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France

Socialism and De Gaullisme

Collaboration between various organizations in France which are in opposition both to the present Regime and the German invaders, has made great steps forward. Apart from evidence provided by other documents and other indications of the present trend, this development can be seen in a Manifesto issued by the "Comité d'action socialiste" extracts of which are given here. The "Comité d'action socialiste" consists of former members of the French Socialist party (S.F.I.O.). The Manifesto runs as follows:

"In France all activity for Socialism is subordinated to the liberation of the country, and if it is right to call on people to work for the future establishment of a new regime, then it is also right to rally them here and now in the struggle for national independence.

The Comité d'action socialiste is of the opinion that for this task of liberation all who are in sympathy with this aim and wish to cooperate, whoever they may be, are welcome and needed, and must be made use of.

They are ready to take up contacts with all the oppositional movements, and in particular with the movement which is commonly called 'Gaullisme'.

For us, General de Gaulle is the natural and necessary symbol of resistance and liberation. We do not think that the working class have anything to fear from him in spite of the hopes which may be placed on him by a part of the bourgeoisie. Symbol of the spirit of resistance to Hitler Germany, the natural ally of the Anglo-Saxon democracies, de Gaulle symbolizes, consciously or not, the restoration of the democratic state. It would be inconceivable that the temporary dictatorship, which will be established and which the Comité d'action socialiste have already declared themselves willing to support, would be anything more than a preparation for a return to a democratic regime."

Letter to Pétain

The French oppositional journal "Le Combat" published in May of this year an open letter to Marshal Pétain. This letter is particularly noteworthy because the people behind "Combat" stand politically rather to the right than to the left. We quote here some of the most important passages:

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"June 17th, 1940: You gave the order to give up the fight when our fleet, our Empire

and our armies overseas had no other desire than to continue the war. While you broke the promise we gave to our Allies you claimed that honour demanded that we should not take any steps directed against them.

October 14th, 1940: You made France follow a policy of service to Germany. Again you broke a promise which, this time, you yourself had given. In trying to conceal from our country this new breach of promise you call it 'collaboration'.

April 18th, 1942: You should have withdrawn from office and left it to others to free our country. But you preferred to stay, - no longer in a state of semi-freedom, but now in complete slavery - in order to shield to treachery with your name.

All is clear now, - the Pétain myth has passed away; your sun will not rise again.

'I alone am responsible', you said. And you are indeed responsible for having supplied the enemy with the products of our factories and of our mines, for having advocated the anti-bolshevik legion, for having delivered supplies to Rommel's **[1]** army, for having handed over Indo-China to Japan.

You are also responsible for the suppression of our liberty, for the distortion of justice that is taking place under your regime, for the activities of the police, the hateful anti-Semitic decrees, the overwhelming power of the trusts, the unemployment and the growing famine.

Once you said to the country: 'Follow me, keep your confidence in eternal France.'

We do keep our confidence in our Fatherland. We shall serve it with all our energy. We shall sacrifice to it our freedom and if necessary also our lives. But we shall not follow you."

May Day 1942

The "Franc Tireur" **[2]**, one of the illegal newspapers in the unoccupied zone, prints a number of reports about the first of May demonstration against the German invaders and their French lackeys. The Celebration was prepared by a committee consisting of members of the independent and the Christian Trade Unions. This Committee now claims to be representative of the French working-class movement. The Communists called for a General Strike, but nobody followed this line. During the demonstrations moreover, specifically communist activities were not in evidence; for example the cry "Long live the S.U." was not often heard.

The Committee met on the 5th May and as a consequence of the splendid success of the May demonstrations issued a special declaration, which appeared in the three illegal newspapers in the unoccupied zone.

The following is taken from the "Franc Tireur":

"We receive from all parts of the country reports about the first of May celebrations which were successful beyond all expectations.

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Following the appeal of the organisations for national resistance many thousands of French men and women from all sections of the population demonstrated in front of their town halls and the Republican statutes. The 'Marseillaise' was sung by these crowds who were aware of the double meaning of their anthem: the national and the

social. By shouting 'To the gallows with Laval', the people manifested their will to see justice achieved; in acclaiming General de Gaulle they showed their desire to continue the fight on the side of our allies.

