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France

Left press analyses election results

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"...the LCR and LO have particular responsibilities to prepare for the coming events, both in the struggles and in the presidential and parliamentary elections."

Lutte Ouvrière (extracts)

Georges Kaldy

"One of the striking facts of these elections is the high rate of abstention (Paris apart). While the municipals are supposed to be among the most popular elections, between the first round of 1995 and that of 2001, the rate of abstention went from 30.6% to 38.7 %. At first sight, it is in the workers towns, and more particularly in the popular neighbourhoods and housing projects that the rate of abstention was highest. It is one of the obvious expressions of the mistrust felt by the popular electorate towards the parties which participate in the Jospin government.

The other striking feature of these elections, and politically clearer still, is the increased vote of the far left. The three far left organizations, Lutte Ouvrière, the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire and the Parti des Travailleurs, undoubtedly intervened around different political axes [...] Nonetheless, in the eyes of the electorate, they were seen as critical of the governmental left. This simple fact allowed them to capitalise on the mistrust felt towards the big political parties in general, and those of the governmental left in particular.

The lists of Lutte Ouvrière, whose electoral axis was a clear and unsparing critique of the governmental policy from the point of view of the interests of the workers, registered in a number of towns, in particular workers towns, a doubling, indeed a tripling of their scores.

The fact that we announced in advance that there was no question of our lists giving in to the blackmail of the governmental left and no question of accepting the fusion of our lists where we scored more than 5%, nor withdrawing them where we were able to contest the second round, was perfectly understood by the fraction of the popular electorate that voted for our lists.

As was the fact that we do not wish to barter the votes of our electors by saying to them "you have voted for us in the first round, now vote for the PS or the PC in the second round" [...]

If the current which expressed itself on our lists manifests itself in the coming period on the electoral level, in the workplaces, the popular neighbourhoods or in the street, to oppose the actions of the employers and the political action of the government and its local representatives, this will have an effect on political life".

Lutte Ouvrière March 16, 2001

Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (extracts)

François Ollivier

One of the striking facts of this first round of municipal elections is the result of the far left and the radical left [...] Of the lists presented or supported by the Ligue, 39 scored more than 5%, 28 more than 7.5% and 12 more than 10%. More than 25 councillors were elected.

Beyond these results, it was a good campaign electoral that we led: 93 lists stood or were supported, of which around 30 were constituted with other alternative political forces or militants and sections of the Communist Party (PCF); there were nearly 3,500 candidates on these lists, twice as many as in 1995. We were able to increase the local implantation of the Ligue and establish new relations with trade unionists, associations, youth and political activists.

All the far left gained good results [...] This is worth pointing out to emphasise the responsibilities of and sectarianism of Lutte Ouvrière (LO), which rejected standing on common lists with the LCR. This election, beyond the specificities of each electorate, shows that there exists a common electoral political space for the radical forces: a space we must occupy together by bringing together the thousands of candidates of the "100% gauche" (100% left) lists, those of LO and those of the left opposed to the governmental policy [...].

These elections are only a stage. They show, even if in a fragmented manner, that there is a broad sector of the popular electorate which rejects neo-liberalism, disowns the government of the plural left and seeks ways and means for another kind of politics, a real political change.

But if that broadly goes beyond the existing organisations, within this configuration, the LCR and LO have particular responsibilities to prepare for the coming events, both in the struggles and in the presidential and parliamentary elections, for what is at stake is the possibility of creating or favouring the conditions to advance on the path of a new political force, a new party for the workers.

Rouge March 15, 2001