The Left of the New Anticapitalist Party (NPA) Unites to Form Platform A

written by Left Voice | May 29, 2016

This is a translation of a statement by the Left Tendencies of the French New Anticapitalist Party (NPA) that are grouped under Platform A, originally published in La Izquierda Diario *on January 27, 2016.*

In the indicative vote taken at the NPA's National Political Council meeting, the platform of the left tendencies came in first with 45% of the vote, beating those presented by François Sabado and Olivier Besancenot (38%) and Alain Krivine and Philippe Poutou (16%).

The NPA National Conference confirms the decision of its Third Congress [January 2015] to present an NPA candidate in the presidential elections. The text that follows defines the political framework of this candidacy.

Platform A: for an NPA candidate in the presidential elections

For workers and the popular classes, the balance sheet of the Hollande government is catastrophic. Unemployment and job insecurity have not stopped rising and the degradation of public services continues. All of society has been dragged into social and democratic regression by the capitalist crisis, with the politics of austerity and the race for competitiveness as its consequence.

For the government, this anti-democratic and anti-popular state of emergency is permanent.

These policies multiply the financial support given to the capitalists, destroy labour laws and accentuate inequality in all fields. The only ones who benefit are the capitalists that control the economy, the finances of the state and the monopolization of wealth.

Hollande, along with the right, have no other project except continuing to make things worse. They line us up against the wall.

Both here and across Europe, the difficulties that workers experience in retaking the offensive, in overcoming the dispersion of their struggles – in a word, in overcoming the politics of demobilization and illusions in the institutions of traditional political and trade union leaderships – have left the field open for the rise of reactionary ideas and forces.

The growing discrediting of the government parties, parties that promote the same politics of

making workers and the popular strata pay for the crisis, opens the door to the far right, to the Front National (FN – National Front).

In this context where the traditional left and the right have 'set the table', Marine Le Pen attempts to give the FN a false image of a new and popular party, while maintaining its ideological and militant continuity with the extreme right. Today, the FN is a real threat, especially because of its influence among youth and workers.

It would be illusory and dangerous to believe that the FN could give even a minimal response to the social regression provoked by the offensive of the ruling class and their state. On the contrary, it will only exacerbate it. The FN does not aspire to do anything else except serve the interests of the ruling classes and of the bourgeoisie, which their leaders are a part. And in order to ensure power for itself, the bourgeoisie tries to deflect popular anger and discontent, directing it towards those who are weakest, the migrants.

The latter are in no way the adversaries of workers of this country. They are also workers, victims of all sorts of horrors and an illustration of the barbarity caused by the neo-liberal and imperialist policies of the great powers and of France.

It is in the interest of all of us not to be divided

Migrants need to be welcomed. It is necessary to open the borders in order to stop the violence and death of refugees.

We must also put an end to the wars of which these populations are the first victims.

The headlong rush in militarism which Hollande has sent the country into has only aggravated the chaos engendered by the imperialist wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Africa and the permanent war against the Palestinian people.

This new military adventure demonstrates the inability of the ruling classes to provide even a minimal response to the horrors that their policies have given birth to. Their military and police responses do nothing except exacerbate tensions and provoke new horrors on a higher level.

It is these policies that have given rise to the fundamentalist terrorists who are enemies of the workers, of the people, of democratic rights, and it is these policies that only end up serving the FN.

To fight Daesh (ISIS) is to bring the wars that spawned it to an end, to stop airstrikes against Syria and withdraw French troops from Africa and the Middle East. It is to express our solidarity with the workers and peoples that in Syria, Iraq and the Middle East are struggling against the most reactionary dictatorships, as the continuation of the Arab spring. It is also supporting the struggle of the Palestinians against the State of Israel and the right to self-determination of the Kurdish people.

No to the National Union, lift the state of emergency

With the proclamation of the state of emergency, Hollande has taken a leap forward in his authoritarian politics and has reinforced the police character of the state. This hardening, accepted by the traditional left and the majority of the trade union organizations, aims to silence workers and the population in order to impose the policies of social regression.

