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France

We publish below an article from "Libérer et Fédérer", one of the French underground papers, and the journal of the Revolutionary movement for a Socialist and Federalist Republic. The programme of the movement is published in the same issue and is summarised as follows:

"Libérer and Fédérer wants:

To liberate France and Europe from the fascist and Nazi invaders and to federate the peoples of Europe to prevent the recurrence of future wars.

To liberate France from capitalist exploitation and federate the workers and peasants, the technicians and intellectuals, the traders and the artisans so that they may carry out cooperative production for the benefit of the people.

To liberate the nation from the old parties who were a source of discord and demagogy and to federate all Frenchmen in the great army of Socialist reconstruction.

To liberate the people from the yoke of the centralised state, with its fatal tendency towards totalitarianism and dictatorship, and to federate the people and their occupational and spiritual communities so as to coordinate their activity whilst at the same time respecting their autonomy as much as possible."

The following is the above mentioned article:

"Against the stream"

On the question of the reconstruction of France there is still a dangerous confusion which must be continuously attacked.

This confusion actually dates from the very beginning of the resistance movement. But at that period there was at least some justification. When, immediately after the disaster of June 1940, a few isolated individuals stood up against the flood of treachery, fear, cowardice and weak opportunism and hoisted the flag of resistance, they could scarcely have had any other concern than the liberation of their country. Victory seemed to them at that moment too distant and uncertain a prospect to call for any discussions on the problems of reconstruction. And the resisters were too few in number, too weak and too isolated to risk causing disunity on account of their political beliefs.

But since then there has been a considerable development and the situation has greatly changed. The members

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of the resistance movement are to-day no longer a handful of hunted men, without resources or support. They are now an immense army whose ranks are constantly swelled by the influx of new recruits.

There is no longer any danger that those who might be shocked by a revolutionary solution of the problems of the future might abandon the resistance movement. Such people who in the main joined the resistance movement only at the eleventh hour have too much to apologise for to make difficulties now that the defeat of Nazi Germany seems certain. ...

And furthermore, whether we like it or not, as the victory of the Allies draws near the problem of reconstruction is growing urgent and is increasingly becoming the prime concern of the French people.

Nearly all Frenchmen - all true Frenchmen - are to-day convinced that the France of to-morrow cannot and must not be as it was before 1939.

Nearly all Frenchmen, loathing as they do the so-called "national revolutionary" regime of Laval and Pétain, look forward to a post-war France which will also put an end to the blunders and injustices of the third Republic and will at last set up a real Republic based on liberty and justice.

But, though this may appear paradoxical, the more the French people show their concern about post-war problems the more the men who seemed to have had the aim of securing the renaissance of France appear desirous of postponing and avoiding these problems.

Of course they do not go so far as to assert that the problems of reconstruction are non-existent. Everybody admits that the coming establishment of the fourth Republic must be accompanied by fundamental reforms. But these reforms are mentioned by the way, and are not stressed or, what is more important, given any precise content. "In order to preserve unity in the resistance movement", they say, "we must avoid all controversial issues."

Avoid all controversial issues? What does that mean? Do they imagine that the problems of peace will solve themselves of their own accord, or that the conflicts they will arouse will be less dangerous after the war than now? They seem to forget that the struggle for peace can no more be left to improvisation than the military struggle can and that for France the fight to win the peace is of vital importance. ...

The glory of France, the position she occupies in the world, has hitherto been due as much or more to her spiritual creativeness as to her material power. France has always been great because she has never ceased to be the standard-bearer of civilisation, the champion of liberty. ...

To-morrow even with her reduced material resources, France can regain her position amongst the great nations if, as in the past, she becomes the symbol of the ideals for which the peoples of the world are now fighting; if as in the past, whilst effecting her own revolution she assumes

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the leadership of the revolution which all the peoples of the world are awaiting, the revolution which through socialism and federalism will at last establish the reign of justice and liberty for which so many are now suffering and dying.

But, in order to carry out such a revolution, to become its champion and leader throughout the world, the French people must be prepared, organised and allotted their specific tasks ... and if their own leaders do not start with this work who else can see to it that the efforts of the French people are directed towards the achievement of their historic mission. ...

