

Mobilize the working class against the French state of emergency in New Caledonia!

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The *Parti de l'égalité socialiste* (PES) unequivocally condemns the state of emergency imposed by France on New Caledonia. French imperialism is trying to crush a social revolt provoked by a deep economic crisis, notably the crisis in the market for nickel, the principal export of this archipelago of Pacific islands, and by the neocolonial regime France imposes there.

Having arrived Thursday to discuss with state officials and to coordinate repression, Macron pledged to crush the revolt. Armored vehicles and helicopters would, he said, “in the coming hours retake all locations that are still in the hands of violence and disorder.” In addition, Macron announced the censoring of TikTok. These are France’s most brutal measures since the crushing of the 1985-6 Kanak uprising, which ended with the murder of 19 Kanaks on Ouvéa island by French special forces.

Ruling by the sword, Macron presents himself with brazen hypocrisy as a champion of democracy. Defending his proposed electoral reform allowing newly arrived Europeans to vote in New Caledonia’s local elections, the proposal whose announcement triggered the riots, he said: “We are really in a pretty strange country. In France, we authorize the vote of [European] foreigners in local elections. ... But here we are saying that people, who have lived here 10 years, don’t have the right to vote in local elections.”

Workers in France, the Pacific region and internationally must defend the Kanaks. As during Macron’s anti-democratic imposition of a massively unpopular pension cut and the repression of mass riots in France against the police murder of Nahel, last year, the French government is on the war path. Kanak youth and workers running directly into the geopolitical and military interests of French imperialism.

As Washington and its NATO allies including France

are waging war and preparing to wage war with China in the Pacific, Macron is determined to keep control of the massive mineral reserves and strategic military bases in New Caledonia. This war policy is inseparably bound up with the NATO alliance’s use of the far-right Ukrainian regime to wage war on Russia and its backing of the Zionist genocide in Gaza.

To wage imperialist war abroad, Macron is waging class war at home. The archipelago of New Caledonia has been devastated by the fall in nickel prices. Workers at one factory in the north of the archipelago have been laid off, threatening 1,750 jobs. Inflation and unemployment are devastating living conditions, and the French government has nothing to offer but repression.

Macron’s electoral reform triggered the eruption of massive social and political discontent, which grew last week into rioting and the occupation of streets and public places. The local authorities, whether “pro-independence” or openly pro-French, admit they have lost control of the situation. Riots have cost 6 lives including those of two policemen, with more than 200 arrests and 300 people wounded in the region of Nouméa, the capital.

The threat to public order comes not primarily from the insurgent masses, but from panicked and bloodthirsty bourgeois. The “Caldoche” (European-origin) elites are organizing death squads, like French colonists who organized “rat-hunts” to murder Arabs during Algeria’s 1954-1962 war for independence from France.

“A source told *Le Monde* that the first two people killed were two Kanak youth who were killed by Caldoches,” *Le Monde* wrote, citing a police commissioner who said: “Armed militias are being formed for self-protection.” The newspaper added:

“‘Militias’, this term, which recalls the specter of the 1980s—referred to here as ‘the events’—strikes fear into the hearts of majority Kanak neighborhoods. Unverifiable rumors, featuring pictures of pick-up trucks with tinted windows, are circulating on instant messaging services, speaking of punitive expeditions during which young Polynesians are hunted down.”

Indeed, Macron is censoring TikTok to make sure that the masses cannot upload to social media evidence of criminal behavior by members of the propertied classes.

Workers in France, the Pacific and internationally must mobilize in defense of the workers and youth in struggle in New Caledonia. There is no national solution, within the archipelago, for a political crisis rooted in the crisis of capitalism and world imperialism, who are again plunging into world war. This political reality is illustrated in the bankruptcy of the “pro-independence” Kanak and Socialist National Liberation Front (FLNKS).

FLNKS leaders, who are tied to Stalinist and social-democratic bureaucrats in France, are rushing to meet with Macron and try to strangle the movement that began, despite them, from below.

The FLNKS leadership, together “with all the pressure groups making up the FLNKS (UC, PALIKA, UPM, RDO)” said in a statement that it hopes Macron’s visit will “give new life to a calm and serene dialog.” In a communiqué Wednesday, the FLNKS demanded calm, “in order to allow our students, our most vulnerable citizens and, in general, the entire Caledonian population which has been made more fragile by this situation, to return to confidence and security.”

The FLNKS speaks for a native petty bourgeoisie that has no clear policy beyond enjoying their privileges within the economically sclerotic, neocolonial system France imposes on the archipelago. Despite colossal resources (up to 30 percent of world nickel reserves), New Caledonia is only the world’s third-largest producer, with 230,000 tons in 2023. It is far behind Indonesia, which with 1.8 million tons multiplied its production by 10 over the last decade, thanks to

Chinese investment.

The current law restraining electoral participation in New Caledonia is reactionary, dividing Kanak from Asian and European immigrant workers. The outcome of the 1998 Nouméa accords signed by then-Prime Minister Lionel Jospin’s Socialist Party as a “compromise” between pro-independence and pro-French forces, it aims to maintain France’s grip over the archipelago. But workers cannot give the task of opposing the reform of the political system driven by Macron and his military police to the “pro-independence” forces who in fact work with Macron.

By meeting Macron, the “pro-independence” movement are setting a trap for Kanak workers and youth, aiming to chain them to French imperialism and Washington’s war plotting against China. But the entire region is a social powder keg. In January, a wave of riots erupted in Papua New Guinea against the surge in the cost of living and social discontent.

Trotsky opposed the false, counterrevolutionary Stalinist theory of “socialism in one country,” and similarly there is no socialist perspective in a single Pacific archipelago. Moreover, there is nothing to be negotiated with Macron and French imperialism. The way forward is building an international movement against not only Macron but also the FLNKS and its allies in the French Stalinist and trade union bureaucracies, building an international anti-war movement in the working class, fighting for workers power and socialism.



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