On the basis of reports received we can confirm that everywhere, in Toulouse as well as in St. Etienne, these demonstrations were not just party affairs but that all social classes took part in them: There were priests as well as trade unionists, former members of the Socialist Youth sang the National Anthem together with former members of the 'Jeunesse Patriotes' (nationalistic organisation). We have seen members of the 'Legion' (Pétain's organisation) tear off their badge and shout with us 'Down with Laval'.

At 5 o'clock the Marshal spoke; at 6.30 France answered him with a double shout of contempt and of hope.

On the evening of the First of May there was great excitement everywhere, in the Occupied and in the Unoccupied Zone, when it became known that demonstrations had taken place and that for the first time since the armistice and since the regime of traitors came into power thousands of Frenchmen had shouted: 'Long live Freedom, Long live the Republic'.

The editors were overwhelmed by a flood of orders to the press: 'Do not mention the demonstrations in Lyon, Toulouse, Marseille, Saint-Etienne, etc. It is forbidden to mention incidents, arrests, etc. ...'

On May 2nd the French people was still in a state of joyous excitement about this awakening of national consciousness. They were not surprised to find their newspaper made no mention of the resistance which manifested itself on this First of May and were full of sermons of the old man to whom nobody listens any longer.

The SS of the "Legion"

One of the illegal French newspapers has published a number of official instructions which clearly show that the so-called "S.O.L." (Service d'ordre legionnaire), is nothing but a body of storm troopers like the SS, Himmler's black guard.

"We have to put it down as a matter of absolute principle that the S.O.L. is not an organisation which one can enter or leave at discretion. The missions entrusted to the S.O.L. are often complicated and difficult. They involve risks which are sometimes rather heavy; candidates should be accepted with greatest caution and volunteers for the S.O.L. must be aware of what they are going to undertake.

... The main quality of a member of the S.O.L. must be a spirit of real discipline. Orders must be executed without discussion, with complete loyalty and absolute precision. The S.O.L. will in fact often be called upon

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to carry out tasks of which they do not understand the sense and the necessity. Although they may play a political role, they should consider it as a grave mistake to discuss the wisdom or otherwise of the tasks which have been entrusted to them.

The members of the S.O.L. are being recruited from all quarters, from the most humble homes as well as from the most noble circles, and in this way the S.O.L. will be an incomparable instrument for penetration. Without arousing suspicion they will be

able to approach those circles which are otherwise almost inaccessible, like the great commercial and industrial enterprises, the universities, the liberal professions, the trade unions and the peasants' organisations, the public administration.

Their tasks will be solely of a political nature. ... They must be masters in the necessary technique, especially in the technique of street fighting. ... They will be the best agents of the administrative services."

Luxembourg

On April 10th 120 Luxembourg patriots were arrested. On April 25th further arrests took place. Amongst the arrested persons were: **[3]** the mayor Speker, Toni Neumann, a solicitor, the painter Regenwetter, Lieutenant Albrecht. All these arrests followed the discovery of an illegal transmitter. In Rodange the following arrests took place: On April 13th seven patriots, on April 16th six and on April 25th seven. Many of the arrested persons are members of the "Ligue Patriotique Luxembourg".

From Rodange the following is reported:

A certain Max Simon had enrolled in the Foreign Legion before the war. After the outbreak of the War he returned to Luxembourg and became an agent of the Gestapo. He often feigns to be an escaped French prisoner and asks peasants to assist him. If they do so he denounces them and has them arrested.

Officials in the Luxembourg administration have received enrolment forms for the German Army. Those who refuse to sign them can be sure of dismissal.

The flag of Luxembourg on an S.S. post was hissed on April 4th. On May 2nd the Gauleiter addressed a meeting on the sports ground; the workers of the town were forced to attend. When, however, the Gauleiter appealed to the workers to enrol in the German Army, a very great part of them left the meeting place.

On April 17th seven patriots were arrested in Behrdorf and deported to Germany. On April 22nd Raymon Petit **[4]** was arrested; he was a member of the "Ligue Patriotique Luxembourg" and has been sought for a long time because of sabotage activities. He had wounded one Gestapo agent and killed three others. He himself has since been killed by the Gestapo. Other arrests took place in Echternach, Bissen and various other towns. Fighting has occurred and very often the S.A. or the S.S. has had to intervene. A decree of April 14th makes it obligatory for women to accept work.

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Air-Raid shelter are being built; they are specially protected against gas attacks. Cylinders of oxygen are kept in public buildings.

