French Pensions: “Victory is possible against Macron, his reform and his 49.3!”

Statement by the New Anticapitalist Party (Nouveau Parti Anticapitaliste NPA) of France on Macron’s pension reforms.

The use of the 49.3 by the government is a democratic scandal. [1] It shows the weakness of the government’s social base and of its authoritarian approach. Under the pressure of the movement, despite an agreement with the LR (Republicans: mainstream conservatives) leadership, their members of parliament did not dare vote for the reform. It reinforces the illegitimacy of the government and pushes the mainstream left and union leaderships with positions in the institutions to continue the mobilisation, notably the CFDT. [2] It shows the particularly undemocratic character of the institutions of the Fifth Republic, which allow a minority government to pass a reform. In a way, what has happened is good news for the movement.



The actions that took place throughout the country on Thursday night testify to the anger at the democratic scandal, the repression that has been unleashed, not only against the demonstrations but also against specifically targeted union activists, such as those in the energy sector, and the hardening of the government’s position. Macron and his reform have little support, and the first post–49.3 opinion poll indicates the massive rejection of his draconian action and the depth of the protest, which is not weakening. With the continuation of the mobilisation, it is likely that the government will step up the repression. This will require

solidarity and a united response equal to the challenge.

However, nothing is won. The motions of censure will be rejected, and the balance of forces remains uncertain. The movement must take a step forward to win; we can no longer be satisfied with renewable, rolling strikes. The 23rd of March date set for the next national mobilisation announced by the inter-union coordination is too far away. [3] We have to use it to build strikes where there are none by building on the strength of the mobilised sectors. But we need to accelerate the pace so as not to demoralise people and not to leave the most advanced sections of the labour movement isolated.

For us, a victory depends on the combination of different factors:

• Strengthening the rolling strikes, in particular in the public services and state enterprises. In the private sector, it is necessary to broaden the mobilisation to slow down production and put pressure on the employers and their political representatives. Renewable strikes have greatly contributed to destabilising the government. We have to do everything to enlarge them; to make this struggle a daily mobilisation, the movement has to be in the news every day. What we are aiming for is a general strike.

• Continuing the mass demonstrations which show the depth of the movement and its legitimacy. We call for mobilisations everywhere that directly target political power, as the Yellow Vest movement did. The movement must aim to blockade the country. We need a national demonstration in Paris to politically and massively challenge Macron’s reforms and government.

• Responding to the ongoing democratic scandal The government and Macron must go, but we must prevent the far right from ambushing us and gaining the main benefit. It is a question of imposing a policy that starts with the needs of workers,

youth, and pensioners and relies on their mobilisations to impose it. We need a government that is as faithful to the interests of workers as Macron's is to those of the employers. It is the responsibility of all the organisations of the trade union, political, and social movements on the left to discuss all these points. We will work to help set up such meetings as soon as possible.

Beyond that, and more than ever, a political alternative around a project of breaking with capitalist policies is necessary—a rupture for an ecosocialist society.

A victory is possible against Macron and his reforms. We must give ourselves all the means necessary to achieve it.

NPA Executive Committee

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Montreuil

FOOTNOTES
[1] Paragraph 3 of Article 49 of the French constitution allows the prime minister, "after deliberation by the Council of Ministers," to force a bill through the Assemblée Nationale with no vote. The only alternative to prevent the bill from passing is then to overthrow the government.When the prime minister triggers this procedure, MPs have the option of tabling a motion of no confidence within 24 hours. Le Monde.

[2] The CFDT is the largest French trade union confederation by number of members (875,000) but historically less radical than the CP-dominated CGT to which it comes second in voting results for representative bodies.

[3] The inter-union coordination is composed of eight trade-union confederations/federations (CGT, CFDT, FO, CFTC, CFE-CGC, UNSA, Solidaires and FSU) and four youth organisations l'Union nationale des étudiants de France (Unef), l'Union

nationale lycéenne (UNL), le Syndicat général des lycéens (SGL), and the Fédération indépendante et démocratique lycéenne (FIDL).

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