

Analysis of the arguments put forward by communist propaganda against the Schuman Plan

Caption: Anonymous French note which reviews most of the arguments against the Schuman Plan which had been cited in Europe on the basis of Communist propaganda.

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Given the variety and disparate nature of the information gathered, it is interesting to select, as a basis for this study, two documents which constitute official Communist positions taken eleven months apart:

4 July 1950

The Joint Declaration of the Communist Parties of France, Germany, Italy, Great Britain, Belgium, Holland and Luxembourg against the Schuman Plan.

1 and 2 June 1951

The declarations made to the Economic Commission for Europe by the Soviet and Czechoslovak delegates, Arutiunian and Biheller.

Geneva

These two declarations, which are supplemented by certain quotations taken from other sources of information, may be considered to reflect the Communist position following the proposal of 9 May.

The analysis is divided into two parts

I. Presentation of the Schuman Plan

II. Means of fighting the Schuman Plan

I. — Presentation of the Schuman Plan

The arguments to be used to present the Schuman Plan to the public: its origin, its intentions and its consequences are, in outline, reiterated.

A. — What is its origin?

1. — The American imperialists.

‘This plan is dictated by American imperialists’ who have even agreed to finance it since ‘Harriman declared on 7 June 1950 that 600 million dollars of Marshall aid could be used to implement the French plan.’

Declarations of the European Communist Parties — Arutiunian

2. — The magnates of the Ruhr

1 June 1951

‘The idea of European integration is not new ... Rochling, who had been appointed by Hitler ... had made it clear that the aim of unifying the coal and steel industry would be to step up German war production.’

Arutiunian

The explanation for this twofold origin is that ‘the close nature of the links which exist between the monopolies of the United States and the German cartels ... is well known.’

The Schuman Plan will, therefore, take on all the features of such a weighty heritage.

B. — What are its intentions?

War

4 July 1950

‘The Schuman Plan is not a plan for peace, it is a plan for war ... it is a violation of the Charter of the United Nations.’ In brief, ‘the Schuman Plan, which is an extension of the Marshall Plan, is designed to make western Germany, which has been placed under American control, a political, economic and military base in Europe which is essential for the third world war.’

Declaration of the Communist Party

‘The real aim being pursued is inevitably to prepare economically for war.’

Arutiunian

This line of argument, which is at the heart of all Communist propoganda, is to be found at all levels, nationally and internationally.

France:

‘This war economy is enshrined in the Schuman Plan’

Resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party.

Western Germany:

‘The sole aim of the Schuman Plan is to stockpile arms for a new war.’

Reiman Declaration

Eastern Germany:

‘The Schuman Plan, a plot hatched by American imperialists ... against the peace and security of nations.’

Decision of the Grotewohl Government against the Schuman Plan.

27 June 1950

Russia and its satellite countries:

‘The Schuman Plan means opting for war,’ etc.

Radio Prague

C. — What will the consequences be?

The first will follow from the preceding argument.

Adapting and converting peace industries to the needs of a war economy.

12 June 1951

‘According to the Steel Committee report, the situation on the steel market had changed radically since the middle of 1950, and this was the result of the increase in strategic production in many countries: this policy would be stepped up by the launch of the Schuman Plan.’

Arutiunian, Economic Commission for Europe

Adaptation of industry to the production of strategic material.

‘Many factories in France are already producing war material. This is giving rise to heavy military expenditure which is entirely unrelated to the defence of the nation ...’

Humanité — A. Croizat

hence the contradiction with

The second consequence,

Unemployment,

which is rather unexpected, since it could have been deduced from the foregoing that an increase in production for the purpose of war would pave the way for full employment.

Factory closures

19 July 1950

‘The *départements* of Moselle, Meurthe-et-Moselle and Nord will not be spared ... possible complete closure of the factories in Senelles, Maubeuge, Mont Saint-Martin, Rehan, and Herserange ... that is to say around 25 000 workers in the iron and steel industry who would be made redundant as a result ...’

A. Croizat

15 November 1950

‘163 iron mines are on the verge of being closed: after that 100 000 workers will be jobless ...’

Trud & Radio Moscow

Closures are even reported prior to 9 May 1950:

18 September 1950

‘77 mines have already been closed since 1 January 1948: 69 000 miners have been made redundant and 13 000 transferred.’

National Defence Conference — Humanité

The factory closures will lead to a contraction of production (an argument which is incompatible with the increase in production for the purpose of war).

Drop in wages

17 September 1950

Production costs will be brought into line with the lowest levels ‘as demonstrated by the vacancies that are being advertised.’

National Defence Conference

Poverty

4 July 1950

‘The wages and working conditions of French, British, Italian, Belgian, Dutch and Luxembourg workers would be reduced to the very low level of those of West German workers whom the imperialists wish to keep in poverty.’

