

US war on Iran exposes bankruptcy of Mélenchon's France Unbowed party

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Since February 28, 2026, the United States and Israel have waged a war of aggression against Iran. Trump publicly threatened to exterminate Iranian civilisation, in remarks of an undeniably Nazi character. Tens of thousands of Iranian civilians have been killed or wounded. The nuclear site at Natanz and the famous Golestan Palace have been struck. The war has set the entire Middle East ablaze and is shaking the world economy.

In the face of this, Jean-Luc Mélenchon and his France Unbowed (LFI) party has not called on the millions of workers who vote for LFI to strike or protest against the war. They confined themselves to lamenting the violation of international law, while remaining silent on workers' struggles in Iran and on Washington's political maneuvers to manufacture a crisis there before it launched the war.

Mélenchon's inaction in the face of the war has the same roots as his silence on the intrigues Washington used to prepare it. It stems from the class character of LFI: a populist and anti-Marxist party, born out of the bourgeois Socialist Party (PS), whose founder explicitly rejects a policy oriented towards the working class and the socialist revolution. In *L'Ère du peuple*, published in 2014 as he founded LFI, Mélenchon declared that the entire left was dying: "The harm is well advanced. It will not be repaired with clever explanations to distinguish the true left from the false." He called for burying the foundations of Marxism: "Here, it is the people that takes the place formerly occupied by the 'revolutionary working class' in the left's project. The citizens' revolution is not the old socialist revolution."

These conceptions primed LFI to serve as a political instrument of French imperialism to block a mobilisation of the working class against the war in Iran and the genocide in Gaza, and against the global social and economic crisis that flows from the catastrophes in the Middle East.

Mélenchon is silent on Iranian workers' struggles

The full social power of the working class in France, Europe, the United States, and the Middle East must be mobilized to stop imperialist governments who are committing crimes of historic gravity. This is not an abstract political question.

In December 2025, before the demonstrations backed by Washington and Tel Aviv erupted, a wave of strikes swept through Iran, objectively indicating the possibility of such a mobilisation. These strikes had deep causes. Years of US sanctions had ravaged the Iranian economy, causing persistent inflation and a continuous fall in workers' living standards. The war waged by Israel and the United States against Iran in June 2025 had further aggravated this situation, disrupting oil exports and deepening the economic crisis.

Thousands of oil, gas, and electricity workers demonstrated on 10 December in Tehran outside parliament. Steelworkers struck in Shadegan on 8 December, and more than 5,000 workers at the key South Pars refineries had walked out on December 8-9. Workers at the Middle East Sugar company in Shush followed suit during the second half of December, as did railway workers in Lorestan, Zagros and Andimeshk.

Mélenchon and LFI, like the entire French media and political

establishment, were silent on Iranian workers' struggles. Instead, they latched onto a movement that began at the end of December with demonstrations by bazaar merchants, centred on the fall of the Iranian currency and the collapse of the Iran's Ayandeh bank. It was not by accident that Mélenchon ignored the strikes while focusing on this second movement. A working-class, internationalist policy would have required supporting the strikes, explaining what was at stake, and calling on workers in France to support them and to mobilise against the policy of war, sanctions, and genocide being waged in Gaza, against Iran, and throughout the Middle East. Mélenchon does not practice this kind of politics.

Mélenchon covers for Trump's intrigues in Iran

Amid the bazaar demonstrations, Mélenchon wrote on January 1, 2026, on X:

The popular demonstrations in Iran testify to the dead end of a religious power trying to manage a developed society without gagging it. A people like ours always watches with sympathy the popular insubordination that asserts the right to a dignified life. However, in expressing its support, the Mossad seeks to inflame tensions among Iranians.

This declaration exemplifies Mélenchon's political method. It mentions the Mossad's intervention only to minimise its significance, relegating it to the role of an external factor that "inflames" Iranians, rather than explaining the way imperialism and Zionism intervened in this movement. In doing so, it suppresses the essential fact: Washington deliberately engineered the economic crisis that triggered these demonstrations and then tried to exploit it politically to achieve regime change.

Two weeks later, on January 13, the *Wall Street Journal* wrote: "The harbinger that everything was about to collapse in Iran did not come from the anger of the opposition in the country, or from the frustrated hopes of young people eager for personal freedoms. It came from the collapse of a bank. At the end of 2025, the Ayandeh bank, run by regime insiders and saddled with nearly \$5 billion in losses, had gone bankrupt."

US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent stated publicly on 5 February, 2026, before the Senate Banking Committee: "What we did was create a dollar shortage in the country. That ended quickly and gloriously in December, when one of Iran's largest banks collapsed. The central bank had to print money, the Iranian currency went into free fall, inflation exploded, and so we saw the Iranian people in the streets."

Trump has since admitted to having attempted to arm the demonstrators by sending weapons via Kurdish nationalists in the region. This confirms that the fascist in the White House sought to transform protests into a pro-imperialist armed insurrection. His policy does not aim to defend the democratic rights of Iranians.

From the very start of the movement, however, it was already clear that NATO and Israeli leaders were aggressively intervening to try to steer it. Mossad officials had publicly expressed their support for the demonstrations; former CIA director Mike Pompeo tweeted: “Happy New Year to every Iranian in the streets. Also to every Mossad agent walking alongside them.” These forces were monitoring and directing the movement from its outset, precisely because Washington had engineered the financial crisis that provoked it.

This information was available as Mélenchon was hailing the movement. His tweet of January 1 treated it straightforwardly as a popular affirmation of the right to dignity, without warning workers that Washington and Tel Aviv had deliberately triggered and were actively steering the movement.

