

Macron address signals right-wing shift by new French government

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On Tuesday night, French President Emmanuel Macron gave a rambling, two-and-half hour televised press conference on his installation last week of a new government led by Prime Minister Gabriel Attal. Despite attempts to give a liberal veneer to his policies, his remarks confirmed that by installing Attal he aims to escalate policies of world war abroad and class war at home that have a fascistic character.

Macron began by acknowledging that his government is being deeply shaken by a crisis of the entire capitalist world order and explosive class struggles. “Yesterday’s world is being erased,” he said, and France is “threatened by global crises” and “internal divisions.” He would show “where we are coming from and where we are going” so “France can remain France, the France of common good sense, of the Resistance and of the Enlightenment.”

Macron’s remarks gave no account of the relationship between his now nearly seven years in office and the global capitalist crisis. But in reality, the policies carried out by his government together with all the other NATO imperialist powers is driving the global capitalist crisis. Despite his empty invocations of the 18th-century Enlightenment and resistance to Nazi rule over Europe, he outlined a national-chauvinist policy of militarizing French society, utterly incompatible with fundamental democratic and social rights.

Macron defended his alliance with the Israeli regime amid its genocidal war on Gaza and called to escalate NATO’s war on Russia in Ukraine. At home, beyond raising prices for electricity and medicine, he endorsed the “struggle against immigration” and far-right Interior Minister Gérald Darmanin’s immigration law. Above all, he called to accelerate plans to reimpose national military service on French youth, require nationalist “civic education” in high schools, and limit youths’ access to Internet-connected devices.

The policies Macron outlined underscore the central

point made by the *Parti de l’égalité socialiste* (PES) during last year’s mass struggles against his regime. There is nothing to be negotiated with Macron. The only way forward for workers and youth is to mount a political struggle, independent of the labor and political bureaucracies that negotiate with Macron, to bring down his police-state regime and take power into their own hands.

Macron claimed the “greatest danger is the Russian war in Ukraine, we cannot let Russia win. This would ultimately be to accept that the rules of the international order cannot be respected.” He called to deliver artillery pieces, dozens of missiles and hundreds of bombs to Ukrainian forces to escalate the war.

Macron justified the Gaza genocide, insisting that principal blame lay with “terrorist attacks” carried out by the Palestinians. While he cynically declared himself to be “shaken by the lives lost in Gaza” as the Israeli regime bombs defenseless refugee camps, hospitals, and schools, he claimed this is the fault of Gaza’s Hamas government. Echoing the Israeli regime’s propaganda, he claimed that Hamas has an “odious strategy placing weapons in schools and hospitals” that justifies taking these buildings as targets.

He praised the US government, which has played the leading role in driving the Ukraine war and arming the Israeli regime against Gaza, calling it “a great ally which shares our values.” He pledged to work with whoever wins the 2024 US presidential elections, including Trump—though he added the proviso that Europe must be able to serve as a “pole of stability” amid a “structural US-China rivalry” that is destabilizing the world.

Macron’s defense of war and genocide represents a significant shift to the right even from the policies he advocated after he was first elected in 2017.

In 2019, as NATO and Russia both intervened militarily in Syria, Macron told the *Economist* that NATO was

“brain dead” and heading towards all-out war with Russia. He criticized Washington’s war policies, calling to “reconsider our policy towards Russia,” adding: “When the United States is very harsh with Russia, it is a form of governmental, political and historical hysteria.”

Macron warned in 2019 that French and NATO imperialist interests could not be best served by a policy of direct global conquest: “Sometimes we committed mistakes by trying to impose our values and change regimes. It was what we saw in Iraq and Libya. ... It is an element of the Western approach, I would say in generic terms, that has been an error since the beginning of the century, perhaps a fateful one, due to the convergence of two tendencies: the right of foreign intervention and neo-conservatism.”

Since the trillion-euro bailouts of the banks and the ruling classes at the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic and the class struggles that followed, however, Macron has shifted his line. He set a course of war and social reaction bringing him into direct confrontation with the working class, against which he has settled on a fascistic policy of inciting anti-immigrant chauvinism.

Last year, Macron’s unpopular policy of slashing pensions to transfer hundreds of billions of euros to military spending provoked the largest strikes in France since the 1936 and 1968 general strikes. While these strikes were shut down by the union bureaucracy and brutally assaulted by Macron’s riot police, they utterly discredited the Macron regime. It is widely recognized among French workers and youth that Macron governs against the people.

This was followed by mass rioting across France last summer, after a telephone video emerged showing the cold-blooded police execution of the young man Nahel, and then mass protests starting last autumn against the Israeli regime’s genocide in Gaza.

Macron’s response was to put forward the fascistic immigration law of Darmanin, a sympathizer of the Nazi-collaborationist *Action française*, which denies funding to medical care for foreigners and citizenship to children of immigrants born on French soil. Macron government officials have acknowledged that the law, which is currently going before the Constitutional Council, is unconstitutional. This law is, as neo-fascist National Rally (NR) leader Marine Le Pen enthusiastically declared, an “ideological victory” for the far right.

Tuesday night, Macron above all outlined his plans to incite nationalism and step up police-state repression at home. He boasted of the “implacable response of the

state, the police forces, and the justice system” and “a record number of arrests and guilty verdicts” during last year’s protests. He pledged to “double the police presence in France’s streets.”

The cause of the rioting, Macron claimed, was that youth spend “many hours in front of [computer or telephone] screens... It produces a generation of conspiracy theorists.” He called on scientists to develop a rationale limiting youth access to the Internet, with rules that “before a certain age you cannot use a screen, between these ages the use of screens must be limited to so many hours.”

“France will be stronger in this world of shocks if we are united by a common sentiment,” he said, calling to speed up the reintroduction of mandatory universal military service, school uniforms and the singing of the French national anthem in the schools. He claimed that in France, “Everyone feels lost” and that under these conditions, the “old precepts have their value.”

The French people, Macron declared, have to be taught that the nation has “an extra bit of soul, a mystical common program, something spiritual that is beyond us.”

With his mystical and xenophobic appeals, Macron is obliterating the distinction between his party and the neo-fascists, for whom he is opening a path to power. The fascistic delirium which he presented to the French public as a justification for supporting genocide, austerity and war is the clearest indication that the capitalist class as a whole is brain dead. It has reached an impasse and lost any historic legitimacy for its rule.

This also exposes all the union bureaucrats and allied pseudo-left politicians who called for a negotiated settlement with Macron during last year’s pension struggle, as polls showed two-thirds of the French people supporting blocking the economy with a general strike to bring him down. They are politically implicated in Macron’s criminal record. The decisive question is building independent rank-and-file organizations of struggle in the working class, and building the Parti de l’égalité socialiste as the Trotskyist revolutionary vanguard in the working class, to wage a struggle for power.



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