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France

# LCR proposes electoral agreement, LO refuses

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**At the first round of the French Presidential elections on April 21 2002, the far left gained more than 10% of the vote. Despite the Le Pen effect and the 20% score of the far right, this unprecedented result is positive both in terms of the current relationship of forces and in the struggles to come.**

[<http://internationalviewpoint.org/local/cache-vignettes/L155xH146/05besancenot-cd4a9.jpg>] Olivier Besancenot

It shows the readiness of significant numbers of the working population and young people to show their disapproval of the different components of the Jospin government from the left, while rejecting the right and the far right. It bestows major responsibilities on the LCR (Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire - French section of the Fourth International) and LO (Lutte Ouvrière - the other major French far left organization).

During the campaign the LCR declared from the beginning that it was for the unity of the far left. Our opinion has not changed after the first round.

Nationally only LO and the LCR have the capacity to present a clear alternative in the political landscape. A multiplication of candidacies and competitive situations will be harmful for everyone.

Therefore last week we proposed to Lutte Ouvriere that we discuss an agreement to divide up constituencies. This approach was confirmed by our central committee.

Such a sharing out of constituencies seems to be the most effective way in view of the very short time we have to work things through and the fact that the two organisations conducted separate campaigns.

This would mean a far left candidate in every mainland constituency on a 50-50 basis with a call for a reciprocal vote on the basis of a common declaration dealing with the main issues in the election.

The LCR has been involved for some years in some departments in local agreements like "Tous Ensemble à Gauche" (All together on the left) in Finistere (Brittany) or 'A Gauche Autrement' (On the Left Otherwise) in the Rhône. These groupings should be included in this national approach and be written into the agreement.

In its own constituencies, the LCR will pursue its policy of openness toward those who identified with Olivier Besancenot's campaign.

For the second round of the elections, we think we cannot take the slightest risk of helping th election of National Front deputies. Where that risk exists, we call for a vote for the best-placed left candidate.

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*Following the LCR's proposal for an agreement to divide up seats in the forthcoming 2002 Parliamentary elections, we reprint from Rouge: [Lutte Ouvrière's reply](#) to this proposal, and the [LCR's response](#):*