

The bankrupt perspective of the French Morenoite Révolution permanente group's May 24 anti-war meeting in Paris

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On May 24, *Révolution permanente* (RP) will host a Paris meeting of the Morenoite “Trotskyist Fraction–Fourth International” (FT-CI), led by Argentina’s Socialist Workers Party (PTS), under the title “Against Imperialist Militarism and the Reactionary International.” Representatives from the FT-CI’s affiliates in France, Argentina, Germany, Spain and the United States will attend.

The meeting is being convened amid growing outrage among youth and students over the genocide in Gaza, the mounting death toll from the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East, and the rise of America’s fascist president, Donald Trump, and his far-right allies. In France, where Trump’s global trade war threats have stoked fears of a broader conflict, polls show that 55 percent of the population fears the outbreak of World War III.

Far from providing a way forward, RP’s meeting represents a political dead end for youth and workers seeking to oppose genocide, war and fascism.

What workers and youth lack is not anger or discontent, but a clear political perspective—an understanding of what must be done, and who must be fought, to halt the accelerating death spiral of capitalism. The FT-CI offers no such perspective. Instead, it seeks to reconcile empty phrases about revolution, internationalism and Trotskyism with its actual alliances with pro-war Stalinist, social-democratic, and liberal parties, as well as nationalist union bureaucracies.

An announcement of the event, published by RP states:

The rally will take place as Europe’s major powers increasingly lean toward militarism. Amid a historic crisis in transatlantic relations, all European heads of state are preparing to accelerate their military rearmament. ... So that they can fund the rearmament and impose their militaristic agenda, these leaders will likely attack our living conditions and democratic rights.

In reality, the European imperialist powers are not merely “preparing” to “lean towards” militarism—they are already militarizing at breakneck speed. The EU has adopted an €800 billion rearmament plan, and Germany alone is pursuing a €1 trillion military buildup. These colossal war budgets make one thing certain: the ruling class will seek to impose mass impoverishment and erect fascistic police-state regimes to crush mounting opposition in the working class.

Workers and youth cannot halt the drive to war through the ballot box. The military build-up advances regardless of which capitalist party holds office—whether under fascists like Italian Prime Minister and Trump ally Giorgia Meloni, so-called “centrists” like German Chancellor Friedrich

Merz and French President Emmanuel Macron, or media-promoted “left” formations like Podemos (now Sumar) in Spain. RP comments:

In this context, the Far Right is becoming increasingly appealing to the ruling classes, from Trump and Musk in the U.S. to Meloni in Italy, Milei in Argentina, and Le Pen in France. A genuine reactionary international is emerging, rooted in racist and anti-worker policies.

As always with RP statements, what is most significant is what they leave unsaid. One must ask: How is it possible, after the horrors of fascism, genocide and world war in the 20th century, that the bourgeoisie can once again bring far-right governments to power? It is not because mass fascist movements like Hitler’s Brownshirts or Mussolini’s Blackshirts are marching in the streets or mobilizing millions in Europe or the United States.

Rather, far-right forces have exploited the deep social anger among workers and youth created by the betrayals of the parties falsely presented as “left” by the capitalist media. The suppression of workers’ struggles by these parties has created conditions in which far-right demagogues can win votes, including among sections of the working class.

How are workers to fight imperialist war, fascism and genocide? The RP states that its Paris meeting aims “to amplify the voice of the socialist Left and the working class,” concluding:

The rally will provide a platform for us to emphasize that only the working class and the oppressed have the strength to halt militarism. While militarism has led to massacres in the past, what the ruling class fears far more than tanks or nuclear missiles are struggles and revolutions. The best contribution to peace is to fight our governments, our bosses, our own imperialism, and its war plans, from an internationalist, working-class, and revolutionary perspective.

The statement does not say who this “socialist Left” is, how it intends to “amplify” the voice of the working class, or what “revolutionary perspective” it actually supports. It remains conspicuously silent on its own ties and orientation to pro-imperialist forces such as the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), Germany’s Die Linke, Spain’s Podemos, the New Popular Front (NFP) in France, and the Stalinist-led CGT union bureaucracy.

A genuine revolutionary perspective requires an irreconcilable political struggle against all those organizations that tie the working class to the capitalist state. Yet this is precisely what RP and the FT-CI will not do.

