

France's pseudo-left NPA backs restoration of law and order in Burkina Faso

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12 November 2014

After a military coup following the mass uprising on October 28 in Burkina Faso, the New Anti-capitalist Party (NPA) is backing the bourgeois opposition to deposed President Blaise Compaoré as it seeks to restore order in Burkina Faso and defend the interests of French imperialism.

In its article “Burkina Faso: Solidarity with the popular revolt,” the NPA unhesitatingly lines up with the statement of the bourgeois opposition: “‘The victory of the popular insurrection belongs to the people and consequently the management of the transition belongs legitimately to it and should not be confiscated by the army,’ declare the opposition parties and associations which called for people to demonstrate last Sunday [November 2].”

The NPA's implicit claim that Colonel Isaac Zida's coup and his negotiations with the bourgeois opposition are a “victory resulting from the popular uprising” is an absurd political lie.

The attempt to prevent the mass uprising from bearing fruit for the workers and oppressed masses of Burkina Faso is not only the work of the army. After the October 28 uprising, the bourgeois opposition sought, like the military junta, to restore order in Burkina Faso. The criticisms of the army expressed by the opposition and NGOs merely reveal differences within the Burkinabé bourgeoisie and among the imperialist powers on how to take the situation in hand.

By hiding these political realities, the NPA is lining up with the French government, which is counting on the opposition to defend its interests. Discussions took place with the French ambassador and the bourgeois opposition to organise the November 2 demonstration, which was designed to serve as a safety valve to dissipate the anger of the masses.

In order to hide its pro-imperialist position the NPA

presents the opposition as progressive, in an ahistorical and false way. It promotes Thomas Sankara, the “African Che Guevara,” a former president of Burkina Faso murdered in 1987 with the approval of the CIA and France. In this way the NPA orientates itself to sections of the opposition and the army close to General Kwame Lougué, who use the image of the murdered president to give themselves a radical tint and try to win the protesters' sympathy.

The NPA writes: “Thomas Isidore Noël Sankara laid the bases of an African revolution with integrity, he defined his program as anti-imperialist, launched the reduction of the expensive lifestyle of the government, the abolition of the traditional system of tribal chiefs, the struggle against illiteracy and the campaign for equality between the sexes in the very unequal society that he was former Upper Volta. In every international forum, on every international stage he was given, Thomas Sankara was the champion of the oppressed, not only of Africa. Now, we must continue the fight for justice for Thomas Sankara, justice which will be for all the revolutionaries in the world and above all the youth of Africa.”

This praise of Thomas Sankara, the Burkinabé head of state from 1983 till his assassination in 1987, is a fossilized relic of the orientation of the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR), the forerunner of the NPA, to Third World nationalist regimes in the 1980s.

Sankara's social programmes and radical discourse earned him powerful enemies among the elites of Burkina Faso, and in Washington and Paris. Nevertheless, these policies were being carried out by a bourgeois regime seeking to politically coexist with the imperialist powers, notably France. In this, Sankara resembled bourgeois nationalist figures such as Fidel Castro in Cuba, Muammar Gaddafi in Libya, or Yasser

Arafat's PLO (Palestine Liberation Organisation).

Sankara did not come to power at the head of a revolutionary movement of the working class, rallying the oppressed masses in a struggle against imperialism, but by a coup d'état. In the final analysis, he based himself on sections of the Burkinabé bourgeoisie, which at best sought to defend their interests by balancing between the different major powers. This is what earned him a certain support with the anti-Marxist petty bourgeois of the LCR, who came out of the post-1968 student movement.

However, the political and material relations between the LCR and French imperialism—led by the Socialist Party (PS) of President François Mitterrand at the time, and of President François Hollande today—counted for much more than these platonic sympathies for Sankara. Therefore the LCR continued its alignment to the PS after the murder of Sankara by Compaoré, and the cancellation of the measures of Sankara that were considered to be too radical by the imperialist powers and the Burkinabé ruling classes.

Nearly 30 years later, the Burkina Faso “opposition” is far to the right of what Sankara was, just as the NPA is far to the right of the LCR in the 1980s. General Lougué assured RFI radio that he “supports his comrades in arms,” that is, the military junta and its maneuvers with the bourgeois opposition.

The opposition praised by the NPA is in fact a tool of the strategic interests of leading French corporations. The spokesman for the Leadership of the Opposition coalition, Zéphirin Diabré, is a deputy in the National Assembly, a former minister of Trade, Industry, Mines, Economy, and of Finance and Planning. In 2006, he joined France's Areva conglomerate, to lead the operations of its Africa and Middle East division. He left Areva in 2011 to work as a consultant in mine financing. Since 2010 he has led the Union for Progress and Change party (UPC).

The working class risings against regimes historically associated to bourgeois nationalism in Africa, notably in Tunisia and Egypt in 2011, highlight the failure of the bourgeois nationalist perspective. It has proven incapable of ensuring social and democratic rights for the working class and oppressed masses. Now that pro-imperialist regimes in the region are shaking under the blows of the capitalist crisis and the rising anger of the workers, it is the perspective of an internationalist

revolution of the working class, not bourgeois nationalism, which is shown to be the way.

This has completed passage of the petty bourgeois pseudo-left forces represented by the NPA into the camp of social reaction. The NPA defends the policies of the Hollande government, which it helped to elect, blocking a fight against austerity policies by supporting the betrayals of the trade unions. Thus the NPA has facilitated mass sackings and the slashing of workers' living standards.

Internationally, the NPA has lined up with the interests of French imperialism, applauding France and NATO's “humanitarian” wars in Libya and Syria and their regime change operation in Ukraine. It has supported Islamists tied to Al Qaeda and the Ukrainian fascist militias that led the Kiev putsch, presenting them as “revolutionary” forces.

The praise it is showering on the collaboration between Diabré, Lougué and the Burkinabé military junta is one element of the pro-imperialist orientation of the NPA against the workers and oppressed masses of the world.



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