After Suleimani murder, New Anti-capitalist Party backs US war on Iran

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France's petty-bourgeois New Anticapitalist Party's (NPA) statement on the US state murder of Iranian General Qassem Suleimani, is a barely veiled declaration of support for war with Iran that brands the NPA as a bitter enemy of the international working class.

The NPA admits that Washington's cold-blooded murder of a popular, widely-respected figure was aimed at provoking a major war. Across Iran and Iraq, millions attended funeral processions for Suleimani or protested this terrorist killing ordered and openly glorified by Donald Trump. "One thing is certain," the NPA writes. "Iran will respond, directly or through one of its armed proxies, since the insult caused by Suleimani's death is too great, both in the eyes of regime and of the population, to be met with inaction."

Nonetheless, the NPA insists Iran should not be defended against military or terror attacks by Washington or its European imperialist allies. Passing over in silence the danger of an all-out war, the NPA instead blares out its own war propaganda—advancing the lie that Iran, a former colonial country, is in fact an imperialist power, and personally slandering Suleimani as a mass murderer.

It asserts, "Anti-imperialism cannot ignore contradictions of the international and regional situation and give in to the oversimplification of a black-and-white vision of social and political dynamics. US aggression cannot in that sense lead us to absolve Iran of its reactionary, expansionist policy, both inside and outside its borders, or its alliance with Putin's imperialist Russia."

Underlying the NPA's sudden re-definition of Iran and the post-Soviet capitalist regime in Russia as "imperialist" is the pro-war politics of this pseudo-left party of the affluent middle class. The NPA can barely conceal its outrage at the eruption of opposition among Iranian workers to the murder of Suleimani, who led Iranian units that defeated the nine-year CIA-led war in Syria—a war the NPA ardently supported.

Demanding that Suleimani not be "built up as a martyr," the NPA adds: "It is he who, among other disgraceful military acts, directed the Iranian intervention, alongside Russian forces, aimed at destroying the anti-Assad uprising, which led to hundreds of thousands of dead and millions of refugees and displaced people."

The NPA shamelessly adds: "This nuanced analysis in no way signifies a weakening of our absolute opposition to the imperialist policies of the United States or its allies, on the contrary."

In fact, this "analysis" is a pack of lies to hide the fact that the NPA sits squarely in the camp of the CIA and allied factions of France's imperialist ruling elite.

Responsibility for the millions of dead and tens of millions of refugees created by three decades of war from Iraq to Afghanistan, Libya, and Syria lies not with Iran, but with the powers that launched them: Washington and its European allies. They exploited the Stalinist regime's 1991 dissolution of the Soviet Union, the main political and military counterweight to imperialism, to pillage a strategic, oil-rich region. Underlying mass outrage at Suleimani's murder is deep opposition among workers internationally—including in the imperialist countries—to these wars.

The NPA's support for a US war drive against Iran is the outcome of a long, pro-war evolution of the privileged, politically rotten layers of the post-1968 petty bourgeois student movement from which the NPA is drawn. They joined the union bureaucracy and various factions of academia, which are bribed by corporate subsidies and have close ties with the military

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and intelligence services. Particularly as Washington launched wars in Libya and Syria in 2011, they came out in open support of imperialist wars of plunder.

As NATO started bombing Libya, Bertil Videt, a leader of Denmark's NPA-linked Red-Green Alliance, denounced "ready-made slogans about always being opposed to imperialist aggression." He admitted "that France, UK, and the US are not driven by some sudden kindness—but by strategic interest in the oil-rich region" and expressed doubts that they were "genuinely moved by the human rights situation in Libya." Nonetheless, Videt concluded, "none of these points are, by themselves, arguments for opposing the no-fly zone over Libya."

NATO bombings and CIA-backed Islamist militias managed in six months to conquer Libya, which fell into a nine-year civil war. The NPA's fraudulent promises of democratic revolution in Libya gave way to the reality of a reign of terror by rival CIA-linked militias, as the European Union built Libyan concentration camps in which thousands of refugees are enslaved, raped and murdered. The NPA, however, was on to marketing the CIA's next war—this time in Syria.

NPA former presidential candidate Olivier Besancenot, who had vocally demanded that France arm the Libyan militias, came out even more aggressively for arming CIA-backed militias in Syria, dismissing their publicly acknowledged ties to Al Qaeda. Washington, the Persian Gulf sheikdoms and the European powers spent billions arming their proxy militias. Besancenot's calls became even more insistent as Tehran, fearing that the devastation of Syria could bring down Assad, intervened militarily against the CIA-backed forces.

Paris, Besancenot stated in 2014, "should graciously give weapons to the Syrian revolutionaries." Dismissing the fact that weapons were going to Islamist militias, who less than a year later carried out terror attacks in France itself, he said: "To those who say, 'We should above all not give arms because they will end up with the jihadists,' well, that is already the case. … It is my principle as an internationalist to have confidence in the peoples to decide on their own destiny."

The CIA's Islamist proxies in Syria went down in defeat, however, as they lacked any popular base whatsoever, despite the NPA's cynical attempt to pass them off as democratic "revolutionaries." With Iranian and Russian forces counterbalancing US and Turkish support for CIA-backed "rebel" militias, they collapsed, aside from in a few regions near the Turkish border.

The NPA's venomous hatred for Suleimani reflects the bitter frustration of the well-connected middle class elements making up this party, who are livid at the defeat in Syria. This frustration is rooted in their material class interests, hostile to those of the working class. They are angry that their trade unions and universities will now receive smaller payoffs and grants from the French state and oil companies than what they would have received, had Washington and its allies and Islamist proxies succeeded in conquering Syria and Middle East.

The NPA's attempts in its current statement to package its line as an "anti-imperialist" critique of Trump's Iran policy are laced with deceit. Criticizing French President Emmanuel Macron's statement of "solidarity" with Washington in a phone call to Trump, it writes: "This is the position of a lackey of US imperialism who, after a naked act of aggression, denounces the state that is the victim while supporting the aggressor state."

But it is the NPA that is denouncing Iran and downplaying the dangers posed by the US war drive in the Middle East, because the NPA itself is a lackey of imperialism.

An international radicalization of the working class and resurgence of the class struggle is underway. Just days before Suleimani's murder, mass protests against the Iranian-backed neo-colonial regime set up by the 2003-2011 US occupation of Iraq were erupting across that country, as mass strikes against Macron's austerity policies unfold in France. The NPA's response has been entirely reactionary. When everything depends on unifying workers internationally in struggle against imperialism and the war danger, it has sought to divide them with war propaganda against Iran.

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