

The New Anti-capitalist Party and the political crisis in France

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The pseudo-left New Anti-capitalist Party (NPA) has reacted to the formation of the new government of Prime Minister Manuel Valls with empty, hypocritical criticisms to mask its responsibility in the installation of this deeply right-wing government, which the NPA will continue to defend.

What the NPA fears above all is that the collapse and discrediting of France's ruling Socialist Party (PS) will provoke a crisis of rule in which the NPA could not stifle a political movement of the working class directed at the PS and its political satellites, including the NPA itself. In an article titled "France in crisis: We must censure the Hollande-Valls government in the streets," it stresses the risk of an event like the collapse of PASOK, after it imposed devastating austerity measures upon Greece.

The author, François Sabado, writes: "Who can say what the situation of the PS will be in the coming weeks and months? Until now, a process like that which happened to PASOK—the Panhellenic Socialist Movement that collapsed—seemed to be ruled out, but the choices of the Hollande-Valls team may provoke a collapse of the PS."

In an article titled "The new government: finance at the helm," the NPA comments on President François Hollande's nomination of a new government headed by Valls: "Manuel Valls formed a second government that is essentially in continuity with the first, to apply even more clearly and coherently Hollande's road map. It's a government of combat that will continue and intensify austerity measures, social attacks, and confrontation with those who reject and combat it."

In fact, the NPA itself voted for Hollande's road map, which this "government of combat" is trying to promote, by helping him to get elected in 2012. During the presidential elections, it called for a Hollande vote,

cynically claiming that it would be easier to pressure a PS government to obtain left-wing policies.

As Sabado admits, the NPA was well aware that Hollande would in fact carry out reactionary policies. "The 'social-free-market' trajectory of the Socialist Party is not new. Its integration into the summits of the state and of finance capital has been verified for several years." The NPA thus called for a PS vote knowing that they were supporting a reactionary party of finance capital. Now, it is supporting Hollande and his government as it implements right-wing policies, by strangling every attempt by the working class to mount a political struggle against the PS.

The installation of a second Valls government is the result of pressure from the European Union (EU) to accelerate his social cuts. Hollande reacted to criticisms from leading PS members and ministers such as Arnaud Montebourg to eliminate from his government supporters of a policy that would be overtly hostile to Germany and that advocated a more inflationary economic program.

He named ministers such as Emmanuel Macron—the new economy minister, a former finance inspector and investment banker at Rothschild's—to carry out a policy dictated by the EU and French high finance.

The NPA, by its hostility to a socialist and revolutionary perspective, contributed to the installation of the most right-wing regime France has known since the World War II-era fascist Vichy regime. It writes that to deal with the new Valls government, "more than ever [we must] build a social and political opposition and mobilization against this policy of social retrogression ... a coalition of trade unions, non-governmental associations, and political parties has gathered tens of thousands of protesters against austerity policies."

This is just a cynical political smokescreen. The NPA is calling again for “the necessity to build an opposition” with coalitions of pseudo-left parties and union bureaucrats who have for decades betrayed the struggles of the working class and who helped Hollande push through his policies. These parties are just as subordinated to the PS as the NPA itself. The NPA is advancing this dishonest perspective to reassure the Valls government that it will continue to try to strangle workers’ struggles and, as needed, to divert those it cannot strangle into harmless channels.

Sabado thus mentions the defeat of this summer’s rail strike, presenting it as a victory to cover for the government: “New generations, like those who appeared during the railway strike, show that when the conditions for struggle come together and have come together, workers can resist attacks by the government and the bosses, even though there can be a substantial gap between militancy and the level of anti-capitalist political consciousness.”

In fact, it is the NPA that is neither revolutionary nor anti-capitalist. It does not seek the overthrow of capitalism, but to save it under conditions where it threatens to provoke war and economic collapse, and the conditions for an eruption of social revolution are fast being prepared.

If the NPA formulates some reservations about Valls’ policies, it is because its own economic program resembles more closely Montebourg’s inflationary economic policy than the deflationary policy pursued by Valls.

In 2009, *Contretemps* magazine opened its pages to the economic writings of the NPA. It published an article by Sabado titled “An anti-capitalist alternative in Europe,” in which he wrote: “Europe could constitute the functional arena for a Keynesian bailout plan.”

He complained that bank bailouts in Europe did not go far enough and were smaller than those given to Wall Street in the United States: “Obama’s bailout, which amounts to over 5 percent of gross domestic product, will only succeed in reducing by half the probable scale of the recession. What should we say of the European bailouts? They are at best undersized. It is 1.3 percent of GDP in Great Britain, 1 percent in France, 0.8 percent in Germany, 0.1 percent in Italy.”

What Sabado carefully avoided saying was that the Obama administration’s bailouts were catastrophic for

the American working class, with drastic cuts to wages and social spending. Whatever economic policy the various capitalist governments adopted, they aimed to attack the social rights of the working class.

The NPA speaks for affluent layers of the middle class who applaud a policy of running the printing presses to create money, as took place in the United States. They want to place the weight of the economic crisis on the backs of the workers, as such a policy will enrich them. This anti-working class party is ready for unprincipled alliances with organizations of all types, whose only common point is their hatred of the working class and of socialism. In Syria, the NPA supports militias tied to Al Qaeda and in Ukraine the fascists of the Svoboda Party and Right Sector. It is completely aligned on the most repulsive policies of French and US imperialism.

Despite the empty criticisms it formulates against the Valls government, it will continue to defend parties imposing the most reactionary austerity measures against the working class.



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