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France

Manifesto of the Mouvement Ouvrier Français

On November 25th the "Mouvement Ouvrier Français", the underground organisation of the French workers fighting against Fascism, issued a manifesto on the events in North Africa. The following is a resume of this manifesto:

Against the Hypocritical Forces of Opportunism

"On behalf of the French workers the M.O.F. (Mouvement Ouvrier Français) sends fraternal greetings to the victorious troops in North Africa, and particularly to the forces of 'La France Combattante' and their leader, General de Gaulle. With great joy we welcome the fact that the officers and soldiers of French Africa are now preparing themselves to take up arms for the liberation of France.

The Trade Union comrades in North Africa who are working for the attainment of our ideals have our full confidence. We call on them to support the growing efforts of France's new combattant army.

The M.O.F. declares, in the name of thousands of workers fighting against oppression and resisting the *releve* (the sending of French workers to Germany) that the workers are not deceived by the manoeuvres of those who in the past delivered our comrades to the firing squads and who to-day are trying to save their own skins.

We emphatically denounce the attempts of corrupt politician to assume leading positions in territories fighting with the Allies. These politicians are responsible for the

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misfortune of France and must be removed. The workers of France will not allow their ideals to be made a mockery or their representative to be ignored.

They will continue their fight for freedom against the hypocritical forces of opportunism, and for the realisation of their hope of a Free France."

The Generals Strike at de Gaulle

The following extracts are taken from a report written at the beginning of October which deals with the situation prior to the events in North Africa.

"A certain measure of confusion has been created inside the resistance movement by the plan of certain Vichy people. These people want to move to North Africa to form there a military government of resistance against Hitler which would have contact with Britain and the U.S.A. Highly-placed militarists in Vichy are of the opinion that the

moment has come to offer active resistance to the Germans. They want to discard the policy of 'attentisme' (wait and see), as it has now become clear who will win the war. Those who foster this plan are reactionaries, mostly coming from the 'Action Française'. They now want to fight actively against the Germans, firstly, to get rid of their own inferiority feeling which was aroused by the defeat of France, and secondly to save the 'Révolution Nationale'. These people are against de Gaulle because they consider him a representative of a the Popular Front, a Popular Front of resistance, as they call it.

This plan is already fairly well advanced. Some generals have even sent their representatives with an invitation to trade union leaders to go with them to North Africa there to collaborate with them. The reason trade unionists were invited to join the generals is that the generals have realised that in modern warfare two factors are decisive - soldiers and workers. And they think that for purely military reasons it is important to secure the support of working class representatives. The soul of this enterprise is General Giraud [1].

From a purely military point of view this attempt - if it succeeded - would be excellent. But, in view of the fact that the generals have also political plans which are the absolute opposite of our own, such a step could have catastrophic effects upon the future internal development of France. It will be the task of the trade unionists so to strengthen the workers' front inside France that at the decisive moment they will be in a position to frustrate all the plans of reactionary generals. The group "Libération" is specially suspicious of the whole plan because it is definitely directed against de Gaulle."

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From mere Resistance to a Positive Political Programme

There are signs of a growing realisation, not only amongst the workers but also amongst right-wing resistance groups, that the level of the whole struggle must be raised above that of a merely negative resistance movement. A common political line is being worked out which should offer guarantees against fascist and reactionary tendencies in a future France.

"Combat"

In the issue of "Combat" of September 15th an article is published under the title "Combat Révolutionnaire" which is a manifesto on the future of France. It stresses the necessity of creating a free, equitable and honest France, of carrying out a socialist revolution and of establishing the Fourth Republic and the United States of Europe. The approach shows a certain lack of political experience but the idea expressed in the article is animated by sincerity, and it indicates that the group "combat" is moving towards the left.

Liberate and Federate

The movement built around the underground journal "Libérer et Fédérer" [2] has also tried to prevent the work of resistance from being limited to mere anti-German agitation. The leaders of this movement are left-wing intellectuals, its members are mainly progressive Liberals and Catholics. In their journal of July 14th, which had an edition of 18,000 copies, this group published its political programme. Point 6 of this programme runs as follows:

"In collaboration with the governments of the countries freed from the Nazis and

Fascists the revolutionary government (of France) will create the basis of a European federation, built upon the principles of freedom, peace and prosperity."

To Win the Peace

An editorial of the same journal with the heading "To win the War and the Peace" especially stresses that the mistakes of 1918 must not be repeated as, if they are, another war will break out in 20 years time. It says:

"The battle for peace cannot be won by muddling through any more than can military battles ... To win the war means to liberate Europe from the yoke of the conquerors and to crush the influence of totalitarian regimes. To win the peace means to put into practice the ideals of justice and freedom for which the peoples are fighting to-day, to unite the nations of Europe and to create the conditions of a lasting peace. Our slogan is therefore: Liberate and federate. Let us liberate France and Europe from the fascist and Nazi conquerors and unite the nations of Europe in a Federation which will prevent the recurrence of wars."

In the October issue of the same journal a distinction is made between the patriotism which unites the nations and that which divides them. The necessity is stressed of resistance to any manoeuvres of discredited politicians of the old regime. It lines up behind "France Combattante" [3] and asserts the right of this movement to play a political rôle. A supplement to the journal contains an interesting article on the development of the world of to-morrow and on the problem of liberty.

The judgment of the comrade who sent us this report is:

"In going beyond the merely anti-German stage of resistance and setting out the objectives of French and European liberation, this articles and the manifesto meet the needs of the French masses."

Editorische Anmerkungen

1 - *Henri Giraud (1879-1949), französischer General, Sitz im französischen Kriegsrat (ab 1939), Kommandant der 7., später der 9. Armee, Gefangennahme durch die deutschen Wehrmacht (1940), Flucht in den unbesetzten Teil Frankreichs, Ablehnung der Kooperation mit den Deutschen, nach Landung der Alliierten in Nordafrika Oberbefehlshaber der Truppen, Hochkommissar von französisch Nord- und Westafrika, Teilnahme an der Konferenz von Casablanca (1943), Verlust seines Posten als Oberbefehlshaber, überlebte ein Attentat (1944), Mitglied der Verfassunggebenden Versammlung und des Kriegsrats (bis 1948).*

2 - *"Libérer et Fédérer", illegale französische Zeitung der Bewegung „Libérer et Fédérer“, der revolutionären Bewegung zur Befreiung und zum Wiederaufbau Frankreichs.*

3 - *"France Combattante", illegale Publikation der Widerstandsgruppe „France Libre“, die in „France Combattante“ umbenannt wurde.*