Since the attacks of November 13, in the name of war, Hollande presents himself as the man of "national union", the only one able to stop the Front National while singing the same song as Marine Le Pen, appearing as defender of the nation, promoting xenophobic prejudices and reinforcing

racism against Muslims and immigrants in particular.

For Hollande, just as it was for Sarkozy yesterday or for Marine Le Pen tomorrow, if she ever comes to power, the defense of the nation does nothing more than mask the defense of the interests of the ruling classes, the rich and the privileged.

All those who offer up the retreat towards nationalism as some kind of response to the crisis and protection for the popular classes are simply lying to us. They want to convince us that bosses and workers, the dominant and the dominated, all have the same interests. They want to divide us, make us face off against one another, stir up xenophobia, racism and fear towards foreigners.

At a time when all of humanity is threatened by the climate crisis, the degradation of the environment due to urban, industrial and energy policies that are subject to the logic of profit and global competition, to retreat behind borders is not only a ridiculous proposal but a hoax.

Faced with the gravity of the problems caused by the policies of the capitalist classes that strike the whole population, nothing less than an internationalist response is required, one that questions the very basis of this logic, capitalist private property.

Responding to the social, democratic and ecological emergency requires a radical attack against the power of the capitalist class

If we want to break with the policies of austerity, and guarantee jobs and a decent wage for all, the ending of unemployment, the development or reconstruction of public services, neither magical incantations, the announcement of policies to boost consumption or legislation to “bring morality to capitalism” will be enough.

No, these good intentions of the anti-liberal left do not work because they do not attack the root of the evil.

It will take a workers’ government to prohibit all dismissals and massively reduce working hours, end unemployment, cancel debts, form a single public bank, nationalize the major financial, industrial and commercial conglomerates and place them under workers’ control. All this without any indemnity or compensation: workers and the population have already paid more than enough to maintain the standard of living for these parasites.

Confronting the ecological crisis, responding to global warming, requires tearing the economy out of the hands of the multinationals and ending generalized competition in order to lay the foundations of a planned economy.

To carry forward the energy revolution that humanity needs to survive in all sectors of activity (housing, transportation, energy, agriculture), what is required is a break with the logic of profitability and productivity. This anti-capitalist rupture would make it possible to organize workers’ and popular control of production within the perspective of democratic planning and on the basis of social and ecological needs. This would allow for an end to nuclear energy, massive investments in renewable energy and removing or reducing parasitic production that does not correspond to our genuine needs.

Let us become our own representatives

None of the big institutional parties defends or can defend the interests of the workers and the lower classes simply because they defend the interests of the exploiters, employers and bankers. The

electoral and democratic game boils down to placing a ballot in the ballot box to decide who manages the affairs of the bourgeoisie.

The politicians that alternate in power act as a great immovable administration, they are granted privileges that guarantee them a lifestyle worthy of the ruling classes while asking us to “tighten our belts” and imposing austerity policies upon us.

It is these very rules of this falsely democratic political game that need to completely change. Every representative should earn no more than a salary equal to that of the average worker and should be able to be recalled at any time. The presidential regime that concentrates exorbitant powers in the hands of a single person, along with reactionary institutions like the Senate, must be brought to an end.

A truly democratic government cannot arise without breaking with capitalist institutions and property. This would result from the mobilization of the working class and the population as well as the emergence of assemblies composed of elected and recallable delegates in workplaces, communes, departments, regions and the national level.

To move forward in this way, the workers, the popular classes and the youth need to regain confidence in themselves without being paralysed by the supposed “social dialogue” – the anti-labour policies that the ruling Socialist Party and the Medef (Employers’ Federation) want to involve the trade union leaderships in.

We want to echo the discontent and overcome the anxiety of the exploited, bewildered by the politics of union leaders who are supposed to represent them, but leave strikes and struggles dispersed and without any coordination.

