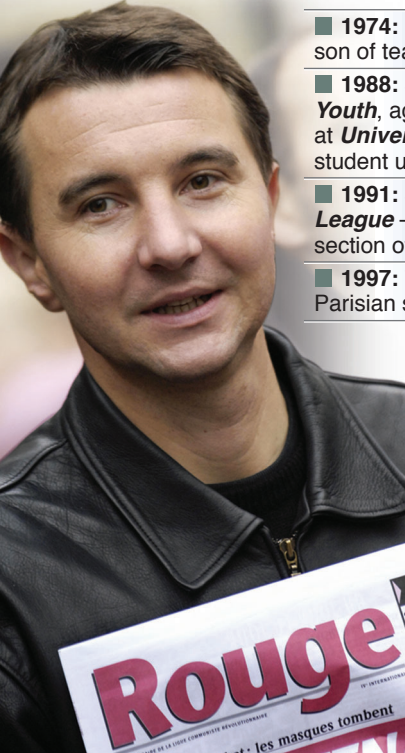


Olivier Besancenot – the revolutionary postman

A portrait of Olivier Besancenot, a French politician, wearing a black leather jacket. He is holding a sign that says "Rouge" in large red letters. The sign also has smaller text: "LE MANIFESTE DE LA LIGUE COMMUNISTE REVOLUTIONNAIRE" and "chat: les masques tombent".

■ **1974:** Born in Levallois-Perret, near Paris, son of teacher and school psychologist

■ **1988:** Joins **Revolutionary Communist Youth**, aged only 14. Enrols to study history at **University of Paris X Nanterre**, where 1968 student uprising began

■ **1991:** Joins **Communist Revolutionary League** – radical left political party and French section of international Trotskyist group

■ **1997:** Takes job as postman in wealthy Parisian suburb of Neuilly-sur-Seine

■ **2002:** At 28, becomes youngest presidential candidate in France's history, winning 1.3m votes – 4.25% – standing as revolutionary socialist

■ **2007:** Stands again in presidential election, using slogan "*Our lives are worth more than their profits*". Gains 300,000 votes more than in 2002

■ **Feb 2009:** Set to launch **New Anticapitalist party** – attempt to unify extreme left into single movement

■ **Besancenot is among most popular opposition politicians, viewed as highly effective adversary of President Sarkozy. Opinion polls suggest up to 10% of voters would back him in presidential election**