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France

Against Macron and the far right, unity in the streets and in the ballot box

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The results of the European elections sounded like a thunderclap. The score of the far right, followed by Macron's announcement of the dissolution of the National Assembly, made it vital for the whole left - the parties, the unions and all the organizations of the workers' movement - to unite and mobilize to give a voice to the aspirations of the working classes.

The result of this election, while not a real surprise, has forced our social camp to position itself rapidly in an unprecedented political situation. Several months ago, the polls were already predicting this catastrophe, which is notably the delayed result of the defeat of the mobilisation on pensions. The latter has in fact led to resignation among the working classes and renewed energy on the part of the far right. Those in power are not benefiting from their victory because it does not allow the ruling class to consolidate its positions in the overall context of the crisis of the system.

The results of the European elections were a continuation of those of the last presidential and legislative elections. In the 1930s, Trotsky predicted about France: "The displacements which have been noted have for us an importance not in themselves but only as symptoms of changes in the consciousness of the masses. They show that the petty-bourgeois centre has already begun to give way to the two extreme camps. That means that the remnants of the parliamentary regime are going to be increasingly eaten away. The extreme camps are going to grow. Clashes between them are approaching. It is not difficult to understand that this process is absolutely inescapable." [1] The situation seems similar: the Macronist centre is weakening, the far right is strengthening considerably, while the left is trying to rebuild itself.

This general trend is mirrored across Europe, although we won't go into that in this article.

A danger that comes from afar

To make the popular classes pay for the crisis, the bourgeoisie may be ready to switch from authoritarian liberalism to a fascist solution (like Bolloré), while the proletariat is disoriented, partly demoralized and poorly organized, and the middle classes are increasingly looking to the far right, or even joining it.

The danger of a fascist ascent is growing, and it is possible that the far right will win a majority of deputies, or create the conditions for a grand coalition between the right and the far right to run the country. We need to be aware of this danger, which could accelerate the building of a neo-fascist force, with a series of measures attacking democratic and social rights head-on, physically attacking the workers' movement and accelerating racist, LGBTIphobic and anti-women attacks.

All this is intimately linked to the situation of capitalism, which is in deep and multi-factorial crisis, and to the difficulties faced by the ruling classes in maintaining their profits, and by the imperialist powers in retaining their spheres of influence, particularly France, Russia and the United States. So the economic crisis continues, with inflation now combined with what was presented as the solution to the problem, higher interest rates. As a result, economic stagnation is intensifying, with growth of 0.1% in the third and fourth quarters of 2023, productivity and overall purchasing power stagnating, and social inequalities exploding. The economy is threatened by a crash, particularly in property, a sector in which bubbles have formed in China, while in the USA only 1/3 of loans were repaid in 2024 (compared with 99% in 2021), the Treasury is borrowing at rates above 4.5%, Standard & Poor's has

cut France's rating from AA to AA- and the deficit is 5.5% of GDP instead of the expected 4.9%.

In such a context, the dominant classes are tempted by authoritarian solutions that allow them to increase exploitation tenfold and maintain their colonial domination. Faced with this, the solution can only come from rebuilding the proletariat's confidence in its own strength, reconstituting the class for itself, so that it is capable of opposing the various representatives of the bourgeoisie and moving towards a confrontation with it, first to defend its rights, resist and win social victories, then to pave the way for an anti-capitalist break.

This perspective is our strategic line and determines our entire tactical orientation.

The dangerous game of dissolution

Macron's response, with his gamble on dissolving the National Assembly, is accelerating the current process and increasing the fascist danger. The logic of this policy leads to a campaign for a republican front from Les Républicains to the left, in an attempt by the Macronists to regain a social and institutional base that will allow them to continue implementing its policies.

The Republican front is a dead end. By bringing together organisations from different classes with a view to conciliating and stabilizing the system, it demoralises the workers' movement, the popular classes and their organizations, and sooner or later paves the way for fascism. Macron's calculation could even be to lose the legislative elections and appoint Bardella as Prime Minister, hoping to counter-attack in the presidential elections. This kind of process is frighteningly dangerous.

However, Macron seems to have underestimated the capacity of the working class to react. Indeed, the experience accumulated over the last few years in the mobilizations and its unitary translation with the Nouvelle Union populaire écologique et sociale (NUPES), has pushed the most right-wing sectors of the left that are conciliatory with Macronism, such as the PS, to refuse at this stage a republican front in order to ally themselves with the whole of the left.

Macron's party seems to be in trouble, with the splintering of Les Républicains and the relative cohesion of the left, even if the latter is very fragile due to the deep disagreements that exist within it, between a Socialist Party (PS) that is very much integrated into the system, and La France Insoumise (LFI), which is much more anti-establishment and is trying to rally the most popular classes. However, the sequence is not over, and it is possible that the sirens of the Republican front will be heard again, between the two rounds or after the elections, particularly in the likely event that the Assembly does not have a majority.

A united front in the streets and at the ballot box

In this context, our party has thrown all its forces, however small, into the battle for a united front. The decline in the balance of forces between the classes and the dynamics of the current sequence - with the spontaneous demonstrations or those called by the workers' movement against the far right and Macron - intimately link electoral unity and unity in the struggles. For the masses, it is totally coherent to demonstrate against the far right and to mobilise in an electoral campaign, hoping to achieve victory or, at the very least, prevent the arrival of the far right.

