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France

Statement of NPA National Political Council on the parliamentary elections

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Following the first round of the French presidential election the main left force, the France Insoumise (LFI-France Unbowed), whose candidate Jean-Luc Mélenchon under the label Union Populaire came third in the poll and far ahead of all other left candidates, proposed publicly to the Communist Party (PCF), Europe Ecologie-Les Verts (EELV - Greens) and the Nouveau Parti Anticapitaliste (NPA - New Anticapitalist Party) to open discussions on forming a coalition for the parliamentary elections in June. [1] The method chosen by LFI was a series of bilateral discussions rather than a round table exchange.

At this stage the involvement of the Socialist Party was ruled out. On 16 April Mathilde Panot (president of the LFI group in the assembly) when asked "Why are you excluding the PS from any discussion?" replied "The PS was very clear. Anne Hidalgo [SP presidential candidate and Mayor of Paris] did not want to build anything with us. We took note of her attacks and her refusal to draw a lucid assessment of François Hollande's five-year term [as president 2012-2017]. In the last weeks of the campaign, Jean-Luc Mélenchon had become enemy number 1. During this time, she said nothing about Marine Le Pen or Emmanuel Macron. So there will be no discussions, and this refusal is definitive." [2]

Nevertheless on 27 April LFI opened discussions with the Socialist Party. [3] Under the pressure of these discussions the programmatic proposals shifted rightwards and the place accorded to the NPA increasingly narrowed. The NPA continued to try to make an agreement possible, but after accords were concluded with the EELV, the PCF and finally with the PS the NPA considered that the rightward drift made it impossible to join the coalition. The National Political Council adopted this statement on the evening of 5 May.

The results of the presidential election give a responsibility to all the organizations of the workers' movement and the social movement, to the left that rejects liberalism and destruction of our rights, to bring about unity of action in the streets and in the ballot box. It is on this basis that the NPA was ready to discuss joint candidatures for the parliamentary elections with the Union Populaire. Indeed, faced with the rise of the far right and the fascist danger, against the new five-year mandate of Macron and his henchmen to organize anti-social and authoritarian attacks, we want a left-wing majority for radical change - or at least as many elected members as possible - in the National Assembly. We therefore believe that a unitive dynamic would be a positive signal for the social movements and struggles, giving back confidence to the oppressed and exploited. The perspective of organizing resistance and winning new rights by any means must unite us.

We therefore met with the Union Populaire to try to reach an agreement. On the programme, we jointly wrote a text that reasserted the need to break with neoliberal policies, in particular to withdraw the Hollande and Macron labour laws and those on repression, to welcome migrants, to increase the minimum wage, to introduce retirement at 60 for all, to eradicate poverty. These measures are far from representing the whole of the NPA's anti-capitalist programme, but they are enough to form the basis of an alliance, and even to support their implementation by a government resulting from such a coalition if it had a majority, with Jean-Luc Mélenchon as Prime Minister, without giving up our independence.

However, as the discussions with the other political forces progressed, the political balance of the coalition gradually changed, weakening the break with neoliberal policies that was its strength.

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Thus the agreement reached with Europe écologie-Les Verts, very advantageous in terms of the constituencies offered, retreated on several points of the programme shared by the NPA and the UP, for example on the need to break with the European Union.

Moreover, the reduced place of working-class neighbourhood collectives, such as "On s'en mêle", in the unitary agreement is not the right signal to give to those who suffer the full force of anti-social, security, racist and Islamophobic policies.

In spite of everything, it still seemed important to us to participate in this dynamic towards union.

However, the agreement reached on Wednesday [4 May] morning by the Union Populaire with the Socialist Party is problematic in more than one way. First of all, because it retreats on several essential proposals: an increase in the minimum wage which would no longer be "immediate", a break with neoliberal Europe whose modalities have become vague, "retirement at 60 for all" present in the agreements with EÉLV and the PCF has become a "right to retire at 60" - which we know would mean significant pension reductions (decote)...

In this logic, the PS has been granted 70 constituencies (of which 30 are winnable), which is much more than the initial proposal of the UP for proportional distribution between the different forces.

If we add to these PS candidates the numerous EÉLV candidates who do not represent a break with neoliberalism, the stamp of this left, which has governed against the working classes' interests on many occasions and now runs a good number of cities or regions, becomes significant.

For us, all this constitutes a tipping point: this "New Popular Ecological and Social Union" (NUPES) does not represent a political continuity of the Union Populaire which, in the presidential election, led to Jean-Luc Mélenchon representing a hope for radical transformation of the situation, or only does so in a very ambiguous and contradictory way.

We know that many left-wing activists were hoping to "see Philippe Poutou in the Assembly", but they should know that at no point did the Union Populaire propose a constituency where he could have been elected, or even where he could be a candidate in Gironde [his region]. In the framework of an agreement with the Socialist Party, the UP proposed only five constituencies - far from proportional representation between the different forces - in none of which a candidate could have been elected, or where we have an implantation. Thus, the PS has been granted three times more constituencies than it weighed in the presidential elections, while the NPA was offered three times less. Quite a symbol!

In fact, the Union Populaire would have liked the NPA to participate in the NUPES, but without the possibility of a real political existence within it.

We therefore note with regret that UP has chosen to reach an agreement with forces that are managers of the system to the detriment of an agreement with the NPA, which had nevertheless responded favourably to UP's proposal from the outset, and which pursued the discussions to the end in the hope of reaching an agreement.

We could have reached an agreement with the Union Populaire, the PCF, and even EÉLV, but we cannot validate such an agreement including the Socialist Party and on the basis of the proposals made to us. The NPA will therefore not sign the NUPES agreement.

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The NPA will organize its participation in the legislative elections at a National Political Council to be held on 14 May. In any case, we will call for a vote and support, including actively, the left-wing candidates of the NUPES, and we will not stand candidates against them. In other constituencies, against candidates labelled NUPES who embody a continuity with social liberalism, the NPA will seek, where the conditions are met, to give voice to an alternative, though unitive candidates, from the workplaces and working-class neighbourhoods, representing a fighting left, independent of institutions and social liberalism.

5 May 2022

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[1] Francetv Info 15 April 2022 "[Législatives 2022 : La France insoumise propose à une partie de la gauche de former une coalition](#)".

[2] *Journal du Dimanche*, 16 April 2022 "[Mathilde Panot, présidente du groupe LFI à l'Assemblée nationale : « C'est à Macron de convaincre »](#)".

[3] Europe 1, 27 April 2022 "[Législatives : LFI ouvre des tractations historiques mais ardues avec le PS](#)". For further analysis see "[Faced with popular hostility Macron imposed his re-election](#)".