An Illegal Newspaper

In the meantime a new paper published by the underground movement has also appeared in Luxembourg entitled. "Luxembourg will be free", Subtitle: Our unmuzzled journal" **[5]**

In the number which has come to hand people are above all called to resist the recruitment of workers to be sent to Germany; recognition of those who have remained loyal and warning against the traitors is rightly placed in the forefront.

Germany

The Watch on the Rhine

Our correspondent on the Rhine frontier writes to us: "Almost daily corpses are drawn out of the water here with bullet wounds on their heads. Often they are Russians who have been caught attempting to escape from the Third Reich. But also civilians, for the most part Jews, frequently try in this way to reach the safety of a foreign country. A short time ago three women tried to escape evidently out of fear of a threatened transportation to the East. They were discovered by the frontier guards, who shot at them and loosed their dogs on them. One of the women was 72 years old. One ultimately succeeded in crossing the frontier nevertheless.

In spite of the watchfulness of the Germans people often succeed in escaping. Thus some days ago 15 Russians simultaneously attempted to escape over the frontier. 5 were shot dead. 10 arrived safely on the other side. They considered this a good percentage.

Even German soldiers try to desert from time to time. Recently we had the opportunity of watching one of them dragged back; he had jumped out of a moving train whilst it was travelling for a short time through non-German territory."

From Kehl we hear:

"Belgian and Dutch crews who used to remain on the Rhine boats as to Rheinhafen Basel, are now being replaced here by Germans or Swiss, in order to prevent desertions."

Victory?

From South Germany we receive reports that:

"The population of South Germany is especially war-weary. They fear that they will soon be subjected to air bombardments. The destructive attacks on Rostock and Lubeck have only served to increase their fear. In spite of this those who are anti-Nazis welcome such bombardments as a support for their own work. They would also like the B.B.C. in their workers' transmissions to specially emphasize that these bombardments are

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not directed against the workers, but only against the Military, and that the workers should take refuge in the Air-Raid shelters immediately the warning sounds.

Here a lack of faith in victory is now fairly general.

Defeatism

A German business man who, thanks to long-standing connections abroad, has old friends there with whom he is therefore quite frank, told them some weeks ago:

"` My fairly extensive connections lead me to the conclusion that a large section of the German people are absolutely sure of a German defeat. I personally have in any case not much more to expect from life, since both my sons have already fallen.' When we asked him if this was not a terrible blow for him and his relations, he answered, ` I got

over it years ago. At the time when my two boys were taken away from me I was very sad. For they were already lost to me when they took up Nazi habits. Now, I must confess, I am inclined to be glad that they are dead. Thus I can at least be sure that they can no longer do any harm."

Opposition

A few weeks ago we published extracts from an S.S. report which clearly showed that these special troops for the Home front were preparing themselves to meet a socialist opposition. Official reports, and also others which have reached us through different channels, clearly indicate that these fears of the S.S. are not without foundation. But the Socialists themselves also knew of the preparations of the "Schwarzen" and are therefore as a rule extremely careful not to give them any opportunity of taking steps against them. The struggle has become more concealed, but none the less bitter. - We have heard by the way that leaflets have been distributed on the most diverse occasions. Opposition has also shown itself in other ways in an apparently spontaneous and malicious manner. For example the inhabitants of Cologne always noted with great annoyance that at the approach of darkness the important Nazi officials of the town drove to their villas in the suburbs, which were not menaced by air bombardment. At last this became too much for them, and a shower of stones was thrown at the luxury cars of the "Leaders". Since then these gentlemen drive in ordinary police cars to their bomb-proof shelters.

Radio

From several of the larger South German towns we hear:

"Your (i.e. the London) Radio transmissions for workers are often listened to in our district and very much appreciated. Some comrades would like to see a much stronger tone adopted against the Nazis. But there are many who greatly value just this objectivity and calmness on tone in the announcements. Everybody wishes that they would spread special slogans so that the German opposition would not themselves have to take the risk involved.

The active opposition wishes also that the British radio would appeal to the workers always to go into the shelters immediately an air-raid alarm is given. In this way the factories would be forced to stop work without it being necessary for the workers to make any definite plans in this direction. The help of the English Radio is invaluable for all work of this

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kind. In addition, all our friends here would like the German Radio to be disturbed by interference during their Propaganda Service."

