

National Council 13 and 14 October — Report by Pierre Laurent

Dear Comrades,,

Following your vote on the common basis and six weeks before our Congress, I intend, quite rightly, to focus my report on the preparation of our Congress.

Therefore, I will not be presenting a much-needed response to recent political developments, both national and international. And yet these events shed essential light on the work our Congress must achieve. We must keep them in mind at all times.

I would like to underscore, however briefly, how much these very rapid changes confirm the urgent nature of issues facing society and human conscience. How they call for action from Communists and require that we think through our political initiatives with relevance and ambition, for it is our duty to be of use to our people in these perilous times.

We do not exist only for ourselves. Everything that we do must be useful to the resistance against growing threats, to the opening of pathways to immediate, sustainable transformation, new hope. The message of our Congress in six weeks must be resolutely addressed to our people.

Just let me mention some of the events that have marked this last week.

The IPCC has issued an alarming new statement on the climate; catastrophic climate events are regularly front-page news.

The forces of capital, powerful nations and the United States have sacrificed Brazil and handed it over to the far right to prevent the re-election of Lula.

In Europe, the extreme right is prepared to make new inroads in the Bavarian right's stronghold, and the meeting between Le Pen and Salvini shows how they are marshalling their forces.

And in France, the model presented as the "new world" barely one year ago, "Macronia", is already mired in a long-term political crisis.

The government is further and further removed from popular expectations as days go by, and yet continues to rain low blows on the people: the project for a complete change in the retirement system announced on Wednesday is not the least of it. The government is hiding the consequences of a project that will massively lower pensions for the great majority of retirees. A decisive battle awaits us.

This confirms that the very meaning of human society and the world that we will live in is constantly called into question.

The first challenge of our Congress is to determine the political message that we will address to society in these exceptional times. One year ago, when the national assembly of section leaders adopted the road map, we decided to work on this topic by answering three questions:

1. Why is the major issue of the 21st Century to overcome capitalism, in our opinion, and why is Communism, as we perceive it today, the most modern response to this challenge?

2. What is the most credible path forward that we can now define for French society to provide solutions to the people's urgent needs, to urgent political questions and the urgent question of climate change, while breaking from the past and pushing forward with social, environmental and democratic progress as well as new social connections?
3. What is the Communist Party today, as we would dedicate it to this transformation of society?

I am pleased to observe that, over the past months, these are the very questions that Communists have worked to answer, in clear and accessible language. We are following our road map scrupulously and we have amassed a great deal of work, which we now must put to use.

The vote on the choice of a common basis was one important phase in our debates and our work. We are far from completing the debate thus engaged, as we enter the ultimate, decision-making stages of the Congress.

We have chosen a common basis for discussion, now we must progress towards our choices and final decisions.

- 30,841 Party members voted on the choice of a common basis.
- They represent 60% of the 49,231 members of more than three months declared by local federations to be up to date on their dues.
- 30,841 Communists mobilised, 1,677 more than voted on this question prior to the previous Congress; this shows our strength.

The vote demonstrates that the Communist Party remains one of the most activist political groups in the country, and that it is democratic and operates in transparency. This is an essential political fact, an advantage that we should all try to underscore.

However the vote did reveal some inequalities in the levels of involvement in the debate.

- 20,000 Communists responded to the initial consultation in preparation for the Congress.
- Among the 31,000 voters, many took an active part in preparatory discussions, others only voted.

Many comrades, as it was often reported in general assemblies in the sections, did not receive or did not spend much time reading the texts. But voting took us forward a step with regard to the involvement of Party members, and for some, the time to debate is just beginning.

Of course, not all of our dues-paying members, nor all of those holding three-year membership cards, who are numerous, took part in the voting process. We need to think more extensively on this subject, because our base of activists and militants is even broader.

A significant number of members remain outside of our democratic processes. This is a structural problem that we have not managed to resolve.

The new three-year Party membership card will be introduced at the end of the Congress, and this should provide the opportunity to face this problem head on. I will be making a proposal in this regard.

Following these preliminary remarks, I would now like to address the results and their significance, which we all must take into account.

The results, as you all know, have brought about a situation that the Party has never previously experienced.

