

French petty-bourgeois “left” backs imperialist war plans in Syria

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France’s New Anti-Capitalist Party (NPA) is promoting plans for military intervention by the imperialist powers in Syria on the spurious grounds of needing to “protect” civilians.

In a February 24 communiqué, the NPA declares: “The barbarism of the Syrian regime of Bashar al-Assad knows no limits. He is ready to massacre the Syrian people, to carpet the city of Homs and every island of resistance with bombs in order to keep power.”

Lamenting that “Women, children, doctors are tortured, assassinated”—though it presents no concrete proof to support this inflammatory assertion—it concludes: “Bashar al-Assad, you and your clique of killers, get out.”

Such positions brand the NPA as petty-bourgeois sycophants of imperialism. They are silent on *who* is fighting the Assad regime—armed groups led by the Muslim Brotherhood, CIA assets, Al Qaeda elements and Syrian army deserters—to hide the central political issue: the imperialist drive to reconquer Syria, which the NPA supports.

This is not a struggle by the Syrian working class, the only force that can overthrow Assad on a progressive basis, but a struggle against it.

Sections of the ruling class are calling for acting on war plans against Syria, with US Senator John McCain on Monday calling for air strikes. On Friday, French President Nicolas Sarkozy proposed the creation of a humanitarian zone inside Syria. This echoes calls by the UN Security Council for “immediate” humanitarian access—that is, for the US and its allies to take over sections of Syria’s territory to send supplies to pro-US forces inside the country.

Foreign powers are training Syrian opposition

fighters in neighboring Turkey and supplying arms through the Turkish-Syrian border, and US allies Qatar and Saudi Arabia have offered financial support to the Syrian “rebels” to buy arms. Foreign military intelligence, including British MI6 agents and French intelligence, are already on Syrian soil.

A week ago, in Homs, a general from the Syrian Free Army told Reuters, “French and American assistance has reached us and is with us.” He added, “We now have weapons and anti-aircraft missiles and, God willing, with all of that we will defeat Bashar [al-Assad].”

The NPA’s statements aim to hide these basic realities and, by whipping up uninformed outrage against Assad, to disorient and lessen popular opposition to a new war. It plays a key role in maneuvering public opinion to legitimize military intervention under the guise of “humanitarian aid.” This pro-imperialist line follows their backing of US-NATO-led war against Libya last year, which resulted in 80,000 deaths according to the US-backed forces themselves.

In this, they are simply echoing the reactionary propaganda of the bourgeois media. A February Ifop poll found that nearly 50 percent of the French population still opposes military intervention in Syria. Before the NATO intervention in Libya last March, however only 36 percent favored intervention in Syria. This shift does not reflect popular enthusiasm for war; rather, it is the product of what Jérôme Fourquet, director of the Ifop polling agency, called “disinformation and daily black-and-white propagandizing, which have reinforced the interventionist camp.”

The NPA’s support for imperialist war flows from a

fundamental shift in the political orientation of formerly left petty-bourgeois layers over a period of decades. Elements that once opposed imperialist wars have gained economically and grown affluent as a result of decades of political reaction and social attacks on the working class. Amid mounting revolutionary struggles of the working class internationally, they now embrace the ruling elite's social austerity policies and imperialist war.

Ahead of the upcoming French presidential and legislative elections, the NPA is seeking alliances with the bourgeois "left" Socialist Party (PS) and especially with the PS's government coalition partners such as the Communist Party and its presidential candidate, ex-PS minister Jean-Luc Mélenchon. (See also: "2012 French elections: NPA bids to join pro-austerity government")

The PS's presidential candidate, François Hollande, has promised that he will keep France within the NATO military command. He recently attacked Russia and China for blocking a UN Security Council resolution on Syria. The bourgeois "left" and its petty-bourgeois adjuncts are thus signaling their desire to sign on as junior partners in the US drive to overthrow the existing Syrian and Iranian bourgeois regimes and bring the entire Middle East under US hegemony.

The NPA's international affiliates in the Pabloite United Secretariat are deeply implicated in the functioning of the pro-imperialist Syrian "opposition" forces. Thus Gilbert Achcar attended a conference organized by the Syrian National Council (SNC) last October in Sweden, pressing the SNC to issue demands for the Western powers to intervene in Syria. (See also: "French petty-bourgeois "left" plots military intervention in Syria").

Achcar told the SNC that, under the correct conditions, it could arrange for foreign intervention in Syria: "The reluctance regarding direct intervention that we see today on the part of Western and regional states might change tomorrow if intervention requests made on behalf of the Syrian opposition were to increase."

Achcar's ability to move seamlessly from meetings with right-wing, pro-imperialist operatives like the SNC to meetings with the NPA leadership reflects the deep political integration of the petty-bourgeois "left" into the camp of imperialism. It is not accidental that

the NPA's February 24 communiqué appeals for these layers—the bourgeois "left" parties, the union bureaucracy and French NGOs—to back the Syrian "opposition."

It states: "Left organizations, the trade union movement, and non-governmental organizations must with the greatest urgency take initiatives to aid the Syrian opposition, to help all those who resist under terrifying conditions, to bring the pitiless repression by the Syrian regime to an end."

While it would not dare admit it, the NPA's offer to help "all those" opposing Assad line it up against the working class and with the linchpins of global counter-revolution: the Persian Gulf monarchies, the European bourgeoisie and the Pentagon.



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