

French Capitalist Parties Exploit Student Protests



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Violent protests erupt in France over precarious school education, with hundreds injured and thousands arrested. Both the capitalist far-right and the far-left aim to exploit unrest for political gain.

Details. Massive protests led by high schoolers have [erupted](#) across France, beginning at underfunded [schools](#) in impoverished areas and spreading nationwide. Grievances [centre](#) on teacher shortages, poor school buildings, and an unequal university admissions system. Teachers, university students, and unions have [joined](#) the protests.

► Hundreds of thousands are [participating](#). By October 7, 764 police, 215 students, and 89 teachers had been [injured](#). In a single day, police made [1,949 arrests](#), surpassing the peak of the [Yellow Vest](#) protests.

► The government has attempted to quell the protests by [assigning](#) 3,024 substitute teachers, debating an education funding increase, and announcing [five initiatives](#) to improve schools. However, protests have continued despite these concessions and [violent police repression](#).

► The far-right has blamed the unrest on [migrants](#) – a claim backed by [Trump](#) – and accused La France Insoumise (LFI) of encouraging violence for electoral gain. The Rassemblement National (RN) has [reinforced](#) these accusations, using a statement by an LFI mayor to attack the party, while exploiting the unrest to advance its own electoral interests.

► LFI leader Jean-Luc Mélenchon has [opportunistically joined](#) the demonstrations and [urged](#) protesters to remain peaceful. Although LFI has limited influence over the largely spontaneous movement, Mélenchon has sought to [channel](#) the mobilisation towards the 2027 presidential election.

Context. The protests are happening against the backdrop of the presidential elections in 6 months. If no candidate wins an absolute majority here, a runoff election will be held with the top two candidates. This will [likely](#) pit Le Pen of RN against Mélenchon of LFI.

► RN is a [far-right](#) party which [blames](#) immigration and the EU for France's economic and social problems. Its [programme](#) advocates restricting immigration, tougher policing and cuts to many public agencies. Its founder, Jean-Marie Le Pen, was repeatedly [convicted](#) for inciting racial violence.

► LFI [presents](#) itself as a radical alternative seeking to “return power to the people”. However, its proposals, including [raising](#) the minimum wage, [lowering](#) the retirement age to 60 and [taxing](#) the wealthy, remain mild reforms within capitalism. LFI also [joined](#) Macron and RN representatives at a military briefing on France's preparations for imperialist conflict.

► Anger at social spending cuts and rising costs of living is widely shared across France, leading to public servants [joining](#) the protests to denounce the government's planned cuts. Furthermore, in 2025, at least a third of French households had [difficulty](#) paying their electricity and gas bills, while French hospitals report being [insufficiently](#) funded. Contrastingly, the French defence budget [increased](#) by 13.5% for 2026.

