

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 Kunkin, 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.