

Opposition grows to France's fascistic immigration law

Our reporters
21 January 2024

On Sunday, 150,000 protesters took part in 160 demonstrations across France against President Emmanuel Macron's immigration law. The fascistic law is now being reviewed in the Constitutional Council which is due to publish a final decision on Thursday. It was voted through the National Assembly by a parliamentary alliance between Macron's Renaissance party, the Republican party and the neo-fascist National Rally (NR) of Marine Le Pen.

The struggle against Macron's immigration law intersects with mass international protests against the imperialist-backed Israeli regime's genocide in Gaza, and rail strikes, anti-fascist protests and farmers protests in neighboring Germany. The far-right agenda of war, social austerity, and anti-immigrant chauvinism imposed by all the imperialist governments faces mounting international opposition in the working class.

Macron's immigration law restricts social benefits for immigrants, including familial and housing support during periods of unemployment. Parliament will set immigration quotas for the next three years, determining how many migrants will be granted entry per annum. Although the complete abolition of healthcare for ill foreign nationals was removed from the final draft of the bill, the government pledged to review this issue later in 2024.

The law also restricts birthright citizenship. Those born in France will no longer automatically receive French citizenship. Instead they will have to apply for citizenship at 16 years old. Those convicted of any crime before 16 will be barred from citizenship all together. The conditions for family reunification have also been tightened, including a requirement of proof of sufficient financial resources to host a spouse.

WSWS journalists spoke to protesters at the rally in Paris, which was attended by Fabien Roussel, the

leader of the Stalinist French Communist Party, Manon Aubry of Jean-Luc Mélenchon's France Unbowed (LFI) party, as well as top union officials.

Adama, an undocumented worker and member of the CGT union, told the WSWS: "There are ideas from the former National Front [now Le Pen's National Rally] which were taken up by Emmanuel Macron. We all know the reality that without immigrants the country would be paralysed. Migrants are workers, they contribute to all social security funds, they participate massively in the economic life of this country."

Adama criticized the political deceit of Macron, who pledged to oppose the far right only to adopt a fascistic law against immigration. He said, "But to satisfy the far right, to satisfy the racists, those who want to gain power at all costs denounce immigrants every day, even those who work and do not live on [state] aid. I wake up at 4 a.m. to work. I participate in the economic life of the country, and I am linked to France by history."

Adama also stressed his solidarity with the international movement against the Israeli regime's war and genocide in Gaza, saying, "I feel solidarity for all the oppressed. The Palestinian people is oppressed. ... One can win a war, but one never wins through war."

The WSWS also spoke to Martin, a doctor. Martin explained, "I came today because I am both a doctor and an immigrant. Removing State Medical Aid (AME) seems to me to be something very inhumane and counterproductive. Even if they took the aid out of the [current] law they will add it again later, it's a political tactic. Medically it is unjustified and dangerous."

"This [measure] is contrary to medical rules and the commitment of doctors and caregivers in general. So I think they [doctors] would continue to treat them, I'm sure of it, but with what means, I don't know."

Significantly, yesterday's protest was boycotted by

the Sans-Papiers (Undocumented Workers) Collective (CSP), which had organised a protest against the immigration law of over 40,000 throughout France on January 14. The collective criticized the union officials' refusal to endorse its earlier protest and their decision to drop other demands for undocumented workers' rights that it had put forward at the previous demonstration.

In its statement announcing the boycott, the CSP attacked the French union bureaucracies who called the January 21 protest, stating: "Where it is necessary to build a unity of struggle, the initiators of the call for the January 21 protest have sowed the seeds of division with those who have been fighting for months against this racist law. For us, the struggle for equal rights in society must translate into equal rights in the organisation of the struggle itself."

It continued, "The demonstrations of January 14 were initiated by the Sans-Papiers collectives of the Paris region and organised with 500 organisations, many of them local structures. The initiatives in around thirty cities involved more than 40,000 people. These demonstrations on the 14th showed that there was a response unifying undocumented people and those with papers (French people and immigrants)."

The collective has also endorsed calls for a strike against the law scheduled on January 25 and for a new set of protests, independent of the union leaderships, on February 3.

The CSP's boycott is an initial expression of mounting working class opposition to the staggering treachery of the union bureaucracies and their pseudo-left political allies. Terrified of a movement threatening their own place in the ruling establishment, these forces shut down and betrayed last year's mass strikes and protests against Macron's overwhelmingly unpopular pension cuts. They have also worked for years to stifle working class opposition in France to anti-immigrant measures such as the European Union's murderous Fortress Europe policy, which has led to the drowning of over 20,000 migrants in the Mediterranean over the last decade.

The decisive question facing workers in France, as protests erupt in neighboring Germany and around the world, is building an international movement of the working class.

Immigrant workers and youth cannot overcome the

threats they face within a national framework, under the control of national union bureaucracies. They face escalating imperialist wars, militarization of society, social austerity and fascistic anti-immigrant policies that are coordinated by the imperialist powers across Europe and internationally. These policies can only be fought on an international scale, against the capitalist class that imposes them. In this struggle, immigrants' best allies are their fellow workers across Europe and the world.

The growing distrust and opposition to the bureaucracies among ever-broader layers of workers and youth point to the urgent need to build rank-and-file organizations of struggle, committees of action responsible to their members and independent of the union executives. Such organizations are essential to overcome the sabotage of workers' struggles by the bureaucracy, unify these struggles internationally and prepare a direct struggle of the international working class for power, the overthrow of capitalism and the building of socialism.



To contact the WSW and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

[wsws.org/contact](https://www.wsws.org/contact)