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European Languages

زبانهای اروپایی

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13.11.2023

Macron's ministers, French neo-fascists join hands in pro-Israel rally



President Emmanuel Macron and Marine Le Pen

This weekend, as millions of workers and youth around the world demonstrate against the Israeli government's war on Gaza, President Emmanuel Macron's ministers will march side by side with leaders of Marine Le Pen's neo-fascist National Rally (NR) in a pro-Israel rally.

The politically sinister and mendacious character of this event is virtually self-evident. The march was called by the heads of the National Assembly and Senate, Yaël Braun-Pivet of Macron's Renaissance party and Gérard Larcher of the right-wing The Republicans (LR), supposedly to oppose antisemitism and racial hatred. However, the event is attended by forces who relentlessly appeal to antisemitism and Islamophobia and called by a government that is supporting Israel's genocidal war in Gaza.

One cannot speak honestly about genocide today without stating that the Israeli state aims to carry a genocide out in Gaza. Its forces have killed over 11,000 Palestinians and wounded over 70,000, raining down bombs and artillery shells on defenseless hospitals, schools and refugee camps.

Israeli officials have publicly declared their intent to expel all survivors from Gaza into Egypt's neighboring Sinai Peninsula, ethnically cleansing the Gaza Strip of Palestinians.

Sunday's pro-Israeli rally in Paris, while ostensibly called against antisemitism and racial hatred, in fact is part of Macron's support for the war on Gaza. The call of Braun-Pivet and Larcher for such a rally, posted in the right-wing daily *Le Figaro*, declares that "the Republic is in danger" and pledges to be a "bulwark against Islamism." But it says not one word about the Gaza genocide, nor does it make any criticism of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's policies.

Twenty-seven ministers of Macron's government are to attend the rally, including Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne and Interior Minister Gérald Darmanin. A sympathizer of the far-right, antisemitic *Action française* party, Darmanin is infamous for denouncing the presence of kosher and halal food in French supermarkets. By attending the rally, the head of France's far-right riot police units is continuing the support for the war on Gaza given by Macron, who rushed to Israel to endorse its "right to defend itself" and hailed Netanyahu as a "friend."

As for Le Pen, who reacted to the Gaza war by calling for the "eradication" of Palestinians resisting the Israeli army, she is seeking to place her extreme-right party at the center of French political life. "I call on all our members and voters to attend this rally. It has been years that our Jewish compatriots have faced antisemitic acts," Le Pen told RTL radio, insisting that both she and her assistant Jordan Bardella would attend.

Le Pen also attacked Jean-Luc Mélenchon's Unsubmissive France (LFI) party, which announced that it will not attend the rally. She accused LFI of "complacency and even complicity towards the most hard line, brutal and terrifying Islamist factions. If one does not fight them, one is ambiguous."

The presence of Le Pen's party at the rally in particular exposes the fraudulent pretense that it is against antisemitism. The RN (National Rally), whose founding generation was largely made up of ex-members of the genocidal, Nazi collaborationist French Popular Party (PPF) of Jacques Doriot, is infamous for its antisemitism. Its previous leader, Marine's father Jean-Marie Le Pen, was repeatedly found guilty in the courts of antisemitic statements, after dismissing the Holocaust as a "detail of history."

Bardella brazenly defended this record, telling BFM-TV: "I don't think Jean-Marie Le Pen was an antisemite." Asked about this statement on the far-right CNews cable channel, Bardella again defended it, claiming: "We have always been beyond reproach on this subject."

Such statements sharply pose to workers and youth in France and internationally critical issues facing the mass movement of protests and workers' actions against the Israeli war on Gaza. For over three decades since the Stalinist dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the NATO imperialist powers have waged endless wars across the Middle East and Africa. They are giving a green light to the Israeli regime for genocide in Gaza because they are waging a global war to turn back the clock to the bloody crimes of the colonial era against the oppressed peoples.

As it escalates its war on Russia in Ukraine and its neo-colonial wars in Africa and the Middle East, the Macron government is working to sanitize the bloody record of French imperialism. Its call for Sunday's rally published by Braun-Pivet and Larcher in *Le Figaro* equated the Hamas government in Gaza with the Nazi regime. It described the October 7 Palestinian uprising against the illegal Israeli blockade of Gaza as "a massacre whose ignominiousness is unequaled since the Holocaust."

This provocative and false equation of the oppressed Palestinians with Nazism, a genocidal imperialist regime aiming for world domination, whitewashes French imperialism. It equates the 1,400 Israelis killed as Palestinians rose up against an illegal blockade with the millions killed in wars that French imperialism and its NATO allies have waged since World War II. This includes the millions killed in the NATO wars of the 21st century in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Mali and beyond.

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Of particular significance, as Macron embraces the RN against the movement in defense of Gaza from below, is the implicit whitewash by Braun-Pivet and Larcher of French crimes in the 1946-1954 French Indochina and 1954-1962 Algerian wars. In both of these wars, France jailed millions in concentration camps, killed hundreds of thousands and resorted to torture on a mass scale.

The RN historically drew support, beyond the Nazi collaborationist PPF, principally from former French colonists forced to flee Algeria after it obtained its independence. Its first leader, Jean-Marie Le Pen, was a lieutenant in a parachutist unit in Algeria that was infamous for its use of torture against Muslims. These forces also repeatedly launched coups to try to force a continuation of the war despite mounting anti-war sentiment among workers in France.

These are the political forces and traditions to which Macron and the entire French bourgeoisie are appealing to against the international movement in the working class. After the "yellow vest" protests against social inequality and the first months of the COVID-19 pandemic, sons of the far-right "French Algeria" coup leaders around Philippe de Villiers published a manifesto in the far-right magazine *Current Values*. Echoing the record of their fathers, they issued a coup threat to intervene militarily against a supposed Islamist threat in French cities to kill thousands.

An objectively revolutionary situation is emerging in France and internationally, as mass protests against war and genocide shake the world. The Macron government is particularly sensitive to this threat, as it faced a mass strike movement this spring against its pension cuts, which it imposed despite the opposition of three-quarters of the French people. French workers and youth widely

agree that Macron rules against the people, using police violence to attack strikes and protests and impose the diktat of the banks.

There is nothing to be negotiated with the NATO governments like the Macron government who are backing genocide against the Palestinians, or the trade union bureaucrats and pseudo-left political operatives who work with them. In France, the role of LFI member François Ruffin, who has bucked LFI's decision not to attend the pro-Israel rally as part of his continuing political collaboration with Macron, is a warning on the right-wing evolution of these forces.

The Macron government's embrace now of fascistic, pro-colonialist forces like the RN is a further warning that there is nothing to be negotiated with it. The struggle against war and genocide internationally must be taken up by workers already in struggle against social attacks and police violence at home. This requires the construction of a mass, international movement of strikes and struggles to halt the resupply of the Israeli army, stop the war, and bring down the governments which are supporting the Gaza genocide in order to transfer power to the working class.

World Socialist 11.11.2023