

## What does it mean to be socialist in 2020?

The 2017 earthquake has fractured the French political landscape. The absence of the Left in the second round, on the evening of May 7, brought us back to "an April 21, 2002". We had to take all our share of responsibility for this failure. The socialists did not sufficiently embody the will for social transformation desired by the French during our exercise of power. The socialist identity gradually dissolved in a liberal shift that was not understood and that the circumstances of the time did not impose. Little by little, we moved away from the working and popular classes.

Three years later, the "new world" candidate Emmanuel Macron has hints of the old world, only worse. The President unashamedly assumes a right-wing position. His strategy is clear: polarize the debate between him and the extreme right to leave no room for other possible alternatives. His strategy leaves a real space in the national political landscape for the Left, which we must participate in filling. It is obvious that, dispersed, the Left has no chance of making it to the second round of the presidential election, but together it can claim to propose a real political alternation to the French. The strategy initiated by the First Secretary has proven its effectiveness in the last municipal and senatorial elections.

The risk of a new duel between a liberal right and the extreme right invites us to reinvent ourselves and to reaffirm who we are in order to propose another path to the French. The Socialist Party must now begin its transformation towards the 21st century: let us be lucid and audacious. We are no longer hegemonic, and the other Left formations may be tempted to "do without us". However, the Socialist Party remains the essential central force for federating and winning the Left when we are united.

The Socialist Party is rooted in its political camp, the Left. In today's society, socialism must recover what made its DNA. It must reappropriate its values and assume its will to transform French society and the Republic.

### **I) Reaffirming our values**

#### **Carrying eco-socialism.**

The fight against inequality and discrimination is the *raison d'être* of the Socialist Party. However, for several years now, our society has been going through multiple crises that call into question our social model, our bulwark against the deepening of inequalities.

With the Covid-19 health crisis, they exploded and became even more visible. This crisis brought to light certain forgotten and too often devalued professions, as well as obvious failures of the State in the management of the crisis. These were partly compensated for by movements of citizen solidarity. In addition, there are environmental crises that will lead to new economic and social crises. It is therefore essential that the Socialist Party propose a global response to all of these problems, because it is the only party that has been able to offer a global response to all of them.

party that integrates social justice at the heart of all its reflections and that knows how to combine it with ecological urgency.

Indeed, to be socialist is to carry eco-socialism. These two notions are intrinsically linked. Socialism fully integrates ecology, because the latter is a new source of inequality. However, the Socialist Party defends a humanist ecology rather than a naturalist ecology, a social ecology rather than a punitive ecology. We must be vigilant about ecology that tends to put the human species and the plant species on an equal footing. However, every action counts and the effects of global warming are already being felt.

It is our most fragile citizens who are the first victims of the environmental emergency. Ecology must be combined with social issues, the end of the world and the end of the month are not without each other.

**Reconnect with the republican brotherhood. Socialism is republican.**

As Jean Jaurès said, *"Without the Republic socialism is impotent, without socialism the Republic is empty"*. Certainly Jaurès' initial promise of "the Republic to the end" did not come true, but it is precisely our responsibility to give a concrete translation to this promise of republican brotherhood, to make the Republic a common crucible. The very idea of the Republic has gradually become an abstraction incapable of responding to the expectations and concrete aspirations of many of us, especially the younger generations. Our republic has abandoned entire populations by agreeing to subcontract to others, security, education, health, solidarity and ecological transition. It is because the Republic has not kept "its promise to go all the way" that some are tempted to turn away, to withdraw into a culture, to close themselves off from a community or to claim an identity. And it is in these flaws of a public power that is too absent that identities are engulfed. We must make this sad observation and take full responsibility for it.

The Republic is not compatible with withdrawal into oneself, nor with communitarianism. Above all, let us not renounce its universality; universality must remain a requirement. The Socialist Party must firmly assume this subject on the Left and within society. France has no skin color, France has no religion, indigenism must be fought. It is because our Republic is secular, that each and everyone, beyond their religious or cultural affinities, shares the same community of destinies: our national community. The barbaric act committed in the name of radical Islamism on October 16, 2020 must challenge us. When Freedom of Expression is attacked for radical religious reasons in neighborhoods, schools or universities, it is our Republic that is under attack. To those who ignore or refuse to understand what our secularism is and weaken it, we must remember that in France, the freedom to think, to express oneself, to caricature, is an achievement of our long history. It is not negotiable. Let us reaffirm the urgent need to fight, very actively, against Islamist radicalization. The Socialist Party and the Left must denounce even more firmly those who are complacent with extremism.

religious. Let us make secularism "a shield against fundamentalism," which protects believers and atheists alike, within our society. Let us proudly display our attachment to the 1905 law guaranteeing our good living together. To be socialist is to have secularism pegged to the body.

### **For a more social and united Europe.**

#### **To be socialist is to be deeply and sincerely European.**

In line with Jacques Delors, we must be the spokespersons and builders of a "fair, sustainable, democratic and inclusive" European Union.

