

Morenoite *Révolution permanente* group backs French New Popular Front as it allies with Macron

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The French Morenoite *Révolution permanente* (RP) group, tied to the Socialist Workers Party (PTS) of Argentina and *Left Voice* in the United States is supporting Jean-Luc Mélenchon's New Popular Front (NFP), even as the NFP seeks to build a government with President Emmanuel Macron. This unmasks RP's revolutionary pretensions. It is a middle class party that, like the NFP, works to block working class opposition to Macron and his policies of imperialist war and police-state rule.

RP's own presentation makes clear the NFP is a largely right-wing organization, profoundly tied to Macron. Certain parts of the NFP openly promote Macron's policies, but all are hostile to a revolutionary program and strategy. In its article titled "Second round of the general elections: no to the far right and to politicking with Macronism," RP writes:

"while denouncing the NFP's program, we do not equate all its components. The Greens and especially the PS are bourgeois organizations deeply integrated into the Fifth Republic that, in power, were among big business' best agents. Tomorrow, they will not hesitate to apply the same policies as Macron if the occasion presents itself, and no vote can be given to them.

"For the other organizations making up the NFP, local conditions and the context of the second round justifies a critical vote for their candidates. This should not imply any illusion as to the role of these organizations, whose strategy and program we do not share."

But it is impossible to reconcile revolutionary opposition to Macron and the neo-fascists with support for the NFP. The NFP is trying to form a government alliance with Macron and, thus, to block a movement of workers and youth against Macron and neo-fascist leader Marine Le Pen. It is not hard to see that this decision to again cede to Le Pen the role of opposition to Macron will reinforce the electoral position of the neo-fascists.

The NFP's program, moreover, calls to send French troops, presented as "peacekeepers," to Ukraine and to reinforce France's military police and intelligence agencies. The PS under Hollande carried out right-wing policies, deporting the Roma and repressing

migrants and Muslims during a state of emergency that suspended basic democratic rights. The PS waged neocolonial wars in the Sahel and explicitly backs war in Ukraine and the Israeli genocide in Gaza.

The war with Russia dictated the electoral calendar with snap elections in France and Britain. These elections took place just before the now-ongoing NATO summit in Washington that is planning a direct NATO intervention in Ukraine against Russia. But RP, which has been silent on imperialist war planning and the NFP's support for war, is part of the official media machine that tries to lull workers and youth to sleep on the war.

RP admits that the NFP is hostile to the working class, but nevertheless refuses to oppose it. Indeed, RP does not represent the working class, but factions of the middle class tied to union bureaucracies that, like the NFP, want to impose on the workers debilitating alliances with political representatives of the bourgeoisie. Calling to build a front of trade union protests that would support the NFP's bourgeois parties, RP writes:

"Such a front should try to build the fightback from below against Macron and the far right, unifying the immense forces of our class totally independently from the regime. They have expressed themselves in struggle since 2016, like the millions of protesters and strikers who opposed the pension cuts of Prime Minister Borne a year ago, and go far beyond the NFP electorate."

The revolutionary political mobilization of the working class "in all independence from the regime" however requires precisely to oppose the forces that, like the NFP, present themselves as "friends of the people" but then demand that the workers bow to the capitalists.

The defeat of the struggle against Macron's pension cuts shows the bankruptcy of RP's policy of calling for trade union mobilizations linked to capitalist parties. Two-thirds of the French people wanted to halt the cuts and block the economy via a general strike, but RP claimed the situation was not revolutionary and that workers had to make experiences with bourgeois democracy. RP aligned with the union bureaucracies who strangled the struggle,

refusing to call protests after the Constitutional Council approved Macron's cuts.

One cannot understand the rise of a working class neo-fascist vote without understanding the impact of such reactionary maneuvers on working class consciousness. RP admits that the struggle against Macron's cuts mobilized workers well beyond those voting for the NFP. To speak plainly, many workers who went on strike and marched against Macron's cuts voted for the far right out of bitterness and anger after yet another trade union demobilization of a fight against austerity.

