

14 Charles Lane  
New York, N.Y. 10014  
Sept. 3, 1973

TO ALL ORGANIZERS

Dear Comrades,

When the French Communist League was banned by the Pompidou regime, we and other Trotskyist groups throughout the world organized immediate protest actions including picket lines and public statements from groups and individuals.

Although Comrade Alain Krivine has been released from prison under the impact of the protest campaign, Comrade Pierre Rousset still remains in prison and the French government has not re-treated on its dissolution of the League. It is clear that a consistent, energetic defense campaign must be maintained on an international scale. In this country, a Committee for Defense of the Rights of the Communist League in France is being formed.

The National Office has assigned Comrade Caroline Lund to coordinate the party's work in this campaign on a national scale. Each branch should assign someone to take responsibility for organizing this work in each area.

Our immediate goal will be to obtain signatures of prominent individuals for the three demands that are being raised by the defense committee in France. After gaining this initial layer of supporters, the defense committee will be in a position to consider additional activities for the future, such as tours, public meetings, etc.

The first step in this campaign should be given immediate attention. After assigning a comrade to head up the work, a list should be drawn up of the most important individuals to approach in your area. The defense committee fact sheet and petition should be sent or delivered to these people, and then they should be called or visited and asked to sign. At the same time, they should be asked to make a financial contribution.

The fact sheet and a petition (copies are enclosed) can be reproduced in each area. For more details on the banning of the League, comrades should reread the article by Jon Rothschild in the July 9 Intercontinental Press.

It is important for the defense committee to obtain an initial list of signers within a week or ten days, in order to lay the basis for a serious effort on a national scale. We hope to have at least a few important names in time for a story in The Militant that goes to press Sept. 13. The article will announce the campaign for signatures and the existence of the new defense committee in this country. The deadline for the story is Tuesday, Sept. 11. Any important names obtained by that time should be called in to The Militant by Tuesday night.

Comradely,



Ed Shaw  
National Office

## French Government Outlaws Political Organization

On June 28, 1973, the French Council of Ministers voted to outlaw the Ligue Communiste (Communist League), a political organization that was founded in 1969. The pretext for the ban was a June 21 demonstration organized by the League and eight other groups against a fascist meeting in Paris. In order to appear impartial, the Pompidou regime banned the sponsor of the fascist meeting, Ordre Nouveau (New Order) as well as the League.

Several days later the general secretary of the Communist League, Alain Krivine, was arrested. Krivine had run for president of France against Georges Pompidou in both the 1969 and 1973 elections. He was charged under the notorious "anti-wrecker law" (loi anti-casseurs), according to which the leader of an organization can be held responsible for any illegal acts committed by anybody in the course of a demonstration called by that organization.

Krivine was out of town on the night of the June 21 demonstration and did not even take part in it.

Also imprisoned was Pierre Rousset, another leader of the League, who happened to be in the League's headquarters June 22, when police ransacked the offices and claimed to have found some illegal weapons there. Rousset is charged with possession of weapons.

Alain Krivine was provisionally released from prison Aug. 2, but will face trial this fall. Rousset is still in prison as of this writing.

### Protests throughout France and worldwide

The French government's ban on the League and persecution of its leaders met with an immediate outcry of protest. The two largest French trade unions, together with the Communist Party and Socialist Party and League for the Rights of Man sponsored a protest rally of some 10,000 people on July 4 in Paris.

Thousands of French people have signed a petition demanding the lifting of the ban on the League and dropping of charges against its leaders. Signers of the petition in France include such prominent individuals as writer Simone de Beauvoir, film director Constantine Costa-Gavras, writer Marguerite Duras, journalist Michelle Ray, actress Jean Seberg, philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre, and actor Yves Montand.

In Britain, five members of parliament sent a protest letter to French President Pompidou including Michael Foot, a member of the Labour Party "shadow cabinet."

In Germany there were protest meetings of 2,000 in Frankfurt, and 5,000 at the Free University of West Berlin. In Australia, Pompidou's action has been protested by such figures as Dr. Jim Cairns, Minister for Overseas Trade and Secondary Industry, and Bob Hawke, federal president of the Labor Party and president of the Australian Council of Trade Unions.

