

'The pernicious treaty' from L'Humanité (5 December 1951)

Caption: On 5 December 1951, the day before the debates are to be held in the French National Assembly on ratification of the Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), the French Communist daily newspaper L'Humanité criticises the foundations of the new European Treaty and calls for a stand to be made against implementation of the Schuman Plan.

Source: L'Humanité. Organe Central du Parti Communiste Français. 05.12.1951, n° 2255; 48e année. Paris: L'Humanité. "Le traité néfaste", auteur:Fajon, Etienne , p. 1.

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Last updated: 05/07/2016

The pernicious treaty

The letter sent by Jacques Duclos to the Central Workers' Council of Usinor, published today in *L'Humanité*, is a document of the greatest importance. This letter explains the French Communist Party's position on the treaty signed in April known as the Schuman Plan. The National Assembly is to begin debating this plan tomorrow.

Let us recall what this important American decision consists in, one to which Schuman, a former Minister of Pétain, has lent his name. Its purpose is to pool the coal and steel industries of six countries: West Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg. These industries are to be withdrawn from national sovereignty and submitted to the omnipotence of a cosmopolitan 'High Authority', under the ultimate control of American millionaires. Customs duties on coal, iron ore and ferrous metals will be abolished. The 'High Authority' will have the right to close down those firms judged to be least profitable. It will be able to transfer their workers from one country to another; in other words, to deport them. Salaries will be standardised for the entire Community at the level of the country where they are lowest.

Since its first appearance a year and a half ago, the Schuman Plan has been described by our Party as a plan for war, treason, ruin and poverty.

'Its aim,' stated Maurice Thorez to the Central Committee on 23 June 1950, 'is to make West Germany the main base for the American aggressors by accelerating its economic, political and, before long, military recovery.'

Maurice Thorez was quite right. Riding rough-shod over the Potsdam Agreement, the Americans have transformed the Ruhr into the main arsenal for their aggression in Europe. They are now demanding that the French iron ore reserves be put at the disposal of this arsenal in order to provide, among other things, for the needs of the new Wehrmacht's divisions on the spot.

But the Schuman Plan is not merely aimed at furnishing Hitler's revanchist generals with a powerful war economy. Its objective is to ruin French industry to the advantage of the magnates of the Ruhr and their Yankee bosses.

The predominance of German potentates in the 'Community' is, in fact, assured, given that their coal and steel production is the largest. Furthermore, since German manufacturing costs are lower than ours, French mines will automatically find themselves threatened with closure. The same is true for a large number of steel-making factories that are less advanced technically. To sum up, it is a return to the de-industrialisation of France that was planned by Pétain and the Nazis in the past.

Where the workers are concerned, the Schuman Plan offers them the prospect of aligning their wages with those of their exploited German and Italian comrades, and, even worse, unemployment or deportation beyond the Rhine.

Thus Maurice Thorez was telling the truth when he explained in his June 1950 speech what the Schuman Plan involved for France:

'... the suppression of all traces of national independence; the prospect of a worsening economic situation, of the liquidation of numerous businesses and of a lowering in the standard of living of the masses.'

But today the Communists are no longer the only ones to see and say these things. All workers, particularly those in the industries most urgently threatened, are expressing their concern, and the resolution passed by

the Fédération F.O. du Sous-Sol, Force Ouvrière's Federation of Underground Workers, reflects this concern today. For their own reasons, numerous bosses are protesting against a treaty that ruins them at the same time as it ruins France. And ordinary Frenchmen who hate war henceforth refuse to believe that the protection of peace may be entrusted to the arms dealers of the Ruhr.

There can, therefore, be put in place, against the Schuman Plan, both a united front of workers and a national front of all the French people, without distinction made between opinion or social condition, who aspire to re-establishing their country's independence and peace.

If it expands and becomes strong very quickly, this active union can stop the implementation of the pernicious Schuman Plan.

The Communists shall, for their part, do all they can to achieve this goal.

Etienne Fajon