

France's New Anticapitalist Party denounces opposition to NATO escalation in Syria

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The agitation by the New Anticapitalist Party (NPA) for a direct NATO intervention in Syria aimed at Russia is indistinguishable from the war propaganda of the CIA and the French corporate media.

As US officials threatened to bomb Syria and deploy nuclear weapons against Russia last week, the NPA published an article by its Swiss-Syrian correspondent, Joseph Daher. The article, "Calling for an end to intervention is not nearly enough," denounces opposition to NATO intervention in Syria and calls for the installation of a puppet government in Syria closely tied to Al Qaeda.

Daher begins by hailing the breakdown of last month's short-lived truce between US-backed and Russian-backed forces in Syria, which he calls a "total failure politically, militarily, and in humanitarian terms." He then turns on "some sections of the 'left' and sections of the antiwar movement in the USA and Britain," for whom "the failure of the truce is a result of the internationalisation of the war in Syria."

Daher cites an article from Britain's Stop the War coalition, which states: "The central problem is the internationalisation of the war. Syria has for years been a theatre in which regional and global powers have been pursuing their geopolitical interests—prolonging and intensifying the conflict. This process has been gathering pace recently, and in the run up to the worrying US election, there are growing calls for further Western escalation."

Outraged by criticism of Western escalation against the regime of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, Daher responds: "Simply calling an end to all interventions, putting them on the same level, to reach peace in Syria ... is not enough and is simply wrong." He attacks the Stop the War Coalition's article: "Anyone reading the article will notice that not a single word is said about the destructive policies of the criminal and authoritarian Assad regime—the main source of the nearly half a million deaths in the country."

Daher's attack on anti-war sentiment is based entirely on political lies. The main cause of the carnage in Syria is not Assad's regime, but the intervention of the NATO powers backed by pseudo-left groups like the NPA. After five years of war, it is well known that NATO and its Middle East allies have spent billions of dollars arming Islamist opposition

militias to topple Assad, launching a conflict that caused hundreds of thousands of casualties and forced over 10 million Syrians to flee their homes.

Daher writes entirely from the standpoint that is politically aligned with that of NATO military forces and intelligence agencies pushing for regime change in Syria, and which was opposed to last month's ceasefire.

Last month, several US generals announced they did not intend to respect the ceasefire after it was signed by US Secretary of State John Kerry. They objected to sharing intelligence on Al Qaeda with Moscow, against whom they have since declared that they are preparing for war. They also feared the temporary cessation of hostilities would help Assad retake key cities like Aleppo from US-backed, Al Qaeda-linked militias, who were not covered by its terms. US fighters bombed and killed dozens of Syrian troops in Deir ez-Zor shortly before the ceasefire expired, finishing off any attempts to extend it.

Echoing the position of the Pentagon chiefs, Daher denounces the ceasefire for preventing the destruction of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's regime.

"At the political level, this ceasefire was born to fail because it did not address the political roots of the problem: the Assad regime," he writes, adding: "The political agreement concretely actually led to stabilization of the Assad regime under the so-called pretext of the 'war on terrorism' for the political interest of the USA and Russia. That is why this agreement was rejected by large sections of the democratic opposition, whether armed or peaceful."

Daher claims that the Obama administration is trying to stabilize Assad's regime. This lie, which originated in US neoconservative circles, serves the interests of sections of the US military and media, and of the NPA's allies in France's Socialist Party (PS) government, who are dissatisfied that the Obama administration has not yet taken military action to crush Assad. Particularly in 2013, Obama almost went to war in Syria alongside France, but suddenly backtracked even after the PS had come out for it. This infuriated both the PS and prominent NPA supporters of the Syrian war, such as Professor Gilbert Achcar, who already in 2011 was directly advising leaders of the CIA-linked Syrian National Council.

