

France : For a left that stops making excuses

lundi 20 octobre 2008, par [BESANCENOT Olivier](#) (Date de rédaction antérieure : 18 octobre 2008).

Hand in hand with the struggles of French workers and students has been the massive growth in popularity of postal worker and Revolutionary Communist League (LCR) spokesperson Olivier Besancenot.

Recent opinion polls listed “The Postie”, as even the capitalist media call him, as the second most credible opposition politician to the right-wing government of President Nicolas Sarkozy. Besancenot was voted second after the Socialist Party (PS) mayor of Paris and ahead of the parliamentary leaders of the official PS “opposition”.

Below is an excerpt of Besancenot’s speech to an August open air rally of 3500 members and supporters of the New Anti-capitalist Party (NAP), initiated by the LCR, on the challenges for the project.

It’s in these times of economic crisis that we will have to show just how useful we really are.

We must, in the year ahead, continue to show that we are the most effective opponents of the Sarkozy government and the policies of the French Confederation of Business Enterprises.

We have been trying to show, step by step, that there is a credible alternative : an alternative in the form of a new party worthy of the name — a left that doesn’t apologise for being left, for being anti-capitalist, for wanting to transform society.

In short, a left that is as faithful to the interests of its own sectors — the exploited and oppressed — as the right is faithful to the interests of their side, the exploiters and privileged.

I know that we are asked to do as activists things that would be a big job for a multinational corporation, when we currently only have the resources of a small business ! So what, it’s just what we’ll have to do.

And that means in their workplaces and working class suburbs, people will be able to depend on us. It means that those who fight against racism, fascism, sexism and homophobia know that they can count on us.

Immigrants and undocumented workers must know that they can count on a left that from now on will support them all the way to victory : permanent residency for all undocumented immigrants, closure of the detention centres, full citizenship rights and the freedom to move and live where they like.

The PS tries to tell the majority of people that the only way to escape Sarkozy is to wait ... for a hypothetical and uncertain escape thanks to the next presidential election in

2012.

To depend on the uncertain prospect of the umpteenth change of government, in which the only thing that can really be guaranteed is that absolutely nothing in our daily lives will change at all.

Well, we're part of the left that says, "We're not going to wait until 2012 to resist, to fight and to try to stop the policies of the Sarkozy government".

Because it's a social crisis, for millions of people.

To those that ask, "With your New Anti-capitalist Party, what do you want to achieve ?", I suggest you respond to them in the manner a minister in the government of Bolivian President Evo Morales responded when I met him in Paris with two other comrades.

He said to us, "Deep down, what we want is not to live better, because to live better always means at the expense of others. What we want is to not simply survive, because that's already a given.

"What we want, is to simply live well."

We want the same thing ! To live well ! And living well means the right to existence takes a priority over profits. Living well means having time for yourself — for those close to you — those around you, for creating, for having access to knowledge, for travel.

Living well also means living in harmony with our environment, putting an end to all their crocodile tears and taking the steps that are necessary.

Because if we really want to be ecological, then we must start with the evidence of what has been proven not to work : the existing model of economic development in which capitalism, each time touches any part of the ecological fabric, treats it solely as a piece of merchandise and destroys it.

We arrive systematically each time at the same conclusion : we simply have to have a new model of economic and social development. We call it "Socialism of the 21st century".

There are those that call it "eco-socialism", "libertarian self-management" or "communism with a human face".

Who cares what we call it ! It's a process of a deep-going transformation that we want to take on. But I've said enough already... Stop talking about it and let's do it, together !

P.-S.

* From : International News, Green Left Weekly issue #771 22 October 2008.