

Build rank-and-file committees to wage the struggle against Macron and war!

Parti de l'égalité socialiste (France)

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Hundreds of thousands of workers will strike on today's day of action in France, a week after the fall of the French government and mass "Block Everything" protests called on social media. As social anger mounts against President Emmanuel Macron and his new prime minister, Sébastien Lecornu, France is not only in the throes of a parliamentary crisis. It is passing through a crisis of rule rooted in an international conflict between the working class and the capitalist oligarchy.

Workers reject the demands of the political establishment across Europe for deep social cuts to fund the sovereign debt and unpopular wars, while preserving the oligarchy's obscene wealth. Replacing François Bayrou with Lecornu as French prime minister has not lessened this insoluble class conflict one iota. As Lecornu met with union leaders and the bourgeois Socialist Party (PS) to discuss new cuts and assemble another minority government, his poll ratings fell to 16 percent.

In the explosive class battles that lie ahead, the working class must take control of its own struggles. Militant organizations of the rank and file, built completely outside the framework of official politics, must take control of the class struggle out of the hands of the union bureaucracies and their "social dialog" with the capitalist state. This is the only way workers can organize resistance to and defeat the ruling oligarchy's program of fascism, genocide and war.

Political lessons of the European strike wave of 2023, including the defeat of the struggle against Macron's pension cuts, must be drawn. An overwhelming majority of French people opposed the cuts, millions of workers went on strike, and riots shook cities across France. Yet Macron was able to impose his cuts, because the union leaderships and parties in Jean-Luc Mélenchon's New Popular Front (NFP) called off strikes and protests once Macron promulgated his illegitimate cuts as law.

The working class cannot defeat the attacks against it without breaking free of the bureaucracies that police the class struggle and enable the capitalist state to rule against the people. The decades-long escalation of imperialist wars, social austerity and attacks on democratic rights since the Stalinist dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 has proceeded so far that it is no longer compatible with democratic forms of rule.

Across Europe, the ruling class is demanding military escalation and payoffs to the banks that would require destroying the welfare state and impoverishing the population. Sovereign debt is 114 percent of GDP in France, 150 percent in Italy, 104 percent in Spain, 102 percent in Britain. Germany's €1 trillion rearmament plan could boost its debt to 90 percent of GDP. France, on tax revenues of €330 billion, spends nearly €100 billion on debt servicing, €50 billion on the military and has pledged to raise military spending €100 billion more to 5 percent of GDP.

There are two stark alternatives: Either the working class will break the diktat of the capitalist oligarchy, stop the war and the payoffs to the banks; or the oligarchy will escalate the war by destroying essential social programs on which the French people rely.

Powerful sections of the bourgeoisie understand that they are embarking on a class war against the workers that would require a fascistic dictatorship. This underlies the neo-fascist National Rally's (RN) announcement, in an open letter by RN party President Jordan Bardella to France's CEOs, that he is ready to double the austerity measures planned by Macron to €100 billion in cuts, if elected.

The policy of Mélenchon, for his part, is to lull the working class to sleep and keep subordinating it to the union bureaucracy. He has claimed "It is enough for us to let the situation ripen," pointing to the fact that several union bureaucracies have called protests and claiming that "It is useless to tire oneself out trying to do more." Peddling hopes that the union bureaucracies will call more protests and force Macron's resignation, he says nothing to prepare workers and youth for a situation where the bourgeoisie would react to Macron's fall by attacking workers even more aggressively.

In fact, the defense of the fundamental social and democratic rights of the working class requires a mass mobilization of the rank and file, fighting for the self-organization of the working class and the preparation of a general strike to bring down Macron. This is inseparable from the construction of a political movement in the working class, in France and across Europe, for workers' power and a socialist revolution.

The PES calls for the transfer of power in all factories and workplaces from the union bureaucracies to the rank and file.

To wage this struggle, workers need rank-and-file organizations to overcome the opposition of union bureaucracies whose “social dialog” ties workers to the diktat of the capitalist state. The Parti de l’égalité socialiste proposes the following demands, on which a political offensive can be waged in the working class to build support for the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC):

Expropriate the capitalist oligarchy!

Workers must reject the lie that there is no money for social programs and jobs. The trillions of euros monopolized by the capitalist oligarchy in France and across Europe must be used to fund key social programs and rebuild industry, infrastructure and jobs. This requires a struggle by the working class to expropriate the oligarchy, turning Europe’s major enterprises into a network of public utilities serving the interests of the people.

Bring down Macron, abolish the Fifth Republic’s executive presidency!

The capitalist oligarchy rules against the people by police repression and mass arrests of strikers. The executive presidency of France’s 1958 constitution, the nerve center of police state plots against democracy, must be abolished. Ultimately, ending attacks on democratic rights will require the transfer of power to organizations of the working class: Just as there can be no socialism without democracy, there can be no democracy without socialism.

No to imperialist war and NATO, build an anti-war movement in the working class!

Macron’s overwhelmingly unpopular plans to send French troops to Ukraine must be stopped. France must leave the imperialist NATO alliance, which threatens to trigger nuclear war with Russia, as part of an international struggle by the working class to dismantle NATO and end its wars. Not a penny should go to spending increases for “high-intensity war,” that is, mass death like the current fratricidal slaughter of Russian and Ukrainian soldiers.

Stop the Gaza genocide! No persecution of opponents of genocide!

Workers in France and internationally must block the production and delivery of arms to Israel. The prosecution of opponents of the Gaza genocide on bogus anti-terrorism or antisemitism charges must end. Israeli officials responsible for the genocide, like French and NATO officials complicit in supporting or arming the Israeli state, must be prosecuted.

Stop the persecution of immigrants! For the international unity of the working class!

The struggle for socialism is inseparable from the international unity of the working class against attempts by the ruling class to divide workers along national lines. Workers must oppose the persecution of immigrants, the building of detention camps for refugees, and discriminatory laws like bans on Muslim clothing in French schools.

For the United Socialist States of Europe!

The most powerful allies of French workers and youth are the millions of workers across Europe and internationally opposed to war, fascism, genocide and austerity. The bureaucrats and populist politicians will stand in the way of building a fighting alliance with them. Workers must build their rank-and-file organizations of struggle and a political movement to transfer power to the working class in France, across Europe and internationally, replacing the capitalist European Union with the United Socialist States of Europe.



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