Daher's alignment with Pentagon and CIA war propaganda marks a further step in the evolution of the NPA far to the right. Over decades, the NPA and the social layers from which it is drawn have integrated themselves into bourgeois politics. Since the 1980s, it has orbited free-market PS governments which launched wars and military interventions from Chad and Mali in Africa to Iraq and Afghanistan.

Daher, a graduate student at the University of Lausanne, represents a younger layer inside the NPA with absolutely no genuine personal connection to Marxism, Trotskyism, or anything that can be seriously described as socialist and anti-imperialist politics. Their association with the NPA has served as a mechanism of their integration into the media and political networks through which the imperialist powers seek to create a somewhat broader, "popular" base for their war policies inside layers of affluent students and the upper middle class.

Daher contributes to various web sites that post materials from US-backed opposition forces in Syria, like the Syrian Freedom Forever blog. He signed the International Socialist Organization's May 2013 "Solidarity with the Syrian revolution" appeal, which was part of the propaganda campaign for US-led military intervention in the run-up to the 2013 war scare. He has been photographed wearing a Palestinian scarf, which is intended to provide Daher with a "left" persona even as he produces pro-imperialist propaganda.

Politically, Daher and Achcar are far closer to neo-conservative politicians like Paul Wolfowitz, who planned the illegal 2003 US invasion of Iraq, than to left-wing politics, let alone socialist politics based on the working class.

Daher ends his article by calling for US-backed groups like the Free Syrian Army (FSA) and other member organizations of the National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces (NCSROF) to destroy the Assad regime and take power in Syria. Assad's overthrow, Daher writes, "is the only way for democratic and progressive forces to reorganise and once again play a leading role in the struggle for a new Syria for all without discrimination, far from the dictatorship of the criminal Assad regime and the authoritarian practices of the Islamic fundamentalist forces."

In fact, the NPA is working along very similar lines to the Pentagon, the CIA, and the Persian Gulf oil sheikdoms to install a reactionary Islamist puppet government in Syria, as an examination of Daher's analysis of the "democratic" opposition makes clear. Daher cites criticisms by the Syrian Kurdish militias, which are backed by both the Pentagon and the NPA, of the NCSROF.

These militias have attacked a NCSROF draft plan for a post-Assad Syria, declaring: "Whoever reads the document notes immediately that point 1 of the 'General Principles' exclusively lists the Arab culture and Islam as sources 'for intellectual production and social relations'. This definition clearly excludes other cultures—be they ethnic, linguistic or religious—and sets the majority culture as the leading one. As

Syrian Kurds, we feel repulsed by this narrow perception of the Syrian people. The similarities between this definition and the chauvinist policies under the Assad regime are undeniable."

Daher replies with a series of damning admissions about the forces he is supporting. He writes, "It is true that the National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces has long lost any legitimacy to represent the aspirations for democracy, social justice, and equality of the Syrian revolution and revolutionaries by its alliance with dictatorships and authoritarian regimes in the region, while collaborating with sectarian and reactionary forces (Jaysh Islam) or seeking more cooperation with them (Ahrar Sham and Fateh al Sham)."

Fateh al Sham is the newly-renamed Al Nusra Front militia, Al Qaeda's affiliate in Syria, and an ally of the forces the NPA wants to see take over Syria. Daher adds that the NCSROF's "corruption and promotion of neo-liberal policies and rather poor consideration for democracy, in addition to its chauvinist and racist policies against Kurdish people, objectively oppose the objectives of building a new Syria for all Syrians without discrimination."

Daher is admitting that his proposed military escalation aims to bring to power a corrupt, free-market, anti-democratic, racist, and discriminatory organization tied to Al Qaeda.

He blithely concludes by stating: "At the same time, there is a need to empower the democratic popular movement and FSA democratic groups upholding the objectives of the revolution and uniting the various components of the Syrian people to challenge sectarianism and racism."

Like the NPA's other attempts to present its policies as "left" or democratic, this is just empty rhetoric, trying to legitimize the bloody policies of US and European imperialism in progressive garb.



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