No to pension reform and war, bring down Macron!

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This statement was distributed by members of the Parti de l'égalité socialiste (PES-Socialist Equality Party) at demonstrations in Paris, Marseille and Amiens on June 6 on the 14th day of action against French President Macron's pension cut.

Today, workers and young people across France will march against Emmanuel Macron's illegitimate pension reform. The desperate attempt by the union bureaucracies to move on from the struggle against Macron and against the capitalist state, by suspending the mobilizations between May 1 and June 6, has not succeeded. Despite this delay of several weeks between the days of action, the fight against Macron continues.

A wave of strikes is shaking not only France but all of Europe. Workers in Italy are demonstrating against Meloni's far-right government and its austerity and war policies, and strikes are rocking the UK, Portugal, Belgium and Germany. In France, the workers of Vertbaudet, Disney, transport, and at the Post Office carried out strikes against the social cuts and for better wages.

However, after a truce with Macron imposed by the union bureaucracies, the questions of political perspective and organization are urgently facing the workers. To lead the fight against Macron, the banks and their policy of wage austerity, workers must organize independently of the bureaucracies which demobilize the movement, and fight to bring down Macron through a general strike.

As a Ukrainian offensive causes thousands of deaths and injuries in a fratricidal war between Russians and Ukrainians armed by NATO, the French National Assembly has voted the Military Programming Law (LPM). It increases the military budget by 40 percent, from €297 billion to €413 billion between 2024 and 2030. It spends billions on cyber warfare, nuclear weapons and ammunition stockpiles in order to build the "economy of European war" wanted by Macron.

The LPM is an illegitimate law: its funding is based on the pension reform forcefully imposed by the ruling elite on the French people, the overwhelming majority of whom are hostile to the reform. The LPM refutes the argument that this reform, which cuts pensions by €13 billion per year, was "essential" to "save" the financing of the pension system. In reality, there is more than enough money for pensions, but Macron and the ruling elite want to spend it on war.

To stop Macron's pension reform and looting of workers, the NATO-Russia war in Ukraine must be opposed. It threatens to trigger a third world war, which would end in a generalized use of nuclear weapons that would destroy humanity. The working class in France and internationally is the decisive force that must be mobilized to stop this war and the social attacks it rains down on the masses.

Two-thirds of French people want to block the economy with a general strike in order to stop the pension reform. This would also act to block the financing of the militarist offensive by France and NATO. But it is impossible to mobilize the enormous force of workers in such a struggle without throwing off the shackles that the union bureaucracy and its pseudo-left political allies impose on workers' struggles.

For this, workers must break free from the diktat of the union bureaucrats' bankrupt negotiations with Macron, create their own grassroots organizations of struggle, and turn to their class brothers and sisters internationally who are also fighting against austerity and militarized police states.

The union bureaucracies and the pseudo-left did not seek to mobilize the workers against the LPM. They

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remain silent on the link between pension reform and the war. Financially dependent on the state, these bureaucracies are run by representatives of the wealthy middle classes hostile to a working class struggle for power.

The Parti de l'égalité socialiste has warned workers that the fight against austerity and the looming world war requires bringing down Macron through a general strike. It explained that the struggle against reform was a struggle between the working class and the capitalist state, which has plunged France and Europe into an objectively revolutionary situation. Workers must form action committees capable of waging a struggle to bring down Macron and prepare for a struggle for power.

This warning contrasted not only with the CGT or CFDT union bureaucracies that are now negotiating with Macron, but also with the pseudo-left parties that defend these bureaucracies and support, openly or by their inaction, the NATO war in Ukraine.

During March-April, when millions of workers took to the streets facing Article 49.3 and wanted a general strike that would have brought down Macron, the union bureaucracies called for mediation. Thus, they tried to preserve the reign of a president who governs against the people. They then suspended strike days for several weeks, resuming their routine of social dialogue, which imposes the destruction of social gains and layoffs.

The Unsubmissive France of Jean-Luc Mélenchon is doing everything to strangle the workers by a prospect of alliance with the bourgeoisie, putting forward illusions that the right-wing parliamentary group LIOT will lead a victorious struggle to repeal the pension reform in the Assembly. The Morenoite Permanent Revolution group, formerly a fraction of the pro-war New Anti-Capitalist Party, claimed that the situation was not revolutionary. They insisted that the French must first experiment with "bourgeois democracy," that is, with the police state.

Likewise, these organizations have not waged any struggle against the NATO war against Russia, waged in conjunction with neo-Nazi organizations in Ukraine and which threatens to set Europe ablaze. Thus they made themselves accomplices of Macron's militarist and austerity campaign, through their support for the existing order.

The Socialist Equality Party (PES) has explained that the only way out for workers is to build an international mobilization against austerity and against imperialist war. It calls for the formation of independent action committees and building the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC), to equip workers with organizations capable of foiling attempts at political sabotage by the pro-Macron bureaucracies. Workers in favor of this perspective should give their support to the PES, the French section of the International Committee of the Fourth International.

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