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## France

### **Manifesto of the Comité d'Action Socialiste (June 1942)**

The world is plunged into a blood-bath. Men are dying by the thousands every day. Typhus and famine are spreading over the continents. In Europe those countries who enjoy, not freedom from anxiety but more or less peaceful conditions, can be counted on the fingers of one hand. The Mediterranean shores, the distant islands of the Pacific, the Far East, the whole world is aflame. At the same time men are fighting each other at the North Cape and beneath Africa's burning sun.

The old people realise that they will not live to see happy times once more. Those in the prime of life have no hope. The young people are craving for some enjoyment, nothing more.

There seems to be no gleam of light in this world gone mad.

However, once the forces of barbarism are crushed, out of this universal chaos must emerge a new world, which will guarantee peace and bread to mankind.

From America, England, Russia, and even from the occupied countries voices are heard calling to life the world of the morrow: a humanitarian, fraternal, and socialist world.

In France, the Comité d'action socialiste calls all men to take immediate action to secure the liberation of their country and the restoration of the Republic whose memory is cherished with undiminished affection in the hearts of all her citizens.

They call to the whole of the working class to co-operate with them in carrying out the indispensable tasks of national and social reform. Since the attempt has been made to pass judgment on those who were alleged to be responsible for the defeat of France, the punishment of those who were really responsible for the betrayal and of their supporters is certainly justified.

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## Who we are

The Comité d'action socialiste of to-day is not the party of yesterday. Some of its most active members have betrayed it. Many others have taken refuge in cowardly inaction since June-July 1940. On the other hand, many French people who up till then had not thought fit to join their ranks, now work together with them in carrying out the essential tasks of reform, revitalisation, and rejuvenation.

The Comité d'action socialiste, both as it is constituted to-day under illegal conditions, and as it will present itself freely to the people to-morrow, has undertaken a thorough examination of its conscience. It has deliberately and definitely broken with those of its members whose instinct of immediate self-preservation was stronger than their moral and physical courage. It has deliberately and definitely broken with those of its leaders who did not show their loyalty to the Republic by resisting Dictatorship, and who preferred to collaborate with the power which is victorious at the moment rather than continue the struggle. The Comité d'action socialiste has nothing whatsoever to do with the Pétain government, from the very first it has fought against the men of Vichy.

Having learnt from experience and taken to heart the lessons of recent events, the Comité d'action socialiste is desirous of not repeating its old mistakes and misdeeds, and is more confident than ever in affirming the permanent character of the socialist doctrine.

Resolutely opposed to the Capitalist regime, determined to abolish the hideous scandal of personal profit, desirous of securing the equitable redistribution of the vast riches of the world amongst all mankind, the Comité d'action socialiste - the party of the working class, industrial workers and peasants - solemnly declares that only the application of its doctrine can save the world from chaos and annihilation.

Even the opponents of socialism - to prevent it from gaining the support of the masses of the people - have had to distort facts and to borrow socialist formulas and phrases. In this way H `s nationalism made use of the adjective "Socialist", the biggest warmongers declared themselves in favour of peace, and the reactionary movement which came into being in France after the defeat professed to be a "Revolution Nationale".

At the same time the government tries to persuade us that it is "our promises" that the chief of state is keeping, and that

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M. Laval is the champion of Liberty which he is in fact destroying.

A new party or rather renewed in so far as its members and methods of action are concerned, we nevertheless still adhere to certain principles which are incapable of variation since they are all derived from the same social truths.

The aim of socialism was and remains the establishment of a world society based on justice in the internal affairs of all nations and on peace amongst all the peoples of the world.

### **Socialism and De Gaullism**

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 H 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.

### **Towards a Socialist Democracy**

The Comité d'action socialiste does not, however, believe that the machinery of this democracy should function in the same way as in the Third Republic. It appeals to all its active members to start thinking over these problems now and to consider drastic methods which would prevent personal ambition and egoistic designs

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from sabotaging the popular will. **[1]**

Besides, the Comité d'action socialiste is convinced that the present developments will lead to the emergence of a socialist democracy in Franc, which is the necessary precondition for international democracy. The political power of the bourgeoisie in fact no longer exists, and their economic power will collapse as soon as it is attacked. In Europe, the weapons of the bourgeoisie lie buried under the ruins, and in the Anglo-Saxon countries, the bourgeoisie has already consented to reforms which in reality constitute an abdication.

In the eternal struggle of mankind to improve their conditions the development after the war will be not only towards the reform and rejuvenation of political democracy, but also its extension to include social democracy. The rights of the citizen will be re-established. The rights of the workers will be created.

### **Socialism and Bolshevism**

With regard to their relations to the Communist party - to whom they have already made definite proposals for common meetings - the Comité d'action socialiste is prepared, as in the case of all other organisations of resistance, to consider in co-operation with them, all kinds of action which although not of a fundamental character, are necessary to drive the enemy out of France.

As for the future, the Comité d'action socialiste sincerely hopes that Soviet Russia will of her own accord form a part of the international community of democratic nations which will have recovered their independence, and that the relations of the various sections of the Communist International with the other working-class parties will be improved. We are indeed convinced that a democratic and socially sound policy will not be possible in our country unless an independent French communist party can persuade the U.S.S.R., in the interest of the European working-class and of the Russian and French workers in particular, to form part of a united international community.

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### **No Peace of Revenge**

Moreover, Europe and the world of to-morrow can only exist if the peace which is established excludes all abuse of force, all suppressed and territorial dismemberment.

On this subject also, French socialists are proud to be able to say that from the time of the Treaty of Versailles up to 1939, they cried out until they were hoarse against the warmongers who were first of all implacable towards Republican Germany and then ready to give in to H. In this respect they have strongly fought against the labelling of some of their members as warmongers. The safeguarding of peace and this only, was in the mind of the French socialist party when it decided on a policy of resistance to aggression. If this policy had been put into operation, if the French and the English bourgeoisie had not sabotaged the application and even the principle of collective security (Abyssinia 1935; occupation of the Rhineland 1936; Austria 1937; Czechoslovakia 1938), France would not have lost her allies and her prestige, she would not have strengthened H, and she would have nipped in the bud any attempt at aggression by the head of the Third Reich.

To-day, we must admit the fact which is quite understandable that in the countries occupied by and at war with public opinion distinguishes less and less between n and Germans, between the German people and their masters. It is none the less our duty to be ready to study with calmness the problems of the Peace. The solution must lead to a lasting peace. It should provoke none of those feelings of revenge which Chauvinism on the one hand and the abuse of power on the other are in danger of arousing once again.

Germany like the other countries must be brought - by force if need be - within the framework of a real and disarmed peace.

These are the proposals for the present and the future which in the Spring of 1942 - its leader in prison, many of its militants imprisoned by the Germans or arrested by the French - the Socialist party (French section of the Labour and Socialist International) submits to the working people of the world.

THE COMITÉ D'ACTION SOCIALISTE.

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### *Editorische Anmerkungen*

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*1 - Fußnote im Original: Work in this connection has already been carried out. In future numbers we shall publish the first results of the studies we have made.*