

French state classifies Melenchon's LFI as “extreme left-wing” to deepen assault on democratic rights

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On Friday, the Council of State, France's highest administrative court responsible for reviewing the legality of government decisions, upheld the classification of La France Insoumise (LFI-France Unbowed) as “far left,” despite the party's appeal. This decision is part of a broader campaign aiming at the very least disciplining or more probably criminalising Jean-Luc Mélenchon and his party.

This attack is not only directed against LFI, but against all those who aspire to an independent left-wing politics, and aims to prepare the working class for the acceptance of authoritarian and neo-fascist measures. It reflects an international trend: governments use the pretext of security and public order to criminalize popular opposition, restrict democratic rights, and facilitate the rise of authoritarian and far-right forces.

Despite well-documented and irreconcilable political differences with La France Insoumise and Jean-Luc Mélenchon, the WSWs and the Parti de l'égalité socialiste—the French section of the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI)—unconditionally defend LFI against attacks by the state and the government, in order to protect the democratic rights of workers and young people to oppose the government and the far-right without being criminalised.

On Wednesday, the Council of State rejected LFI's appeal against this classification. Rapporteur Alexandre Trémoлиère explained: “The dividing blocks must not be too numerous and therefore aim for a broad range. The [government] circular is not intended to provide an analysis of political philosophy. The nuanced classification is an administrative practice whose sole purpose is to offer an analysis of the results.”

By presenting the classification as a simple technical operation devoid of ideological significance, the rapporteur seeks to conceal its obvious political nature. However, in a context of crisis and increasing polarization, the administrative definition of electoral blocks cannot be considered neutral.

Laurent Nunez, the Minister of the Interior, justified his “extreme” label for LFI as follows: “Within La France Insoumise, there is a refusal of parliamentary debate, systematic calls for censure votes, and a refusal to meet with the government for working sessions. As Minister of the Interior, I take into account the reality of the situations.”

LFI has been accused of delegitimizing the justice system, making sweeping accusations against the police and security forces, calling for civil disobedience, and seeking to break with capitalism. It has not been accused of inciting violence or breaking the law. This means the party is being denounced as “far left” because it exercises its

democratic right to criticize the government, state institutions, and capitalism. The extremist that threatens democracy is not Mélenchon, but President Macron, a defender of genocide and the repressor of the Yellow Vest movement.

This decision must be seen as part of an international trend, a shift in ruling circles towards authoritarian and fascist methods. France is going through a profound political and economic crisis. Faced with massive deficits and unprecedented social tensions, Macron's government is seeking to impose austerity measures and suppress any worker protests.

Macron has openly supported the genocide in Gaza, and the French elite denounce any opposition to Zionism as antisemitic. They seek to delegitimize La France Insoumise, break its electoral alliance, and pave the way for the National Rally (RN) to come to power.

The leader of the National Rally (RN), Jordan Bardella, mentioned a potential cost of €100 billion linked to the controversial social cuts, illustrating the scale of the direct confrontation between the state and the working class. The ruling classes and the government are creating the conditions for bringing a far-right party to power to directly wage a policy of class warfare and external war.

In the last two presidential elections, Mélenchon garnered nearly 8 million votes among the working class in major cities, expressing support for an independent left-wing policy. In this context, the attack against LFI goes beyond the strictly electoral realm: it criminalizes the aspirations of millions of people for a left-wing, anti-war, anti-genocide, and anti-austerity policy, whose votes have shifted to LFI and Mélenchon.

The political front mounted against LFI, encompassing far-right groups, the Socialist Party (PS), the National Rally (RN), and Macron's government, is waging an offensive against democratic rights and the growing opposition to the establishment of a police state. The objective is clear: to enable Marine Le Pen or Jordan Bardella to come to power after the upcoming municipal and presidential elections. On February 21, the leader of The Republicans party, Laurent Wauquiez, stated that “La France Insoumise (LFI) is toxic to our democratic life,” and Bruno Retailleau (The Republicans) advocated for a “cordon sanitaire” against LFI.

This authoritarian logic is not unique to France. It is reminiscent of recent experience in the United States, where the police state under Trump used violence and repression to control the population, particularly in Minneapolis. European imperialist governments, confronted with growing social movements, are adopting similar measures, intensifying judicial and police repression against political

opponents. Traditional democratic forms are being junked by the ruling class.