For us, unity at the ballot box is essentially tactical: we want to contribute to a defeat of the far right and Macron, or even enable a victory for the left, but we know deep down that the essential thing is played out in the self-activity of the masses and in social struggles. And, particularly, the ability of workers and working-class neighbourhoods to emerge as a political force. It is the mobilizations that produce the political balance of power, and that determine both a possible electoral victory and the possibility of continuing afterwards, against bourgeois policies and for a counter-offensive by the proletariat.

We have little control over the electoral agreement on the left, over its programmatic content and its major dynamics, even if we defend our policies at this level. What's more, we are not even invited to the discussions! The major left-wing leaders essentially want to use us so as not to lose the votes of the most contentious sectors of the left. They have nevertheless managed to find a small place for us, with Philippe Poutou's candidacy in the Aude. The space we will have, overall, we will have to find by elbowing.

Unity without losing our compass

We need to keep our bearings clear in terms of class struggle and strategy... all the more so as part of an alliance where the most right-wing sectors of the PS are represented, even Carole Delga and François Hollande!

But we note that the organizations that refuse to join this united dynamic (like LO, RP or the NPA-R) appear marginal and sectarian in view of what's at stake in the situation, and consequently useless to our social camp.

The battle for a united front is opposed to the republican front, and combines the building of a balance of power on the streets with electoral unity. The challenge is to exert maximum influence through street mobilizations led by all the organizations of the workers' movement, in particular the trade unions. The frameworks for electoral and fightback mobilization are not separate.

It is therefore within coalitions combining struggles and elections that we defend our policies and that we combat electoral illusions and point out the betrayals of the neoliberal left in power. We argue that the only guarantee for the working classes is to remain mobilized, to build social opposition in order to put elected deputies under the control of the social movement. We're in a period where class contradictions are driving not towards conciliation but towards confrontation, and we need to explain this. The link between the actions for Palestine and the current movement is a very important point, with these connections being the presence of working-class neighbourhoods in the mobilization, the action against racism, against fascism and all forms of colonialism, both here and there.

Four essential objectives

We are pushing, wherever possible, for mass demonstrations, mobilizations in workplaces, among young people and in popular neighbourhoods so that the rejection of Macron's brutal, anti-social policies and those of the far right are expressed in the streets and, where possible, through strikes.

We are helping to build a united front that brings together the entire political and social left without exception, in the streets and at the ballot box. To do this, we talk to all the organizations, from the bottom to the top, proposing general assemblies, meetings, everything possible to mobilise the proletariat. This concerns trade unions, but also associations and collectives, while respecting their autonomy, and political parties. We are in favour of all the organizations of the workers' movement, of the social movement, taking part in the battle, going beyond the social

and political divide. It is the movement of the proletariat that will determine victory or defeat, because it will or will not create a dynamic that will convince passive voters.

As part of this front, we are leading the battle to ensure that the programme is as radical as possible: we need measures of rupture to turn our backs on the capitalism that is destroying our lives and the planet, to break with anti-social, racist and repressive policies, and to stand in solidarity with the rights of peoples, particularly the Palestinians and the Ukrainians. We are also leading the debate on the need for mass mobilization and self-organization, with a view to building a counter-power.

We are continuing to develop our orientation of anti-capitalist rupture: capitalism is in deep crisis and is bringing us the worst, from wars to the extreme right in power. "Socialism or barbarism!" We need to break with this system, starting by implementing the demands made by social movements and the workers' movement in recent months, which represent the basis for an alternative imposed by our mobilizations: retirement at 60; wage increases of 400 euros; a minimum wage of 1,800 euros; extension of free public services for all common goods (energy, transport, housing, but also health and education); an end to productivism and extractivism; the right of peoples to self-determination and the right to resistance in Palestine, Kanaky and Ukraine in particular; the opening up of borders; equal rights for all... To achieve this, we defend the need to organise over the long term, constructing a great political force "for rupture and the social transformation of society", embodying a practice both unitary and revolutionary.

Action!

Our organization is ready for battle, either by taking the initiative or by participating in the collectives organizing action. We are not naïve, we know that the solution to the situation is not electoral, that it will be determined by class confrontations for which the electoral sphere is not the essential place, but rather an obligatory point of passage, given the illusions, hopes and aspirations of a large part of the popular classes, to go further. We are therefore publicly developing our orientation, our explanations, our programmatic axes, convinced that in this election there are nonetheless important issues at stake. There is, of course, the issue of who will win, and the possibilities that may or may not open up as a result. But with this sequence, we are also seeing the beginnings of elements of the recomposition of the left. At the moment, it is essentially in the struggles between the parties that these are perceptible. But who knows, a major movement of activist sectors, shaking up the balance of power and the apparatuses, could also open up prospects for the construction of a party for rupture and the revolutionary transformation of society.

** This text is an updated version of that which served as the basis for the discussions at the National Political Council on 11 June 2024. Translated by **International Viewpoint**.*

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[1] Leon Trotsky: [Whither France? - 1934](#), on marxists.org.