- 30,180 members voted on the texts, 661 ballots were blank or invalid.
- 11,467 votes, representing 38% of the total, were cast for the common basis proposed by the National Council.
- 3,607 votes, representing 11.95% of the total, were cast for the text “For a Communist Spring” (*Pour un printemps du communisme*).
- 12,719 votes, representing 42.14 % of the total, were cast for the Manifesto text.
- 2,387 votes, representing 7.91% of the total, were cast for text number four.

It is therefore the Manifesto text that received the most votes, 1,252 more than the text proposed by the National Council. It is thus this text that will serve as a common basis for pursuing our discussions. Our by-laws are clear and definitive on this point. It is our common rule.

The choice of the Manifesto has meaning, and it has been summed up as follows: “*stop the erasure of the Party*”. For comrades supporting the text, it is a mark of the will to affirm our Party more strongly and a criticism of our unitary choices. This message must be heard.

These concerns are not unique to Communists who voted for this text. They are widely shared, even if different conclusions have been drawn. This explains the other characteristic of the results: the diversity and absence of a majority opinion.

Indeed, none of the common bases submitted to the vote obtained a majority of ballots, which is also a first time occurrence.

The votes were clearly split, and in some places quite the opposite of the overall results:

- 49 Federations voted for the National Council text, 29 of them by absolute majority and 20 by relative majority.
- 40 Federation voted for the Manifesto, 24 of them by absolute majority and 16 by relative majority.
- 4 Federations voted for the Spring text.
- 3 Federations voted for text number four.

To move past this situation, it is indispensable that we take account of all voters and their motivations, if we are to achieve our common construction. Enabling Communists to come

together on choices that are clear and supported by a majority at the Congress will require that we work to make our debates more intense, more specific, while ensuring that all voices are heard and respected.

It is therefore with a new state of mind that we must all enter this last phase of the Congress if we want to constitute effective majorities and move forward. We should not be content to merely repeat the first phase of discussion, which would put us in a deadlock, without allowing a clear majority to emerge.

I believe that this is possible, without denying the previous steps, by clearly acting on the results of the vote and going further together in debate on a number of issues.

We have a new starting point with the text of the Manifesto. It is now up to the Communists, all of us, to attain our objective: the guiding text adopted in Congress.

The National Council, the National Executive Committee, myself as National Secretary, have the responsibility to ensure that the process brings together Communists based on the sovereign choices of our members in this final phase of the process.

How shall we advance towards this goal?

1) The first question is that of the democratic construction of the final text before the Congress.

If we do not want to prolong the clash between texts, but to move towards a common majority choice, I believe that we need to identify the issues on which the debate should be deepened in order to envision amendments, additions or new versions of the text.

I want to give my opinion on these issues, and I hope that National Council's discussion will enrich this thinking by bringing it to the attention of all Communists.

I identify five major themes.

The first deals with the relevance of communism today.

We have set as the objective of this Congress the redefinition, as clearly as possible, of what the common basis refers to as "the Communism of our time", a Communism that is both a goal and a path of struggle to overcome capitalism, the historical necessity of which asserts itself as never before in this 21st Century, as the contradictions and dead ends of capitalist globalization are ever more apparent.

We are therefore taking a lead on reworking the various texts, the common basis, the text of the National Council, and Spring, which will carry us towards this objective.

When we consulted our members to build up the basis for the work of our Assembly of section leaders, with the participation of nearly 20,000 communists, we addressed the question of which challenges in our combat should be given priority. Party members established an initial list: the struggle against the cost of capital, the revolution of work, the environment, the transformation of globalisation for world peace, construction of the commons, the fight against racism and all forms of discrimination, the democratic revolution, emancipation through knowledge and culture, the struggle for women's rights.

On this basis, we organised many initiatives and carried out work to enrich the text for joint discussion.

Among the many initiatives that are giving reality to the Communist project of the 21st Century: the Communist Assembly for the environment, placing "eco-communism" at the heart of that project; the Republic and constitutional reform, to re-launch the battle on the 6th Republic as our current regime grows more and more monarchical; an *États généraux* on digital matters; the *Rencontres Niemeier* on urban policy in the Paris metropolitan area; our convention for arts and culture; study days on racism; our campaign for equality and against violence suffered by women.

The common basis would greatly benefit from taking into account the work of these various initiatives, and many other fields of Communist struggle.

Our idea of Communism has long surpassed the notion of a fixed and finished project for society that we would only have to make available through our singular force of will, and now encompasses the actual movements and struggles for the emancipation of each and every person.

