

Macron's state visit to Germany: Pro-war policy in the name of Europe and democracy

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French President Emmanuel Macron's three-day state visit to Germany has vividly refuted the policy of the lesser evil—the idea that the rise of the far right can be stopped by supporting “more moderate,” supposedly more democratic parties.

The state visit—the first in 24 years, with all the pomp and circumstance that goes with it—was designed as an election campaign. Two weeks before the European elections on June 9, Macron's party alliance Ensemble is trailing far behind the far-right Rassemblement National (RN) in the polls. The latter can expect just under a third of the vote, Ensemble only half as many. RN leader Marine Le Pen also sees the European elections as a test run for the 2027 presidential election, in which she wants to succeed Macron in the highest French office after three failed attempts.

In Germany, the Greens have 15 percent, Chancellor Olaf Scholz's Social Democrats (SPD) 14 percent and the Liberal Democrats (FDP) 4 percent. Together, the three governing parties, which accounted for 52 percent of the vote in the 2021 general election, achieved less than a third of the vote. The far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) is in second place with 17 percent behind the conservative Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union (CDU/CSU) with 30 percent, although it has been rocked by several scandals in recent weeks.

In his carefully staged appearances, Macron presented himself as a champion against the extreme right and as a representative of a progressive, prosperous and peace-loving united Europe. However, the policies he advocated—escalation of the NATO war against Russia, military rearmament and massive subsidies for the defence industry—are not only grist for the mill of the far right, they also make it indispensable for the ruling class to suppress the growing social and political opposition.

To kick things off, Macron visited a “democracy festival” on Sunday together with Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier to mark the 75th anniversary of the post-war German constitution. On Monday, he gave a speech on European policy against the backdrop of the rebuilt Dresden

Frauenkirche, which had been completely destroyed during the Second World War.

“Right-wing extremism is a reality, we have to wake up,” he shouted to the young audience gathered especially for this purpose. The European Union was a “unique project in the world” and Dresden, which was destroyed and rebuilt by the war, was “a sign of hope.”

Now, right-wing extremist ideas and war were jeopardising Europe, “Our peace, prosperity and democracy are now at stake,” said Macron. A common defence and security strategy for Europe was needed to preserve peace. “We must act together as Europeans,” he said.

After a stopover in Münster, where he was awarded the Peace of Westphalia Prize, Macron travelled on to Meseberg, where a meeting of the Franco-German Defence and Security Council took place in the Federal Government's guest house, attended by Chancellor Olaf Scholz, the foreign and defence ministers and the military commanders-in-chief of both countries.

The meeting was a council of war. It decided on a massive escalation of the war against Russia in Ukraine, an acceleration of European rearmament and massive subsidies to make the European defence industry more independent.

At the subsequent press conference, Scholz declared that he and Macron agreed that support for Ukraine remained a top priority and a key shared concern, saying, “We must now take the next step to put this support on a new footing.”

Macron made clear what the next step meant: a green light for Ukrainian attacks on targets inside Russia. He pulled a map out of his pocket showing missile launch pads on Russian territory and declared, “We need the opportunity to hit these missile launchers.”

Scholz, who had previously expressed reservations about attacks on internal Russian targets, agreed with Macron. “Ukraine has every opportunity under international law to do what it is doing,” he said, rejecting media reports that Germany was prohibiting this for the weapons systems it had supplied. There had never been any declarations to this effect “and there never will be,” he said.

It is certain that Russia will react to such a military escalation. Macron, Scholz and NATO are setting in motion an escalating spiral that threatens to lead to nuclear war and the destruction of the whole of Europe if it is not stopped in time.

The two announced a further expansion of cooperation in the areas of security, defence and armaments. Macron proposed doubling the EU budget in order to finance armaments and other projects, which Germany has so far rejected for fiscal policy reasons.

However, the two governments agreed to “continue to support Ukraine for as long as necessary and as intensively as necessary” and to develop “strong and credible European defence capabilities” in order to make the European Union “a true geopolitical actor,” as stated in the final declaration of the meeting.

The declaration emphasises “the central importance of nuclear deterrence for the security of Europe and NATO and the deterrent role of the independent French strategic nuclear forces.” “We are aware,” it continues, “that our deterrence and defence capabilities are based on an appropriate mix of nuclear, conventional and missile defence capabilities, complemented by space and cyber capabilities.”

It is obvious that this war and armament policy, the gigantic costs of which are being passed on to the working class, will meet with massive resistance and indeed is already meeting with it. In particular, the genocide of the Palestinians in Gaza, which both Berlin and Paris support, has triggered fierce protests in both countries.

Since all the establishment parties, including those supposedly on the left, support the policy of war, rearmament and social cuts, the extreme right is partly able to exploit the frustration and anger with this. Above all, however, these reactionary forces are being deliberately built up and integrated into governments in order to suppress any real—i.e., left-wing—opposition to rearmament and social cuts.

After the neo-fascist Giorgia Meloni, who has been leading the government of the third-largest EU state for a year and a half, the Netherlands is now also in the process of forming a government in which the ultra-right, Islamophobic Freedom Party of Geert Wilders sets the tone.

The European Union is also preparing to accept right-wing extremists into the highest offices after the European elections. Ursula von der Leyen, who owed her election as Commission president five years ago largely to Emmanuel Macron, is now courting Meloni so that the neo-fascist can help her win a second term.

Marine Le Pen, who belongs to a competing far-right European faction, also wants to join forces with Meloni. Le Pen recently caused the German AfD to be expelled from the

Identity and Democracy (ID) parliamentary group. The reason was not the trivialisation of Hitler’s SS by the AfD’s leading candidate Maximilian Krah, as was officially stated, but the AfD’s stance on the war in Ukraine.

Krah and the number two on the AfD’s European election slate, Petr Bystron, are suspected of having accepted Russian funds. Krah is also alleged to have employed a Chinese agent in his European office, who is now in custody.

Support for the NATO war against Russia is the irrevocable condition that the European bourgeoisie insists on before allowing a politician to take up the levers of power. Meloni, Wilders and Le Pen have all accepted this. Due to their Islamophobia, they are on Israel’s side in the Gaza genocide.

Macron, who owed his election victories in 2017 and 2022 primarily to the fact that many voted for him in the second round to block Le Pen, paved the way for the latter with his policies in the interests of the rich, his police terror against the “yellow vest” protesters, pension protests and striking workers, and his pro-war policy.

The only way to stop the rise of the far right and prevent a third world war is to mobilise the European and international working class on the basis of a socialist programme. This is what the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party, SGP) is fighting for in the European elections. It opposes the European Union of the corporations, banks and warmongers with the United Socialist States of Europe.



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