

Macron dissolves parliament: French imperialism marches to war and dictatorship

Alex Lantier
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After a European election campaign in which he called to send troops to Ukraine for war on Russia, French President Emmanuel Macron dissolved parliament on Sunday night following large gains for far-right parties across Europe. This has triggered an explosive crisis. The political establishment is feverishly discussing far-right alliances, or, among factions historically linked to Stalinism, an electoral “Popular Front” to limit the far right’s expected gains in parliament.

Among workers and youth, there is broad and growing anger. Yesterday, amid a resurgence of protests against the Gaza genocide in France, protests broke out at several high schools against Macron’s handing the political initiative to the far right. The decisive task is orienting this growing opposition to building an international movement in the working class against imperialist war, genocide and fascism.

Macron announced the dissolution of parliament in a perfunctory, five-minute pre-recorded video. After criticizing far-right parties as threats to military aid to Ukraine and EU bank bailouts, he proclaimed “confidence in our democracy.” He continued, “The sovereign people must speak, there is nothing more democratic than this.”

He claimed the election outcome would be better than “all the stitch-ups, the precarious solutions. It is time for an indispensable clarification.”

Macron’s invocation of democracy is a lie: He rules not for, but against the people.

Last year, he imposed a pension cut to finance a surge in defense spending despite overwhelming popular opposition and mass strikes, which police brutally attacked. He now aims to replace the current legislature, in which there is no stable majority, with a workable parliamentary majority to support a monumentally reckless escalation of the war against Russia and suppress the opposition of a vast majority of the population in France and across Europe.

The snap elections Macron called, ending July 7, fall just after the July 4 snap elections recently called in Britain, and just before the July 9 NATO war summit to be held in Washington to approve the Biden administration’s plans for

NATO military intervention against Russia.

Macron aims to have a more stable government so as to claim democratic legitimacy to implement NATO’s anti-democratic policy of war with Russia.

Significant factions of the ruling class expect that this will require bringing neo-fascists—primarily Marine Le Pen’s National Rally (RN)—into the halls of power. Amid a massive media campaign asking whether the RN is ready to play a responsible role, Le Pen and her assistant, Jordan Bardella, are giving interviews falling in line with NATO and the banks. Bardella stressed during the campaign that RN statements of sympathy for Russia years ago were a mistake, and yesterday he abandoned the RN’s call to rescind Macron’s pension cuts.

Factions of the ruling class are rapidly abandoning democratic pretenses and adopting a more overtly pro-fascistic orientation. Yesterday, Eric Ciotti, head of the Gaullist The Republicans (LR) party, called for a national alliance between LR and the RN in an interview on TF1 television. Denouncing France Unbowed (LFI) leader Jean-Luc Mélenchon as a left-wing threat, Ciotti called for a right-wing uprising, saying:

We need an alliance, while remaining true to ourselves ... with the RN and its candidates. ... I hope that my political family will go in this direction. Many are following me. ... There is today a force that will rise up, which must rise up against the impotence of Macron and the danger of Mélenchon.

A bitter factional struggle has erupted inside LR, as other officials swear public oaths never to form an alliance with the neo-fascists. Mélenchon, for his part, intervened in the LR crisis to say he hopes that a “right wing of resistance [to fascism]” still exists. This morning, Bardella said the RN is preparing electoral coalitions supporting LR candidates in dozens of parliamentary constituencies.

The French ruling class is even less capable of democratic opposition to far-right politics today than it was at the outbreak of the last world war, during which it ultimately collaborated with Nazism. It cannot and does not want to rally working class opposition to militarism, genocide and police-state rule that are the historical heritage of European fascism. This is because it is preparing a continental and, indeed, global war against Russia and ultimately China, backing Israel's genocide in Gaza, and ruling at home through naked police violence.

The war escalation and attacks on social and democratic rights cannot be stopped at a national level, by maneuvers inside the parliamentary machine. As with World War I, which was stopped by the October 1917 Bolshevik revolution in Russia and the 1918 German revolution that toppled the Kaiser, it can only be ended by the international struggle of the working class for socialist revolution.

This underlies the bankruptcy and essentially reactionary character of the calls spearheaded by LFI official and Macron ally François Ruffin for a "Popular Front" with Stalinist and social-democratic parties. Ruffin called for an electoral coalition between the Socialist Party (PS), the Stalinist French Communist Party (PCF), the Greens and LFI. While LFI previously called this party coalition the New Popular Ecological and Social Union (NUPES), Ruffin proposed to rename it the Popular Front. In a X/Twitter video, he said:

We must try something. It was President Roosevelt who tried it during the New Deal, saying the country would not be upset if we fail, but it will be if we do not try. So last night we tried something, like a bottle to the sea in BFM-TV, it's: Popular Front. ... The parties will get there, but the faster they do, the better. And we are not going to wait until the white smoke appears [confirming the election of a new pope].

Currently, LFI is waging factional battles with PS figures like European lead candidate Raphaël Glucksmann and former Prime Minister Bernard Cazeneuve, who advocate a "unity of the left" slogan more directly compatible with participation in a Macron government.

Mélenchon endorsed Ruffin's proposal, however. Repeating his offer made in the 2022 presidential elections to serve as prime minister under Macron, he tweeted:

Yet again, [LFI members] are throwing away all

grudges and building popular unity. France is not condemned to the punishment of Bardella. The New Popular Front knows how to govern.

The decisive feature of this "Popular Front" is its appeal for alliances with forces, like Glucksmann, who hysterically support waging war with Russia in Ukraine and beyond. Its proponents also acquiesced to the union bureaucracies' decision to halt all action against Macron's pension cuts last year.

An urgent warning must be made: Those who invoke Popular Frontism to justify ambitions to serve as Macron's ministers thereby expose their bitter hostility to the working class, Trotskyism and socialist revolution.

The 1934-1938 Popular Front alliance of Stalinists, social-democrats and liberals paved the way to world war. Having blocked a struggle of the working class for power and the overthrow of capitalism amid the 1936 French general strike, the Popular Front collapsed and played a thoroughly counterrevolutionary role as World War II began in 1939. The PCF backed the Stalin-Hitler Pact, which freed Hitler to start World War II by invading Poland. The social democrats and liberals, for their part, voted in their majority to give Nazi-collaborationist dictator Philippe Pétain emergency powers in 1940.

The Popular Front endorsed the lies of the Moscow Trials with which Stalin justified his murder of the Old Bolsheviks, the political genocide of Soviet Marxists during the Purges, and the preparation for the murder of Leon Trotsky in 1940.

The *Parti de l'égalité socialiste* encourages the widest protests and strikes against Macron's policies, genocide and imperialist war. But war and authoritarianism cannot be defeated by moral appeals to the capitalist class.

The great political lessons of the 20th century must be learned. The mortal crisis of capitalism cannot be resolved without building an independent and, above all, international movement of the working class in the workplaces and factories and a Trotskyist vanguard in the working class to build within that movement support for socialist revolution.



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