

## FRANCE

### Who are we ?

● The International Workers Committee Against War, Exploitation, for a Workers' International (IWC) was set up at the World Conference held in Mumbai ( India ) on Novembre 19, 20 and 21 gathering delegates from 28 countries.

● The IWC was set up on the basis of the Mumbai Manifesto against war, exploitation and precarious labour which was endorsed by labour activist and trade union and political organisations officers from 46 countries (\*)

● Its continuations committee is composed of labour activists from all political/ trade union backgrounds:

**Innocent Assogba** (Benin),  
**Alan Benjamin** (USA),  
**Colia Clark** (USA),  
**Constantin Cretan** (Romania),  
**Berthony Dupont** (Haiti),  
**Ney Ferreira** (Brazil),  
**Daniel Gluckstein** (France),  
**Rubina Jamil** (Pakistan),  
**Apo Leung** (China),  
**Gloria Gracida** (Mexico),  
**M.A. Patil** (India),  
**Mandlenkosi Phangwa** (Azania),  
**Klaus Schüller** (Germany),  
**Jung Sikhwa** (Korea),  
**John Sweeney** (Great Britain),  
**Mark Vassilev** (Russia),  
**Nambiath Vasudevan** (India).

(\*) Afghanistan, Argentina, Austria, Azania, Belarus, Bangladesh, Belgium, Benin, Brazil, Burundi, Canada, Chile, China, Czech Republic, Ecuador, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, India, Ireland, Italy, Ivory Coast, Korea, Mali, Mexico, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Rwanda, Senegal, Sweden, Switzerland, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, USA, Venezuela, Zimbabwe.

### Statement by the Democratic Independent Workers Party (POID)

## The majority have had their say

On 11 June, the majority had their say.

With the majority of voters abstaining at the highest rate in the whole history of the Fifth Republic (over 51 per cent), the people have expressed their rejection of an illegitimate government.

Under the Fifth Republic, what purpose does the National Assembly serve? To ratify the decisions taken by the President of the Republic, who holds all the power in his hands.

With the majority abstaining, the people – and more particularly the workers and youth – have refused to go along with this farce.

This is why on 11 June, every one of the candidates in the presidential election lost a big share of their vote. “*La République en marche*” [The Republic on the Move] lost 1.3 million of the votes received by Macron on 23 April; the National Front lost nearly 4.5 million votes; the right, around 3 million; “*La France insoumise*” [France Unbowed] lost over 4.5 million votes, two-thirds of the votes received by Melenchon; the Socialist Party lost 600,000 votes. Every one of them lost a big proportion of their voting base. Every one of them was hit with rejection.

In the case of France Unbowed, the politics of division arrogantly applied by its officials disconcerted a large proportion of its voters; especially those who had taken seriously the call to put an end to the Fifth Republic and elect a Constituent Assembly. How could they fail to be confused, when Melenchon put himself forward as Macron’s Prime Minister in the framework of a cohabitation government? Or when he spoke highly of the “powers” of the National Assembly, presented – under the Fifth Republic! – as a framework of resistance to replace strikes and demonstrations?

What now? From the democratic point of view, this government and the overwhelming majority it will have in the National Assembly are illegitimate.

And yet it is this illegitimate government which in the coming weeks intends to attack the Labour Code, the Social Security system, pensions and the baccalaureate qualification, and to enshrine the state of emergency in the Constitution!

By what right?

With this illegitimate government determined to threaten labour and democratic rights and gains, there can be no matter whatsoever for negotiation or consultation.

Faced with this minority government that intends to destroy everything, the workers have no other choice than to counterpose the unwavering united front of the working class, the youth and the labour organisations in their determination to stand up on a united basis against the government’s policy of devastation.

The Democratic Independent Workers Party (POID) fights in all circumstances for unity and democracy, which requires the elimination of the Fifth Republic and the election of a sovereign Constituent Assembly, breaking with the diktats of the European Union.

As a supporter of the class struggle, the Democratic Independent Workers Party will take and will support all initiatives needed to help the workers progress down this path.

In this period of political crisis and political decay, we fraternally call on the members and supporters of the Communist Party, the Socialist Party, the Left Party, France Unbowed, and on trade union activists. Let us open the discussion: do we need a working-class party, yes or no? Do we need to help towards working to build the workers’ united front to defeat the plans of reaction, yes or no?

