

Middle class pseudo-left defends bureaucracy and war

French section of IMT backs pro-war New Popular Front in snap elections

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The New Popular Front (NFP) formed by Jean-Luc Mélenchon's France Unbowed (LFI) party for the July 7 French snap elections is a political trap for the working class. The key issues in the snap election are the risk of a victory of the neo-fascist National Rally (RN) and NATO's plans for a massive escalation of the war with Russia in Ukraine.

By forming the NFP, LFI is trapping working class opposition to neo-fascism and world war behind a perspective of support for imperialism, police-state rule and war. The NFP's program calls to send troops to Ukraine and build up France's military police and intelligence agencies. It brings together LFI with the big-business Socialist Party (PS) and the Stalinist French Communist Party (PCF), two longstanding parties of capitalist government, war and austerity.

The NFP relies on the services of various middle class, pseudo-left tendencies to block opposition on its left among left-wing workers and youth, who are aware of the reactionary record of the PS and that it plays a key role in pushing embittered voters to back the RN. Such tendencies downplay the imperialist war with Russia or support it outright, excuse the labor bureaucracies' complicit inaction amid the genocide in Gaza, and ignore LFI's counterrevolutionary ties to Stalinism.

At a recent rally in Paris, WSWs reporters interviewed Max, a youth leader of one such tendency: Révolution, the French section of the petty-bourgeois International Marxist Tendency (IMT). Together with other sections of the IMT, Révolution plans to rename itself the Revolutionary Communist Party (PCR). We reproduce the full interview below, followed by comments by the WSWs.

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WSWS: Why are you participating in the rally today?

A: We are here to bring several points. First of all, obviously, our support for the strategy of the Popular Front for June 30 and July 7, but also to bring a more ambitious perspective. If we want to defeat the far right, of course we do it with the Popular Front in these elections. But to defeat it after July 7, in 2027 [French presidential elections] and, ultimately, once and for all, we need a broader perspective, a very clear and very radical program for a break with capitalism. For that, we must pressure the Popular Front on its left and ultimately break with capitalism.

WSWS: So you see yourselves as supporting the New Popular Front from the outside?

A: Indeed, we support the Popular Front. Obviously it is the only left-wing alternative to Macron and to the RN in the coming elections. So indeed, we back it to the hilt. But necessarily it is critical support, we point out its limitations. We saw for instance with the New Popular Union alliance [the previous name of the NFP alliance] a few months ago that LFI was betrayed by the PS and the Greens on the issue of Palestine. They were attacked [by the PS] as anti-Semites. The New Popular Union totally blew apart on this question, so we point to these limitations.

Above all, we point to the responsibility of certain left-wing parties, like the PS that was in power, like the Greens, that also betrayed the working class. So they also have some responsibility in the fact that the RN has such a large vote. So we point to the limitations of an alliance with those people.

If we ever want the program of the Popular Front to be applied after it is elected, we will have to mobilize in the streets, really unify with the trade unions, the youth and the labor movement.

WSWS: These elections are taking place in an explosive, extremely dangerous international context. What is the position of your organization on the war in Ukraine?

A: On the war in Ukraine, we are very clear. We say it is a war between two imperialisms. It is a proxy war of Russian and US imperialism, with NATO that did enormous provocations in Ukraine for years. And evidently there was imperialist aggression by Russia that invaded Ukraine.

It is absolutely disastrous for the Ukrainian people, but neither Russian nor US imperialism can resolve this situation. It is an imperialist war, so we must absolutely stress the responsibility of Putin and the Russian aggressors. And there are also NATO and the United States who carry out the war to the detriment of the Ukrainian people, which is a victim of this entire imperialist attack and confrontation between two imperialist powers.

WSWS: What is the position of your organization on the genocide in Gaza?

A: We really call upon the leadership of the workers movement around the world to live up to their responsibilities. We must absolutely mobilize against this genocide, it is the best-documented genocide in history. There is no excuse for not struggling against it, so we must struggle against the enemy in our own country which is the enemy of the Palestinians, so usually in France it is the French bourgeoisie, the Macron government that refuses to recognize Palestine. And Airbus, Dassault, Thalès keep selling weapons to the Israeli army.

The unions and the major left parties must mobilize against those corporations, against genocide. To solve this question definitively, we must have an overthrow of capitalism in Israel, so an uprising of the Israeli and Palestinian masses for a Socialist Federation of the Middle East. So that is our long term perspective, in the short term it is the struggle against French imperialism.

WSWS: But there have been calls to mobilize workers internationally to stop the sending of weapons to Israel and thus stop the genocide. Why do you think there was no support for such calls in the trade union bureaucracies of France and the other major NATO imperialist powers?

A: We saw Barcelona dockers blocking the sending of weapons for a

pretty long time, I think it also happened in India. So there were times these calls were made and reported.

But the trade union bureaucracies are bureaucracies, as you say, that is to say that they are more and more detached from the rank and file, which are more radical than they are. They are ever more reformist and less revolutionary, and closer to the state power, too. It becomes very reformist and very bureaucratic, which moves them away from workers' interests, so ultimately it will produce absolutely monstrous strategic errors like this, and also mistakes in domestic policy.

WSWS: You say you are launching a revolutionary communist party. This raises very serious issues. What is your position on the history of the communist movement in the 20th century, and here I have in mind the Trotskyist movement's struggle against Stalinism?

A: Yes of course, for us we really stress our loyalty to the ideas of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, that is, the true, authentic communist revolutionaries. We are enemies of Stalinism in the 20th century. We are still enemies of what is left of it, which is to say not very much. There were Trotskyists who were killed or deported by Stalinism. So we are really among the enemies of Stalinism.