Mélenchon applauds a “Citizens’ Revolution” instigated and armed by Trump

As the Iranian regime crushed armed attacks targeting its police and internal security forces, Mélenchon applauded the movement. In his post of January 14, headlined, “You are right to be afraid!”, he lumped together bazaar merchants ruined by the US Treasury and insurgents linked to the CIA and Mossad as actors in a “citizens’ revolution.”

“The ongoing revolution is indeed a citizens’ revolution,” he wrote, before accusing the Iranian regime of conducting a bloody crackdown against the entire Iranian people. “The information coming out of Iran shows an organised massacre of opponents of the theocratic regime... The starting point of the present moment is a deep popular mobilisation that first erupted around social demands. Its rootedness came from there, despite the crude interference of Netanyahu and Trump, who facilitated the work of repression by their intrusion into the situation, giving the impression that the opponents in action are their agents.”

It is revealing that Mélenchon described the December-January movement as a “citizens’ revolution” the central concept from his own 2014 book. The “citizens’ revolution,” by definition, transcends classes and unites “the people” against power. It does not ask which social classes or political forces organise and direct a movement. It need not ask who engineered the dollar shortage, who triggered the banking collapse or which Mossad agents marched among the demonstrators. Mélenchon deliberately suppressed these facts, which were nonetheless accessible, thereby depriving his readers of the information necessary to analyse the ongoing movement and to oppose the war that was being prepared.

The bankruptcy of this position becomes glaring in light of subsequent events. The genocidal forces carpet-bombing Iran and threatening to exterminate its civilisation had instigated and supported from the very beginning the movement that Mélenchon presented as a quest for human dignity. To present this operation as a movement for dignity is to whitewash imperialism using pseudo-left language.

Imperialist war against Iran: Mélenchon equates aggressor and victim

Mélenchon adopted an apparently critical posture after the start of the war on February 28, but in reality continued his previous policy. While observing on X that a war of aggression is the “negation of all international law,” he proposed to workers that they trust not the class struggle but Macron’s diplomacy in the face of the aggression against

Iran: “Faced with the mounting danger, now more than ever law and the United Nations are France’s only means.”

In his tweet, Mélenchon denounced Ayatollah Khamenei—the head of the Iranian regime, killed along with his family in an American-Israeli strike—as “the butcher of the Iranian people.” This formulation, at the very moment when the most powerful military state in the world was carpet-bombing Iran, deserves comment.

It is true that the Iranian regime had suppressed by force the movement instigated by Washington and sentenced opponents to death. But calling Khamenei “the butcher of the Iranian people” at the moment of his death in American-Israeli strikes is to cover for imperialism. The biggest butcher of the Iranian people resides in the White House: it was he who threatened to exterminate Iranian civilisation, bombed civilian sites, and organised the economic collapse that led up to the war. He has for this purpose the active complicity of the French state, which placed its Istres base and its Persian Gulf bases at Washington’s disposal.

Mélenchon’s statements do not mention these facts. They do not mention the tens of thousands of civilians killed, nor the families of regime officials who bear no direct responsibility for the regime but are nonetheless struck by bombs. The asymmetry between Mélenchon’s severity toward the Iranian regime and his silence on Washington’s crimes and French complicity amounts to pro-imperialist hypocrisy.

This policy finds its crudest expression in a blog post by Mélenchon on April 6, 2026, as the war drags on in the form of a fragile ceasefire, and Trump threatens a new escalation. Mélenchon writes: “Let us savour the moment of calm still granted to us. Before long the shockwave of Israel’s and the USA’s war of aggression against Iran will roll more powerfully than ever across every corner of the world.”

But we are not living in a calm era. The war is setting the Middle East ablaze, threatening to engulf the world, pushing oil prices higher and threatening a global financial implosion. Faced with this reality, Mélenchon does not call for politically preparing the working class, for organising an international mobilisation against the war, for calling strikes to stop the war. He calls for savouring a respite. This is the attitude of a fatalistic spectator who demobilises opposition to the war—not that of a revolutionary leader.

Against Mélenchon: The struggle against the war and for workers’ power and socialism

LFI’s response to the war against Iran vindicates the irreconcilable opposition of the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) to the pseudo-left tendencies oriented to the political establishment. Mélenchon uses his influence not to organise the working class’s resistance to imperialist war and the continuous reduction of its living standards under Macron, but to subordinate it to the framework of the capitalist nation-state.

Mélenchon was a member of the Organisation communiste internationaliste (OCI), Pierre Lambert’s party, which broke with the ICFI in 1971 to support Mitterrand’s bourgeois PS. His trajectory—from the OCI to the PS for more than 30 years and finally to LFI—produced not a revolutionary workers movement, but a faction of the capitalist establishment that drapes itself in radical language in order to contain mass opposition.

The war against Iran provides the most recent and damning demonstration of this. Only the intervention of workers into the historical process can stop this war. The task is to prepare the mobilisation of the working class: to build the rank-and-file organisations capable of opposing the war, to unify workers’ struggles internationally, and to

prepare workers to wrest power from the war-making capitalist oligarchies.

For this, workers must organise independently of Mélenchon and the organisations of his Nouveau Front Populaire, including the CGT union apparatus. But the precondition for the independent organisation of the working class is the formation of a political movement that firmly rejects Mélenchon's pro-imperialist positions.

The Parti de l'égalité socialiste (Socialist Equality Party), the French section of the ICFI, puts forward the following demands, on the basis of which it calls on workers, youth, and progressive layers among intellectuals to give it their support:

- Stop the war against Iran and the genocide in Gaza!
- French troops out of the Middle East!
- Not a euro, not a soldier for the wars of imperialism!
- For an international movement of the working class against war and for socialism!



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