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The Politics And Ethics Of Statecraft

Research Paper: Robert Schuman

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Introduction

This paper analyzes the contribution of Robert Schuman, one of the fathers of the European Union, to the project of ensuring the peace in Europe. During his tenure as Foreign Minister of France, from 1948 to 1953, Schuman forged the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). The ultimate goal behind this international organization was not only creating a common market for coal and steel, but also making *“war not only unthinkable but materially impossible”* (Schuman, The Schuman Declaration, 2012) between France and Germany, according to Schuman’s words.

The ECSC was the first European supranational community and set the basis for the European Union (EU). The principles of the ECSC led to the longest period of peace in the history of Europe: 67 years. Prior to that, no generation in Europe had ever lived without being witness of a war among European powers. In recognition for this achievement, the EU has been recently awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for *“the successful struggle for peace and reconciliation and for democracy and human rights”* (Nobel Media AB, 2012). According to the Norwegian Nobel Committee *“the stabilizing part played by the EU has helped to transform most of Europe from a continent of war to a continent of peace”* (Nobel Media AB, 2012). This achievement has its roots in the vision and accomplishments of Robert Schuman, one of the fathers of the European Union.

This document will review several dimensions of Schuman's life: as an individual, as a politician, as a realist, as a networker, and as an administrator. The goal behind this analysis is getting to know his motivations, strengths, weaknesses and actions as architect of the system that has brought the peace to Europe. In addition, this will help to elaborate an evaluation of his performance and behavior as an international leader.

The man

Robert Schuman, one of the fathers of Europe, may be described as "*Luxembourger by birth, German by education, Roman Catholic for ever, French at heart*" (Librairie Larousse, 1995). He was regarded as a man of great vivacity of spirit under a humble appearance, and a tedious speaker whose main persuasion tools were perseverance and honesty (Librairie Larousse, 1995).

Luxembourger by birth

Robert Schuman born in Luxemburg in 1886, during the last years of Bismarck as Kaiser of Germany. At that time, Luxemburg belonged to the German Empire. His father, who was from Lorraine, had served with the French army during the Franco-Prussian war in 1870 (Wikipedia, 2012). At the end of the conflict, he was witness of how his homeland

became part of the German Empire, so he emigrated to Luxemburg in order to escape from the German occupation of Lorraine (Librairie Larousse, 1995).

German by education

In spite of his parents' origins, Schuman grew in a middle-class German family within the German Empire. Studied at the universities of Bonn, Munich, Berlin and Strasbourg, and earned a doctorate in civil law (Schuman Project, 2008). The fact that he was a middle-class college graduate suggests high intellectual ability. It also indicates a down-to-earth understanding of people's real aspirations, far from the platonic view and national pride of the European high-class and nobility.

Soon after he started a law firm, World War I began (1914). He was able to avoid combat due to his education. However, he was a soldier in charge of legal and administrative tasks (Wikipedia, 2012). Hence, he served with the German army. By that time, his culture and habits were definitely German.

Furthermore, his father died when Schuman was 14, and his mother when he was 24 (Wikipedia, 2012). His parents' death left Schuman with no close relatives since he had no brothers or sisters. A painful misfortune that would allow him to take decisions regardless of his father's feelings about the relationship between France, Germany and his homeland Lorraine.

Roman Catholic for ever

Schuman's family was catholic (Wikipedia, 2012). His religious education probably had an important role in his values and principles. Apart from that, it is interesting the contradiction that it represents. His father, French by born, was a believer. However, the anticlerical French state would cause fear among the religious communities in Lorraine after World War I.

In addition, Schuman played an active role in the German social Catholicism before World War I. This approached him to the Church, which had a deep influence in the development of his principles and his first steps in politics. Moreover, he considered his obligations to serve the state as his particular way to serve God (Lejeune, 2000).

