emmanuel Macron. Macron’s decision to ram through pension cuts opposed by the overwhelming majority of the French people, while increasing military spending amid NATO’s war with Russia in Ukraine, has provoked explosive social anger and mass strikes now brutally assaulted by riot police. However, the “Inter-facs” chairing committee ultimately refused to allow a vote on the PES’ motion, claiming it was irrelevant.

The assembly began with reports of protests and work in each university. The students all reported a rapid growth on their campuses of student opposition and anger after Macron imposed his pension cuts without even a vote in the National Assembly.

After the meeting moved from reports of protest activity to propositions for action, Alexandre Lantier, the national secretary of the PES, asked to address the assembly. Lantier introduced himself and said:

Macron leads a regime that governs by force against the will of the people, by repression of the workers and youth. Your reports have given much

evidence of this already. The question that is posed is: what is to be done?

Today, Macron announced that he is unhappy with those who say his government is illegitimate. This is really too bad, because his government is illegitimate.

What must be done is to launch a political movement to throw Macron out of power, to bring down his regime by a general strike. General assemblies must be held in every university, in every workplace in France to declare that this president must go. To achieve this, the working class must be mobilized independently of all the bureaucracies that are negotiating with Macron, not fighting him politically.

If this assembly votes a clear resolution stating that Macron must be thrown out, that the presidency of the Fifth Republic has clearly become the cockpit of an illegitimate dictatorship exercised by the banks against the workers, this can have an enormous impact.

It will allow youth to go to workplaces, to speak to workers, encourage them to gather in general assemblies in their workplaces and to vote similar statements, and thus create the organizations through which the workers can bring down Macron, abolish the Fifth Republic’s anti-democratic presidency, and open the path for workers to collectively take power and build socialism.

Lantier’s remarks met with applause, but the chair of the assembly did not place his motion on the list of proposed actions. Lantier again intervened in the discussion to ask for the motion to be placed on the list, which the chair initially did. Afterwards, however, the

chair refused to allow PES members onto the speakers list in the section of the meeting discussing proposed actions.

No such restrictions were applied to a delegation from the petty-bourgeois Spartacist tendency in Quebec. They distributed their paper, *Le Bolchévik*, calling to build a supposedly “revolutionary” faction in the French union bureaucracy, and were allowed to speak repeatedly.

Discussion focused on issues like organizing security and interfacing with union officials at Wednesday’s protest march, preparing protests and blockades of universities, and protesting outside Assas law school against the fascist “Waffen-Assas” youth group’s attacks on student protests. Throughout, growing numbers of students left the meeting hall.

In the final section of the meeting, as the assembly voted on each of the proposed actions, the chair announced that a vote on the PES’ proposal was not needed. When Lantier asked why a vote should not be taken, the chair said Lantier was not a student and cut off discussion. Students at the meeting later told Lantier they thought the PES’ proposal was not necessary, as everyone in the meeting opposes Macron.

In reality, however, the chair’s refusal to vote on the PES motion illustrates the obstacles facing the development of a genuinely revolutionary movement, and in particular the political obstacles to turning the youth to the working class.

The PES’ motion aimed to initiate a mass political turn of youth to the working class, and to developing a mobilization of the entire working class against Macron. Members of the Inter-facs may well personally dislike Macron and sympathize with strikers targeted for state repression. But their practice does not turn students and youth to going to workplaces and factories to discuss with workers the need to build working class organizations of struggle to bring down Macron.

The political energy of the youth is thus dissipated into futile discussions with union bureaucracies, which for their part are absolutely clear that they seek “mediation” with Macron to defuse a mounting, objectively revolutionary crisis. The practical question of organizing solidarity action with striking workers, instead of being carried out by tens or hundreds of thousands of students, is left to a few dozen students in parties closely tied to the union bureaucracies, like the NPA.

The PES’ struggle to initiate a turn to the working class among the youth clashes with the politics of the middle class parties active in the Inter-facs. *Révolution permanente*, whose *Poing levé* (“Raised Fist”) feminist

youth faction is active at Saint Denis, has declared through the articles of its writer Juan Chingo that workers still need more experience with “bourgeois representative democracy,” that is, a capitalist regime. RP also declares that it aims to develop as a faction of the General Confederation of Labor union’s Stalinist bureaucracy.

The French web site of Spartacist, whose members criticized the PES for raising the supposedly “useless” issue of bringing down Macron, attacks Trotskyists for having opposed France’s bourgeois constitution adopted in 1946, after the Nazi occupation in World War II.

In reality, the current crisis vindicates this historic struggle of the Trotskyist movement. The 1946 constitution—with Charles de Gaulle’s important addition of expanded powers of the presidency, amid the pro-colonial 1958 coup during the French war against Algerian independence—remains the bedrock of the French capitalist state. It has now spawned a police-state regime led by Macron, the investment banker and “president of the rich,” ruling against the people.

The PES is the French section of the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI), the world Trotskyist movement. It explains that the struggles in France are part of a growing, international movement of the working class that is developing via a growing rebellion of workers and youth against counter-revolutionary national bureaucracies. It invites workers and youth who support its call to bring down Macron to contact it and fight to develop this movement in the working class.



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