Rather than returning to our old conceptions of the Socialist transition to define this choice, we have everything to gain from deepening our concept of Communism as a path of struggle and transformation, constantly relying on the movement of the greatest number of people, promoting the elevation of the level of consciousness, giving strength to the aspirations and experiences that exist and develop, and reflect society's obvious will to surpass all dominations.

By confronting ideas and actions, by working with the forces that build and move in society, we will be able to continue to specify the meaning and usefulness of our Communist project.

We should encourage the reading of the *Cahiers du congrès*, published during our summer university during this final phase of the Congress.

During our Congress, we must continue to work together to deepen our analysis of "what society is telling us", so that we may know what message to address in return.

While the capitalist offensive clearly has an impact on society, nonetheless the real development is more complex, richer, and more contradictory than we are led to believe.

This is reflected in the diversity of multifaceted struggles: the arrival of migrants; the fight for equality between women and men; the defence and promotion of public services; the respect of ecosystems and the response to ecological challenges; the struggle for an emancipatory and responsible mode of development from production to consumption.

Practices of co-development and joint action are undergoing a flourishing development in many areas: the social and solidarity economy; the digital revolution with its "third places"; traditional local farming; solidarity finance; urban planning; the multitude of activities in which the citizens' associations are involved.

All these aspects of reality must continue to be debated.

In the same way, in companies, work itself is changing under the influence of new realities. As we experience the digital revolution and shared intelligence, it is an utmost requirement that groups

working in different areas engage in open, ongoing communication. Obviously, such movements and aspirations are constantly countered by companies that set employees in competition against each other in the pursuit of ever more profit. For this reason, one decisive battle for the future will be the demands for new powers for employees, bearing on their own work and corporate operations.

Yet let no one be mistaken. Focussing on these realities in no way means that the new world could spontaneously erupt from the systemic crisis of capitalism, nor that it would suffice to concentrate efforts on any given alternative practice and somehow avoid a showdown with the forces of capital. Capitalist domination limits, constrains and derails the potential of such alternatives. Yet we do acknowledge their existence and their significance as markers of a changing society. They are leverage points for the movement of social transformation.

An important part of our Party's work, and which should be emphasised in our text, is our engagement in the energetic manifestation up of many different forms of solidarity and emancipation. We need to contribute to these movements, to help them converge and acquire more lucidity with regard to the nature of the obstacles facing them and the need to work for political solutions.

Clearly there is much food for thought, and nourishment for our text.

The second theme concerns the meaning and role of the Communist initiative in society.

There is convergence of opinion that the revival of the Communist initiative is a key issue of the Congress. But I think it would be useful to deepen our understanding.

This debate, obviously, deserves to be reactivated.

It is a question of clarifying our approach to unity, but beyond that, our vision of the role of the Party and its utility, from its organization through its designated orientations.

Let us act and adopt our approach to unification within the scope of the real evolution of society with its contradictions, its advances and retreats, its unexpected movements which incite us to analyse new phenomena and ideas in society; let us seek out the best responses, those best adapted to these new, multiform configurations. Or do we consider that we must find the "intangible political formula" that will capture these movements and chart out their course?

This means that we must always be in contact with citizens and social actors, but also, in this period of political re-composition, that we must be attentive to changes in the political landscape, the varying positions of political entities, and understand that we are not working in a frozen landscape.

In fact, everything that we seek to implement must be carried out in confrontation with the real actions and movements of society. Our ideas grow stronger when they take root in society and are no longer only "our" ideas. The execution of an idea, linked with the conscience* of the people who bring it to fruition or would benefit from it, is as important as the idea in and of itself.

We cannot think outside society, but must delve into its contradictions, and to the conscience of the people. This is why I much prefer the notion of a party of Communist initiative to that of a "*forward sentry, at the avant-garde of struggles and ideas*".

Our constant work of unification, which is part of our DNA, is rooted in this close association with society and the popular conscience. When we neglect these ties, we often miscalculate the balance of power, or under-estimate the potential of a given struggle or movement.

The Communist initiative is one that is adapted to the real world, helps popular movements to grow, to unite, to identify causes and solutions, to succeed, to raise awareness of the even greater changes that are necessary.

The Communist initiative is thus by nature constantly attuned to and interacting with social forces in movement.

We should talk more often, not only about the ideas we want to promote, but also about how they are taken on board in the conscience of popular movements. Where do we begin, how, and what words should we use?

