

France's New Anti-Capitalist Party covers up its support for Libya war

By Kumaran Ira
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After enthusiastically supporting the NATO war in Libya as a “humanitarian” rescue mission, even hailing it as a “revolution,” France’s New Anti-Capitalist Party (NPA) is now covering up its support for imperialist war. Whitewashing its bloodstained record, it is shamelessly posturing as an opponent of the war that it in fact promoted throughout 2011.

Last month marked the fifth anniversary of the toppling of the Libyan regime and the torture and murder of its leader, Colonel Muammar Gaddafi, by NATO-backed Islamist militias. Official reports, including a September report issued by the British parliament, show that the catastrophic civil war devastating Libya is a direct product of the NATO war and bombing campaign. The pretense that the 2011 war was a “humanitarian” conflict was a fraud to justify ousting Gaddafi and replacing him with a Western-backed puppet government seeking to plunder Libya’s oil.

Now, amid growing popular concern over war and amid rising divisions over NATO’s policy of backing Islamist militias in the war in Syria, the NPA is trying to bury its own record of backing horrific imperialist wars.

On October 31, the NPA published an article titled “Five years after the intervention, disaster.” It wrote, “The British parliamentary report, which indicts the military intervention in Libya, confirms the criticisms made by opponents of [then-British Prime Minister David] Cameron’s and [then-French President Nicolas] Sarkozy’s warmongering plans.”

The author of the article, Paul Martial, wrote as if readers had totally forgotten the NPA’s aggressive backing for the war led by France, Britain and the United States in Libya five years ago. The NPA did not oppose the warmongering plans and cynical

“humanitarian” rationalisations of the war criminals in Paris, London, and Washington. It aggressively supported them.

From the outset of the war, the NPA and similar pseudo-left parties internationally backed the war. They presented the Transitional National Council (TNC) in Benghazi—a right-wing, pro-imperialist formation consisting of former ministers of the Gaddafi regime, Al Qaeda-linked Islamist militias, CIA assets, and Libyan tribal chiefs—as “revolutionary” fighters against Gaddafi.

Covering up NPA support for imperialist war, Martial invokes the British parliamentary report, writing, “The report considers also that the threat against civilians was largely exaggerated, based only on Gaddafi’s rhetoric, whereas the facts invalidated his diatribes. Indeed, in cities that were retaken by his troops, there were no massacres.”

These remarks constitute an indictment not only of the British and French governments, but of the NPA, which pursued an identical line. Two weeks after the war began, the NPA issued a report on a “debate on the intervention in Libya.” It aligned itself totally with calls for attacking Libya in order to halt a massacre by Gaddafi’s troops, writing: “Because Gaddafi is ready to massacre his people, because he has promised a ‘blood bath’ and that we know very well he will keep his word in the event of victory, we want first and foremost his defeat.”

Events have vindicated the WSW’s Marxist opposition to the Libyan war and to the reactionary role of pseudo-left parties like the NPA. Critiquing the NPA’s pro-war statements at the time, the WSW wrote that the NPA was “declaring its open hostility to Marxism, which insists that the attitude of a working class party towards a war must be based on the social

and class character of the regimes waging it. In particular, Marxists oppose a war by leading imperialist powers such as the US, the UK and France against an oppressed, ex-colonial country like Libya on principle.”

The NPA’s support for this reactionary war sank it ever deeper into lies and political criminality.

As the NATO prepared its military intervention, in February 2011, the UN Security Council passed resolution 1970 imposing an embargo on arms sales to Libya. Violating the resolution, the Western powers continued to provide the arms to their Islamist proxy forces. Martial writes, “The British parliamentary report also confirms that the resolution calling for a total military embargo on the country was violated. Thus, via Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, French Milan anti-tank missiles were supplied to the rebels.”

As Martial and his fellow writers and editors in the NPA well know, the NPA loudly and insistently demanded precisely that France and the other imperialist powers violate the embargo.

On the eve of British and French air strikes on March 19, 2011, the NPA demanded that France arm the Libyan opposition. In a press statement the day before, it wrote: “Our full and complete solidarity goes to the Libyan people to whom we must give the means to defend themselves, arms which they need to bring down the dictator, to conquer freedom and democracy.”

When France admitted to supplying arms to the Libyan rebels, in violation of UN Resolution 1970, the NPA—far from criticising the illegal policies of the right-wing Sarkozy government—stepped up its support for the rape of Libya.

As NATO air strikes killed tens of thousands of civilians and finally led to the torture and extrajudicial murder of Gaddafi, the NPA hailed the outcome as “good news,” claiming that a revolution had been brought to fruition. It declared, “The fall of the dictator Gaddafi is good news for the people. The NPA is in full solidarity with the revolutionary process that is continuing in the Arab region.”

It enthused that there was a “new life that is opening up for the Libyan people. Liberty, democratic rights, and the use of wealth produced by natural resources to satisfy the fundamental needs of the people are now on the agenda.”

Five years later, the lies of the NPA have been refuted by the bloody reality of economic collapse and spreading civil war in Libya. As most Libyans face shortages of food and medical supplies, thousands are fleeing the country due to the ongoing bloodshed.

Last month, the World Bank warned that Libyan economy was “near collapse” due to soaring inflation and collapsing oil production. As a result of falling crude prices and low output, Libya’s foreign reserves have shrunk from \$107.6 billion in 2013 to a projected \$43 billion by the end of this year. Oil production, accounting for some 80 percent of Libya’s economy, has fallen to little more than a third of what it was before the NATO war in 2011.

Now, the NPA is fervently supporting the US-NATO led war in Syria based on the same fraudulent “humanitarian” pretexts, hailing a filthy imperialist war as a “revolution,” while acknowledging that it is led by the Al Qaeda-affiliated Al-Nusra Front. As in Libya, the result has been the devastation of an entire society, with more than 300,000 dead and over 10 million civilians fleeing the country.

The NPA and similar pseudo-left groups that lined up behind cynical “human rights” pretexts for aggressive imperialist interventions bear political and, one might add, moral responsibility for the catastrophes these wars have wrought in country after country,

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