

French President Macron endorses Israeli war on Gaza

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12 October 2023

In a prime-time television address yesterday, French President Emmanuel Macron unreservedly endorsed Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's war on the Palestinian uprising in Gaza. He demanded that the French people demonstrate "national unity" and rally behind his own unpopular government as it supports the Israel Defense Forces' (IDF) relentless bombing of the impoverished Palestinian enclave.

Before Macron's speech, his political advisers admitted to the media that his position faces deep opposition in the French people and that they are terrified that this opposition will explode. This is particularly the case if the IDF launches a widely anticipated ground invasion of Gaza and tries to act on its threats to murder every member of Hamas. Such a policy would entail massacring a substantial proportion of the blockaded Palestinian population of Gaza.

Laurent Marcangeli of the Horizons Party of Macron's former Prime Minister Edouard Philippe warned: "We must watch what we say, have some humility given the complexity of this issue. We do not know how the situation will develop. Public opinion can start asking itself questions depending on how strong Israel's reaction is. After stupor, horror and disgust (at pictures of Israeli victims), other images of innocent victims, this time on the Palestinian side, can move people."

Denis Sieffert, the former editor of *Politis* magazine, echoed Marcangeli's remarks, telling *Le Monde*: "The risk facing the government is that spontaneous, disordered demonstrations could erupt."

Macron reacted by telling his far-right Interior Minister Gérald Darmanin to ban all pro-Gaza protests and inviting the leaders of all France's parliamentary parties to closed-door talks on the political crisis. From neo-fascist National Rally's (RN) Marine Le Pen to

Manuel Bompard of Jean-Luc Mélenchon's pseudo-left Unsubmissive France (LFI) party, all these parties' top officials met Macron. In the current context, this amounts to an endorsement by the entire French political establishment of the blank cheque Macron gave Netanyahu in his televised address.

Ignoring the Israeli state's oppression of the Palestinian people and its illegal 16-year blockade of Gaza, Macron instead gave a travesty of the war, presenting it as a one-sided, absolutely evil act of Palestinian terrorism against Israel. He denounced the uprising against the Israeli government that began a week ago as "the most tragic terrorist attack in its history" and an "unleashing of absolute cruelty."

Branding the Hamas party in Gaza as a "terrorist movement," Macron denounced it for "exposing the population of Gaza in a cynical and criminal fashion." The cynicism and criminality is, in reality, on the side of Macron. Indeed, Macron did not state that what the Palestinians of Gaza are exposed to is the threat of a genocidal IDF onslaught against an uprising driven by the intolerable conditions of the 16-year blockade of Gaza—an onslaught which Macron himself is endorsing.

Macron briefly mourned the death of 14 French people in the Hamas offensive against Israel and pledged to work to free the 17 French people thought to be held as hostages by Hamas, which is trying to use them to negotiate a prisoner swap with Israel. He also demanded that the fighting not spread to Lebanon, a former French colony, where the Shiite Hezbollah militia has traded fire with IDF forces across the border in northern Israel.

While Macron briefly referred to his support for a "two-state solution" of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, his principal concern was with justifying internal, police-state repression. He let it be known that the

French capitalist state will treat sympathy with Gaza as a crime. “Those who mix up the Palestinian cause with terrorism are committing a moral error,” he said, pledging that the French police and army would suppress “all excesses, all moral drifts, all hatreds” that might find expression over the Israeli-Palestinian issue in France.

Macron concluded by hypocritically praising the “singular and universal voice which is that of France,” demanding that the French people line up behind him to remain “united to bear a message of peace and hope” and “be up to the standards set by our history.”

It is impossible to reconcile Macron’s empty rhetoric, intended to be taken as references to traditions of the 1789 French Revolution, with the IDF attacks on Gaza. The 18th century democratic revolution granted religious minorities, such as Jews, Protestants and Muslims, full legal rights, based on a proclamation of the principle of human equality. Macron, on the other hand, is endorsing the IDF onslaught against the Palestinians which is unmistakably taking on a fascistic and genocidal character.

Intensifying its 16-year blockade of Gaza, which the United Nations has ruled illegal, the Israeli state is cutting off all food, fuel, energy and humanitarian aid to Gaza and bombing the enclave—a densely populated zone of over 2 million people, half of whom are aged under 18. Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant has denounced the Palestinians in Gaza as “animals,” as he plans an IDF ground invasion of Gaza.

Macron’s endorsement of the IDF offensive is inseparably bound up with the legitimization by the ruling class of the bloodiest, most reactionary traditions of French and European politics. This emerged in remarks by Marine Le Pen, the daughter and political heir of the Holocaust denier and promoter of the Nazi collaborationist Vichy regime, Jean-Marie Le Pen. Marine Le Pen, who has never condemned her father’s support for Vichy and the Holocaust, advocated murdering a large portion of Gaza’s population and ethnically cleansing Gaza of Palestinians.

“Terrorism is the worst form of cowardice and of brutality,” Le Pen told the far-right C-News channel on Sunday, adding that “we must allow Israel to eradicate Hamas.”

Le Pen then laid out a proposal for the mass murder of all Palestinians active in armed opposition to the IDF

and for the expulsion of all other Palestinians from Gaza. She said, “A part of the Palestinian population probably supports Hamas. But as for the others, they are hostages. So maybe the international community should ask Egypt to open an asylum to let the Palestinian population evacuate Gaza.”

The decision of Macron and of other French parliamentary party leaders to meet Le Pen after this fascistic outburst, which Le Pen’s political ancestors in the French collaboration with Nazism would have understood very well, is no political accident. Firstly, Le Pen was outlining the type of policy that Israeli ruling circles plan to carry out, with European and US support. Moreover, the French political establishment, in the years since the 1991 Stalinist dissolution of the Soviet Union, has agreed to legitimize neo-fascism.

An explosive confrontation is brewing between the working class and the entire ruling class. The capitalist ruling elite is gripped by fear of the masses, after mass strikes this spring against Macron’s pension cuts, which he imposed in a deal with the union bureaucracy in defiance of overwhelming popular opposition and mass riots this summer after the police murder of Nahel. It has not succeeded in legitimizing policies of ethnic cleansing or mass murder, which face deep, historically rooted opposition in the working class.

In the new class struggles that will erupt against Macron, the working class will face the task of opposing war and halting the onslaught on Gaza. His fascistic position on the bloodshed in Palestine is a warning: There is nothing to be negotiated with Macron, whose government must be brought down in a struggle to transfer power to the working class.



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