The Communist initiative also needs time, permanence, tenacity and therefore organisation, evaluation, and adjustment to enable dialogue between political thought and reality. This is what is at stake in our political campaigns, as also in our structures, networks and in our roles as leaders at all levels.

The Communist initiative is fundamentally a matter of process, not just discourse. It is therefore concerned with democratic processes and popular practices. It is summed up in the famous phrase, *"The emancipation of the workers must be the task of the workers themselves"*.

It is important that we continue to discuss all of the matters.

The third theme concerns our political ambition in the new situation.

The common base must update our understanding of the changing political situation following the election of Macron and the political re-composition underway.

Failing this, our strategic discussion will be disembodied or limited to past experience.

I think that during this last phase of the Congress, it is time to specify our analysis of the situation and draw conclusions in light of our past experiences and objectives for the future.

"Macronism" is characterised today by anti-social aggression, exclusive service of capitalist interests, technocratic and monarchic authoritarianism. But it is also fragile, as demonstrated by the recent clumsy cabinet shuffle at the end of a chaotic summer marked by the "Benalla Affair", the resignation of two ministers of state and Macron's plunging popularity rates. And this explosive cocktail has worsened the political and democratic crisis.

We played a part in roiling the waters of "Macronia".

In our 2007 road map, we called on Communists to *"intensify, in all areas, political opposition to Macron's political power, and to build grassroots struggles for a political alternative"*.

And so we did: we participated in struggles and mobilisations that grew, and worked to open perspectives. We fought against executive decrees and the dismantlement of the state railway (SNCF); we participated in actions opposing the reduction in housing assistance and the plan to

eliminate public housing, as well as the end of “assisted contracts” for disadvantaged job-seekers, etc. We initiated many actions and meetings in response to the new system of university selection; we shared the anger of local authorities representing working class districts as they saw their finances slashed and joined together in the Grigny Appeal.

In line with all of these struggles, we have decided upon Communist initiatives: a tour of hospitals with our Members of Parliament; mobilisations and human chains around hydraulic dams; a demonstration for regional equality led by our colleagues from the Hauts de France region; actions for welcoming migrants.

We have constantly pointed out the responsibility of finance and named Macron “the president of the rich”.

We have advanced our idea of the Republic and democracy, especially through the work of our two parliamentary groups, including the colloquium organised on 5 March and the *Serment du Jeu de Paume* in July in response to Macron’s convocation of the Versailles Congress.

We held the *États Généraux* on social progress in Montreuil, and we want to continue this approach with the *États Généraux* on social progress in Europe – the Congress will decide whether or not to pursue this idea.

Our practical solidarity (*solidarités concrètes*) initiatives have met with approval and participation has increased, although we are aware that they must be more deeply embedded in our daily practices throughout the year.

And we should not forget the *Fête de l’Humanité*, its size and resources, an initiative that illustrates the vitality of our Party.

Our Congress must now examine the current situation and specify what initiatives will carry us forward.

- What struggles should be engaged to prevent the current government from implementing policies that continue to degrade people’s lives and break the bonds of solidarity?
- How can we shape our political objectives to draw popular support and engagement in struggles, using our ideas and ideas from the social movement? What are the social, economic and environmental themes that popular movements recognize, that we could develop as we have with our hospital tour of France?
- Finally, what is the path to political reconstruction? This is a question that a large portion of society is already pondering, and we must be able to provide answers.

The National Council text sought to identify the evolution of the forces on the right and the left. The analysis is necessary.

We especially need a lucid, dispassionate debate on the state of the forces of the left, from *France Insoumise* to *Génération·s* and Emmanuel Maurel, including the failing Socialist Party, the Greens and the far left. We need to take a closer look at the millions of people on the left who don’t know which party to turn to, and yet identify deeply with the left. We must debate on the ideas that

these different parties represent. We need to understand the political landscape we are working in; the only other choice would be isolation.

We have two challenges to meet: work with our people to resist the attacks of Macron's government; build a political response in anticipation of its likely decline. If we fail to take this step, we will leave the way open to all other political groups, and we know where that can lead in these times – look at Brazil, Brexit, or Italy. The danger of the rise of the right and far right is a genuine threat here as well as elsewhere.

A debate on the results of our strategic and unified initiatives will be very useful if we want to learn from the lessons of the past.

But this review of our actions can only be useful if we do more than blame the main difficulties on – I quote – “the forfeiture of successive Party leaders”.