Jews

From all parts of the Reich we hear that Jews are put in specially dangerous positions in the armament industry so that the casualties caused by the English air attacks should at least not be of Aryan blood. We know cases where Jewish women up to 60 years of age have been forcibly made to work in the armament industry.

German eye-witnesses (non-Jewish) reported to us that they had seen the Ghetto at

Warsaw. About 250,000 Jews are herded together there in indescribable conditions, guarded by brutal German police outside the Ghetto and by brutal Polish police inside it.

Labour Shortage

From chemical circles we hear:

"Production is slowly but surely decreasing. This is partly due to the lack of raw materials. But the main reason is the falling of the worker's output. How far this is the result of conscious sabotage it is difficult to say.

The fact of decreased production can at any rate be quite clearly seen. The problem of providing sufficient skilled workers in Germany is in our opinion insoluble. The manpower which has been called up for the front and which is just as indispensable there, can simply not be replaced."

On the Evidence of the Military Highcommand (O.K.W.)

The extent of the strain on the German troops, and the consequent development of an unfavourable feeling towards the Home country is shown in some of the directives issued by the O.K.V. In March for instance there is a passage dealing with shirkers:

Shirkers

"A soldier from the Eastern front, wounded there some weeks ago, is in hospital in a large German town, and finally the day comes when he is able to go out for the first time. He has some difficulty in walking, he still hobbles with a stick, and all the hurry und bustle around him, the whole life and appearance of the town, seem very strange after months of absence. He thinks of his comrades at the front and still feels at a loss here. He sits down in a restaurant and watches the people there. Then he notices two healthy young men sitting at a neighbouring table; civilians between 25 and 40 years old. Hastily he draws the conclusion: `Shirkers, why are they not at the front? It is a scandal!'"

No one would think of reproaching a wounded soldier for drawing these over-hasty conclusions, but that is not to say that his conclusion is a correct one. If he had the opportunity of making inquiries onto the case of these two men, he would perhaps change his

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opinion very quickly. One of them is an engineer and the other a physicist; both are working at a Scientific institute on difficult and vitally important problems of arms technique."

Army Post

Information about transport is contained in another part of the report:

"A very great hardship: For many reasons the Transport system is overburdened. The Army Post suffers accordingly. The fact is that it has to take third place only ... This is very hard. Nobody should try and gloss over this hardship or to make out that it has no harmful effect. When for weeks on end no news from home arrives, when months pass by before an answer is received to inquiries about the family, it is certainly a very great

Editorische Anmerkungen

- 1 - *Erwin Rommel (1891-1944), Generalfeldmarschall (1942), führte das deutsche Afrikakorps (1941-1943), später die Heeresgruppe Afrika in Tunesien, dann eine Heeresgruppe in Norditalien und schließlich in Frankreich (1943-1944), Anschluss an die Widerstandsbewegung (1944), Selbstmord (1944).*
- 2 - *"Franc Tireur", zwischen 1941 und 1944 unregelmäßig erschienene illegale Zeitung in der unbesetzten Zone Frankreichs, herausgegeben von der gleichnamigen sozialistisch-kommunistischen Widerstandsgruppe „Le Franc Tireur“, geführt von Jean-Pierre Lévy. Bekanntester Autor in „Franc Tireur“: Marc Bloc. „Franc Tireur“ erschien nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg (bis 1957) als Tageszeitung und ging dann im „Paris-journal“ auf.*
- 3 - *Biographische Daten der im Folgenden genannten Personen konnten nicht ermittelt werden: Speker, Toni (wahrscheinlich Tony) Neumann, Regenwetter, Albrecht, Max Simon (wahrscheinlich nicht identisch mit dem SS-Gruppenführer und Kriegsverbrecher Max Simon, 1899-1961).*
- 4 - *Raymond Petit (1920-1942), Luxemburger Student und Widerstandskämpfer gegen die deutsche Besatzung, Mitglied der „Lëtzeburger-Patriote-Liga“ (LPL), von der Gestapo wegen Sabotage gesucht, eröffnete Feuer auf Gestapoleute, von denen einer ernsthaft verwundet wurde, von der Gestapo ermordet oder Selbstmord (1942).*
- 5 - *„Luxemburg will be free. Our unmuzzled journal“, luxemburgische Widerstandszeitung.*