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France

Macron forces through pension reform, step up the mobilization!

- News from around the world -

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On Saturday 29 February Emmanuel Macron called an emergency cabinet meeting, allegedly to discuss the Coronavirus emergency. However he also used it to decide that parliamentary debate on the much-contested pension reform would be cut short by using the constitutional clause "49-3" thereby meaning the reform would be adopted without a vote. [1]

This expected anti-democratic act met with immediate response as demonstrations were called in towns and cities throughout France, notably in Paris in front of the National Assembly. The *intersyndicale* will meet on Monday 2 March to decide on its next action. We publish the two statements from the NPA, from 25 February before the government's move and that of Saturday 1 March.

Don't let this illegitimate government's 49-3 go through

So Macron has decided to use Article 49-3 of the Constitution to push pension reform through the Assembly. For several days now, Edouard Philippe has been preparing the ground with arguments about the stalemate in the discussions, due to the "obstruction" of France Insoumise and the PCF.

The reality is that the 49-3 is authoritarian, particularly undemocratic means of passing a law. It cuts off parliamentary debate – already in "fast track" mode, which made no sense for such a structural reform, and limits the possibilities for social mobilization, by speeding things up. It also means the government assuming responsibility for a vote of no confidence in the next days, putting all its weight in the balance and linking its existence to a reform.

At a time when the government is doubly illegitimate, with a president elected with 16% of the votes cast in the first round and with a large majority of the population opposed to his reform, our view is that indeed the fate of Macron and his reform must be linked: they must both be got rid of.

The NPA is calling for demonstrations tonight or tomorrow, depending on the city, in front of the National Assembly (in Paris, call at 6:30 p.m. Saturday) and the Prefectures, to protest against this anti-democratic measure, and to build a united mass strike movement in the coming days. While the government is speeding up and wants to pass in force, we cannot wait until 31 March for a mass national response. Building on the mobilizations of 5 March 5 in higher education, 8 March 8, 14 March and 31 March 31, let's go forward together, let's build a general strike to win.

Montreuil, Saturday 29 February 2020

Against the government's attempt to force it through, keep up the mobilization against pension reform

They do not respect anything, not even their so-called democratic system... During the parliamentary debate on the pension bill, the government has multiplied statements and signals to prepare the opinion for "adoption" at 49-3, i.e.

without a vote in the National Assembly. There is therefore an urgent need to get back on the path of mobilization, of strike, to make them back down.

The government wants to go fast and strike hard

The political crisis continues to affect Macronia. After the "Griveaux affair" further weakening a Parisian campaign marked by a very strong rejection of the governing party, the resignation of a LREM deputy from the Hérault last Friday follows about twenty others, denouncing "a movement in space, indifferent to what's going on on the ground."

In an attempt to overcome this crisis, Macron is firing on all cylinders to divert attention away from the social question of pensions: international posture in favour of a common European defence; alleged environmental defender on the Mer de Glace in Chamonix; revival of old racist refrains to launch an Islamophobic campaign against "Islamist separatism".

But the main admission of weakness remains the prospect of 49-3, in a National Assembly in which LREM (presidential party) has a large majority...

The riposte must be up to the task

Started more than two months ago, the movement against the pension bill is gaining momentum. The first phase, the renewable strike in the transport sector, has been over for a few weeks and the mobilisation is looking for new perspectives. Despite all its limitations, the last day of national inter-professional mobilisation on Thursday 20 February demonstrated the continuity of the movement.

The government intends to accelerate the timetable, but the one proposed by the union leadership is not adequate. Tuesday, 31 March, the date proposed for a new national strike day, is a very distant and isolated prospect for relaunching the mobilization, especially at a time when the government wants to quickly end the game by using 49-3.

Relaunching the strike and general mobilization

These next few weeks will not be empty: a day of mobilization of "fighting colleges and laboratories" on Thursday 5 March, an international women's strike on Sunday 8 March, a new "act" of the yellow jackets and a march against police violence on Saturday 14 March, a "black week" starting on Monday 16 March, a solidarity march on Saturday 21 March on the occasion of International Migrants' Day... So many angers that must converge.

As soon as the government uses its 49-3, the most massive possible response must be immediately forthcoming, with rallies and demonstrations against this government coup de force. The national day of Tuesday, 31 March must be seized to help relaunch a general strike movement. It is also with this objective in mind that the NPA has proposed the organization of a national demonstration in Paris towards the symbols of governmental power.

Finally, to contribute to the gathering of all those who want to put an end to Macron and its world, the NPA activists will be present in the next municipal elections alongside activists from the struggles.

The movement is far from being finished, our social camp has not said its last word.

Montreuil, Tuesday, 25 February 2020

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PS:

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[1] Wikipedia [Article 49 of the French Constitution](#).