

No to the persecution of Eric Drouet

By Kumaran Ira
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As the movement of the “yellow vests” expands, the Macron government is trying to intimidate it with fierce repression. One of the main founders of the movement, 33-year-old truck driver Eric Drouet, posted on Facebook Friday that the police had raided his home in Seine-et-Marne. He added that he would have been taken into police custody had he been home at the time of the police intervention, and that his wife had been questioned.

Drouet is the target of an investigation by the Paris prosecutor’s office following statements Wednesday night by the “yellow vests” on BFM-TV. He is charged with “provoking the commission of a crime or misdemeanor” and “organizing an unlawful protest.”

The sole reason for these extraordinary accusations is that Drouet said he would like to enter the Elysée Palace [seat of President Macron], during the following exchange with the journalists:

BFM-TV: “You say: ‘Saturday, it will be the final outcome, Saturday is the Elysée, we would all like to go to the Elysée, on Saturday we should all be completely united and advance together towards the Elysée.’ What does this look like? It sounds like you want to carry out a putsch?”

Eric Drouet: “All the people want to go up there, it’s the symbol of the Republic.”

BFM-TV: “Yes, but to do what? You arrive at the Elysée, what will you do there?”

Eric Drouet: “We go inside.”

The courts and the press have now launched a hysterical and absurd campaign against this comment, claiming that he wanted to commit a crime or even launch a coup.

The accusation against Drouet is fraudulent. The day after his speech on BFM-TV, Drouet clarified his thoughts on his Facebook page. With no ambiguity, he said that he wanted to go to the Elysée [Palace] to express himself in a nonviolent way.

“I never said that I wanted to go to the Elysée to break everything, but to make us heard,” he said. “The only people we have to negotiate with are the ministers, the prime minister, the secretaries of state, but never the president [Macron]; it was rather for the symbol. I have never attacked [property] on a demonstration and it will not start tomorrow.”

Hated by the majority of the population, the Macron government has contempt for the protestors, and relies on anti-democratic measures and police brutality to suppress the movement of “yellow vests,” who truly express deep anger against social inequality and social exclusion.

It’s not hard to understand why the Macron Government is targeting Drouet in this way. The government is desperate to stop the movement, by finding representatives among the “yellow vests” who will negotiate an agreement with Macron’s ministers in order to divide and put an end to the movement.

Drouet is one of the chief figures of the movement who refuses to negotiate with Macron, in contrast to the “free yellow vests,” who seek a common ground with the president. This makes him a target for Macron, who wants at all costs to smash the movement, and to buy up all the people on the various Facebook pages that lead the movement.

The threat against Drouet is a warning to workers who are coming into struggle. The movement of “yellow vests” terrifies the state. Isolated and hated by masses of workers, panicked by the rise of anger against Macron, the government is preparing to use every measure to criminalize the “yellow vests” and any real political opposition to Macron. That’s why it uses lies and provocations to fabricate accusations against Drouet.

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