

# France's New Anti-Capitalist Party applauds Libya war

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France's New Anti-Capitalist Party (NPA) has applauded NATO's war to topple the regime of Colonel Muammar Gaddafi in Libya, praising it as a victory for democracy.

On August 22, it published a statement, "Gaddafi has fallen, now it is for the people to decide." It declared, "The fall of the dictator Gaddafi is good news for the people. The NPA is in full solidarity with the revolutionary process that is continuing in the Arab region."

The NPA's claim that the ouster of the Gaddafi regime by NATO's imperialist intervention is "good news," let alone a "revolutionary process," is a reactionary political lie.

What is taking place in Libya is an imperialist atrocity led by the major powers, aimed at establishing direct control over Libya's oil wealth. To allow the "rebels" to secure control of Tripoli, NATO engaged in thousands of airstrikes and deployed special forces and intelligence operatives. Thousands of people were killed, Tripoli's infrastructure has been largely destroyed, and its population faces a humanitarian crisis amid shortages of medicine, food and electricity.

NATO used the pretext of protecting the civilian population against Gaddafi—which was accepted by the NPA—to legitimize a war to install a puppet regime. At the same time, the subjugation of Libya is aimed at suppressing working-class struggles that have ousted US-backed regimes in Tunisia and Egypt.

The NPA ignores the most basic class questions involved in the war, claiming that the toppling of the

Gaddafi regime will open up democracy for Libyan people. "It is a new life that is opening up for the Libyan people. Liberty, democratic rights, and the use of wealth produced by natural resources to satisfy the fundamental needs of the people are now on the agenda."

Not only is the NPA offering up absurd lies in the defense of an imperialist war, but it is doing so quite consciously. It does not itself believe that the "wealth produced by natural resources" in Libya will be used to benefit the Libyan people. As it notes later on in its statement, NATO's "objectives were clear: to make people forget their support, past and present, for dictatorships in power, and to seize a country that is rich in oil and gas resources."

In fact, the NTC will pursue right-wing policies against the working class and suppress popular opposition inside Libya. It is led by various right-wing elements: ex- ministers of the Gaddafi regime, the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) linked to Al Qaeda, CIA assets, and various Libyan tribal leaders.

The NPA attempts to provide a pseudo-revolutionary veneer to these right-wing forces, presenting them as part of a six-month "revolt" against Gaddafi. It writes, "Over the last six months, the revolt has developed and at the same time, under cover of a UN resolution one month later, NATO's member countries tried to take over the developing process by an aerial military intervention. The NPA denounced this intervention."

This is a cynical trick, attempting to provide cover for the NPA's support for the war. The NPA is supporting the right-wing forces of the NTC, while at the same

time claiming to oppose the NATO air strikes and intelligence operatives leading these same forces in battle!

From the beginning of the war, the NPA supported the military intervention in Libya. In justifying the war, it adopted the pro-imperialist line that the war would protect the Libyan population. In an article posted in March on the NPA web site, Gilbert Achcar wrote: “Here is a case where a population is truly in danger and where there is no plausible alternative that could protect it... You can’t in the name of anti-imperialist principles oppose an action that will prevent the massacre of civilians.”

The humanitarian catastrophe now unfolding in cities targeted by NATO and the NTC is a devastating refutation of this anti-Marxist outlook, which implicitly argues that workers must ignore questions of class perspective and uncritically accept imperialist war propaganda.

The NPA insisted that France arm the NTC. On 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.”

As the war became increasingly unpopular, the NPA tried to soft-pedal its support for the war by organizing a “debate on the intervention in Libya” inside the party in April. The entire exercise was deeply cynical, as the NPA supported the war. However, it allowed the NPA to posture as a “left” critic of the Libyan war while continuing to support the war’s imperialist rationale—the bankrupt claim that NATO was somehow supporting a revolution for democracy.

In any event, French imperialism largely adopted the policy recommended to it by the NPA as that party called for arming the NTC “rebels.” Paris officially acknowledged that it was supplying arms to the NTC in early July. The NPA responded by largely remaining silent on the Libyan war, publishing only a few brief dispatches on Libya on its web site during the summer.

A few days before NATO-led forces entered Tripoli on August 20-21, the NPA published a new article by Gilbert Achcar, who quoted right-wing *Wall Street Journal* columnist Max Boot and suggested that NATO was not bombing Libya with sufficient force. Boot unfavorably compared the 11,107 sorties by NATO bombers against Libya in 124 days of war to the 38,004 sorties by NATO bombers over Kosovo.

Achcar commented, “The crucial questions are then: why is NATO conducting an aerial campaign in Libya that is low key not only in comparison with the air component of the war to grab similarly oil-rich Iraq, but even compared to the air war for economically unimportant Kosovo? And why is the alliance at the same time refraining from providing the insurgents with the weaponry they have consistently and insistently requested?”

This comment was as absurd and deceitful as the rest. NATO’s slaughter in Libya is not “low-key”—this is a fiction that Achcar invented to present the NPA’s support for the intervention in a pseudo-oppositional light.

In the final analysis, the basic position of the NPA on the Libyan war is no different from that of the most powerful and reactionary sections of world imperialism. Like the Bush administration did while invading Iraq, the NPA advances the lie that imperialist war can help bring about democratic change. It has placed itself squarely in the camp of social reaction.



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