French at heart

Although Schuman was born 16 years after the Franco-Prussian war, it probably had a deep influence on his childhood. In spite of the unquestionable German victory, hostilities against France ceased. Schuman's father was a defeated combatant, but he nationalized German, and he and his wife were able to live as a German family (Wikipedia, 2012). However, they emigrated to Luxemburg because of the German occupation of Lorraine (Librairie Larousse, 1995). The respect for a defeated combatant versus the need for leaving its homeland might have shaped the education that Schuman

received from his parents. These contradictory events might have influenced his feeling as a French.

The politician

Schuman's political career was characterized by a moderate approach that collided with the many radical trends present during the twentieth century. From fascism to communism, from nationalism to xenophobia, Schuman struggled to make common sense and ethics prevail. Because of his non-radical position, he had to stand the hostility of extreme right and extreme left. Nevertheless, centrists and moderates appreciated him (Librairie Larousse, 1995).

Interwar period: starting in politics

Schuman's political career started after World War I finished in 1918. He was persuaded to join politics by the religious community in Lorraine, which was afraid of the annexation of the region by the anticlerical republic of France. People from Lorraine appreciated Schuman's condition of French speaker and catholic. He was affiliated from 1919 to Democratic Republican Union (Librairie Larousse, 1995), a party whose goal was maintaining the specificity of Lorraine, particularly in terms of religion, education

and language, as well as providing flexibility in the application of French law in the region (Wikipedia, 2012).

Although Schuman did not play any relevant role during the interwar period (Librairie Larousse, 1995), he was criticized due to his belonging to the German army during the World War I (Kaiser, 2007). This event allowed him to show his mood and capacity to deal with the xenophobic disputes present in Europe, and anticipated the challenges that his condition of French and German would generate in the course of the World War II.

World War II: taking responsibilities

His first relevant political assignment was in 1939, soon after World War II began.

Schuman was asked to organize the reception of people from Alsace and Lorraine evacuated due to the German occupation of these territories. Then, he was appointed sub secretary of state for the presidency of the council (Librairie Larousse, 1995).

Schuman kept this position under marshal Petain's government and voted for him to earn full powers in 1940. This action was regarded as a support to the rendition of France through Petain's armistice. However, he resigned the day after and, back to Metz, he started a campaign of public demonstrations against the expulsion of people from Lorraine by Germans (Librairie Larousse, 1995). His protests against Nazi methods made him to be arrested and interrogated by the Gestapo. Schuman was jailed and sent under vigilance to Neustadt (Librairie Larousse, 1995).

Nevertheless, his condition of German granted him a privileged treatment that allowed him to scape (Wikipedia, 2012). He reached the Free French zone in 1942 and lived there clandestinely until the liberation of France. Schuman informed about the Nazi genocide of the Jews, and addressed public meetings in which he stated that, according to his observations, “*Allied victory was just a matter of time*” (Fountain, 2010). Because of these actions, an honor tribunal restored Schuman’s right to be eligible as a politician in spite of his support to Petain, so he was able to resume his political career after the war (Librairie Larousse, 1995).

Postwar stage: building France and Europe

After World War II, Robert Schuman became one of the leaders of the Popular Republican Movement, which was one of the main parties during the first years of the French Fourth Republic (Wikipedia, 2012). He was Minister of Finance under Georges Bidault and Paul Ramadier, fostering a program of austerity (LoveToKnow, 2010). Then, he became Prime Minister of France during a short period of time between 1947 and 1948 (Wikipedia, 2012). Notwithstanding, Schuman made his most important contributions from 1948 to 1952 as Foreign Minister (Librairie Larousse, 1995).

The realist

Robert Schuman is regarded as a “political realist”. His vision and aspirations, such as the promotion of supranational organizations, may seem liberal. However, in Schuman’s conception they are just instruments to ensure the accomplishment of a goal: the peace among European powers. On the contrary, his plans show an extreme pragmatism. Furthermore, Schuman used political parties as instruments to promote his ideas. He was aware of the need for operating within the framework of a parliamentary group in order to materialize his aspirations. Schuman assumed this reality and played the game of politics without being seduced by personal or party interests (Lejeune, 2000).

