

# An Offensive Against Schuman

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Opposition to Pinay Government Has Foreign Minister as Target

By William J. Humphreys

THE French Parliament reconvenes tomorrow with Foreign Minister Robert Schuman and his policy for uniting Europe as the principal targets of a remarkably strong though disjointed opposition.

One explanation for the curious mixture of Gaullists, Communists, Socialists and a few government supporters rallying to the attack is the success which Premier Antoine Pinay has had with his save-the-franc measures.

By custom, the major Parliamentary issues at this time of the year ought to be the preparation of the 1953 budget and other domestic problems. But the Pinay administration has tightened its hold on the public by arresting runaway inflation, even if there is as yet no assurance of substantial relief from high prices.

In view of this reasonably strong position in the internal plan, the Parliamentary opposition has been using the summer recess to mount a particularly vicious campaign against French foreign policy and M. Schuman, its chief architect.

The veteran statesman is said by his enemies to lack patriotism for constructing the coal and steel community known as the Schuman plan, for projecting the European army to internationalize the defense forces of the six Schuman plan states, and for fostering the present talks aimed at roofing over

this structure with a federal Parliament.

**A** PART from the Communists, who oppose all these actions as a German-American conspiracy to make war against the Soviet Union, M. Schuman's enemies are:

Certain Radical-Socialists (like former Premier Edouard Daladier, the only surviving signer of the Munich pact) who claim that the rearmament of West Germany under the European army treaty would increase the risk of war with the Soviet Union;

Certain Independents of Premier Pinay's party who regard the Schuman plan as ruinous for low-efficiency sectors of the French steel industry, and the Gaullist Rally of the French People (RPF), which approves European confederation, but only if France dominates it;

Socialists, who demand stiffer guaranties against what they now fear will be German domination of the European army and who also are grouching about the possibility of "the little Demo-Christian Europe." Both M. Schuman and Chancellor Konrad Adenauer of the Federal German Republic are Catholics.

These same opposition forces also blame for varying reasons M. Schuman for the stalemate in the negotiations with the North African protectorate of Tunisia. Those on the political Right accuse the For-

ign Minister of making too many concessions to Tunisian nationalism. Those on the Left charge that he did not go far enough.

Divided on party doctrine, but united in its opposition to the foreign policy sponsored by M. Schuman, this collection of malcontents is capable of reversing the Pinay government on the vital question of ratification of the European army project.

Whether the key plan to German rearmament and European unification wins the approval of the National Assembly depends principally on the government's success in winning over the dissident Socialist Parliamentarians.

**T**HERE is a precedent, if not much political reasoning, in hoping that the government may be successful in this direction. Before former Premier Edgar Faure went to the North Atlantic Treaty conference last February, it was the Socialist party which carried the day for M. Pinay's predecessor.

At that time, there was a critical vote on the principle of the European army. After receiving guaranties that the French government would demand the presence of United States and British troops on the Continent to ease their fears of German rearmament, the Socialists enabled M. Faure to go to Lisbon with Parliamentary approval of the principle of the project.

In addition, another factor working for the Pinay administration is the unanswered question of what happens to French foreign policy if Parliament fails to ratify the treaty for consolidating the defense manpower of the six Schuman plan countries into a European army.

It now seems likely that the National Assembly will not get around to the issue before January. In the mean time, it is considered likely that Belgium, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and West Germany will have ratified the project. That situation would leave France, the sponsor of the idea, presumably under the pressure of some form of national pride to fall in line with her own policy.

Failing that, where would France turn? The conviction of her own leaders is that the United States would regard disapproval of the European army project as a green light for direct negotiations with Bonn on West Germany's rearmament. This inevitably would mean the rebirth of a German national army. This is what almost every Frenchman, including the Socialists, wants to avoid.

**W**HILE many Frenchmen have a theoretical appreciation of neutralism, there is no majority that will take practical stock in the idea. What, if not an isolated France? A pact with the Soviet Union? The French Communist party is deep in a crisis of leadership and failing control of the labor movement.

All the questions of this quandary seem to point to the fact that the French Parliament has no choice but to honor the European policy of her Foreign Minister. Perhaps in carrying it out, M. Schuman himself may be a victim of the process. There are indications that he may be ready to resign once the foundations of continental union have been laid.

In that event, his place in history will be secure, even if the mercurial currents of French politics sweep him out of office. He has been there in control of foreign policy since July, 1948. Premier Pinay's associates say that the Foreign Minister never will quit under pressure. That means that the present government is prepared to fight for European unity with M. Schuman directing the battle.