

France's New Anti-capitalist Party backs pro-imperialist guerrillas in Syria

Anthony Torres, Alex Lantier
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The 15-month conflict between the Syrian army and the pro-imperialist “rebel” forces has intensified over the last weeks, with mounting casualties for both the Syrian army and Syria’s civilian population.

Among the most serious atrocities was the massacre in Houla, near Homs. The massacre, which was committed by the “rebels”, was attributed to pro-government forces and utilized as a pretext for a political campaign by the imperialist powers to denounce the Assad regime and develop their propaganda in favour of intervention in Syria. (See, “Houla massacre carried out by Free Syrian Army, according to Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung”)

From the beginning of the conflict, the New Anti-capitalist Party (NPA) in France has supported the Syrian Liberation Army (SLA), which it cynically presents as the spearhead of the Syrian revolution. Its reaction to the Houla massacre is a flagrant example of support by the petty bourgeois pseudo left for the bloodiest crimes of imperialism in the Middle East.

In a June 8 article, “Syria and the signs of decline”, written by Ghayath Naïssé, the NPA evokes the Houla massacre while concealing the “rebels” responsibility. He writes: “The reactions to the Houla massacre near Homs, perpetrated by the regime’s forces and its militias, and which left a hundred victims including dozens of children, have been scathing, condemning the current regime. Several countries have expelled Syrian ambassadors to reinforce the isolation of the regime.”

The reaction of the NPA to this event is highly characteristic. Even before the facts have been verified, it unequivocally declared that the massacre was “perpetrated by the regime’s forces”. In fact, the victims of the massacre committed by the Sunni “rebels” included members of the Shiite minority in Houla and a few Sunni families hostile to the

opposition. However, the NPA immediately adopted the bourgeois press’ presentation of the facts, thus serving the political needs of French imperialism.

The NPA acts in this way despite the fact that excessive haste in aligning itself with the bourgeois press has already made it commit factual errors, notably in its analysis of the murder of French journalist Gilles Jacquier by the Syrian “opposition”. The NPA, like most of the press and the other bourgeois “left” parties, had attributed the responsibility for Jacquier’s murder to Assad. (See, “The French political establishment and Gilles Jacquier’s death in Syria”)

The NPA has published nothing on its site to correct their error since the revelation that the “rebels” were responsible for the Houla massacre.

The NPA acts in bad faith, knowing full well that the propaganda campaign in which it is participating is part of the political machinations by “several countries” to facilitate their armed intervention in Syria. The SLA is financed by the reactionary monarchical regimes of the Gulf region, heavily armed by France and the United States, acting under its orders and based in Turkey. The imperialist countries are intervening in Syria through the medium of this army.

Naïssé himself remarks that the reactions of the great powers are part and parcel of “putting political pressure on the Assad regime”. Referring to the traders’ strikes in Damascus and Aleppo, Naïssé nurtures the hope that the pro-imperialist opposition could overthrow the regime: “The abandonment by the bourgeois traders of the Assad regime would be a major indication of the serious decomposition of the Syrian regime’s social base”.

This reflects the class standpoint of the NPA, which absorbs the attitudes of the imperialist command centers and has nothing in common with a proletarian

outlook. Lacking any interest in the impact of the war on the Syrian proletariat, Naïssé asks the following question: can Paris and Washington bring about Assad's overthrow by arousing a movement to challenge Assad from within the Syrian ruling class?

His outlook is radically hostile to a Marxist outlook, which begins with the understanding that the overthrow of Assad can only be progressive if it is the result of a revolution led by the proletariat. Such a revolution could only develop in a fierce struggle against the murderous Sunni fundamentalists of the "opposition", armed to the teeth by imperialism and supported by the NPA.

In order to give himself a false "left" cover, Naïssé concludes his article by criticizing the attempts to negotiate which are taking place between Washington and Moscow on Syria. Russia, whose only ally in the Middle East is Syria, seeks to defend its interests, notably in relation to its naval base in the Syrian town of Tartus. It is hostile to an invasion of Syria by Western powers, as it was to the intervention in Libya last year, which ended with the installation of a pro-US puppet regime after a devastating war.

He writes: "With continued support of the Russian, Chinese, and Iranian governments, the allies of the murderous [Assad] regime, the American and European positions as currently presented would result in an 'organized transition'....The position of the Syrian revolutionary left is based on the rejection of this solution from above, just as a foreign military intervention would signify the crushing and defeat of the popular revolution".

In fact the criticism by Naïssé of a "solution from above" envisaged by the imperialist powers is reactionary and incoherent. It hides the fact that what Naïssé calls the "popular revolution" is in fact already a "foreign military intervention", which has caused thousands of deaths in a civil war directed by the imperialists. The NPA intervenes in the Russo-American dialogue only to encourage Washington and its allies to reject negotiations in favor of a policy of war until victory.

Naïssé ends his article with the slogan: "The Permanent Revolution until the overthrow of oppression and exploitation!" He tries in this way to pass off the activity of the pro-imperialist death squads responsible for the Houla massacre as if they were

based on the revolutionary theories of Leon Trotsky. This is a crude and repugnant fraud.

In Syria, for the moment, there exists no independent movement of the working class to overthrow the Assad regime. There is rather violence committed by armed bands, controlled by the imperialist powers which seek to change the Syrian bourgeoisie's orientation in favour of the United States and for the installation of a right-wing regime. That is called a counterrevolution, of which the NPA is a fervent defender.



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