It would be better to have a debate among ourselves to determine the best way to move forward in a new way. One thing is certain, the question of a political alternative to Emmanuel Macron is coming up faster than we would have imagined just a year ago. And nature abhors a vacuum. Part of the Communist initiative is finding the answer to that question.

The coming elections will be an airing of all of these battles on political content and construction. I think that the final text should distinctly and precisely address the three election cycles on the horizon: European, municipal (not addressed at all at this time), and presidential.

Regarding the municipal elections, at the *Fête de l'Humanité* I proposed that we launch a great campaign on the future of the Republic. I believe that a great struggle is underway for the future of our *communes*, our institutions, our public services, and equality among regions. This could be the framework for a broad assembly to concretely engage our municipal campaigns throughout France.

Our engagement in all municipalities where our candidates are present is necessary in order to develop these broad assemblies based on projects promoting local authorities, public services and local democracy.

It is also necessary if we are to build projects alongside citizens and with their participation.

This issue could be included in the text in association with the question of the role of our elected town council members, which thus would bring us closer to the local level of action.

Concerning the presidential elections, because the question of a Communist candidate in 2022 has been raised explicitly, I think we need to delve more deeply into this debate.

Obviously, we do not know what conditions will prevail for the 2022 elections. But the reconstruction of our presence in this crucial contest calls for a substantial debate, in particular on the special problems facing a revolutionary party such as ours during presidential elections in the context of the extreme “presidentialisation” of French political life, the devaluation of Parliament, the subordination of legislative elections through juggling of the election schedule, and the five-year mandate of the head of state.

The fourth theme bears on globalisation, internationalism and Europe.

I will start with Europe, and the European elections. I think that here we can set a simple objective: replace the current text with a text on our campaign goals and our candidate list for the European elections. We will discuss it tomorrow with a report from Ian Brossat; everyone welcomes his candidacy, which is the result of work carried out as soon as the section leaders' meeting was held. In a way, it could be considered the first, anticipatory, decision of our Congress. I would remind you that a large majority of the National Council voted in favour of a resolution in this regard.

On globalisation and internationalism, subjects that were not developed in the National Council text but that are developed in the common basis, I think it is necessary to enrich this part of all the work of analysis and initiative carried out by the international sector.

I think that this is where we could refer to the question of migration and the manifesto that we published in the spring.

On these questions, I would remind you that we have produced two important documents: the report that Lydia Samarbaksh presented to the National Council, and the works of the Europe convention held a few years ago. Those works need to be updated, but both documents are a wealth of information and have been under-utilised.

The fifth theme is that of the role and the transformation of the Party.

I believe that, without resorting to caricature and without reducing our successes and failures to our own voluntarism, we must further the debate on the role of the Party and our relationship to society. And from that point, we can more clearly define the areas where we want to push forward on our existing inroads.

In this regard, the text can be enriched with more precise thoughts that are found in the other texts. For example, practical solidarity, which we have been developing more widely over the past year; growing proximity, both geographically and through networks, for better deployment of our capacity for Communist initiative at the grass roots level.

On the political work to be carried out that concerns the workplace, where I believe there is general agreement on the principles, it would be useful to underscore the need to evaluate some of the existing experiments that are in the most advanced stages. This would go along with strategic consideration of the deep changes in the nature of work, salaried employment and business structure; the complex stakes of rebuilding class consciousness in the world of work as it exists today.

I think that we should also integrate into the final text the advances achieved or underway thanks to the work carried out over the past year in particular. In particular, we should highlight the launch of the Party's new digital platform, a tool that many members have been eagerly awaiting, and which will be available as of 5 November. Another important launch is that of the *Université permanente*, which, in addition to the summer university and the reorganisation of our training sessions, augments our policy on training, popular education, understanding of Marxism and knowledge sharing.

I would like to add a special proposal. We know that following the Congress, which will in any event mark a turning point for significant change, we will face the challenge of communicating

and sharing the outcomes. New opportunities for strengthening the Party may open up if we are able to stimulate a new interest in the transformations of the Party. Keep in mind that we are headed for 2020, our centennial year. We could prepare a year of political and cultural festivities under the banner "A Hundred Years of Future", focussed on the 21st Century, a new century of Communism.

