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France

Response of the LCR to LO: Our responsibilities

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"Dear comrades,

Again you respond to a proposal from the LCR for unity by refusing to entertain it. However, we are in a situation which should have made you perceive the necessity for far left unity.

Our two candidates Arlette Laguiller and Olivier Besancenot gathered around 10% of the vote. That gives us a major responsibility in order to respond to the hope this created. We could have been able to confirm and consolidate the April 21 vote by putting forward a single candidate in each constituency who supports the main points of a programme which breaks with past politics, in front of the youth and the wage earners.

The right will present united slates of candidates, the governmental left too. With your refusal only the far left will be standing in competition with each other.

The main pretext you give is our position on the May 5 vote. You reproach us for having participated in a "republican front" by calling for a vote for Chirac, but the reality is different.

We called for a fight against the far right in struggle as well as at the ballot box. We called for a vote against Le Pen. We were present in all the demonstrations.

It is like trying us for witchcraft to confuse our position with that of a "republican front". It is an insult to imply that the LCR would be associated with a plebiscite for Chirac.

Young people and workers wanted to resist the far right danger. It was absurd to oppose this movement, as you did.

From April 21 onwards you minimised the danger of Le Pen; you did not immediately call for demonstrations as Olivier Besancenot did.

We think that even in a difficult situation the solution is always found in collective mobilisation. The proof of this was shown on May 1.

The workers shouldn't be taken for idiots: two million demonstrators on May 1 were not fighting against a "phantom of the operetta", as you wrote in *Lutte Ouvriere*, but against an ideology which is spreading into neighbourhoods and workplaces and which repels them, more than it does you. In the street no republican front vice inhabited their consciousness.

We asked you a question about the Parliamentary elections which you have not answered: are you prepared to call for a vote, not for the right, but for a Communist, Socialist, or Green Party candidate against a fascist?

You also raised again the question of our "partners", i.e. those who find themselves within the framework of the "100% left" union against the right and the policies of the left in government. Is the very idea that others, who are not members of our organisations, but close to our ideas, should wish to participate in this union so insufferable? With the support of 10% of the electorate should LO and the LCR only discuss between themselves?

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Then one must perhaps find the more boring explanation of your rejection in "Lutte Ouvriere" of 26th April where G. Kaldy writes that "in all the elections where there are no other stakes - as there could be for example in certain situations the possibility of electing Parliamentary representatives - the presence of several far left candidates....is not a disadvantage but a blessing.

Behind this lies a very specific conception of unity; you only conceive of it when it useful to gain elected positions. In no other case do you understand the necessity.

For our part we think that the political situation is so specific and so grave that the unity of the left of the left is urgent.

We will pursue this policy, at the time of the Parliamentary elections and afterwards despite your current refusal.

We have never proposed to you a single party. We evidently have differences. But we do not have "opposed orientations" as you write (why not a "class break" between us while you're at it?).

Our two organisations have fought the politics of the plural left. We have proposed to you to take steps forward together, in order to give back hope to millions of young people and wage earners who look to us. You have again lost an opportunity. Despite your sectarianism, we will not abandon our desire for unity.

Fraternally,

The secretariat of the LCR Political Bureau"