We explain why Stalinism happened. It is the result of very specific historical circumstances in Russia of the 20th century, which was very backward and very isolated in a single country, which is totally impossible for us because we are an international, the Revolutionary Communist International. So for us Stalinism is a bloody betrayal of the ideas of communism, so we obviously struggle against it and that is obviously what we defend.

WSWS: You mentioned the criminal role of Stalinism. Stalin ordered the assassination of Trotsky and carried out a political genocide of Marxists in the Soviet Union. But why then do you call to support a New Popular Front that includes the PCF, the main Stalinist party in France?

A: Well, clearly we are not supporting the PCF as such, though of course the PCF today has nothing to do with what it was. We support the New Popular Front in the current context, that is, during snap parliamentary elections where the New Popular Front is the only left force that can defeat Macron. We already said that about France Unbowed in 2017 and 2022, and we say it today about the New Popular Front.

But we want the New Popular Front to be much more radical, and we stress evidently the betrayals committed by the PS, the PCF and the Greens.

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Petty-bourgeois parties like the *Révolution* play a central role in blocking a struggle against the enormous dangers posed by the NATO-Russia war and, more generally, blocking revolutionary opposition to capitalism. These parties are aware that the PS speaks for a ruling class that supports the genocide in Gaza and massive attacks on the working class at home. However, in the name of a supposed, supra-class unity against fascism, they push workers and youth behind the NFP's pro-war program.

The danger of NATO-Russia war in Ukraine erupting across Europe and the rise of neo-fascist parties across Europe expose the bankruptcy of such arguments. To the extent that *Révolution* and similar organizations block revolutionary opposition to the NFP on its left, this only gives imperialism more time to escalate the war and drives more voters, angry at the reactionary record of the PS and its allies, into the arms of the RN. Nonetheless, *Révolution's* response is to double down in support of the PS, the PCF and Mélenchon.

Its arguments are shot through with massive, untenable contradictions. While falsely proclaiming itself to be revolutionary and even sympathetic to Trotskyist opposition to Stalinism, it supports Stalinist parties. It insists

that workers should wait on the union bureaucracies to mobilize against the Gaza genocide, but then admits that these bureaucracies are divorced from the workers and are committing "monstrous errors" by their complicit inaction on Gaza.

It never answers the question: Why does *Révolution* demand that workers be subordinated to Stalinist counterrevolution or to monstrous bureaucracies indifferent to genocide? Indeed, it is impossible for new generations of youth and workers to orient themselves amid a mortal crisis of capitalism, which poses revolutionary tasks to the working class internationally, without understanding the history of the Trotskyist movement.

The IMT has its roots in forces led in Britain by Ted Grant, that broke with Trotskyism after World War II. Adapting to the Stalinist bureaucracies' dismantling of the mass movement of armed resistance to fascism in the European working class, they rejected a Trotskyist program for socialist revolution and promoted the post-war capitalist order in Western Europe as "democratic." The electoral rise of neo-fascists across Europe in the post-Soviet era is only the latest and most devastating revelation that this conception is utterly false.

Grant later sought an alliance with forces led by Michel Pablo and Ernest Mandel who split in 1953 with the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI), the leadership of the world Trotskyist movement. The Pabloites advanced the false argument that Stalinist and bourgeois nationalist parties could play a revolutionary role. On this basis, they insisted that the Trotskyist movement should be politically liquidated and destroyed via "deep entry" into these parties.

From this anti-Trotskyist record, *Révolution* draws both an orientation to Stalinism, which ultimately dissolved the Soviet Union in 1991, and an orientation to imperialism, particularly in Western Europe. It covers up its support for the war aims of the imperialist powers with denunciations of "Russian imperialism."

This aligns *Révolution* with the war policy of NATO which, despite the Kremlin's reactionary invasion of Ukraine in 2022, plays the decisive and most aggressive role in the war. It launched a putsch in Ukraine in 2014 to topple an elected pro-Russian government and then furiously armed the far-right Ukrainian regime against Russia. Having thus hijacked Ukraine, it then goaded Russian President Vladimir Putin's capitalist regime into invading Ukraine, placing Europe and the world on the brink of World War III.

Today, NATO officials openly denounce Russia as imperialist and colonialist, adopting arguments championed by forces like the IMT, to advocate conquering it and dividing it up along ethnic lines. At a recent summit in Switzerland, Polish President Andrzej Duda called to carve up Russia into 200 small statelets that could be dominated by the NATO imperialist powers:

Russia is often called the prison of nations, and for a good reason. It is home to over 200 ethnic groups, most of whom became residents of Russia as a result of the methods used in Ukraine today. Russia remains the largest colonial empire in the world today, which unlike the European powers has never undergone the process of decolonization, and has never been able to deal with the demons of its past. There is no more space for colonialism in the modern world.

The IMT's pro-imperialist orientation exposes the utter fraudulence of its claims to be building a "revolutionary communist" international. It is building a motley collection of middle class parties that, as the example of its French section makes very clear, provide political cover for imperialist parties of war and police-state rule.

With its checkered, anti-Trotskyist past, it is neither capable of nor interested in formulating a coherent policy for the international working class to oppose war and capitalist reaction. For all its denunciations of Russia and Putin, it is oriented to alliances with Stalinist forces that, inside Russia, restored capitalism and built the Putin regime.

Mobilizing the working class against imperialist war, genocide and the rise of neo-fascism requires building an international, socialist anti-war movement in the working class. This, in turn, requires breaking the influence of middle class tendencies like *Révolution* and the IMT over workers and youth. The political basis for doing this is the unbroken international continuity of the ICFI's defense of Trotskyism against pseudo-left forces like *Révolution*.



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