

Struggle against Macron continues as strikes break out in multiple French industries

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After months of bitter struggle by millions of workers against President Macron's pension cuts, the French press and union bureaucracies are desperate to put the workers' struggle against Macron and the capitalist state behind them.

After May Day, the union bureaucracies put off all further action until a June 6 "day of mobilization" against Macron's pension cuts. In the meantime, they returned to "business as usual," which consists of negotiating new social cuts with Macron's government.

The mood in the working class could not be more different. After Macron forced through his law in March without a vote in the parliament, 62 percent of the population supported a general strike to block the economy and defeat Macron. At over a dozen strike days, millions of workers marched. As the cost of living continues to rise, the majority of the population remains determined to defeat the "president of the rich."

In a wave of strikes in multiple industries across France, workers are seeking to continue their struggle against Macron, the banks and the corporations. In the last week, strikes have broken out or continued amongst postal workers, bus drivers, textile workers and at Disneyland Paris.

At Disneyland, between 1,500 and 1,800 workers went on a one-day strike on May 30, according to the unions.

Disneyland workers are demanding a €200 monthly wage increase, double pay for Sunday shifts, a review of the travel allowance and the end of adapted hours (where workers must take shifts either much shorter or longer than 8 hours). According to Glassdoor, waiters, performers and stall sellers at Disneyland Paris make around €16,000 a year. Last year, Disneyland Paris made an operating profit of €47 million.

In a meeting on March 26, Disneyland told union officials that they refuse to make any concessions. Nevertheless, imitating union tactics at the national level, the four unions at Disneyland Paris (the CGT and UNSA national unions, and the SIT77 and SNS local unions) are holding one-day marches to pressure the company into continuing talks with the unions.

Rank-and-file workers initiated the Disneyland struggle before the unions were mobilized to rechannel it into less threatening channels. Indeed, Damien Catel, a representative from the SIT77 union, told Actu.fr, "It was a movement started by the workers and accompanied by the unions, not the inverse."

Ahmed Masrou, a representative from the UNSA union, added that after the May 30 action, "The ball is in the court of management. We are waiting for them to reopen the dialogue, this time with serious propositions."

In southern France's Aveyron region, postal workers are engaged in an indefinite strike against the publicly owned postal service that began March 31. After a reorganization of the region's postal service on April 26, workers have been forced to work longer rounds and are continuously understaffed. This led to large numbers of parcels never being delivered.

Union officials have called for a new reorganization to address the issues. However, it is clear that without a major mobilization of the wider working class, such an organization will still be carried out on the government's terms: with staff cuts, longer shifts and under-inflation wage raises.

In Toulouse, Tisseo transport workers are on a four-day strike, which started on May 30 and will finish today. During strike days, 12 bus routes are not running and dozens more will run with reduced service. The Toulouse tram service will also be significantly

disrupted. Workers have been offered a 2.8 percent pay rise by the company, well under the 5.9 percent annual inflation rate recorded in April.

Before this year, Tisseo workers had a safeguard clause, which essentially meant their wages were adjusted for inflation. Strikers are demanding a wage increase and the reinstatement of the clause.

In Lille, a strike of 72 workers at the Vertbaudet factory in Marquette has been ongoing since March 20. Vertbaudet is a children's clothes maker; in 2022, it made a profit of €27 million. The workers on strike make just €1,500 a month, though many of them have over 20 years' seniority. The strikers' main demands are a €150 wage increase and a stop to temporary hiring.

On May 16, police assaulted the workers' picket at the Vertbaudet factory, leading to two arrests and the hospitalization of one striker. Vertbaudet has close ties to the French political elite: it is owned by a holding company run by Édouard Fillon, the son of ex-Prime Minister François Fillon. After the police assault, a CGT delegate supporting the strike was assaulted near his home by masked thugs, who also threatened his wife and son.

These incidents led to the intervention of Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne to call for renewed talks between the company and strikers. However, with the company refusing any wage rise, any such talks have so far not materialized.

The fact that most workers involved are women has been seized upon by the pseudo-left to promote this struggle as a primarily "feminist" issue. A tribune on the strike published by various feminist groups and individuals in *Le Monde* stated: "Vertbaudet workers are like millions of women, glued to a sticky floor that keeps them in devalued and underpaid jobs because of sexist management."

Signatories included CGT chief Sophie Binet, La France Insoumise deputy Mathilde Panot, Greens National Secretary Marie Tondelier, and actress Adele Haenel, affiliated with the Morenoite Révolution Permanente website.

In reality, workers at Vertbaudet, like millions of other women in France, are under attack by employers and the state not because they are women, but because they are workers, from whom the bourgeoisie intends to squeeze massive profits. Their allies in this struggle are

not the privileged middle-class feminists of the French pseudo-left and union bureaucracy, but all working men and women internationally who face the same capitalist crisis and danger of world war.

The renewed wave of strikes in France, after the union bureaucracies' efforts to suffocate the struggle against Macron, once again exposes the role of the union bureaucracy and its supporters in the pseudo-left.

Funded with billions of euros by the government and corporations, the union bureaucracies do not oppose cuts and attacks on wages. Instead, they work to subordinate all opposition to the government and companies behind the bankrupt framework of "social dialogue" with the capitalist state—a euphemism for helping them enforce their will on the workforce.

This process is also playing out in local disputes, as can be seen in the union bureaucracies' role in subordinating the struggle to state-led talks between the companies and union bureaucrats at Disneyland and Vertbaudet. Whenever strikes do break out, such as at Vertbaudet, the union bureaucracies refuse to pay a penny of strike pay to their members in struggle.

The ongoing struggles of French workers against the increasing cost of living is inextricably linked to the struggle against Macron's pension cut and war. The whole of French society is being reorganized as a "war economy," as French and European imperialism prepare for escalation in the NATO-Russia war in Ukraine. For the ruling class, this requires savage attacks on wages and social rights, like Macron's pension cut.

To oppose this, workers in all industries must form rank-and-file committees, independent of the union bureaucracies, to direct their own struggles and to prepare a general strike to bring down Macron. In this endeavor, French workers have the example of their brothers and sisters across the Channel, who have formed their own bus drivers and postal workers rank-and-file committees to oppose attacks on their wages and standards of living.



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