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France/Spanish state

In support of Philippe Poutou

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The first round of the French presidential elections will take place on Sunday 22 April. These elections are particularly unpredictable. The original leading front-runner of the traditional right-wing party, François Fillon of Les Républicains, has been hard hit by accusations of personal corruption. Marine Le Pen of the far-right has also been accused of using European parliament money to fund party workers for the NF at its Paris headquarters. The current polls show Le Pen and the “neither left nor right” former minister of the Hollande government Emmanuel Macron going through to the second round, with Macron predicted to beat Le Pen.

At the same time Jean-Luc Mélenchon, supported by his specially created movement "France Insoumise" and, more reluctantly, the constituent parties of the Front de gauche, has overtaken the official Socialist Party candidate Benoît Hamon. This latter has been deserted by a number of leading SP figures including former prime minister Manuel Valls in favour of Macron. [1]

However a recent television debate with all eleven candidate threw the spotlight onto the “minor” candidates, and notably Philippe Poutou of the New Anticapitalist Party. Poutou made headlines around the world by his attacks on Fillon and Le Pen. [2]

In this statement Anticapitalistas, a current inside Podemos and section of the Fourth International in the Spanish state, declares its support for the Poutou NPA candidature.

The next French elections are very important for the future of Europe. The rise of the new extreme right led by Marine Le Pen represents a challenge for all the democratic political forces opposed to neoliberalism that we cannot ignore. It is part of a more general phenomenon of reactionary and authoritarian rise in Europe and United States. The traditional political forces that have been the pillars of the Fifth Republic regime, the Socialist Party and the Gaullist right are in a strong crisis of identity, project and legitimacy, and for some implicated in corruption cases, like Fillon. On the other hand, an elite sector supports Macron: a “novelty”, but only for employers and the financial world, who have found a cool way to renew the neoliberal project.

The institutional political crisis also reflects a deep social crisis: a society torn apart by questions of identity, austerity policies, exclusions, and the end of the welfare state. Of course, in this context, there is resistance: we do not forget Nuit Debout nor the strikes led by the CGT that brought to light the strength of the organized working class. However, the left has not been able to put forward a broad and unified candidature that gathers all this potential and discontent with a programme against austerity, a grouping from the sectors of anti-neoliberal reformism to anti-capitalist forces and revolutionaries like the NPA, and which can be a credible alternative to Le Pen. A project that is a barrier to the rise of the neo-fascists, which is committed to breaking with the austerity of the EU and confronts the economic powers in favour of the popular classes.

In the present circumstances, as Anticapitalistas, we want to express our support for the candidacy of Philippe Poutou and the NPA: an anti-racist, ecologist, feminist and anti-capitalist candidacy, which puts the working class and internationalism at the center, introducing questions that other candidates do not ask and which are essential to the construction of a transformation project. The fact that Poutou is the only candidate for these presidential elections, in the face of a group of political professionals, seems to us a positive gesture of great symbolic value.

In support of Philippe Poutou

We hope that you will have the best possible results in these difficult elections, helping to ensure that anti-capitalism is an essential weapon in the fight that is coming.

Anticapitalistas, 6 April 2017

[Http://www.anticapitalistas.org](http://www.anticapitalistas.org)

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[1] For a more complete picture see the recent article by Léon Crémieux [The storm and the compass](#).

[2] See *The Guardian*, 5 April 2017 "[French election: factory worker Poutou emerges as star of TV debate](#)", *The New York Times* 6 April 2017, [Disrespect Intended: Mechanic-Candidate Bursts French Political Elite's Bubble](#) and *The Washington Post* 5 April "[Factory worker creates sparks at French election debate](#)". A Danish daily, *Politiken* headlined on 5 April "[Sharp factory worker beats Le Pen and Fillon groggy - Trotskyist broke through in TV debate with corrupt politicians](#)".