To understand the FT-CI's role, it is worth recalling Leon Trotsky's struggle against centrist politics in the 1930s. Amid the revolutionary crisis in France following the 1936 general strike, and with the threat of a second world war looming, Trotsky analyzed the role of Marceau Pivert—a social democrat who criticized the Popular Front government but refused to break with Stalinism and build the Fourth International. Centrism, Trotsky wrote:

fears to break its habitual amicable relations with the friends on the right, it “respects” personal opinions; that is why it delivers all its blows against the left, thus endeavoring to raise its prestige in the eyes of serious public opinion. ... [It] absolutely does not understand that a pitiless manner of posing the fundamental questions and a fierce polemic against vacillations are only the necessary ideological and pedagogical reflection of the implacable and cruel character of the class struggle of our time.

A vast class gulf separates Marceau Pivert from the petty-bourgeois milieu in which the FT-CI operates today. Pivert was a leader within a mass workers' party whose members fought for and won significant reforms, including the eight-hour day and paid holidays. Though he ultimately rejected the fight to build a revolutionary alternative to Stalinism, he permitted Trotskyists to join his party, allowing them to engage with a broader layer of the working class. Eighty-five years later, the FT-CI is not working within reformist workers' organizations, but orbiting around openly pro-imperialist parties rooted in the affluent middle class.

Today's pseudo-left parties, however, share one undeniable similarity with the political bankrupts of 1930s France: Confronted with the threat of fascism and the looming danger of world war, they are determined to block revolutionary struggle and are bitterly opposed to a fight for Trotskyism.

The various components of the FT-CI serve this role in the countries where they operate. Indeed, it is not an international, in the sense of an organization having a unified world strategy, but a collection of various national organizations that base themselves on tactical maneuvers oriented toward bourgeois parties and trade union bureaucracies in their respective countries.

Last year, the Spanish organization, Workers Revolutionary Current (WRC), launched an election campaign that was oriented primarily to the Pabloite Anticapitalistas, which had previously participated in Spain's Socialist Party (PSOE)-Podemos austerity government.

Left Voice (LV), the FT-CI's US affiliate, will be represented in Paris by Julia Wallace, a bureaucrat in the SEIU and a prominent member of Black Lives Matter (BLM), which seeks to divide the working class along ethnic lines and block a unified struggle against capitalism. As Wallace travels to Paris, *Left Voice* is defending union officials like UAW President Shawn Fain, who supports Trump's nationalist trade war. After criticising Fain's declaration that he is “ready to work with Trump” on “tariffs that serve the national and working-class interest,” *Left Voice* still hailed him as “one of the most significant figures in the new progressive labor bureaucracy.”

In Germany, while not formally part of the Left Party—a pro-imperialist organization that plays a critical role in the German state—the Morenoite Revolutionary Internationalist Organization (RIO), orients itself entirely to it and the organizations orbiting it. In response to the rise of the Alternative for Germany (AfD), the RIO called for a united movement

encompassing not only the “left,” but also various right-wing organizations—all of which are responsible for the rise of the AfD itself.

The anti-Trotskyism of Left Voice and the FT-CI extends to promoting Anura Kumara Dissanayake, Sri Lanka's pro-austerity president and leader of the ex-Maoist, Sinhala-chauvinist Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP). In an article also published by RP, *Left Voice* acknowledged that Dissanayake's campaign was “marked by Sinhala-Buddhist chauvinism,” but nonetheless claims it “could have been a hope” for sections of the population. Their only complaint is that Dissanayake has now “left his Marxist origins behind” and dropped “the most advanced elements of his program”—a program already steeped in nationalism and hostility to the working class.

Here, the FT-CI provides political cover for Sri Lanka's pro-austerity JVP regime. In reality, the JVP was a fervent supporter of the Sri Lankan state's 1983–2009 communal war against the Tamil population, including the massacre of tens of thousands of Tamil fighters and civilians at Mullaitivu. It was also responsible for the assassination of members of the ICFI's Sri Lankan section, targeted for opposing Sinhala chauvinism and fighting for the unity of Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim workers.

It is impossible to mount a serious opposition to imperialism on such a basis. This is exemplified in France. *Révolution permanente* emerged from the Pabloite New Anticapitalist Party (NPA) as a faction seeking to recruit young CGT bureaucrats. As workers abandoned the Stalinist organizations after decades of betrayals, RP saw not the need to build a revolutionary alternative, but a chance for political and career advancement within the union apparatus. It declared:

Amid the decline of the PCF inside the CGT and the crisis of recruitment, young union officials can find themselves rather quickly leading major trade union organizations and structures. ... Every revolutionary worthy of the name must pay the greatest attention to this phenomenon, and seek at all costs to converge with this new generation.