The networker

As a public figure, Schuman had numerous partners and adversaries. This section will review his relationship with six of them, who had the capacity to shaped his ideas and work. The first one is Mgr. Benzler, who contributed to hone Schuman’s skills and prepared his entry in politics. Then Monnet, Adenauer and De Gasperi, who were his partners in the construction of Europe. Finally Petain and De Gaulle, who were sometimes Schuman’s allies and sometimes his opponents.

Mgr. Benzler

Willibrord Benzler was the Roman Catholic Bishop of Metz from 1901 to 1919 (Wikipedia, 2012). He was a charming but righteous man, able to keep a friendly relationship with the German Emperor after rejecting his request for encouraging the respect to his figure and the love for Germany among the congregation of the diocese (Lejeune, 2000).

Schuman, in his twenties, was deeply influenced by Benzler. The Bishop made an effort to understand the idiosyncrasy of the people from Lorraine and respect their cultural identity. He even spoke French in francophone regions (Lejeune, 2000). This left a profound footprint in Schuman conception of respect among cultures. Moreover, the Bishop suggested Schuman to read Saint Thomas Aquinas, whose rhetoric was adopted by Schuman as a powerful tool for political debate (Lejeune, 2000).

In addition, Benzler trusted in Schuman to take important responsibilities in his diocese. Proof of this is that the Bishop created the Direction of the Diocesan Youth Work in order to put Schuman's talent to the service of the Church and the society. This not only reinforced the relationship between them and the figure of the Bishop as a reference for Schuman, but also allowed him to stand out as representative of Roma Catholics in the region. It would be particularly relevant for his first steps in politics as advocate of the culture and religion of the people of Lorraine after World War I (Lejeune, 2000).

Jean Monnet

Monnet was a banker, political economist and diplomat. He is regarded, along with Schuman, Adenauer and De Gasperi, as one of the fathers of Europe. On the one hand, Monnet shared with Schuman his Roman Catholic confession (Wikipedia, 2012). On the other hand, his origins, education and profession were complementary to those of Schuman.

Still a teenager, Monnet took responsibility for the international expansion of his family business (Wikipedia, 2012). This experience allowed him to travel widely, which probably contributed to his open mind and to put in perspective the role of France in international affairs. Furthermore, his father's advice seems to have reinforced these traits: *"No one can do your thinking for you. Look out of the window, talk with people. Pay attention to your neighbor."* (Monnet, 1978).

During World War II, Monnet fostered a union between France and Britain to rival the Pact of Steel alliance between Germany and Italy. This union involved the existence of a unique Parliament and army (Monnet, 1978). After the war, he proposed the Monnet Plan in order to *"take control of the remaining coal-producing German areas and redirect the production away from German industry and into French industry instead, permanently weakening Germany and raising the French economy considerably above its pre-war levels"* (Wikipedia, 2012). These projects suggest the ability to understand the

importance of resources in international affairs and the belief in yielding sovereignty for the sake of noble purposes. Moreover, they probably served as the basis for the design of the Schuman's plan, which was inspired by Monnet.

Finally, there is an episode in Monnet's life that may have had a deep influence in his collaboration with Schuman. When Monnet tried to persuade Churchill to put the unity plan to Cabinet, he was told that he would not be successful because he was not the French Prime Minister (Monnet, 1978). Monnet probably learned that there are factors that could prevent great ideas to be put in practice. Therefore, his dream of a united Europe would be impossible without the cooperation of a renowned and respected politician such as Schuman.