August 1973

Committee for Defense of the Rights of the Communist League in France

Petition for the Rights of the Communist League in France

Petitions to the Pompidou regime based on the three demands included below are being circulated internationally as well as throughout France. The French National Committee Against the Dissolution of the Communist League hopes to receive tens or even hundreds of thousands of signatures to these petitions, which will be publicly presented to the Pompidou government.

TO: President Georges Pompidou of the Republic of France

Mr. President:

We the undersigned view with alarm the action of your government in banning the Communist League. The right to form political organizations is one of the most basic of democratic freedoms. While not necessarily agreeing with the views or actions of the Communist League, we believe it must have the right to exist if democratic norms are to be observed in France.

Therefore we join with the many French political figures, trade unionists, artists, academicians, and others who are demanding:

- 1) Lift the ban on the Communist League.
- 2) Drop all charges against leaders or members of the League.
- 3) Free Pierre Rousset, imprisoned leader of the dissolved League.

Name

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Committee for Defense of the Rights of the Communist League in France  
Send this petition to: 150 Fifth Avenue, Suite 737  
New York, N.Y. 10011

Financial contributions are also needed.

Committee for Defense of the Rights of the  
Communist League in France

September 12, 1973

PIERRE ROUSSET RELEASED FROM PRISON

PETITION DRIVE LAUNCHED TO PROTEST BAN ON FRENCH POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

Pierre Rousset, a leader of the banned Communist League in France, was freed from prison August 31. This is an important victory for democratic rights in France and a victory for the international campaign of protest against the French government's persecution of the Communist League. It follows the August 2 release from prison of Alain Krivine, general secretary of the banned organization.

In this country a petition is being circulated demanding that the Pompidou regime repeal its June 28 decree banning the Communist League. The League was banned, and two of its central leaders arrested, following a demonstration by the League and other left and labor groups to protest a racist meeting called by the fascist organization Ordre Nouveau.

Signers of the petition to French President Pompidou include Ruth Gage-Colby of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom; Dave McReynolds, War Resisters League; Michael Harrington, Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee; Bert Corona, director, CASA Hermandad; authors Dalton Trumbo, Bernard Wolfe, Truman Nelson and Jose Yglesias; Dorothy Healey, radio commentator; William Kunstler, attorney; Art Kunin, editor, Los Angeles Weekly News; Sam Bowles, economist; Greg Cain, executive board, Minnesota Federation of Teachers Local 59; and Ray Londo, vice president, Local 107, Postal Workers Union.

A similar petition in France has already been signed by more than 5,000 people, including such prominent persons as Simone de Beauvoir, Constantine Costa-Gavras, Jean-Paul Sartre, Yves Montand, and leaders of the major French trade unions and political organizations.

Leaders of the dissolved Communist League have filed an appeal against the ban on their organization. The French Council of State is expected to rule on this appeal sometime in October.

An example of the mounting international support for the rights of the League is the motion recently passed by the Canberra, Australia, Trades and Labor Council opposing "the undemocratic action of the Pompidou government in France in banning the Ligue Communiste, a French working class organization." The resolution went on to say that the Council "considers actions against such groups as a denial of basic democratic liberties and...a threat to the labor movement as a whole."

Six British members of Parliament have issued an open letter to French President Pompidou protesting the ban. They are Phillip Whitehead, Eric Heffer, Norman Atkinson, Michael

Foot, and Frank Allaun.

Members of the Canadian parliament have also publicly protested the ban, as have Henry Gautrin, president of the Quebec New Democratic Party; Henri Gagnon of the Federation of Quebec Workers; and Michel Chartrand of the Confederation of National Unions of Quebec.

The Committee for Defense of the Rights of the Communist League in France appeals to all supporters of civil liberties to aid the defense campaign in the United States. Worldwide pressure brought to bear on the Pompidou regime can help to reverse this attack by the French government on one of the most basic democratic rights -- the right to form a political organization.

Signed petitions should be sent to:

Francoise Collet  
2310 Creston Ave. Apt. 6A  
Bronx, New York 10468

Donations are badly needed to finance the defense campaign. They can be sent to the defense committee in this country or in France. In the U.S., contributions should be sent to the committee's secretary treasurer, Francoise Collet, at the above address, with checks made out to Francoise Collet. Donations can also be sent to the French defense committee c/o Michel Foucault, C.C.P., Paris 26 15, France.

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