A decisive test of RP's perspective came during the 2023 mass strikes against Macron's pension cuts, imposed by decree to finance military rearmament. France was plunged into its deepest political crisis since May 1968, as Macron ignored mass opposition and unleashed riot police on protesters. Throughout, RP advanced only the demand that the CGT bureaucracy provide a “battle plan” against Macron.

The Parti de l'égalité socialiste (PES), the ICFI's French section, advanced the call for the working class to bring down Macron for trying to rule against the people. In meetings of workers and youth during the protests, it explained:

What must be done is to launch a political movement to throw Macron out of power, to bring down his regime by a general strike. General assemblies must be held in every university, in every workplace in France to declare that this president must go. To achieve this, the working class must be mobilized independently of all the bureaucracies that are negotiating with Macron, not fighting him politically. If this assembly votes a clear resolution stating that Macron must be thrown out, that the presidency of the Fifth Republic has clearly become the cockpit of an illegitimate dictatorship exercised by the banks against the workers, this can have an enormous impact. It will allow youth to go to workplaces, to speak to workers, encourage them to gather in general assemblies in their workplaces and to vote similar statements, and thus create the organizations through which the workers can bring

down Macron, abolish the Fifth Republic's anti-democratic presidency, and open the path for workers to collectively take power and build socialism.

Even as riots erupted across France, RP opposed any socialist perspective. In mass protest meetings, RP delegates rejected motions submitted by the PES calling for a general strike and a break with the union bureaucracy.

"I do not think the situation is revolutionary," said RP member Juan Chingo. Claiming that it supported revolution "on the Jacobin model," that is, a national bourgeois revolution like the 1789 revolution, RP called on "the mass movement to make experiences with bourgeois representative democracy and allow to develop consciousness of the need for self-organization." It adapted itself to the union bureaucracies' shutdown of the struggle after the pension cuts were adopted as law.

What emerged was RP's fundamental loyalty to bourgeois rule—not socialism, but capitalism upheld through alliances with Stalinism. This was confirmed again last year when RP supported a critical vote for the New Popular Front (NFP), an alliance of Jean-Luc Mélenchon's populist France Unbowed, the big-business Socialist Party, the Greens, the Stalinist PCF and the Pabloite NPA.

The PES's warnings of the bankruptcy and treachery of the NFP, a pro-war alliance whose program called for sending French troops to Ukraine, were vindicated. After forming an electoral bloc with Macron under the pretense of stopping the neo-fascist RN, the NFP mounted no serious protests or strikes when Macron ignored the election result—in which the NFP came in first—and installed a right-wing minority government. The NFP thus played a decisive role in allowing Macron to retain power.

Among its accomplices was RP, which urged workers to vote for the NFP on the spurious grounds that, because it includes the Stalinist PCF, it is part of the "labor movement." While acknowledging that the PCF is "far from opposing law-and-order, xenophobic and Islamophobic arguments and sometimes even helps promote them," RP still justified its support by claiming: "While the PCF has served in several left-wing governments, this party claims to be in the workers movement and maintains a certain working class base from its past or certain ties it has with the trade unions."

This record exposes the central lie behind RP's conference in Paris: that it is waging an all-out struggle against the far right. In reality, RP has marched in line with the pseudo-left organizers of defeat—forces that systematically demobilize workers and create the conditions in which the far right can falsely present itself as the only real opposition to the status quo. The primary beneficiary of these betrayals has been the neo-fascist National Rally.

One critical political lesson from the history of the 20th century must be underscored today. In an epoch marked by world war, fascism and genocide, petty-bourgeois tendencies that adapt to imperialism, legitimize xenophobia and conceal Stalinism and mass murder behind pseudo-Marxist phraseology invariably lead to catastrophe. For workers and youth seeking a genuine revolutionary path, the urgent task is to break decisively with these forces and actively oppose them.

Such a struggle cannot be cobbled together from a patchwork of nationally based, pragmatically chosen tactics. It requires an uncompromising fight for Marxist internationalism: the international mobilization of the working class against war, fascism, and capitalism, and the building of a revolutionary leadership grounded in Trotskyism. This is the perspective advanced by the ICFI.

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