

NPA meeting in Paris backs imperialist policy on Egypt, Tunisia

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WSWS reporters attended a February 9 meeting of France's New Anti-Capitalist Party (NPA) in Paris, titled "Tunisia-Egypt, from revolt to revolution." The meeting highlighted the counterrevolutionary politics of the official French "far left," whose reaction to these struggles echoes that of the foreign offices of the imperialist powers.

The speakers included Wassim Azreg, who apparently accompanied Olivier Besancenot in his recent trip to Tunisia (See "An errand-boy for French imperialism: NPA's Olivier Besancenot visits Tunisia"), and Vanina Giudicelli, a member of the NPA national leadership billed as an expert on Middle Eastern affairs.

The organizers set a completely unserious tone at the meeting, announcing they would try to finish it in roughly one hour, so that those attending did not miss the televised France-Brazil football game.

On Tunisia—where the NPA hopes the state machine of the old Ben Ali dictatorship will survive the ouster of President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali—Azreg defended the interim regime led by Ben Ali's crony, Prime Minister Mohamed Ghannouchi.

He spoke briefly on "freedom of expression" that "one could really see ... since the revolution" and popular demands for control over price increases, particularly in food prices, caused by the privatization policy long pursued by the Ben Ali regime. He concluded by calling the situation in Tunisia a "process of revolution" that "remains to be built."

Azreg's amorphous comments notwithstanding, the

problems of revolution in Tunisia are not so easily solved. The Tunisian regime has managed to survive Ben Ali's departure by relying on Ghannouchi and the police force to suppress ongoing popular protests and keep the regime in power. Though the working class has showed its strength in Tunisia, it still must build a revolutionary political leadership and forms of independent organization before it can overthrow the regime.

The NPA, however, is hostile to the perspective of socialist revolution. In response to a question from a WSWS reporter, Azreg said: "In the new world of globalization and financial markets, revolution on a Marxist perspective ... is out of the question and does not correspond to today's realities."

Azreg implied that the Tunisian revolution was over—even as Tunisian police continue to gun down working class protesters. He said: "What's happened in Tunisia is a revolution, because now there is freedom of expression....The real revolution, in fact, is that the people managed to make the regime collapse."

Giudicelli later advanced the same absurd and reactionary view that the Tunisian revolution has essentially accomplished its goals, saying: "Tunisia succeeded in making the revolution, but in Egypt it's still occurring."

In Egypt, the NPA is unsure about what forces Washington, Paris and other powers can rely on to disorient and crush working class struggles. As a result, it praises all the official "opposition" groups—both "left" and right-wing Islamist forces like the Muslim Brotherhood—so that it can work with any conceivable

coalition that would emerge from a defeat of the Egyptian revolution.

Giudicelli said that the Mubarak regime was supported by the United States, but that “opposition parties including the Muslim Brotherhood constitute the alternative in which many people are participating.” Evaluating the Muslim Brotherhood’s membership at over 500,000 people, she added: “Some of their members are participating in the strike.”

This is, in fact, a travesty of what is taking place. While Washington is supporting the Egyptian military dictatorship against mass popular struggles, it would have no objection to working with the Brotherhood, various trade union groups, or other “opposition” parties. Its main concern is to avert a social revolution, save capitalist rule, and to build up a regime that will continue Mubarak’s pro-imperialist policies in the Middle East.

By publicly promoting the Brotherhood, an Islamist group with a long history of anticommunism and strike-breaking in Egypt, the NPA confirms that it has decisively broken with socialism and any orientation to the working class.

Giudicelli also encouraged the most dangerous illusions about the role of the army, which she praised for “fraternizing with the people.” In fact, the absence of a political party that wages a systematic campaign in the army—to win the soldiers over to the side of the workers and break them away from the officers and the regime—poses immense dangers to the Egyptian revolution.

Giudicelli closed her remarks calling for demonstrations to “pressure the French government to support the peoples in Egypt.”

This proposal is completely bankrupt. The French government has marched in lockstep with its other NATO allies, including the United States, who aim to preserve Egyptian capitalism and Western imperialism’s strategic control of the Middle East. If there were demonstrations called on the NPA’s perspective of promoting the official Egyptian

“opposition,” they would play into the strategy of the major powers: cobbling together a new political elite to stave off a revolutionary challenge from the working class.



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