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France

**“The perspective is to
challenge this system, all of us
together”**

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This statement was made by Philippe Poutou on behalf of the NPA on the evening of the first round of the presidential elections.

First of all, we want to thank the voters who chose to vote for us. Through their vote, they wanted to express rejection of a system of professional politicians who are often corrupt, and allow in fact the capitalists and bankers to run the country. They wanted to say that the change will come through mobilization and a break with this system.

This campaign has shown the abyss that increasingly separates the population from a political system that does not represent us and that basically does not take into account our living conditions, in fact worsens them year after year ... All these politicians represent fewer and fewer voters, especially in poorer areas.

The unprecedented outcome of this first round is the absence in the second round of the candidates of the Socialist and the Republicans. This is the sign of a major political crisis: the two parties that have governed the country for 60 years have been eliminated. But the second round of Marine Le Pen and Emmanuel Macron is not good news, let alone a break with everything we have been suffering for decades.

The FN claims to be an anti-system party that defends the workers, but it is a capitalist party like the others, it has as many corruption scandals, it never fights against redundancies and the bosses' plans, which protect the rich and hit the exploited hard. Moreover, this party is a serious danger because, through racism, it stirs up hatred and division against immigrants and ethnic minorities, aiming to divert wage-earners anger from those responsible for unemployment and poverty.

The other candidate will therefore be Emmanuel Macron, who is an impostor in several ways: he is not a new anti-system candidate but an offshoot of the banks and François Hollande, and as responsible as Hollande for the policies we have suffered during the last five years. And his policies promise more austerity and inequality.

The political crisis – the elimination of the major parties and Le Pen's score – demonstrate the urgent need for us to take control of our affairs and mobilize. It is even more important than in 2002 not to rely on a “republican front” but on a broad mobilization, especially among youth, against the National Front and neoliberal policies. This is indispensable. We have to fight in the workplace and localities, without waiting for the outcome of the second round.

On Sunday, 7 May, many will want to block the FN by voting Macron. We understand their desire to reject the deadly danger for all social progress and for all rights, especially for immigrant and immigrant populations, that Marine Le Pen's election would represent. But it should be remembered that it is the austerity and security policies, particularly of a so-called left government, that are the reason for the rise of the FN and its nauseous ideas. Macron is not a bulwark against the FN; to impose a lasting retreat there is no alternative but to take the streets against the far right and against all those who, like Macron, impose or try to impose anti-social measures. The NPA and its militants will participate actively in all protests against the FN.

We want to say to all those who refused to vote or are denied the right to vote, to those who voted Mélenchon wanting to break with the system, to those who voted Lutte Ouvrière, we would like to say this evening, more than ever, we need a new political force to represent us: a party that represents our interests, a tool for our daily struggles, to end the capitalist system, to defend the perspective of a society rid of exploitation and all oppressions.

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For the weeks to come, we will first be present on the street on 1 May to show international solidarity at a time when France is engaged in neocolonial interventions and the butcher Assad continues to inflict death and destruction, but also to defend our democratic freedoms and our social rights. After that, the NPA will continue its daily activity in the workplaces, in mobilisations, in working-class districts and cities, on the questions I and my comrades have been campaigning on during the last few months.

On the evening of this first round, the perspective is still to challenge this system, all of us together.

Paris

23 April 2017