

'The food weapon' from L'Humanité (23 May 1992)

Caption: On 23 May 1992, the French communist daily newspaper L'Humanité criticises the new reform of the common agricultural policy and sees it as a capitulation of European agriculture to the demands of the United States, especially in the context of the GATT negotiations.

Source: L'Humanité. Organe Central du Parti Communiste Français. 23.05.1992. Paris.
http://www.humanite.fr/1992-05-23_Articles_-L-ARME-ALIMENTAIRE. "L'arme alimentaire",
auteur:Spire, Arnaud.

Copyright: (c) Translation CVCE.EU by UNI.LU

All rights of reproduction, of public communication, of adaptation, of distribution or of dissemination via Internet, internal network or any other means are strictly reserved in all countries.
Consult the legal notice and the terms and conditions of use regarding this site.

URL: http://www.cvce.eu/obj/the_food_weapon_from_l_humanite_23_may_1992-en-55f10896-17bc-43ff-89ed-09982a72cddb.html



Last updated: 02/02/2017

The food weapon

The Ministers for Agriculture of the Twelve have just demolished their own common agricultural policy (CAP). As a result, nine million European farmers have found themselves hit by a lowering of the price of cereals by 29 % and that of beef by 15 %. It is a knife in the back of the agricultural world. Henceforth, the system of 'guaranteed prices' is to be aligned with the world rates imposed on the poor countries. Farmers are obliged to leave at least 15 % of cultivated land lying fallow, with no regard for the victims of hunger in the southern hemisphere, nor for the increasing number of poor in the north, nor, of course, for the health of the national economies.

In France alone, 149 000 businesses are immediately threatened. There will likely remain only 700 000 businesses at most by the year 2000 if the act of allegiance made by EEC Ministers to American interests is not called into question.

This European capitulation in the open countryside clearly corresponds to the requirements expressed for months by the White House under the GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade), namely, to export, without restrictions and without reciprocity, what they call 'the food weapon'. It appears that this is one of the most powerful weapons for imposing the American new world order on the planet. Did not a senior American civil servant, quoted by Francis Wurtz in his report to the Central Committee of the French Communist Party, make the following criminal statement years ago? 'The best way of making use of food is to employ it to attach a certain number of countries to the United States, thus making them become more and more dependent, needing these supplies and buying more and more of them every year. Gradually these countries will depend increasingly on the United States and will hesitate before rising up against us.'

It is certain that, if the declarations of intent of the common agricultural policy had been applied, they would have guaranteed the defence of our potential for agri-foodstuffs production. This is the case for the 'Community preference', which, far from being a purely defensive stance, could have led the way towards generous and mutually advantageous partnerships between peoples. But the Twelve have implemented the opposite strategy, thus demonstrating yet again that European integration as conceived by the Treaty on European Union constitutes no protection at all against the hegemony of the dollar, the Deutschmark, or even the yen.

The farmers and their trade union organisations were not deceived. Raymond Lacombe, speaking for the French National Federation of Farmers' Unions (FNSEA), at once deplored the fact that 'Europe has become an American colony', and that 'the essence of the CAP has been abandoned in favour of movement towards global dependence'. The trade union organisation described this European capitulation as a 'historic break with the age-old agricultural and rural model existing on our continent'. The Movement for the Defence of Family Farms (MODEF) sounds the alarm in these terms: 'Like the bailiffs who scour the countryside, Louis Mermaz has just signed the act of seizure and expropriation of French agriculture on orders from the USA.'

The decision has sent tremors throughout the countryside. On Thursday night, protest meetings were swiftly organised across the country. Yesterday, François Mitterrand was forced to give reassurances in La Rochelle, where he was engaged with President Kohl in building a joint European army corps. Unfortunately for him, his statement begging that 'the reform of the CAP' should not be mistaken for a capitulation to the American demands made at the GATT negotiations coincided with congratulations expressed by Arthur Dunkel, who spoke of a 'welcome European initiative that would facilitate discussions with the United States'.

The Communist Party and its leadership, through their spokesman, André Lajoinie, yesterday expressed their determined opposition to the recent decision taken in Brussels. Naturally the Communists show total solidarity with the farmers and country people's movement, aiming to defeat, in an appropriate way, this capitulation by the Twelve — and by the French Government in particular. With their campaign for a referendum and for making the content of the Treaty on European Union more widely known, the Communists are making a significant contribution to the rural world.

ARNAUD SPIRE