

Letters on the French elections

14 May 2002

Below we post a selection of recent letters on the French elections.

At the heart of the French bourgeoisie's (and world bourgeoisie's) fear of Trotskyism is precisely the internationalist character of its program and history. The longstanding acceptance and defense of a national program ultimately propels the Communist Party, Socialist Party, and others on the official left, into Chirac's arms. Official French society has nothing to fear from these forces and, as the election proved, much to gain. That the so-called "far-left" parties calling themselves Trotskyist, also have no international program places them, if not in the Chirac camp, at least furtively skirting its edges. The reestablishment of a section of the International Committee of the Fourth International on French soil would be a tremendous gain for the world working class and cause for a long overdue celebration.

HP

Portland, Oregon

6 May 2002

Dear WSWS,

I am encouraged when I see your readiness for action concerning the French elections, since I have already been convinced in the superb quality of your articles and analysis during three months of reading of your web site every day. I say "your" [web site] just because I am still not aware of an official way how [to] say "our," but I consider myself a member of our international Marxist family which is, I now believe, is led by International Committee of the Fourth International, and am willing to contribute as much as possible to the cause.

The campaign of WSWS around the French elections was a demonstration of how intelligent a scientific analysis combined with willingness for concrete action can quickly make a change. It is just what is desperately needed nowadays. So the best possible outcome is your initiative for creating an

internationalist socialist party in France. Since I am not French I cannot help there, but in my university there are some French foreign students, so I will certainly fervently recommend the WSWS to them. This task of making a new powerful branch in a country of such importance as France is so inspiring that I believe every one of us must do whatever is possible, now!

The illuminating initiative that the WSWS exercised on the matter makes your supporters feel their efforts are not in vain, and that real results are attainable, quite the opposite of what members of Arlette Laguiller's Lutte Ouvrière (LO), Olivier Besancenot's Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR), and Daniel Gluckstein's Parti des Travailleurs (PT), feel right now.

Let's not lose momentum! For internationalist socialist party in France!

Cordially yours,

DP

6 May 2002

Dear Editor:

From reading Lutte Ouvrière's responses to the recent WSWS criticisms, one thing is abundantly plain: It is Lutte Ouvrière, not the WSWS, that distorts the reality of its own positions. Both EB and the other Lutte Ouvrière correspondent deliberately obfuscate on the issue of boycotting the runoff election, then accuse the WSWS of distorting its position for observing (correctly) that the group does not support a boycott.

Most revealing is this passage from Lutte Ouvrière's letter, which you quote as follows:

"On the evening of the first round of the presidential elections LO issued a statement (available on our site) in which we warned workers against voting for Chirac (or for Le Pen, of course). Since then, in view of the hysterical campaign for Chirac mounted by the papers and just about every political current, we reformulated our position in an even more precise fashion, by calling for a blank vote, so as to allow workers to make a

political gesture against both candidates.”

Lutte Ouvrière’s supporters accuse the WSWS of dishonesty by omission , yet the author of the above response attempts to pull off a shell game by quoting a Lutte Ouvrière statement made “on the evening of the first round” of the French the election. Lutte Ouvrière’s call in the first round for workers to reject both Chirac and Le Pen and vote for its own candidate is neither surprising nor the issue! The issue at hand pertains to Lutte Ouvrière’s refusal to call for the boycott of a runoff between two terminally reactionary political candidates. More than representing a missed opportunity, under conditions where millions of French citizens see Chirac as the only alternative to Le Pen, this amounts to a political betrayal.

One can only imagine the impact Lutte Ouvrière might have had if it intervened in the recent mass demonstrations under a banner calling for a boycott and for the building of an international revolutionary party. The claim of this group that there exists no entity worthy of this title is nothing more than self-fulfilling prophecy. At the same time, by not advancing this call to the millions who voted for them and others on the left who turned out in the streets of France, they apparently consider the working class itself unworthy of an independent, revolutionary socialist party.

AR

5 May 2002



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