Adenauer and De Gasperi

In addition to Robert Schuman and Jean Monnet, Konrad Adenauer (Chancellor of West Germany) and Alcide De Gasperi (Prime Minister of Italy) are considered the fathers of Europe. It is not clear whether Schuman, Adenauer and Gasperi were close friends beyond their political duties (Kaiser, 2007). In any case, they shared similar beliefs, experiences and goals.

The three men were catholic. This belief might have served as a common ground for understanding each other in terms of ethics, objectives and methods to achieve their goals. They also were victims of the Nazi totalitarianism during World War II, and were

jailed. De Gasperi shared with Schuman his condition of “man of the frontier”, member of a minority in the border between two European nations (in the case of De Gasperi, Italy and Austria). Regarding Adenauer, believed that the European project would facilitate the unification of Germany. These common points were key in the delicate process of yielding national sovereignty in favor of the European supranational institutions.

Petain and De Gaulle

Philippe Petain (Marshal of France and Chief of State of Vichy France) and Charles De Gaulle (leader of the Free French Forces during World War II and Prime Minister of France) represent the two opposite attitudes toward France during the twentieth century. Although De Gaulle was disciple of Petain during most of his career in the military, his differences regarding the organization of the French army during the interwar period distanced them (Wikipedia, 2012).

These differences became an open confrontation after the German invasion of France in the World War II. Petain thought Britain would not resist German attacks, so he rejected the union with the British and signed an armistice with the Germans (Wikipedia, 2012). On the contrary, De Gaulle organized the Free French Forces and encouraged the French people to fight against Germany (Wikipedia, 2012).

Schuman's relationship with Petain and De Gaulle followed a similar scheme to the one between both generals. Schuman served as sub secretary of state for the presidency of the council under Petain, voted for him to earn full powers, and then resigned due to his disagreement over the collaboration with the Nazi regime (Librairie Larousse, 1995). Free from his political obligations, Schuman went back to Metz and discovered the brutality of the Nazi methods. The resignation, the information that he shared with the allies about the Nazi crimes, and the contribution that he did to the French resistance allowed him not only to recover the right to be eligible for public service after the war in spite of his support to Petain, but also to be regarded a man on who the future of France and Europe could rely.

Schuman's right to be eligible as a public servant was restored under De Gaulle's Provisional Government after World War II. Although Schuman neither manifested his support to De Gaulle's exhortation to resist Nazi Germany nor was an official member of the French Resistance (Wikipedia, 2012), the aforementioned resignation and contributions were proofs of his commitment to freedom and democracy. De Gaulle supported Schuman's idea of a economic union, but was reticent to the idea of yielding sovereignty in favor of supranational organizations, and firmly opposed the creation of an European community for the defense (Librairie Larousse, 1995).

The administrator

Robert Schuman's administration model gravitated between elevated moral standards and a high sense of realism. An example of this is the aforementioned support to Petain and latter resignation. Being against the cooperation with German invaders, Schuman realized that a lack of clear leadership in the French government might prevent the state to face the challenging situation with guarantees, which shows his sense of realism.

Notwithstanding, Schuman resigned and protested against German policies. He was threatened with being deported to a concentration camp, jailed and probably tortured (Schuman Project, 2008), which shows his high sense of ethics.

For the purposes of this paper, Schuman's administration as a politician should be analyzed through two major events: the first of them is the repression of the strikes encouraged by the Communist Party in 1948; and the second one is the nationalistic vindications by Tunisia and Morocco.

French strikes in 1948

Strikes promoted by left-wing extremists in 1948 generated an unsustainable level of distress in French politics. Schuman, as Prime Minister, struggled to manage the situation between the Communist Party supporting insurrection and the Rally of the French People (Librairie Larousse, 1995), which was a conservative party founded by Charles De Gaulle

that “*advocated a constitutional revision in order to institute a presidential government*” (Wikipedia, 2012), willing to demonstrate the failure of the parliamentary system.

