Beat: Politics

DECLARATION OF GENERAL DE GAULLE PUBLISHED IN FRANCE IN THE CLANDESTINE PAPERS

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USPA NEWS - The last veils behind which the enemy and traitors plotted against France have now been torn down. The issue at stake in this war is plain to all Frenchmen : independence or slavery. It is the sacred duty of every man to contribute all he can...

The last veils behind which the enemy and traitors plotted against France have now been torn down. The issue at stake in this war is plain to all Frenchmen : independence or slavery. It is the sacred duty of every man to contribute all he can to the liberation of our country through the invader's defeat. There can be no solution and no future for us except through victory.

Yet this gigantic ordeal has shown the nation that the danger threatening its existence does not come solely from outside, and that victory without courageous and thorough internal reconstruction would not be real victory.

One moral, social, political and economic régime, paralysed by corruption, has abdicated in defeat. Another, arising from a criminal capitulation, is drunk with personal power. Both are condemned by the French people who, even as they unite for victory, are massing for revolution.

In spite of the fetters and gags of slavery, a thousand tokens, coming from the very heart of the nation, allow us to glimpse her desires and hopes. In the name of France, we proclaim these, and affirm the war aims of the French people.

We want our country to recover everything that belongs to her. For us, the end of the war means the restoration of complete integrity to France, the Empire and the national heritage ; it means that the nation must once again exercise absolute sovereignty over its own destiny.

Any usurpation, whether from inside or beyond our frontiers, must be destroyed and swept away. As we mean to make France once again sole mistress of her fate, we shall likewise see to it that the French people alone are masters of their destiny. At the same time as they are freed from enemy oppression, all their internal liberties must be restored. Once the enemy is driven from our land, all French men and women will elect a National Assembly, which, in the full exercise of its sovereignty, will determine the country's future.

We seek retribution for every blow which has been, or is now, aimed at the rights, interests and honour of the French nation, and intend all such dangers to be eliminated. This means, first and foremost, that enemy leaders violating the laws of war to the detriment of French persons and property must be punished, together with the traitors who co-operate with them. Next, it means that the totalitarian system which incited, armed and hurled our enemies against us, as well as the systematic coalition of private interests which, in France, has worked against the interests of the nation, must simultaneously and for all time be overthrown.

We want all Frenchmen to be able to live in security. In the sphere of external policy, we must obtain material guarantees to render France's hereditary invader incapable of further aggression and despotism. At home, practical guarantees must be worked out to put an end to the oppression constituted by perpetual infringement of rights, and to ensure freedom and dignity in work and life for every citizen. For us, national and social security are imperative and inseparable aims.

We seek to destroy for ever the robot-like organisation of the masses, such as the enemy has achieved in contempt of all religion, morals and humanity, simply because he believed himself strong enough to ride roughshod over the rest of the world. And simultaneously, in a mighty resurgence of national and imperial resources under expert technical direction, we mean the time-honoured French ideal of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity to be henceforth a reality in our land, so that each individual may be free in his thoughts, beliefs and acts, that from the sociological point of view all may start out with equal opportunities, and that every man be respected by his fellows and helped in need.

We want this war, similarly affecting the future of all peoples and uniting the democracies in one and the same effort, to result in a world organisation which will establish in every sphere lasting solidarity and mutual help between nations. And we intend that, in this international organisation, France shall take the eminent position to which her genius and merit entitle her.

France and the world strive and suffer for freedom, justice and the right of the individual to self-determination. This right to self-determination, this justice and freedom must win the war in fact and in law to the advantage of every man and the benefit of every State.

Such a victory for France and humanity can alone compensate our country for the unparalleled trials she is undergoing, and once again open up for her the road to greatness. A victory like this is worth every effort and every sacrifice. We shall conquer.

Source : Declaration of general de Gaulle published in France in the clandestine papers on, June 23rd 1942.

Ruby BIRD
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UPA United Press Agency LTD
483 Green Lanes
UK, London N13NV 4BS
contact (at) unitedpressagency.com
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