Those who have entered the resistance movement for their own profit, the careerists, the opportunists of all shade are only concerned to please everybody; their desire is always to swim with the stream.

The members of "Libérer and Féderér" have no such concern. Ready for any sacrifice in the service of the ideal for which they are fighting, they are not afraid of arousing opposition. Convinced of the rightness of their cause and of the future triumph of their ideas, they do not hesitate to go against the stream when it is not flowing in the direction of the aims which they have set themselves.

Just as in 1940 France had need of men determined to stand against the stream of betrayal, so to-day she needs teams of men strong enough to stand against the stream which is trying to draw the nation away from the path of its renaissance. -

We have reproduced this article by our French comrades of the movement "Libérer and Féderér" in order to show how the problems of the post-war period are calling for urgent attention in the French resistance movement as elsewhere. We see the anxieties of comrades who share our opinion that the solution of these problems cannot be left until after the war.

Germany

The following reports from inside Germany were all written between December 1943 and February 1944. The first report came from a large town in Western Germany. The situation it describes prevailed throughout the whole of the district.

Air-Raids

"The damage caused by the air-raids is terrific. The people who have lost their homes are a great embarrassment to the government and also to their fellow-citizens; this, of course, is not their fault. But the ill feeling about the extra trouble by the bombed-out people is growing.

In spite of this the propaganda against the so-called 'terror raids' meets with no response. Meetings are very poorly attended, even so-called compulsory meetings, which every employee of the factory or every member of the organisation which has called the meeting is obliged to attend.

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Opposition

In spite of terrible threats on the part of the officials, the Gestapo and the police, the whispering propaganda continues. Not only Hitler but his generals, too, are blamed for lengthening the war.

Sabotage in the X works in A, B, C, and D. is on the increase. Every day we hear new details about them. (The letters A, B, C, D stand for four of the biggest towns in

Germany). Transport, too, is affected by sabotage, although many other factors contribute to the confusion there. The result is that trains are sometimes cancelled altogether; tracks and rolling stock are in a terrible state, rusty and shaky.

Sometimes leaflets appear and are eagerly read; not only by German but also by foreign workers, including prisoners of war.

The B.B.C. and the broadcasts from stations of Fighting France [1] are listened to by many people. We have issued special instructions how to listen in without running unnecessary risks.

Terror

The Gestapo is again very nervous. Throughout Germany there are many arrests every day.

Peace at Any Price

Our working day amounts sometimes to fifteen hours, our working time is quite irregular. Some of us walk about like shadows. Those who have no wires to pull are miserably off. Everybody is dead tired, and above all war-weary. We hope that we shall soon be able to breathe freely once more and that peace will come soon, no matter what kind of peace."

A group of workers, socialists and trade unionists of long standing, sent us the following report:

Marvellous

"A demobilised German soldier told us: At the front they never listened in to broadcasts from Germany because everybody knew that they were not telling the truth. The soldiers could check that up themselves: the news reported slight reconnaissance activities in their sector at a time when they were involved in heavy fighting. On the other hand, the broadcasts from London were regularly listened to. When they heard on several occasions that the British had shot down German aircraft they said spontaneously: 'Marvellous'. One of the soldiers then rebuked them with the words: 'I think it is horrible of us to find this marvellous. After all, the crew that has been shot down were our own comrades.' Thereupon the soldiers decided not to listen in to any wireless at all.

Desertions

Special measures are taken to prevent persons of military age from evading military service. For instance, German workers whose work takes them regularly abroad are allowed to continue this job only if they are over the military age (which is 56 years!) or if they have relations inside Germany who can be used as hostages in case they do not return to Germany.

The question is often asked why cases of desertion are relatively rare. The main cause is the fear of the brutal

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consequences. The Gestapo takes drastic reprisals against the parents of deserters;

they confiscate their property, they deport their relations. Moreover, the soldiers at the front are closely watched and there is a great danger of being shot before the enemy positions can be reached. Again, in the view of many soldiers it is by no means certain what the Russians will do with deserters. And last, not least: Many soldiers consider it a betrayal of their fellow-soldiers and comrades in misery, to let them down.