Paris, 12 June 2017

## SERBIA

## Tens of thousands of youths swamp the streets after the presidential election

After the April 2nd presidential election, which saw Aleksander Vucic reaping a 55% victory (but with a heavy rate of abstention) – youths took to the streets in the thousands in the major cities of Serbia. Workers and ordinary citizens joined them, which gave the protests a mass character. The banners sported slogans such as *“Down with the autocratic regime”, “No dictatorship of capital”, “We are not exportable cheap labour”*. Vucic, who used to be a Serb Nationalist, has morphed into a “pro-Europe” figure; he served as Prime Minister from 2012 to 2017. A correspondent from Serbia has sent his analysis of the events.

**Against dictatorship**

On May 31st, Aleksander Vucic was inaugurated as the new president of Serbia. Protests had started up right after the April 2nd election. The demonstrators said they wanted an end to dictatorship, the removal of the political elites, free and fair elections, free media, improved conditions for workers and the protection of their rights and full State financing of education and healthcare, with equal access guaranteed for all.

The thousands who swamped the streets used the election results as an opportunity to vent their grievances over the situation in the country. But after the third day, the numbers of people in the streets quickly dwindled from thousands to a few hundreds, and, today, protests have ceased. Why?

**Workers joined with the youth, but the trade unions were not there**

The reactions to this movement have been very contradictory. Some immediately rejected the protests saying they were “colour revolutions” (1). On the opposite, some took the opportunity to be able to act on the political level.

Some encouraging signs could be seen in those protests. For instance, when the Goša factory workers joined

the protests, and also when a part of the military and police unions occasionally participated in the protests. During the demos, slogans on class struggle issues were chanted. But the major unions sidelined the demonstrations, merely paying lip service. In this way, they missed the opportunity of increasing their social clout; they missed the opportunity of linking up the students’ and the workers’ combats.

**Which social classes support the government and which support the opposition?**

The highest abstention rates at the presidential elections were scored in the poorest regions of Serbia: the perception of bourgeois elections depends first and foremost on prevailing social conditions. Vucic is supported by the upper class bourgeoisie. But a fraction of the popular layers also voted for him, as they do not consider that the opposition parties offer a valid alternative; on this point, they are right, but they are afraid. The situation of the poor has not improved but has not worsened either (when Vucic was Prime Minister from 2012 to 2017 -*Ed.n*). This section of the electorate does not accept a socialist agenda. In the past, it has already given its support to reactionary, nationalist currents and neo-liberal policies encouraged by long-winded nationalist declarations, leading to conflicts with neighbouring countries.

**The petty bourgeoisie sees its standard of living collapsing**

The opposition garnered the votes of most of the liberals, of members of the petty bourgeoisie and of the “middle class”. The result of their candidate, Jankovic (15.5% of the votes), more or less tallies with what these social layers represent in society. When the Serb Popular Party (SNS, Vucic’s party) set up its monopoly over political and economic life, the petty bourgeoisie speedily

started to lose its privileges, which sparked panic among its ranks. The petty bourgeoisie worries over their slumping living standards, which are converging with those of the workers – their worst nightmare! This is the very reason why, on the political level, it does not manage to mobilise other classes to support its own interests.

**Free elections? But to elect whom instead?**

The demands of the protesters were justified. But the demand for new elections raises the issue: to elect whom instead? Once again, the “centre” and the “left” which, for years in Serbia, have provided political staff in the service of imperialism and have resulted in a succession of “compradores” (2) governments one and all in the service of a genuine dictatorship under the name of imperialism? It is dictatorship against the majority of citizens.

This is why we are focusing on the mobilisation of the youth and on the 50% voters who abstained at the elections. The living standards of a large layer of the impoverished petty bourgeoisie will shortly have joined our own and a part of that layer will undoubtedly radicalise.

Down with the dictatorship of capitalism! Up with socialism!

**Jacim Milunovic**, trade unionist, endorsed the Manifesto of the Mumbai Conference Against War Exploitation and Precarious Labour.

(1) “Colour revolutions”: protest movements sparked by US and EU foundations to bring about regime change such as, for instance, the “Orange Revolution” in Ukraine (2004-2005)

(2) “Compradores” literally means: “buyer”; is said of the bourgeoisies of dominated countries which are dependent on the major powers.

(Sub-titles by the editorial committee)