Schuman resolved to call-up 80,000 reservists. In addition, managed to persuade the parliament to approve laws in order to suppress acts of sabotage against industrial companies (Librairie Larousse, 1995). This shows Schuman’s ability to deal with complicated conflicts that involve different factions with extreme positions. Moreover, his actions suggest excellent persuasion skills and a realism that allows the use of strong measures in order to make order prevail.

Nationalistic vindications in Tunisia and Morocco

As Foreign Minister of France, Schuman proposed a liberal solution to the aspirations for independence of Tunisia and Morocco (Librairie Larousse, 1995). However, his cautious plan failed, probably because Tunisians and Moroccans expected radical changes. For example, the suggestion of a gradual process was interpreted as a negative to independence by Tunisians (Borowiec, 1998).

The conflict involved a large number of factions: French settlers, local elites, local nationalist groups, French public opinion, extremist parties in France, etc. In addition, Schuman lacked of knowledge about the real situation in North Africa, as most of the French politicians did. These factors led to a violent outcome that represents Schuman’s failure in dealing with this issue (Ferro, 2000).

This conflict illustrates three relevant points for Schuman's success in building a common Europe. First, he believed in the independence of the states and their ability to maintain harmonious relationships. Second, he relied on personal experience to take actions in order to drive change. This is suggested by his incapacity to comprehend the nature and dimension of the problem in Tunisia. And third, he was a realist. This is evidenced by his plan for independence in stages. Provided that the factions that he best knew (French ones) favored colonization, he probably took this approach in order to avoid conflict and set the basis for the future independence of Tunisia and Morocco.

The European

So far, this paper has drawn a portrait of Robert Schuman: the man, the politician, the realist, the networker, and the administrator. The introduction is intended to explain the origins of Schuman's vision on a unified Europe, the values that led him to its design, the resources that he used for its implementation, and the challenges that he faced during the process of creating a united Europe. This section will describe this process, along with its links with Schuman's background and experience as described previously in this document.

The motivations for building Europe

The reasons to build a united Europe were revealed by Schuman in The Schuman Declaration. According to Schuman, *“cooperation between Germany and France was the major problem for Europe; without Germany, same as without France, it was impossible to build Europe”* (Schuman, Pour L'Europe, 1963). In the declaration, Schuman first warned his audience that exceptional measures should be taken to deal with the Franco-German issue. He stated that *“world peace cannot be safeguarded without the making of creative efforts proportionate to the dangers which threaten it”* (Schuman, The Schuman Declaration, 2012).

Then, he stressed the failure of traditional policies by saying that *“in taking upon herself for more than 20 years the role of champion of a united Europe, France has always had as her essential aim the service of peace”* (Schuman, The Schuman Declaration, 2012), however, *“a united Europe was not achieved and we had war”* (Schuman, The Schuman Declaration, 2012). This affirmation was contrary to the idea of a dominant state that was responsible for granting peace in Europe, which had been the model that generated two World Wars. However, this proposal also suggests that maybe France should not adopt a dominant position in Europe. Chances are that this idea was not popular among Gaullists.

Finally, Schuman mentioned that *“Europe will not be made all at once, or according to a single plan”* (Schuman, The Schuman Declaration, 2012) in order to stress that the

construction of Europe would require a gradual process. He also stated the need for creating “*a de facto solidarity*” (Schuman Project, 2008), and the essential role of France and Germany in any project of peace in Europe by advocating for “*the elimination of the age-old opposition of France and Germany*” (Schuman Project, 2008). These words show prudence and suggest an elevated sense of purpose for the sake of a noble cause.

The European Coal and Steel Community: a success

On 9 May 1950, Schuman proposed the “*Franco-German production of coal and steel as a whole be placed under a common High Authority, within the framework of an organization open to the participation of the other countries of Europe*” (Schuman, The Schuman Declaration, 2012) through The Schuman Declaration. He justified this proposal by arguing that “*the pooling of coal and steel production should immediately provide for the setting up of common foundations for economic development as a first step in the federation of Europe, and will change the destinies of those regions which have long been devoted to the manufacture of munitions of war, of which they have been the most constant victims*” (Schuman, The Schuman Declaration, 2012). Schuman also stated “*the solidarity in production thus established will make it plain that any war between France and Germany becomes not merely unthinkable, but materially impossible*” (Schuman, The Schuman Declaration, 2012).