Food

Nutrition has considerably deteriorated. This becomes most obvious when one meets people whom one has not seen for a few months. It is not only that people look badly fed, they generally do not receive adequate medical attention. At one time workers who worked a few days or even a week abroad had none of their rations cut; now they lose their coupons for even three days. At one time the entire crew on board ship received the extra rations allowed for very heavy workers. To-day only firemen, engine room hands and the captain get these extra rations. Formerly this extra ration was distributed even while a ship was under repair. This is no longer the case.

Opposition

A report from the Saar district informed us that the once favourable attitude of the people towards the Nazis has altered greatly.

At first the foreign workers there were allowed a relatively great amount of freedom. Now they have to work in closed units under supervision because their relationship to the German population had become too close.

German officers on leave often openly express their dissatisfaction at the German High Command's inability to prevent the bombing of German territory.

In the course of one week 33 Russians working in Strasbourg were sent to Schirmeck prison, they were accused of not having worked hard enough.

After air-raids we often hear remarks such as this: "If only the devil would take the right people for once!" The other day we witnessed a rather hot-tempered conversation in the course of which one person half in jest and half in earnest called the other a Prussian, whereupon the other called him a Nazi. A third person then said calmly and seriously: Nazis or no Nazis, none of us has a say in matters. Whether Prussians or Alsatians or Saarlanders, it is us every time who have to do the work. That's why we have to stand together. To that the man who had been called a Prussian said: "Well said. You are quite right. But a time will come again when we shall be able to open our mouths." - The next morning we asked one of the three participants whether they should not have been a bit more careful in expressing their feelings. His answer was: "When we are quite amongst ourselves you would be surprised at our language. The Nazis could not kill the old spirit. It is still alive and if things go on like this it will assert itself one of these days."

The following points are taken from various reports:

Terror

"In Mannheim a number of N.S.D.A.P. officials were accused of sabotaging the food supply of the German people. They had neglected the decentralisation of big

stores of wheat as a consequence of which the wheat was destroyed in an air raid on Mannheim. It is fairly certain that nothing but negligence was behind it. They were punished all the same, because the whole of the population was very embittered.

Recently we saw a Frenchman who had been released from a concentration camp. He was a man of 22; we took him for 60. Russians and Poles who managed to escape and who have safely arrived abroad all agreed on the following points: Their food was completely insufficient; the guards treated them badly and brutally; the majority of the civilian population were very kind to them, in most cases civilians had made their escape possible.

The system of denunciation has been more and more developed as a pillar of the whole terror apparatus. Lately we have noticed a number of police officials or other government officials accepting jobs as ordinary workers or office staff - obviously to be in a better position to spy upon the workers. But of course, the workers soon know when a new spy has appeared upon the scene."

Transport

"The difficulties of the Nazis in keeping the transport system going are constantly increasing. From all parts of Germany there are reports of serious bottlenecks. It is difficult to establish whether in a particular case the bottleneck is caused by sabotage or by one of the usual factors: unskilled or overtired personnel; deterioration of permanent way and rolling stock; overloading of trucks; general shortage of staff. The extent of transport difficulties is indicated by the view, seriously held by some, that one of the reasons why the Nazis have so far failed to reply to the Anglo-American air-raids with the promised reprisals is that they have lacked the means of transport necessary to get the explosives to the places where it was required."

Corruption

"Nobody believes that the Nazis will eliminate corruption from public life. For a year a father sent his son stationed in Denmark a weekly parcel of tobacco and cigarettes. Not one arrived.

It is well known that nepotism plays a big part in the billeting of evacuees. The homes of civil servants and party officials are rarely used as billets. Even material for the repair of bombed houses like wood for doors and window frames, can often be obtained only if the price offered includes as bribe - tobacco or something of the kind."

The Way Out?

"What are the political prospects of the Nazi regime? There is a general consensus of opinion as to this question: Within the Third Reich there is only one power comparable with the terror apparatus of the Nazi regime: The military forces. A military putsch is therefore the only way the regime could at present be overthrown. A military defeat will of course alter the picture - the more unstable the regime, the better the chance of the achievement of power by other social groups."

Editorische Anmerkungen

1 - „*Fighting France*“, französischer Rundfunksender der Widerstandsbewegung, der im Zweiten Weltkrieg in Deutschland gehört werden konnte. Weitere Daten konnten nicht ermittelt werden.