

**Labour File:**

## Macron launches New Round of Attacks on the Working Class of France

In this epoch of capitalist neo-liberalism, suppression and repression of the working class by denying its rights and benefits has become its confirmed main plank of economic policies.

For the past three decades the ruling classes and their governments in the imperialist countries have been consistently implementing the policies of attack on the rights of workers and working class in one form or other under lofty slogans in furtherance of the interests of monopoly capitalist and big business classes.

In recent time the ruling elite in the USA has slashed health care, public education and other key social programmes that are detrimental to the interests of the working class. Presently the European Union is negotiating another raft of austerity measures with the government of Greece. Likewise the government of Macron in France has launched a new round of attacks on its working class in the form of issuing decrees on labour code. These decrees aim to remove all legal barriers for capitalists to lay off workers, lengthen working hours and slash wages and benefits. For the implementation of these anti-working class attacks, the state of emergency declared by the previous socialist party government suspending basic democratic rights and giving police draconian powers to prosecute youth and workers engaged in the even constitutionally-protected protests – all in the name of curbing terrorism in the wake terrorist attacks in Paris – came handy to the present Macron government.

In essence the ruling classes throughout the world and presently in France have been avowedly targeting the rights of working class for trampling, earned by the European working class through its struggles in the wake of Great October Revolution of 1917. By repudiating the social rights won by the working class in Europe in 20<sup>th</sup> century, the French monopoly capitalist class is attempting to throw the workers back by decades.

The decrees released by the Macron government are aimed at increasing French MNCs' global competitiveness by giving them more flexibility to hire and fire, tear up and rewrite contracts, cut wages and attack social benefits. The state of France is thus imposing a historic regression in social and working conditions of workers; giving the capitalist class more flexibility in negotiating terms and conditions with their workers, while reducing the costs of firing workers. With such regressive acts, the Macron government wants to make France more attractive for both French and foreign finance capitalists, who long complained about restrictive labour laws and the power of trade unions.

The Macron government is pursuing two pronged policy in launching its attacks on the working class. On the one hand it intends to use all the repressive powers granted by the emergency against the workers to ram through his decrees.

On the other hand he is making every effort to buy out the leadership of established trade unions through granting subsidies and implementing various schemes. It also plans to utilise the deep splits in the labour movement between CGT and its hard line allies which are determined to obstruct the reforms, and others prepared to compromise and negotiate.

According to an official parliamentary report, 95 per cent of the funding of trade unions in France is being financed by the state and businesses. This totals to 95 per cent of 4 billion Euros of yearly budget of trade unions.

The government is also including in its ministerial staff several people closely tied to the union bureaucracies and developing an alliance with the trade unions leadership gaining a support base for its anti-worker policies and attacks.

In such a back ground, Macron's decrees aim to grant the unions a 'union cheque' financed by the employers and pay out subsidies to train union officials, give the union a major role in legally approving new contracts cutting their members' working conditions and labour code.

The media belonging to the monopoly capitalists, like New York Times in USA and “Die Welt” in Germany have not only applauded Macron for launching his attack on the working class, setting off the right track with labour reform, but also advised Macron “to stay on the course” and “to stake everything on a decisive blow”, reminding him “now he has a historic chance and he will not have a second chance”.

These commendations, encouragements and advises indicate that the international finance capital though Macron has launched a wave of regressive measures against the working class.

Whatever might be the designs of international finance capital, monopoly capitalists and their colluders in bureaucratic trade union leaderships, the workers and the working class of France are not ready to submit meekly to the attacks on their rights by the ruling classes and their government.

The anger is growing among the workers of France. Workers and people are protesting against the decrees of the Macron attacking the labour code. The government’s attempts in collusion with the bureaucratic trade union leadership by organising rolling strikes in different industries to dissipate workers’ militancy, but the workers’ anger is mounting and workers’ protests are spreading throughout France sporadically.

Throughout the month of September 2017, massive protests and strikes occurred in the country. Thousands of people demon-strated in cities of Paris, Nice, Marseille, Saint Nazaire, Toulouse and Caen. Unable to contain the class anger of workers, the established biggest trade union, CGT was forced to call for 4000 strikes and 180 protests against labour reforms. The agitations are continuing even in the month of October.

It is noteworthy that one quarter of France’s specialised riot police - 9 of 36 brigades at national level- went on prolonged strike against budget cut targeting them. Thus a sign of discontent is brewing among employed class against the austerity policies and methods of the government and the ruling classes.

To discredit the anger and protests of the workers, the government has chosen to propagate as if workers are not honouring the principles of parliamentary democracy, by posing “where will the democracy will be if the parliamentary majority is systematically put in question?” Thus the hollowness of parliamentary democracy is being exposed by the very ruling classes and its representatives that their democracy is of a few chosen representatives but not of or for the overwhelming majority of the people and their interests.

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