

French pseudo-left falls in line with Valls' attacks on the working class

Kumaran Ira
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France's pseudo-left parties are trying to block opposition to the new Socialist Party (PS) government of Prime Minister Manuel Valls, whom President François Hollande appointed on a free-market, law-and-order platform after the PS defeat in March municipal elections.

Reactionary petty-bourgeois parties like the New Anti-capitalist party (NPA) and the Left Front are working to subordinate the working class to Valls' right-wing agenda. They are seeking to downplay the significance of the shift to the right the PS is preparing, while preserving the credibility of the PS and of their own political alliances with it.

The NPA complacently claimed nothing would change with the new government. In a March 31 communiqué titled, "With Valls, Hollande will not change policies," it wrote: "After the walloping it got this weekend, Hollande had to replace [former Prime Minister Jean-Marc] Ayrault with Valls. At least things are clear. Hollande does not intend to change policies. He will continue to submit to the demands of the bosses."

In another communiqué of April 2, it added: "As expected, this new government does not bring any novelty."

This is a shameless cover-up of the character of the incoming Valls government. Hollande is bringing in France's former top cop to intensify his attacks on the working class while making militaristic, law-and-order appeals that will strengthen the neo-fascist National Front (FN). The NPA, which supported Hollande's election and the installation of the previous PS government against the working class, is signaling its continued support for a shift towards the far right. The NPA's empty criticisms of the PS are deeply dishonest. In 2012, the NPA supported Hollande's election against right-wing incumbent Nicolas Sarkozy, trying to promote illusions in the PS. Acknowledging that Hollande would adopt free-market policies and ignoring his reactionary denunciations of the

Roma people, it claimed that the PS can be pressured to adopt left-wing policies.

The outcome of the municipal elections is a shattering refutation of such political lies. After a humiliating defeat for the PS, which lost around 155 cities with populations of over 10,000, and an FN victory, taking 15 cities and 1,200 municipal councilor positions, the PS is, predictably, turning to an even more right-wing orientation.

This underscores the political disintegration of the entire bankrupt framework of "left" politics, from the reactionary social-democratic PS to the pseudo-left NPA. As Valls intensifies his austerity policies and law-and-order measures, the main beneficiary within the political establishment will again be the FN.

The promotion of fascistic policies by these organizations clearly emerges in their support for the US- and EU-backed fascist coup to oust Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich on February 22, which the NPA applauded as a popular uprising in Kiev. Should the French bourgeoisie bring the FN to power in France, the pseudo-left forces would try to adapt themselves to it. (See: France's New Anti-capitalist Party backs fascist-led putsch in Ukraine)

As broad layers of the population look for a political alternative, they confront the situation that the forces that pass for the "left" alternative to the PS—the NPA or the Stalinist French Communist Party (PCF)—are reactionary parties deeply implicated in the rise of neo-fascism. They are mere political shadows of the discredited PS, deeply hostile to a political struggle of the working class against Hollande.

The NPA is calling for participation in an impotent April 12 protest rally called together with the Left Front, a coalition of long-time parliamentary allies of the PS, claiming: "We must build opposition to this government, build the social fightback beginning on April 12. This is

the only thing they will listen to!”

Such protests are a political dead end for the working class. The PS does not “listen to” protests against its policies. It will view the April 12 protest in particular as a protest called by its political allies, and a block on the development of what it fears most: a politically independent movement of the working class against Valls government.

On their part, the Left Front coalition between the Left Party (PG) of Jean Luc Mélenchon and the PCF—which also called for a Hollande vote in 2012—are seeking to salvage the PS’ smaller parliamentary allies. They are seeking to peddle illusions that forces like the Left Front and the Green Party, the long-time allies of the PS’ so-called “Plural Left” coalitions, can be built into an alternative to the PS.

Mélenchon criticized Hollande for “responding to an electoral disaster by committing political suicide.” He called for building a “new left, capable of being a majority in our country.”

The PG praised the Green Party’s refusal to serve under Valls after participating in the PS-led Ayrault government. This action by the Greens is only a cynical maneuver, trying to keep their distance from the PS and avoid being too discredited by its right-wing policies.

Praising the municipal elections in Grenoble, where a Green-PG coalition won, PG National Secretary Eric Coquerel said: “Things are clear. We are obviously happy with the Greens’ exit from the government. It is an important action in this presidential term. Concretely, it opens up possibilities of an alliance between the Left Front and the Greens as we succeeded in doing during the municipal elections. It can be the basis of an alternative majority.”

In fact, the Left Front and the NPA are worried only that the installation of Valls, a nakedly right-wing figure, will provoke opposition from workers and youth on the left of the entire political establishment.



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