The follow-up to our Congress will also be the issuance of our new three-year membership card. During the Congress, we could launch a major campaign to welcome working people and youth to our Party, a campaign to popularise our identity and raise awareness of our battles – a major membership drive. This drive could roll out over two years, up to the anniversary date of 25 December 2020.

Our communications group also worked in association with many federations, and launching the campaign at the Congress could create a new signature image of the Party, anchored in our values, more modern, unifying, and centred on our "People First" (*l'humain d'abord*) theme, which will be the lead banner on the home page of the platform. I believe that thousands of new members may join us during this two-year campaign.

Here, dear comrades, I have presented a non-exhaustive list of the questions that I think we must examine in depth if we are to produce proposals for the unification of Communists on the basis of improvements made to the Congress's final text.

2) The second and last question is the make-up of our future national leadership.

This debate will now very naturally speed up. The commission on candidacies has already met several times; the first meetings were devoted to defining leadership positions. Gilles Ravache will take the floor during the day to present this work.

But we will also move progressively towards the establishment of a list of candidates as the Congress makes choices and candidates are declared under the procedures in our by-laws.

I would like to share a few thoughts on my critical reading of the assessment of the Party leadership and what we would do well to change. I would make three comments.

1. The National Council should be more of a collective leadership, that is a collective space where all levels of experience are brought face to face. I mean a broad inclusion of comrades, federal secretaries and leaders in charge of activism in the federations; parliamentarians and other elected representatives who build up whole components of the Party's development and representation; leaders and group leaders from the different national work sectors. The composition of the National Council, in my opinion, should be modified to better integrate national work concerns. Our Party has a wealth of experience to draw on, but the National Council does not benefit from this often enough. It does not take enough advantage of this diversity of experience. Bringing in comrades that have exercised real responsibilities in different ways is a necessary condition for taking account of today's realities and acting more effectively.
2. The National Council is often rendered sterile by the endless reproduction of the same old strategic debate, to the detriment of its work on development and evaluation of our

decisions. Thus, after the adoption of the road map in November, implementation went forward while deliberations at the National Council appeared to be unaffected by it in any way. The campaign for the selection of a text often ignored the implementation work, which nonetheless continued to advance; this cut Communists and their national leadership off from the benefits of appreciating the results of this work.

3. The effectiveness of the national leadership's work must be reviewed in terms of guidance and development as well as implementation, which requires a different working organisation, meeting preparation, information and memo sharing, and assessment of our decisions.

In substance, I think the Party needs more unity in its centralisation, sharing of experience on the political level and decision-making, as well as more effective action. The leadership does not fulfil this role of building unity and furthering effective action.

The problem is not our human and political diversity – that is our advantage. The problem is building political unity of action through this diversity.

It is my personal opinion – although I know this is subject to debate – that reducing the number of members on the National Council and the National Executive Committee, combined with better attendance rates among members, would help resolve this problem. In addition, it would be in better alignment the reality of our means.

And I think that the leadership and its members should divide their time equally between political strategy development and the work of supporting and implementing policies.

Within the National Council, the executive body should be organised around the ideas of teamwork, loyalty and solidarity; in my view, this does not equate to any sort of reduction of the diversity of our approaches. And the designation of the National Secretary is only one aspect, albeit an important one, of the team's constitution. I give this issue its due.

In our situation, these ideas of teamwork and collective leadership seem to me more essential than ever, and they must be enhanced, even if that means some tense, demanding discussions when it is time to define membership.

No National Secretary, whether myself or another, can meet the challenges that face us alone.

I have spoken on the subject of the National Secretary with all of these considerations in mind: political and organisational challenges; the actual situation of our Party; our strengths and weaknesses; the awareness of our responsibilities at this crucial moment for our future.

I have said two things that I reiterate today. The first is that I am available if the Communists so decide. My ambition for the Party, for its transformation, for our unity in offensive action remains intact.

The second is that this question was in no way taboo, and other proposals could be tabled. In this event, we must collectively, and without dramatisation, examine the situation. The Commission and Communist Party members must be apprised. I will not say that I hoped for this situation. You have understood that I believe that we should focus our discussion on the collective leadership,

because this is an issue, like the question of our orientation, where we must bring Communists together and look to the future.

Dear comrades, these are the thoughts and proposals that I submit for our discussion.

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Translator's note: French *conscience*, here used to indicate the set of shared beliefs, ideas, and moral attitudes which operate as a unifying force within society (cf. Émile Durkheim)