

France's NPA joins in anti-democratic media hysteria over Strauss-Kahn affair

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Since Dominique Strauss-Kahn's (DSK) return to France on September 4, the New Anti-Capitalist Party (NPA) has aligned itself with the media's anti-democratic and feminist hysteria against him. This high financier and leader of the Socialist Party (PS) was accused of rape after an encounter with Nafissatou Diallo, a chambermaid at the Sofitel Hotel in New York City on May 16.

In an article by Ingrid Hayes entitled "The end of judicial proceedings against DSK : bad news for women," the NPA writes: "For several weeks, we have witnessed a trial by suspicion led from different sides against Nafissatou Diallo based on her past. It is this campaign of discredit on which the judge based his decision" to drop the charges against DSK.

In fact, if the judge ended the proceedings against DSK, it was because the New York public prosecutor Cyrus Vance had to admit that Diallo's evidence, on which he based his arguments, was unreliable. She had lied about her actions on the day when she accused DSK of rape, as well as the claim about a rape that she was a victim of in Guinea. She also received large sums of money sent by a boyfriend currently in prison for drug trafficking.

It was thus on completely false bases that DSK was publicly humiliated, and his political career destroyed. After the allegations laid against him, DSK was on the same day removed from an aeroplane and paraded in handcuffs –forcing him to resign from his director general post at the International Monetary Fund and forfeit his possible candidature for the 2012 French presidential election.

It is not a question here of having political sympathy for Strauss-Kahn, who carried out a reactionary social austerity policy as head of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), supported by the PS and the international

bourgeoisie. However, one has to be blind not to recognise the danger posed by the anti-democratic stance of the media and the state, which assume the right to publicly destroy, without any substantial proof, a political figure over a personal encounter.

Hayes continues: "But the essential point is not here. The whole affair is an object lesson, from the point of view of the domination exercised by men over women in their relationships."

The NPA is not concerned that the media and the justice system demonstrated their ability in the DSK affair to destroy the reputation of a public figure without credible proof—even when the accused has, like Strauss Kahn, enormous financial resources to defend himself. The question is presented in a false and reactionary manner, as a generalised confrontation between men, who are labelled "dominant," and women, who are declared victims.

This reductionist and petty-bourgeois method of viewing the complex issues raised in the DSK affair have nothing to do with Marxism. The not insignificant fact that Strauss-Kahn was not found guilty of rape does not even enter into the NPA's calculations.

The American press published hysterical reports to besmirch Strauss-Kahn, which were echoed in French feminist circles. Thus in the *New York Times*, Maureen Dowd wrote: "Oh, she wanted it. She wanted it bad. That's what every hardworking, god-fearing young widow who breaks her back doing menial labor at a Times Square hotel to support her teenage daughter, justify her immigration status, and take advantage of the opportunities in America wants, a crazed, rutting, wrinkly old satyr charging naked out of a bathroom, lunging at her and dragging her around the room cave-man style." This article was based uniquely on the disturbed imagination of the journalist.

Thus the release of DSK angered certain feminist elements in the NPA, who were convinced by the anti-DSK propaganda in the American and French bourgeois press. This indifference to questions of democratic rights and their lack of independence vis-à-vis the bourgeois press is characteristic of the NPA's politics, and more generally of the entire French ex-radical petty-bourgeoisie.

These people are not interested in the considerable financial and political stakes connected to the torpedoing of Strauss-Kahn. His replacement at the head of the IMF by Christine Lagarde, a more right-wing figure inside the French bourgeoisie, has helped the banks to once more impose "a rescue plan" to pillage Greece without reducing its debt – a measure which Strauss-Kahn had opposed. President Nicolas Sarkozy also saw in DSK his most threatening rival for the 2012 presidential elections.

None of these questions are approached, or even seriously examined, by Hayes in her writings on the DSK affair.

Beyond the DSK affair, on every serious issue the NPA adopts a similarly narrow-minded point of view, in line with the political needs of the bourgeoisie and the moods of a right-wing layer of the petty bourgeoisie.

Thus the NPA swallowed without protest the lie that NATO's war in Libya is a "humanitarian," or even "revolutionary," war. Likewise, at the time of the 2010 strikes in the French oil refineries, it relayed the order by Bernard Thibault of the CGT union that there should be no more than "playful" or "symbolic" opposition to Sarkozy's decision to smash the occupations of the refineries.

According to the anti-democratic arguments of the NPA concerning the Strauss-Khan affair, a serious analysis of the facts is in itself a hindrance to a correct method of proceeding—a method which above all prevents the accused from defending himself by challenging the evidence against him.

That is what Ingrid Hayes confirms in the article "DSK affair: on the side of all women victims of violence," published on September 21 in *Hebdo Tout est à nous*. The article explains: "In fact, what has been established about the life of Nafissatou Diallo before the events, the contradictions in the evidence, constitute a convenient screen behind which to hide."

This means that Diallo's lies—admitted to in detail by the New York prosecutor ("False testimony of rape," "False testimony under oath," "Many false complementary statements")—must not be taken into account. On the other hand, accusations without credibility against Strauss-Kahn must lead to his trial on rape charges.

The NPA does not seem to know the meaning of the phrase "innocent until proven guilty."

The logic of such argumentation is profoundly reactionary: any person accused of rape must be subjected to a trial, whatever the credibility of the evidence against him or her. Therefore any person's reputation must inevitably be at the mercy of the honesty of anyone who may accuse him. It is not only a profound attack on democratic rights, but an argument that most profoundly threatens those who, unlike Strauss Kahn, do not have the financial means to defend themselves.



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