We want to develop common action, a united front of all the organizations, tendencies, groupings of militants, in order to advance the struggle and impose our demands.

We want to encourage workers to unionize and to reclaim their organizations so that they become genuine instruments for the defense of their interests; we seek to unite and coordinate all those who break with the politics of collaboration with employers and the state.

For workers to take affairs into their own hands, what is needed is the preparation of a counteroffensive, an overall movement, of a general strike, capable of imposing the greatest demands and of bringing this system of misery and exploitation to an end.

This is the only way to defeat the capitalists who hold the reins of the economy.

It is the only way to conquer the right of the workers and the population to decide on and control the running of the economy.

The only alternative is a workers’ and peoples’ government, born of the mobilizations and that breaks with capitalist institutions and property.

For the transformation of society

In contrast to a retreat into nationalism, such a government would call on the workers and popular classes of Europe to extend the mobilization. The fight against austerity cannot be conducted only at the level of France, of one country, for it is a European fight. As the failure of Syriza has shown, this fight cannot be waged without breaking with the politics that serve the capitalists, Brussels and the ECB (European Central Bank), with the Europe of the financiers. To attack the power of our national

bourgeoisie is to break with the institutions of the European Union.

Against the Europe of the troika, we defend international solidarity and stand for a Socialist Europe of the workers and the people.

We denounce the security measures and permanent state of emergency put in place by the government after the November 13 attacks. We denounce the racism, in particular the Islamophobia, engendered in this policy.

We fight against all forms of discrimination, for equality between women and men, between LGBTI and hetero, and for the right to choose for all women.

We propose the immediate regularization of all “sans-papiers” (undocumented migrants), the right to vote in all elections for all foreigners, and the abolition of all immigration laws. We defend the right of people to self-determination, whether in Corsica or the former overseas colonies.

Voting will not change our lives. But in this campaign just as in our everyday activities, we understand that we are the spokespersons for the workers, the popular classes, the women, the youth, the oppressed minorities, the sans-papiers and migrants; and for the denunciation of social, democratic and ecological havoc, and the denunciation of the social violence exercised by the pursuit of profit and globalized competition – the motor force for the domination of the capitalist class.

Not only do we want to contribute to the regrouping of forces from the world of labour, we also want to build a bridge to those who are fighting or seeking roads towards another society. To bring the social and ecological struggles together, to bring together exploited workers with those who have no job or those organizing the struggles against the massive construction projects that damage the environment, to give strength to all those with rebellion in their veins and aspirations for a more just and better world, that is the meaning of our fight, of our campaign.

We want to debate and open dialogue with the organizations and all those who refuse to abide by the regressive policies of the ruling classes and the parties that serve them.

We fight for the regroupment of anti-capitalists and revolutionaries.

We want to help the exploited and oppressed to secure their own representation and political expression in order to take their affairs in hand, and those of all society, in order to respect their rights and their needs and replace the capitalist logic of exploitation with the logic of solidarity and cooperation, both here and beyond our borders, constructing in the continuity of the struggle for socialism, communism, a society free from exploitation and oppression.

Against the prevailing discourse about “insurmountable” capitalism, we defend the perspective of a superior social organization based on the collectivization of the means of production, the planning of the economy under workers’ and popular control in the enterprises and at every level of society for the satisfaction of the needs of all.

This is the meaning of our actions, our campaign and our candidacy.

To carry out this campaign, the NPA needs to regroup all its forces and mobilize all its energies. The Socialist Party government attempts by all means, in particular with the amendment to the “loi sur les parrainages” (sponsorship law *), to prevent the minority currents that are fighting from the left to express themselves. It is through such a broad regroupment that we can rise to the challenge.

**The constitutional requirement for Presidential candidates to collect 500 signatures from locally elected officials before they can stand in elections.*

Translated by Sean Robertson. Reposted from the website of Left Voice.