

No to the Deployment of French Troops to Saudi Arabia and to Neo-Fascism!

# Mobilize the Working Class against War and Austerity!

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The public sector strike in France is part of an international resurgence of social struggles against the backdrop of war and the rise of the far right. Mobilizations are following one another: against high rents in Spain, against conscription in Germany, the “No Kings” protesters against Trump in the United States, wildcat strikes in Turkey. What is developing is not a series of national trade union struggles demanding negotiations with one capitalist government or other.

Everywhere, workers are entering into a political struggle against the financial oligarchy. The demands of firefighters, electricians, gas workers, education workers and transport workers in France are just, both on wages and on resources in the workplace. But to defend social conditions and prevent another union sellout of the struggles, as happened in the fight against the pension reform in 2023, a political movement must be built among workers against war, dictatorship and the capitalist system that produces them.

Over the past decade, Macron has doubled the military budget to more than €70 billion, gutted the taxation of the rich and created an immense debt of more than €3 trillion. At the same time, the media are promoting the National Rally (RN), which is leading in the 2027 presidential election polls, even though it proposes annual austerity packages of €100 billion, or even €125 billion. The ruling class intends to trample workers’ demands underfoot through fascistic dictatorship and war.

Macron’s televised interview Thursday evening confirmed the direct link between austerity and neocolonial war. He proposed sending French troops to

take control of the Saudi oil port of Yanbu, which was hit by Houthi strikes during Washington’s war of aggression against Iran. At the same time, he called the current €54 billion austerity plan based on freezing public sector wages “fair.”

Macron’s interview highlighted the enormity of the capitalist crisis and the political tasks facing the working class. He admitted that it is “factual” to say that the NATO war in Ukraine is cutting off France’s energy supplies and driving up inflation. He admitted that he could not rule out strikes in France in retaliation by Moscow for attacks carried out by Ukraine with the help of French military personnel, or an energy shortage if Trump cuts diesel supplies in the context of his economic war against Europe.

In plain terms, the capitalist oligarchy is rushing headlong toward world war, financial bankruptcy and an economic and social collapse that would be triggered by an energy shortage. Under these conditions, no lasting defence of workers’ social and democratic rights is possible without wresting control of the economy and political life from the ruling class.

To do so, it is essential to draw the lessons of the sellout of the struggle against the pension reform by the trade union bureaucracies in 2023, with the complicity of the political forces that later grouped themselves in the New Popular Front. Millions of workers struck against the reform, and riots broke out across the country when Macron imposed it without a parliamentary vote. Bourgeois commentators admitted that it was the greatest political crisis in France since the general strike of May 1968.

What blocked the development of the class struggle toward a general strike that would have brought down Macron and directly raised the question: which class rules? It was not a lack of militancy or anger among workers.

Everything that the media presents as the “left” in France acted to contain and strangle the movement. On the one hand, the leaders of the trade union bureaucracies declared their fear of an eruption of social anger and called off the strikes once Macron had promulgated his illegitimate reform. On the other, the NFP forces led by Mélenchon and his La France Insoumise and their satellites such as Révolution Permanente told workers to place their hopes in the vain illusion that the union leaderships would prepare a “battle plan.”

The course of events vindicated the Socialist Equality Party/Parti de l'égalité socialiste, which called for a struggle to bring down Macron and to stop the war and the escalation of military spending. The PES called for workers and youth to be mobilized in workplaces and schools from below, to demand Macron's removal and the withdrawal of his illegitimate reform. Now, as the bourgeoisie seeks to exploit the stifling of the class struggle to install a neo-fascist dictatorship, it is precisely such an independent struggle that must be built.

Mélenchon has nothing to offer to stop military escalation abroad. After Macron's interview on sending troops to Saudi Arabia, he posted on X not to denounce this policy, but to call for a parliamentary vote that would legitimize it. Since there is a risk of involving France in the war with Iran, he wrote: “Therefore the Assembly must vote on the matter. Article 35 of the Constitution.”

The task facing workers is to stop neocolonialism and world war, not to have them legalized by a vote of reactionary deputies. To do this, workers must organize independently of the trade union bureaucracies that profit through works councils from the militarization of industry and link their struggles with those of their class brothers and sisters internationally.

Already in 2018, the “yellow vests” movement demonstrated that it is possible to organize social struggles independently, through social media. For this reason, calls for a return of the “yellow vests” are circulating and attracting real interest. This corresponds

to the need, felt instinctively by masses of workers, to break through the dead weight that the bureaucracies impose on the class struggle.

The political lessons of the “yellow vests” mobilization are rich. On the one hand, their mobilization confirmed the power of an independent social struggle, holding Macron in check for many months. On the other hand, the movement's declared apoliticism and its rejection of a class strategy cut it off from the possibility of a broader revolutionary mobilization of workers internationally against austerity, war and capitalism. Such a mobilization must urgently be built today.

The construction of a politically independent movement in the French and international working class is the decisive question today. The development of the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC) is the weapon of the workers to counteract the sellout of struggles by the union leaderships and to unite unionized and non-unionized workers across national borders.

Above all, supporters of an independent and international struggle of the working class against imperialist war and dictatorship must organize politically and unite to bring this perspective into the class struggle. On this basis, the PES, the French section of the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI), calls on workers and youth to support the work of the ICFI, read the WSWS, and build sections of the ICFI as the revolutionary vanguard of the working class.



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