

Why is the New Anti-Capitalist Party silent on the Libyan war?

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The war against Libya led by the imperialist powers has now been going on for nearly four months. Despite the intensification of their bombing of Tripoli in order to bring down Colonel Muammar Gaddafi's regime, the western powers have not been able to achieve their goal, and NATO's intervention is currently at an impasse.

At the beginning of this month, France acknowledged supplying arms to the Libyan rebels, who are fighting Libyan government forces in the Djebel Nafoussa region, south of Tripoli. This was reported by the daily *Le Figaro* newspaper, according to which the supply of arms parachuted in the Djebel Nafoussa Mountains included rocket launchers, assault rifles, machine guns and "Milan" antitank missiles. (See "France arms anti-Gaddafi forces")

France's delivery of arms to the rebels is a violation of UN Security Council resolution 1970, which in February imposed an embargo on the supply of arms to Libya. In France, as in other European countries, the military intervention in Libya is now opposed by the majority of the population. According to an IFOP opinion poll, 51 percent of French people disapprove of NATO's military intervention against Libya.

There is a deafening silence surrounding these events in the press of the petty bourgeois ex-"left". This is most notably the case with the New Anti-Capitalist Party (NPA) in France. The NPA's web site has published three brief articles on the Libyan war over the last two months—at a time when this war has been France's main foreign policy initiative.

Why has the NPA kept silent when the war is unpopular and prosecuted illegally by the French government? For weeks, the NPA has not issued any official statement on the war or criticized President Nicolas Sarkozy for the illegal delivery of French arms

to the rebels.

In fact, since the start of the war, the supply of weapons to the rebels has been the policy that the NPA has recommended to French imperialism. If the NPA does not seek to criticize the illegal militarist policy of the French government, it is because the latter is doing exactly what the NPA has asked it to do.

The day before the air strikes on March 19 by Britain and France, the NPA suggested that France deliver arms to the Libyan opposition. In a press statement dated March 18, the NPA wrote: "Our full and complete solidarity goes to the Libyan people to whom we must give the means to defend themselves, arms which they need to bring down the dictator, to conquer freedom and democracy."

Olivier Besancenot, the NPA's former presidential candidate, publicly repeated this comment: "Our full solidarity goes to the Libyan people to whom we must give the means to defend themselves, the arms which they need to bring down the dictator, to conquer freedom and liberty."

The reality of the daily bombings of Libyan civilians by NATO airplanes has exposed the dishonest ambiguity of these formulations, which attempt to imply that the NPA wanted to protect civilians or "the Libyan people". In fact, the NPA now attempts to camouflage by its silence the support that it offered for an imperialist war, whose objective is to overthrow the Gaddafi regime and to set up a new client state, led by the Transitional National Council (TNC) in Benghazi.

The TNC, a right-wing and pro-imperialist formation, protects above all the geostrategic interests of the great powers and the western energy conglomerates. Far from representing "the Libyan people", the TNC is composed of forces such as former ministers of the Gaddafi regime, Islamic terrorist forces linked to Al

Qaeda, CIA assets, and various Libyan tribal chiefs.

From the start of the war, the NPA has put forward absurd arguments to justify the imperialist powers' intervention in Libya. Regarding the TNC, the NPA gave a "revolutionary" coloration to what is in fact a reactionary, pro-imperialist force.

On April 1, the NPA published a report on a "debate on the intervention in Libya" within the party. Adopting the position of French imperialism, according to which a military intervention was necessary to protect the civil population, it declared: "Because Gaddafi is ready to massacre his people, because he has promised a 'blood bath' and that we know very well he will keep his word in the event of victory, we want first and foremost his defeat."

On April 8, the NPA published an article by its Belgian collaborators (Revolutionary Communist League-Left-LCR Gauche), entitled "The imperialist war and counter revolution in Libya". According to the article, "in Libya, there are currently two wars engaged: the air offensive launched by the imperialists on the one hand and the war led by the Gaddafi regime against the popular insurrection."

In fact, the TNC does not represent a popular insurrection. It is an instrument of the imperialist powers, receiving NATO air support and serving as ground troops for the NATO intervention in Libya. If it succeeds in overthrowing Gaddafi and finds itself in power, it will function as a puppet regime putting Libya's oil wealth at the disposal of the imperialists.

The separation invented by the NPA between the NATO bombing and the TNC is false and dishonest. To defend an imperialist war under "left" colours, the NPA weakly criticizes the NATO bombings, while applauding the forces which serve as its infantry.

In spite of the misleading presentation of its criticisms of NATO by the NPA, it is impossible for it to hide entirely that these are criticisms from the right. According to the NPA, NATO—which it describes as an imperialist alliance—is not doing enough to help the rebels to combat Gaddafi's forces: "the insurgents are still being refused the supply of munitions and heavy weapons in sufficient quantities, without which they have little chance of resisting or militarily defeating the well trained and well equipped troops of the tyrant."

The article by the Belgian LCR-Left even seems to regret that the imperialists are not bombing Libya

enough, writing: "the NATO air strikes in favour of the insurgents are few and far between, and they are done very sparingly."

A party which has written such comments unambiguously places itself on the side of social reaction, in spite of its efforts to give itself an image of being a party of the "far left". Having advocated an imperialist intervention in Libya, it now shares the political responsibility with Sarkozy for the civilians massacred in Libya by NATO and its Libyan proxies.



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