

Mélenchon signals he could back right-wing French PS government led by Macron

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As President Emmanuel Macron finishes his meetings today with group leaders of France's parliamentary parties, the New Popular Front (NFP) coalition led by Jean-Luc Mélenchon is stepping up its appeals to Macron to let it form a government. To date, Macron has refused to let Mélenchon's France Unbowed (LFI) party and the other parties in the NFP, which won the July 7 elections, try to form a parliamentary majority.

For nearly two months since the elections, Mélenchon and the union bureaucracies backing the NFP have taken no action to mobilize workers against Macron's trampling on the election results. The reactionary implications of this policy are rapidly emerging. After Mélenchon's statements this weekend, it is evident that he and LFI are preparing to serve as parliamentary supporters of a right-wing NFP government controlled by Macron.

Mélenchon appeared Saturday afternoon on TF1 news to announce that, faced with Macron's refusal to name a government if it contained LFI ministers, LFI would be happy to support an NFP-led government in which LFI did not participate. Asked if LFI would support a NFP government led by 37-year old Finance Ministry bureaucrat Lucie Castets without any LFI ministers, he replied:

“We will never be on the side of the problem, we will always be on the side of the solution. So to answer your question very frankly, I in turn have a question for the three pro-Macron parties and the right. If the government of Lucie Castets contained no LFI ministers, do you pledge not to vote to censure it and to allow it to apply the program based upon which we arrived in the lead in the legislative elections?”

Workers must be told the truth. An NFP government without LFI ministers would be a government led by the big-business Socialist Party (PS) of former President François

Hollande and containing a few Stalinist and Green ministers with records of allying to the PS. Workers across Europe have long and bitter experience with the policies of austerity, war, and police-state reaction imposed by the PS and Europe's other social-democratic parties.

Mélenchon's argument that such a government would implement the few token social programs promised in the NFP's program is a political fraud. With its program of war in Mali, pension cuts, its draconian labor reforms, its two-year state of emergency, Hollande's 2012-2017 PS government set into motion the policies of Macron today. Indeed, Macron served in Hollande's government as economy minister.

Mélenchon is rushing to support a right-wing, PS-led government because he is terrified that Macron's overt trampling of the July 7 election result could radicalize the workers, triggering a movement far to the left of what he is willing to countenance.

This is the content of the latest note on Mélenchon's blog, titled “Last warning to the captain of the Titanic.” It does not set out to summon to struggle the millions of workers who voted for him in the 2022 presidential elections and for the NFP in the 2024 legislative elections. Rather, it implores Macron to change course before his attacks on the NFP discredit the institutions of the French capitalist state in the working class.

Warning that the political establishment and the population contains “various generations ... each with experience or lack of experience with political crises and especially crises of rule,” Mélenchon told his opponents to “think well about the message they are sending to the country.” He warned that the refusal to respect elections result could push masses of workers in France to draw political conclusions with far-reaching implications:

“What do they want to tell the country? That there is no legal recourse against an autocrat? That there are no means within the institutions to oppose a coup

against democracy? That parliamentary democracy, as is understood and practiced by virtually every country in the world, is no longer valid in France? Or that there is no use in voting? ... What path are they thus laying out, what acts of violence are they thus inciting?"

French workers have concluded that Macron rules against the people, as he pursues an agenda of war and austerity in the face of overwhelming popular opposition. Polls show 90 percent of French people reject both the call by Macron to send troops to Ukraine for a war with Russia, and his pension cuts last year to fund war at workers' expense. There is also deep opposition to the Israeli genocide in Gaza supported by the NATO powers.

Mélenchon is speaking, however, not to encourage workers to draw revolutionary conclusions, but to warn Macron that given his constant and now overt trampling upon public opinion, the NFP may not be able to control political anger in the working class.

For workers, Mélenchon held out only the fantasy that the PS and factions of the Macron government itself will shift dramatically to the left and begin building opposition to Macron. He sought to promote illusions in precisely the type of government he discussed on TF1 this weekend. He wrote that the PS was moving to support LFI's calls to impeach Macron, which face opposition by a broad majority in the National Assembly:

"The warnings made by LFI have already had a result: they radicalized the PS, which now supports a censure motion that it believes is better than calls for impeachment. This is a good result. The censure motion is thus guaranteed to be adopted. We can already say that presidential maneuvers have less of a future. Those who have decided to get aboard the Titanic to finish the cruise will certainly therefore have to revise their dreams of having power."

But the PS and the forces working to strengthen its ties to Macron are not moving to the adopt the token social promises made by LFI in the NFP's election program. They are moving to implement the NFP program's pledges to send troops to Ukraine and to strengthen French intelligence and military police agencies. This emerged in the comments of Raphaël Glucksmann—the son of the late former 1968 student protester André Glucksmann and head of the Public Square (PP) party who headed the PS election list in the June

2024 European elections.

Glucksmann, infamous for publicly denying the ongoing Israeli genocide in Gaza, told the pro-Macron magazine *Le Point* last week that he was a determined opponent of even the limited social concessions to workers proposed by LFI.

"I have never believed in magically overcoming the extremely deep differences we have with LFI," Glucksmann said. Denouncing the "weakness" of those in the PS who maintain their alliance with Mélenchon in the NFP, he said: "My responsibility is to build an intellectually dominant social democratic force, with a credible project to transform society, implanted throughout the country, and that can beat the far right in the next elections."

Workers and youth are confronted with a breakdown of democratic forms of rule as the capitalist class plunges into war and unsustainable levels of social inequality. The fact that this occurs in France as Donald Trump continues the coup plotting that led to the January 6, 2021 attempted fascistic putsch against the US Capitol underscores the international character of this crisis. Workers must draw the most far-reaching conclusions. Liberty, Equality and Fraternity will be a dead letter unless workers mount a struggle to take power out of the hands of the ruling class and build socialism.

The essential precondition for such a struggle is that it has an international character and cannot be waged through the existing political and trade-union institutions of the national state. It requires the organization of the working class independently of Stalinist and social-democratic union bureaucracies on the Trotskyist perspective of Permanent Revolution. The force that is fighting for this in France is not the NFP or its various pseudo-left political satellites, but the *Parti de l'égalité socialiste*, the French section of the International Committee of the Fourth International.



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