

---

## **E U R O P E   s p e a k s**

**[Heft 23,]  
14th April, 1943**

---

*[Seite: - 1 -]*

### **The Spirit of France**

#### **Illegal Leaflets**

Resistance in France, under the leadership of the Socialists and trade unionists, has developed into a unified mass movement. Following the big popular demonstrations of May 1st and July 14th, similar demonstrations took place on Armistice day, the 11th November. We publish below one of the inflammatory leaflets which were distributed in great numbers.

Together will all the resistance movements, Libération, addresses this appeal to the People of France:

"14th July - 11th November  
Fight for Liberty and Victory

They symbolise France. That is why the enemy and the traitors have effaced them from our calendars. In great numbers, four months ago you celebrated the 14th of July against the Enemy and the Traitors. On that day France became once more her true self. In great numbers you will celebrate the 11th of November.

Against the Enemy and the Traitors  
France will assert herself on that day.  
Against the Boche. Against Vichy.

With de Gaulle  
in the remembrance of Victory  
in the Certainty of Victory.

Patriots, on the 11th of November 1942, from noon onwards, assembled at the usual meeting places, you will proclaim the unanimous will of France.

**LIBERATION"**

The compulsory mobilisation decree issued by Sauckel and Hitler aroused the deepest resentment amongst the French people, because it aimed at forcing the French workers to become part of the German war machine. The following is a leaflet published by the combined French resistance movements and signed by all the organisations from the extreme right to the extreme left.

#### **"General Sabotage.**

The French working class lead the way: they have said NO to Hitler. They have said NO to the 'relève', to requisitioning, to forced labour for the enemy.

All Frenchmen should support them and side by side with them should fight and resist

in the struggle for Victory. The defeat of Germany is certain.

In agreement with the Comité National of Fighting France, in agreement with General de Gaulle, the Resistance movements have achieved Unity. They say to you: Sabotage the transports going to Germany;

*[Seite im Original:] - 2-*

Make common cause with the workers who have refused to go to Germany.

Enforce the liberation of the prisoners;

Ensure that the stocks of food destined to go to Germany shall be available to the people.

In response to every new appeal in favour of Germany: strike!

In response to the slightest police suppression: strike!

There is no longer any doubt: the strike, the traditional weapon of the working class, has become the indispensable instrument of national liberation.

Whereever strikes have been well organised, Vichy and the Gestapo have retreated.

Organise inside the factories and workshops, and inside the civil service.

Make contact with the French Resistance Movement.

Mobilisation of all patriots against the transport of workers to Germany."

## **The Illegal Socialist Party**

The February issue of "Le Populaire", the illegal paper of the Comité d'Action Socialiste which represents the former French Socialist party, contains a report written by one of the most active fighters in the underground struggle. We reproduce this report as evidence of the spirit which animates our French comrades.

### **"The work of our active fighters.**

Socialist organisation has achieved a complete renaissance. This is undoubtedly due to the initiative of the C.A.S. But this organisation would not have been successful if it had not met with such a wholehearted response from the rank and file.

It is unfortunately true that two thirds of our members of parliament betrayed our cause. Some of them were Socialists because it was to their personal advantage. These people abandoned their country, the Republic, and Socialism when they thought that the Democracies were definitely destroyed.

Our active fighters, on the other hand lived for their ideal. They were Patriots, Republicans and Socialists in the past; to-day they are even more ardent Patriots, more devoted Republicans and Socialists. They have never lost faith in their country. They have realised that losing a battle only means defeat for those who surrender. Thus, when we found them again, their mood was one of tense and eager expectation of the moment when they could resume the struggle.

I enjoyed the rare privilege of being one of the first to come into contact with them again. My visit, on behalf of the C.A.S., aroused such enthusiasm that the occasion will always be imprinted on my memory as one of the most poignant moments I have experienced.

After its long silence, the Party was coming to them and appealing to them to work and help in the liberation of our territory and the restoration of the Republic; it was for them a recompense, an unexpected compensation for the many months of isolation they

had just been experiencing!

I saw the miners of the Loire, the metal workers of the Allier, the potters and the boot and shoe operatives of Limoges, the peasants and workers of the whole free zone, office workers, artisans and shopkeepers. All gave me the same hearty welcome and all accepted without reserve the instructions and the disciplinary code which I was entrusted to convey to them.

*[Seite im Original:] - 3-*

Then the Populaire appeared. I distributed the first number. It was not even printed. One could hardly read it. It met, however, with great success. I have seen tears in the eyes of more than one of our comrades when I handed it to them. Since then 'POPU' **[1]** has steadily and successfully carried on.

The repercussions of the Riam trial, the light it shed on the real causes of our misfortune, coupled with the popularity enjoyed by the 'Populaire', served to produce an especially favourable atmosphere for the C.A.S. Our regional organisations were reconstituted on new foundations. Old and new alike, vying with each other in their fervour, became the moving spirits of the great demonstrations everywhere in the country.

France will come into her own again. Our prisoners will come back; both those from Germany and those who lie rotting in the prisons and concentrations camp of Vichy. Once all accounts have been settled, we will re-plant the tree of Liberty and in cooperation with all men of goodwill we will establish a regenerated Republic, a social democratic Republic."

## **The Future of the Socialist Party**

But the illegal papers of the active French socialists do not deal only with problems directly related to the day to day struggle; this is shown by the following article on the renaissance of the political parties, taken from the December, January and February issues of "Le Populaire" 1942-43.

"For some time, the work of reconstructing a Socialist organisation has come up against a dangerous objection, sometimes even from our own comrades. Many well-meaning people have considered the idea of political parties as out of date and their existence as harmful.