Jean Monnet prepared the declaration for Schuman (Wikipedia, 2012) so it could be made in the name of the French government. As mentioned when the episode between

Monnet and Churchill was discussed, Monnet probably realized that he needed a renowned politician in a strong position to promote his ideas. Furthermore, due to the delicate content of the declaration, it had been already discussed with Konrad Adenauer, who was Chancellor of West Germany in that time (Wikipedia, 2012). This is an example of the exceptional relationship among the fathers of Europe. The work methodology that they exhibited is only possible within a group of people that prioritizes attaining a goal over personal credit. Moreover, the level of trust among them was one of the key pieces for the construction of the European Union.

The European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) was created in 1951. This was the seed of the European Union. First, because several European states yielded sovereignty in favor of a supranational organization. Second, because this community led to the creation of the European Common Market (Librairie Larousse, 1995).

It is not clear to what extent the ECSC or the European Union were inspired by the *“Memorandum on the Organization of a Regime of European Federal Union”* for the Government of France by Aristide Briand, who was Prime Minister of France during the interwar period (Wikipedia, 2012). Nevertheless, it is known that Monnet and Briand had met (Monnet, 1978), so The Schuman Declaration might be partially inspired by Briand’s ideas.

The European Defense Community: a failure

Years later, there was a general consensus about the need for incorporating West Germany to the politics and economics of the western world. This was considered a requirement for preventing the expansion of the soviet block and ensuring the sustainability of the free world. Only communist factions, guided by Russian leaders, opposed this idea. However, there was a controversy on the best option to protect West Germany from a hypothetic communist attack from the east. United States supported including federal Germany in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), whereas the general opinion in France opposed this view (Lejeune, 2000).

American posture involved rearming Germany. Nevertheless, Schuman had a different plan. Based on Winston Churchill's speech in the Council of Europe on 12 August 1950, Schuman suggests the creation of the European Defense Community (Lejeune, 2000). Again, Schuman bases his ingenious move in the ideas of a remarkable politician. The ability to improve others' plans and the humbleness that it demonstrates shows a great and extraordinary level of pragmatism.

Unfortunately, a large portion of the French political scene did not support Schuman's proposal. The idea of expanding Franco-German collaboration from coal and steel to defense was opposed not only by communists, but also by Gaullists. Finally, the French

National Assembly rejected Schuman's project in 1954 (Librairie Larousse, 1995). This is an example of Schuman's bipolar relationship with De Gaulle and his followers.

Conclusion

After the European Defense Community failure, Schuman dedicated his life mainly to advocate for European unification and manage European supranational institutions (Librairie Larousse, 1995). In spite of this incident, his administration should be considered an extraordinary success. Schuman's goal was stopping wars among European powers and the European Union, whose roots go back to the ECSC, has brought the longest period of peace in the history of Europe. Therefore, he should be regarded as an outstanding achiever.

The vision that Schuman demonstrated in setting his goal and planning its attainment was exceptional. After the failure of the Metternich's balance of powers, the Bismarck's model and the Treaty of Versailles, achieving the peace in Europe seemed an impossible project. Moreover, Schuman showed an elevated sense of ethics and a balanced character during his whole life. His protests against Nazis and the price he paid for them are an example of his high moral standards. It is hard to find such an example of virtuosity in a person that spent so many years in politics and dealt with issues of such a dimension. Finally, Schuman's statecraft ability might be questioned because the Europe is still an incomplete project. Nevertheless, peace, which was its main goal, has been achieved.

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