

Video: “We must turn the protests in France into a European movement of the working class”

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In the German media, it is only a footnote. But in France, school students and workers have been protesting in huge numbers against the government’s austerity policy for more than two weeks.

Almost half a million people took to the streets on 6 October. Hundreds of schools are blockaded or closed. The state has responded with brutal police violence. More than 6,600 arrests—the vast majority of them minors. More than 5,000 were taken into police custody, in barely two weeks. Hundreds have been injured. In Lens, a 15-year-old lost his hand when he picked up a police flash-bang grenade.

A date keeps appearing on the placards: May/June 68. Back then, police repression against students triggered the biggest general strike in French history. A growing layer of young people and workers is moving to the left—they want fundamental social change.

This is not a purely French matter. In more than 50 Spanish cities, people are demonstrating against evictions and unaffordable rents. There have been public sector strikes in Portugal. Youth protests in Belgium—and in Germany.

For conditions are the same everywhere. Enormous debts, economic stagnation, and a financial oligarchy demanding attacks on social spending. In Germany, the government is spending hundreds of billions on the biggest rearmament programme since Hitler—and imposing cuts to education, health and social services. An entire generation is to be sacrificed once again on the battlefields of the rich.

A confrontation is developing between workers and young people on one side and the capitalist state on the other. The German media understand the international dimensions. They fear that the same movement will

develop in Germany—that is why they are reporting so little.

We must turn these protests into a European movement—a movement of the working class, the only social force capable of stopping the war madness and the social attacks. But to do so, the working class must intervene in political events independently of all capitalist parties and the trade unions.

The trade union bureaucracy is trying to control the movement and subordinate it to the state. The French trade unions have postponed protests until 5 November—but the working class cannot wait until 5 November. The class struggle must unfold freely now.

Mélenchon and his pseudo-left supporters are trying to orient the movement to the presidential elections—and thereby choke it off.

To build the movement independently of these forces, rank-and-file action committees are needed: in schools, universities and workplaces, elected and controlled by those who are fighting. They can organise resistance to police repression, prepare joint demonstrations and strikes, and break down national and sectoral divisions.

This movement must be directed against capitalism—which has nothing more to offer us than misery, cuts and war. The alternative is not Macron, Mélenchon or Le Pen. It is the descent into poverty, a police state and war—or the independent mobilisation of the international working class for the United Socialist States of Europe.

Join the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party, SGP) and go to gleichheit.de now to support this struggle.



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