The causes which have lead to this state of mind are extremely complex. One might, however, especially mention three. First, the official propaganda for two years ("the parties are responsible for the weakness of the State and therefore for the defeat. Their egoism, the bitterness of their disputes both within their own ranks and between the different parties, their thirst for power, all this must be condemned ..."). In the second place the realisation of the undeniable fact that not a single party organisation stood up to the impact of the war and defeat. Finally, a feeling common to all members of the French resistance movement and which the C.A.S. has recently sought to deepen - that everything should be subordinated to the liberation of the country and the community of aims and activity should break down all the former barriers whose revival would hinder the task of liberation.

We can certainly agree that at the present time common action is demanded of all Frenchmen, action which does not leave any room for egoistic competition between

parties. We form part of this indispensable unity and we are ready to accept the discipline. But we go still further. We are determined that in future our organisation shall be purged of a number of past defects. We have already expelled those men whose actions were devoid of decency, sincerity or courage. We shall not readmit them to-morrow. Furthermore our internal organisation will not be the same as it was in the past. And lastly, our propaganda will be divested of everything which might prevent us from mustering our strength in the hour of peril.

*[Seite im Original:] - 4-*

But having freely conceded all this, one essential consideration still remains which it would not be right to overlook. The France of to-morrow, liberated and therefore independent, will be a democracy, since the defeat of the Axis will signify the universal victory of the democracies.

No democracy can exist without parties. It is in a totalitarian state that everything is uniform and homogenous. What is called the 'single party' is one of the institutions of a dictatorship. It is one of the signs of the existence of such a régime. Only the rigidity of the state or inertia of the people can bring uniformity. There is no liberty without diversity, - diversity with all the opposition and conflicts which it involves, is nevertheless a necessary condition for change and progress. Let us not forget that any action directed against the conception of parties is an attack on democracy itself.

What has marred public life for nearly half a century is not the fact of the existence of political parties but their lack of coherence, organisation and discipline. It is the methods employed in public life and especially in parliament. It is the fact that the political parties, though in different degrees, have frequently sacrificed their programmes - that is to say their principles - first of all to the exigencies of the electoral struggle or merely to make life easier, and later-on they have done the same in the parliamentary struggle.

The primary condition for the renaissance of all the parties is based on the radical reform of parliamentarianism as it has existed in France since 1875, which by no means represents the only possible form of democratic constitution.

But this general reform is not sufficient. The Socialist Party must be prepared to go still deeper in their criticism.

The Party is faced with the same problems as the State itself - the place of authority inside a democracy, centralisation side by side with local autonomy, greater and more intimate contact with the rank and file.

They should renounce the language of hate, they should appeal to the highest motives in human nature, and they should set an example of loyalty and disinterestedness in the political struggle. Their words and deeds should never conflict with the national welfare, which for them is an inseparable part of international welfare and the welfare of the whole of mankind.

The Socialist party of to-morrow then, will not be the same as that of yesterday. Some have left the party and some have been expelled. New elements, especially young people, have been recruited. The tone, methods, and direction of our propaganda will be different. So will our tactics and internal organisation.

On the other hand we have nothing whatever to alter in our 'Socialist principles'. In this sphere there is nothing to 'reconsider', nothing to revise. The events of the last three years have confirmed this again and again.

Even those who hate Socialism and attack it, wishing to destroy it at all costs, in all their utterances and gestures cannot avoid paying lip service to Socialism.

*[Seite im Original:] - 5-*

'Socialist criticism of the existing régime has become the common basis of government rhetoric', we wrote in our last manifesto. Capitalism and individualism are things of the past, competition has been destroyed, the profit system stands condemned. The dictatorships appeal to people in the name of Socialism and cloak themselves in our formulas, although at the same time they discredit them, particularly in France, by the inconsistent, hypocritical and wholly unsatisfactory manner in which they apply them in practice. Everywhere the exigencies of the war have interfered with the functioning of liberal economy and have necessitated collective methods of production and distribution.

We have nothing to change. Let us proclaim this with a sense of pride but not with surprise. For what after all is Socialism? It is democracy extended to social relations and organised on an international scale. It is the application of justice or true equality in the production and distribution of wealth. And the principles neither of democracy nor of justice have been affected by the universal crisis.

There are some who do not know our principles, some who have attacked them in the past, without really understanding them. But what do even they hope for, however vaguely, from the future? They dream of freedom without egoism, of a society without privileges, of authority without despotism. They dream of an ordered cooperation for the common good among all men of good will.

Democratic Socialism, which our party still stands for, is the doctrine which combines personal and civil liberties with economic stability and social equality. We have no need to rectify it or readjust it. We have no need to modify its meaning, though it has been distorted by the misuse of the formulas which express it, though it has been slandered and ridiculed in political controversy. We have only to present itself in its true form.

Who will dare to dispute the justification of a Socialist party in a society in which socialism expresses the most powerful and clearest aspirations of the people? Who will dare to deny that it should be ready to play its part in the French democracy of to-morrow?

But socialism is not merely an indispensable part of French public life in the indefinite future. It has a part to play here and now. It cannot wait until democratic government is definitely and securely established and provides free scope for all parties to develop freely. Whilst it is ready - we emphasize this again - to cooperate in every possible way with all sections of the resistance movement in pursuit of our common aim of liberating our country, it has to-day and henceforward a specific task to fulfil. It must prepare for that task forthwith."

---

1 - „Popu“, Abkürzung für „Le Populaire“.