After the tragedy of Conflans-Sainte-Honorine: anger, solidarity, and rejecting Islamophobia in France

written by Nouveau Parti Anticapitaliste | October 20, 2020

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In the wake of the horrific murder of a French high school teacher, President Emmanuel Macron is playing the Islamophobia card in hopes of distracting the country from his catastrophic failure to stem the tide of newly resurgent Covid-19.

According to The Guardian, "Macron, who visited the site near a school in a Paris suburb, said the victim had been 'assassinated' and that his killer sought to 'attack the republic and its values.' 'This is our battle and it is existential. They [terrorists] will not succeed … They will not divide us.'"

This following statement was released by the Nouveau Parti Anticapitaliste (New Anticapitalist Party) of France (NPA).

On Friday, October 16, the NPA received the news of the decapitation of a high school teacher in Conflans-Sainte-Honorine with shock and horror. All our thoughts are with his family, his friends, his students, and his colleagues as well as all people in the larger education community, which has been shaken by this atrocious crime.

The NPA condemns this disgraceful act. Whatever the conclusions of the investigation, nothing can justify such an assassination. We stand by our unwavering attachment to freedom of expression and educational freedom for teachers.

Since the tragedy, President Emmanuel Macron and Minister of National Educaton Jean-Michel Blanquer have been playing the game, repeating declarations of love for teachers, for whom they have nothing but contempt at all other times, and praising the essential role of schools, which they have continuously attacked in recent years.

It is difficult not to feel indignant at Blanquer's hypocritical defense teachers' freedom of expression when we know to what extent the hunt for dissenters is organized by the Ministry Education as demonstrated by the image of four teachers in Melle being sanctioned for mobilizing against the reform of "le bac" (high school graduation qualifications that divide students into professional, technical, and general categories).

Moreover, the government is participating in an escalation of Islamophobia, trying to make a link between the tragedy in Conflans-Sainte-Honorine and its legislative bill on “separatism,” the logic of which is to further strengthen the supposed connections between Muslims, fundamentalists, and terrorists.

Far from opposing the outburst of Islamophobic hatred that we have witnessed since last night, the powers that be are contributing to it, reinforcing the fractures along which the hate-mongers, lethal ideologies and religious fanaticisms, and enemies of all workers and peoples thrive.

We express our total solidarity with Samuel Paty’s relatives, friends, and colleagues, and more generally with all educators who have been impacted by this assassination. The NPA will join initiatives to express our mourning, our anger, and our solidarity in the wake of this tragedy, while refusing to support the logic of national unity with the false-friends of teachers and those who support a repressive headlong rush into an increased stigmatization of Muslims.

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