The very existence and sustainability of the European Union is nowadays disputed. It was built to ensure peace on our continent, it must now bring the peoples closer together. However, within its own borders, the fundamental principles of the EU are being questioned by several member states. Moreover, the EU appears to its citizens as a distant, technocratic and anti-democratic object. The particular interest seems to take precedence over the general interest. The Socialist Party must therefore define a clear social, economic and ecological program for the EU in order to guarantee its citizens a sustainable common social base. The European construction that we defend has always put Progress at the center of our concerns. It is more than ever a necessity today. It is necessary to defend the creation of a European minimum wage, a European tax system and to plead for a new migration policy. All these subjects must enable us to defend a harmonization of the best social conditions for all Europeans.

#### **II) Let us recreate a militant convergence.**

On the strength of its values, the Socialist Party must also undertake a reform of its internal functioning, which is what was undertaken through the Socialist Renaissance that we initiated. Without a serene functioning, the Socialist Party will not be able to carry out all of its struggles effectively. We must recreate a militant convergence to be in phase with society and the French people.

#### **Recovering the serenity of the debate to reconnect with society.**

Today, the Socialist Party has sometimes abandoned the serene internal debate, in mutual respect. We lose our energy and our militants in sterile internal quarrels. Our elected representatives have distanced themselves from the grassroots. This observation should lead us to question and reinvent ourselves.

The Socialist Party has long been the party of the workers, of the wage earners, of the people. Each and everyone could find their place in the rich internal discussions, debates and exchanges. Gradually, it has become a party of elected representatives. This change has had important consequences on all our decisions and our functioning. We have developed the bad habit of meeting in different currents to defend our square meadows, sometimes distrustful of our own comrades. Too often, we have the reflex of withdrawing into ourselves. It is therefore urgent to reaffirm, in speeches and in deeds, the need to make our internal democracy live differently. This is an obvious precondition for making our

We will position and relay them effectively so that our proposals make an impact on the French political debate.

By concentrating on our internal debates to the detriment of bringing the debate into society, we have lost the link with it. We have forgotten that our first political adversary is the immobilism, conservatism, neo-liberalism of the Right, or the inward-looking and frenzied nationalism of the Extreme Right. Propagating and convincing is what we must use our energy for.

### **Recreating the collective.**

Our internal tears and electoral setbacks have contributed to alienating some of our comrades from our party. This phenomenon of militant hemorrhaging that we have experienced must challenge us. If some have left the party to join other political horizons, most have done so for lack of collective cohesion and debate. Little by little, we have become a party that uses its militants only for electoral events. It is a reductive role. We affirm it: the activist must be at the heart of our movement. Let's debate, let's train, let's reflect, let's open up.

The Socialist Party can only exist vertically. How can we build our action without the support of our permanent staff, our real resources for forging ties with our militants. We must develop a spirit of solidarity between federations. In each of our territories, we face common problems without bringing common solutions. It is time to pool our resources where possible and/or necessary. To carry out our political actions, we must have the necessary tools and human resources. In recent years, the Socialist Party has faced a decline in its resources and many federations have had to make the difficult decision to separate from their permanent staff. We propose to generalize, by region, the sharing of our human resources. This fraternity between militants and with our permanent staff is essential to the realization of our values.

### **Put the activist back at the heart of our party.**

The activist must once again become the heart and brain of our party. To do so, we must rethink, reorganize and reinvent ourselves. It is essential to recreate the link between us. Comradship cannot be just a promise from the party to its activists, it must be a reality. This requires developing moments of conviviality, of meetings between militants and with our elected officials. These times of informal discussions are as important to the dynamism and attractiveness of our party as our orientation debates or our internal votes. We need to review our practices such as the way we welcome new members and make them want to stay in the party they have chosen. More than ever, it is more important than ever to overcome our habits that hinder working together. We must be more vigilant in integrating everyone.

The Socialist Party must be anchored in its time. It must develop new ways of militancy, taking full advantage of the possibilities offered by the digital age. The crisis of Covid-19 shows us how necessary it is to invest militancy in distance. We must put the necessary financial means and human resources into it. Let's facilitate the investment of our activists, by working seriously to propose innovative solutions, such as the possibility of

easy and secure remote voting. However, e-militancy should not be seen as an end in itself. It is necessary to act on society in order to make it evolve.

Since 2018, the party has undertaken various projects for its necessary renovation. We support the work undertaken by the 1st secretary and the national leadership. It must be continued and amplified. Putting the activist back at the heart of our movement means, for example, calling on the rich and varied skills of our activists with very different personal and professional backgrounds.

### **Conclusion :**

Never has the social question been so much at the heart of the debates following the Covid-19 crisis. After the deepening of inequalities and the explosion of poverty, we expect a significant increase in unemployment. These situations are likely to tighten society.

To avoid a radicalization of minds, urgent action is needed to maintain social cohesion and to protect the most vulnerable in the face of these crises. That is why the Socialist Party must carry a new, clear and affirmed project for society around social ecology, the affirmation of the Republic, and the strengthening of solidarity within the European Union. Without clarity, we are condemned to remain inaudible. Let us be proud to be left-wing, to be socialist. Let us affirm it in speech and in deeds.

Finally, this reaffirmation of our values cannot take place without activists. Our party is dysfunctional. It is time to put the debate of ideas back at the heart of the life of our sections, to work no longer in a closed circle but towards the outside.