The witch hunt against LFI seeks to demonize young people's opposition to fascist groups and to conscription for war. Defending LFI against this attack does not imply any support for its policies or its alliances with the Socialist Party (PS), which have served as a pillar of bourgeois power for decades. It is about defending the right of the millions of workers and young people who voted for LFI to express themselves and resist without being criminalized.

For the same reason, we defended LFI against the slanderous accusations that it was responsible for the death of far-right activist Quentin Deranque in February. Deranque died from injuries sustained in a fight near the scene of the incident, after supporting a far-right provocation against a rally organized by LFI MP Rima Hassan.

Among those arrested, several are members of the "Young Guard" group, which is close to LFI and was banned by the Ministry of the Interior in the summer of 2025. No evidence proves the charges, nor has the claim that the Young Guard provided security at the rally with Rima Hassan. Both LFI and the Young Guard deny any involvement in Deranque's death. Nevertheless, a broad coalition, ranging from avowed fascists to the far-right National Rally, and including President Macron and the Socialist Party, has held LFI responsible for this death and launched a virulent smear campaign against Mélenchon.

We reject the ban on the Young Guard imposed last year by the Ministry of the Interior. Equating "left-wing violence" with fascist violence, as the state and its allies do, amounts to politically disarming the working class. Workers must be able to defend themselves against fascist groups without being placed in the hands of the police or repressive forces.

Lyon, where Deranque was killed, has been a far-right hotbed for over 20 years, where groups terrorize Muslims, migrants, students, and left-wing workers. Between 2019 and 2023, six people were killed in France by far-right violence. The Young Guard group was formed in response to this.

The security forces are closely linked to this far-right milieu. According to an Ipsos poll for the Sciences Po Centre for Political Research (Cevipof), 60 percent of law enforcement officers indicated they would vote for Marine Le Pen in the second round of the 2022 presidential election. The social base on which the Macron government relies—namely, the police—is favourable to the National Rally coming to power.

This crisis also reveals the political bankruptcy of LFI. The party refuses to call for an independent mobilization of the working class against Macron, the RN, and the entire capitalist establishment. LFI and the petty-bourgeois social strata it represents, instead of mobilizing the working class against the neo-fascist threat, are demanding state and police intervention against the far right, while the state is collaborating with the far right against workers.

With the New Popular Front, an electoral alliance with the Socialists, Communists, and Greens, and electoral agreements with Macron's camp, Mélenchon strengthened these very parties in the 2024 legislative elections that are now attacking him. The New Popular Front did not curb the rise of the National Rally, but as we predicted at the time reinforced the far right.

To justify classifying LFI as "far left," the rapporteur cited the lack of an alliance between LFI and its NFP allies in the first round of the municipal elections: "LFI is presenting its own list in major cities, while the Socialist Party and Europe Ecology – The Greens (EELV) are joining forces. Mélenchon's party is therefore distancing itself

from the left. Regardless of its role in bringing people together in previous elections through Nupes and then the NFP, this time it is going it alone. The circular applies solely to the upcoming municipal elections."

The reference to not forming an alliance with the Socialist Party (PS) and Europe Ecology – The Greens (EELV) is an attempt to force LFI to back down, abandon all rhetorical radicalism, and fall into line. The Council of State and Macron are not so much afraid of Mélenchon or LFI, which is a pseudo-left party integrated into the state apparatus, but the forces that voted for them.

Le Monde reports the reaction of LFI's lawyer, Mr. Thiriez: "LFI has never advocated a Lenin-style revolution, a revolution by street protests or violence. The movement advocates a citizen revolution, through the ballot box, which differentiates it from other far-left parties," he declared.

Deputy in the National Assembly and national coordinator of LFI, Emmanuel Bompard, clearly explains that LFI's policy is exclusively within the framework of parliamentary manoeuvres: "There is an extreme left in France and it identifies as such. It considers elections as a platform and not as a means of gaining power, which is not the case for La France Insoumise."

LFI's perspective rests on the illusion that it is possible to put pressure on the state through parliamentarism to obtain concessions from the government while the latter is strengthening repression against workers and young people.

Workers and young people must learn from this situation. The defense of democratic rights and the fight against the far right cannot be entrusted to parties integrated into the state and engaged in parliamentary alliances with those who are preparing these attacks.

The only progressive response lies in building an independent working-class political movement, based on an internationalist socialist programme, to oppose war, austerity, and the authoritarian drift of French and European capitalism. The WSWs calls on workers to build the ICFI and its French section, the Socialist Equality Party.



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