French NPA's *Révolution permanente* site hails pro-imperialist coup in Mali

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The growing popular opposition in Mali to the French occupation of the country is exposing the petty bourgeois charlatanry of the New Anticapitalist Party (NPA). On August 18, amid mounting protests, a junta of Malian army colonels toppled President Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta and declared its loyalty to the French occupation force. The NPA's *Révolution permanente* web site, linked to the Socialist Workers Party (PTS) of Argentina, reacted by hailing this pro-imperialist putsch.

In its article, Philippe Alcoy writes: "The coup was greeted with mass rejoicing in the streets of Bamako. For now, in any case. Indeed, this group of officers says they want a 'civil political transition leading to credible general elections' within a 'reasonable delay.' The putschists declare that they took the decision to act because 'Mali is sinking day by day into chaos, anarchy and insecurity by the fault of those men charged with its destiny.'"

While Alcoy briefly disapproves of the junta's "repressive measures like the installation of a curfew and the closing of the borders," he nonetheless presents the coup as the beginning of a revolution. He claims that coup is "led without doubt by factions of the ruling classes and of the army who acted without the consent of the French government." He even refers to the well-known reaction of the social-democrat Marceau Pivert to the 1936 French general strike: "Everything is possible!"

He states, "But one thing is certain, France and its allies fear that the coup in Mali could open the way to similar situations in countries across the region who are torn by the same political, social and economic problems. … For Ivorian analyst Franck Hermann Ekra, whose comments were reported by *Libération*, it's 'as if a Malian model had just been born. And so, including in the neighboring countries, everyone now feels they are allowed to think that "Everything is possible" and to compare what happened in Mali to similar opposition to established governments in their country.'"

This is politically absurd. French imperialism does not fear the Malian putsch, of whose preparation it was doubtless well informed. Moreover, a wave of such coups across Africa would constitute not a revolution, but a neo-colonial counter-revolution.

A historic wave of strikes and protests is undoubtedly spreading across Africa. Strikes of teachers and railway workers in Mali; the 2019 mass protests against the Algerian military regime; protests in Ivory Coast against President Alassane Ouattara, who was installed by a 2011 French military intervention; and protests against Keïta all reflect a growing eruption of anger among workers and the oppressed masses in Africa against imperialism.

In Mali, there have been months of protests against the French occupation, launched in 2013, and the ethnic massacres between rival militias that Paris tolerates and uses to divide and rule Mali.

Paris supports the Malian coup, however, because it is aimed against the anti-war protests of youth and workers in Mali. Like the 2012 coup that paved the way for the 2013 French invasion, the 2020 coup started in the Kita army base; and General Ibrahim Dahirou Dembélé, who has been decorated for his services to French national security, was again one of its leaders. When they took power, the putsch leaders made an unambiguous statement.

They called on the Malian army to continue working with French troops (Operation Barkhane), their European allies (Takuba), their UN auxiliaries (Minusma), and their auxiliaries from the Sahel countries (G5 Sahel). They declared, "The Minusma, the Barkhane force, the G5 Sahel, the Takuba force are still our partners for stability and the restoration of security. We call on you, our brothers in arms, to continue discharging your law-and-order and operational missions."

President Emmanuel Macron for his part briefly criticized the putsch before indicating that the French army was happy to work with the new junta: "We do not need to substitute ourselves for Malian sovereignty. … Nothing should divert us from the struggle against the jihadists."

Significantly, *Révolution permanente* is silent on the role of Oumar Moriko, head of the African Solidarity for

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Democracy and Independence (SADI), with which the NPA has long collaborated, calling it a "party historically inspired by Marxism-Leninism."

Around noon the day of the putsch, Moriko launched an appeal to youth in the capital, Bamako, to back the putschists, who were on the defensive against troops loyal to Keïta. These appeals were echoed by the entire June 5 movement-Rally of Patriotic Forces (M5-RFP) led by Imam Mahmoud Dicko, to which SADI belongs. Now, with their support, the Malian junta is doubtless discussing how to strangle mounting opposition to the French occupation.

As ever broader layers of workers and youth in Africa enter into struggle, *Révolution permanente* is doing everything it can to push them behind imperialism and counter-revolution. This is a warning for workers in Africa, in France and around the world. Fighting imperialist oppression of former colonial countries and police-state austerity in Europe, requires building a Marxist internationalist, that is, Trotskyist movement in the working class to fight the populist lies and illusions promoted by affluent petty bourgeois parties like the NPA.

Middle class student leaders of the 1968 generation founded the NPA in 2009 to break whatever residual symbolic attachment these former "Trotsko-Guevarists" retained with the image of Trotsky, the co-leader of the October Revolution and founder of the Fourth International. Integrated into the operations of the big-business Socialist Party (PS), which has long launched coups and wars for decades in Africa, they are unconditional supporters of imperialism against the working class.

In the NATO wars in Libya and Syria launched in 2011, NPA candidate Olivier Besancenot repeatedly demanded that the French army arm Islamist "rebels" against the existing regimes. Thus, the NPA is implicated in wars that have claimed hundreds of thousands of lives and turned over 10 million people into refugees. Now *Révolution permanente*—which has at times tried to give itself a thin "left" veneer by dishonestly criticizing what it called "the imperialist war in devastated Libya," without saying what the NPA's role had been—is again backing French operations in Mali.

After France invaded Mali, the WSWS explained the material class interests that underlay the support of both SADI and the NPA for the war, which the NPA weakly criticized at first. There is not much to add to this analysis of the NPA's role:

> France's wars are indeed filthy acts of imperialist plunder, for which workers in France also pay through rising taxes and new social cuts. They aim to boost Paris's strategic position and the profits of its oil corporations and banks. But this is also the source of the cash flow that the bourgeoisie directs—through its funding of the union bureaucracy, media programs, and grants for "left" academics—to pseudo-left forces like the NPA.

This also explains the class interests underlying *Révolution permanente's* promotion of the Malian putschists in Bamako. The putsch and the intervention of SADI are preparing repression and violence against opposition to the French war among workers and youth. Alcoy therefore adds a few empty phrases trying to distance himself from the junta he has promoted throughout his article:

"And so for the workers and the lower classes of Mali, it would be a fatal error to place their hopes for emancipation and a dignified life in this military junta. It would be equally catastrophic to place confidence in the M5-RFP coalition, which is full of reactionary figures, or the Islamist organizations. And it goes without saying that their worst enemy remains imperialism, notably in its most openly militarist form. All these forces are enemies of the exploited and the oppressed in Mali and the entire African continent."

There are only a few forces to add to this list of shame: one must say that inside the M5-RFP coalition the most cynical element is the SADI party and its French ally, the NPA, inside which the most shameless charlatans are the supporters of *Révolution permanente*. To build an international anti-war movement against imperialism, workers in Mali and Africa as in France and Europe need to build Trotskyist parties, sections of the International Committee of the Fourth International, in struggle against the petty-bourgeois pseudo-left.

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