RP justifies nonetheless backing the NFP with the reactionary argument that the Stalinist presence in the NFP means workers must recognize it as a working class organization. To justify calling for a "critical vote" for the NFP, RP cites the role of the Stalinist French Communist Party (PCF):

"While the PCF has served in several left-wing governments, this party claims to be in the workers movement and maintains a certain working class base from its past or certain ties it has with the trade unions. But it is far from opposing law-and-order, xenophobic and Islamophobic arguments and sometimes even helps promote them by picking up on these themes. [Mélenchon's own] France Unbowed (LFI) has maintained in recent years a more marked opposition to authoritarianism, official racism and criminalization of support for Palestine. But it bears enormous responsibility for the political operation currently underway to rehabilitate the center of the political chessboard."

The PCF's police-state rhetoric and Mélenchon's appeals towards Macron justify working class opposition, not working class support. The NFP and French Stalinism of the 2020s are profoundly different from the Popular Front and the Communist Party of the 1930s.

The Trotskyist movement correctly opposed the Popular Front of 1934-1938 between the bourgeois Radical Party, the social-democratic SFIO and the Stalinist PC. It blocked a revolutionary struggle of the working class for state power during the 1936 general strike, opening the road for the French bourgeoisie to collaborate with Nazism. The French Stalinist bureaucracy played a central role in the assassinations of Trotsky and other leaders of the Fourth International.

But today's PCF has totally lost the working class base it had in the 1930s and into the 1970s. Thirty years after the Stalinist dissolution of the Soviet Union, it is an empty shell, a petty bourgeois bureaucracy that strangles the workers. This is why it can openly adopt chauvinist, law-and-order positions, as RP admits, to ally with LFI as Mélenchon works to rehabilitate Macron.

But "critical" support for an emerging Macron-Mélenchon alliance is not an "antifascist" policy. Macron has declared his sympathies for the Nazi-collaborationist dictator and convicted traitor Philippe Pétain, whom Macron called a "great soldier." As

interior minister, Macron named Gérald Darmanin, a sympathizer of the far-right *Action française* who for years has led the violent repression of strikes and protests while declaring he does not like to see halal or kosher foods.

If RP rejects an independent policy for the working class, this is because it has the same class base as most of the NFP: affluent middle class layers in academia and the union bureaucracy.

Until 2021, RP was a faction inside the New Anti-capitalist Party (NPA), a section of which has also joined the NFP. Like the NPA's Pabloite political ancestors, who broke with Trotskyism and with the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) in 1953, RP is oriented to social climbing within the Stalinist bureaucracies. To explain in particular their orientation towards work in the General Confederation of Labor (CGT) bureaucracy, RP has written:

"Amid the decline of the PCF inside the CGT and the crisis of recruitment, young union officials can find themselves rather quickly leading major trade union organizations and structures. They are emerging moreover in the post-Yellow Vest context, which has created a crisis of trade unionism, weakening the barriers imposed by the bureaucracy between trade union and political activity, thus shaping a new generation of working class militants. "Every revolutionary worthy of the name must pay the greatest attention to this phenomenon, and seek at all costs to converge with this new generation."

The strangling of last year's struggle against Macron's pension cuts, and now the integration of the PCF and Mélenchon into the NFP and its orientation to Macron, exposes the bankruptcy of the perspective outlined by RP.

War and fascistic reaction can only be stopped by mobilizing the working class independently of the Stalinist bureaucracies, in France and internationally, in struggle against capitalism. They will not be stopped at the ballot box. What is being prepared is an explosive confrontation between the working class and the entire capitalist establishment. RP's empty call for "critical" support for the NFP only makes clear that it is well aware of the anti-worker role of the forces it is supporting.

The way forward is building a movement from below, among the rank-and-file, independently of the NFP bureaucracies and also of their middle class supporters like RP. The political foundation of such a struggle is the defense by the ICFI and its French section, the *Parti de l'égalité socialiste*, of the heritage of Trotsky's struggle for international socialist revolution.



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