Declaration of the European Communist Parties

20–27 September 1950

‘Consequently, the situation of workers will become appalling, and unemployment will become widespread.’

Arutiunian

Deportation — Transfers

Example: the Auchel miners

16 and 17 September 1950

‘Some workers are being transferred to other places of work, as in the case of the Auchel miners; others are being offered a transfer from the Lorraine iron mines to the Conakry iron mine in French Guinea.’

National Defence Conference

Different arguments according to the country concerned

Differences, and even contradictions, are to be found in the arguments relating to the consequences of the Schuman Plan for a specific country.

10 May 1950

As regards the French there is talk of ‘an infringement of national independence.’

Communiqué of the Confederal Bureau of the CGT and

‘of the submission of French industry to German industry.’

Radio Moscow in French

19 July 1950

‘The Schuman Plan is merely the creation of German ironmasters who are now gaining, through the Schuman Plan, what three wars failed to give them, that is to say absolute control over our iron and steel and coal output.’

Declaration by A. Croizat

18 July 1950

Schuman’s idea of Franco-German reconciliation is utopian.

‘One and a half million French people died in 1914–1918, but the Briey basin was not bombed. During the “phony war”, ore from Lorraine passed by the trainload through “neutral” Belgium and Luxembourg to supply the blast furnaces of the Ruhr where preparations were being made for the May 1940 offensive.’

‘Robert Schuman’s plan for Franco-German reconciliation harbours within it ... all the seeds of another war, even a war of aggression against our country by Germans seeking revenge.’

A. Croizat

This argument fuels traditional Franco-German hostility.

As regards the Germans

19 March 1951

‘The Schuman Plan will constitute a new infringement of the Potsdam Treaty as it is bound to perpetuate the division of Germany.’

‘On the other hand, it will deal a treacherous blow to German industry by placing it under American control.’

Radio Berlin

hence the contradiction with

‘the French coal mines are unable to compete on equal terms with those of the Ruhr’ — an argument which suggests that the Schuman Plan would lead to increased prosperity for German industry.

A. Croizat

4 July 1950

As regards the Italians: The Italian iron and steel industry would be doomed to extinction.

Declarations of the Communist Parties

Ignoring its own contradictions, the Communist argument seeks to highlight those which prevail in the Allied camp. For example, the conflict of interest and battle for supremacy between the United States and Britain, which is not part of the Schuman Plan, do not prevent Britain from agreeing on the essential issue, namely the rearmament of Germany.

In the view of Arutiunian

In the light of so many divisions among the capitalists, it is possible to see:

‘The working class, the foundation of the national interest in every country ... fighting to thwart the Schuman Plan for slavery and war.’

II. — Means of fighting the Schuman Plan

How is this battle to be fought?

‘The delegates consider that, through this huge campaign, which must be launched in the country, all forms of action are possible in Unity, Union and Action.’

UNION

Union is therefore the indispensable point of departure. That is why the Party will endeavour to bring it about by all means, even by turning to non-Communist elements, as can be seen in the Longwy Steelworks, where delegates of the CFTC, FO and CGC trade unions took a stand with the CGT against the Schuman Plan.

This union will make it possible to take effective

ACTION

The resolution adopted by the National Conference for Defence of the Mining and Iron and Steel Industries draws up a very comprehensive programme:

17 September 1950

— The setting-up and running of regional and local Committees for the Defence of Industries, whose composition must reflect, as broadly as possible, all sections of the population, following the example of the Gard committee.

— The establishment of contacts, in all forms and in particular by the delegations, with all elected representatives, deputies, senators, departmental and municipal councillors, public authorities, and prefects and deputy prefects, to ask them to adopt a clear position on the PLAN and its consequences.

— To call on municipal and departmental councils which have not yet done so to express a view.

— To launch a large-scale campaign among all workers, all corporate bodies and the entire population and to do so by all the means of propaganda necessary: use of the local and regional press, leaflets, posters, speaking at meetings, etc.

— The organisation, as swiftly as possible, of days of action for the defence of industries at regional and local level, bringing together all workers and the public.

— The creation of regional or local support funds in order to give the relevant Committees an opportunity to express themselves and exert influence.

Resolutions of the National Defence Conference

Action on an international scale in the form of

Demonstrations

such as that held by the CGT and German Free Trade Unions (20 June 1950)

22 September 1950

International Conference of Miners and Iron and Steelworkers against the Schuman Plan

It would also appear that the propaganda envisaged the use of

Sabotage

as demonstrated by this note from a Soviet source:

22 June 1950

‘Workers in the French and German chemical industries have been called upon to slow down production in their factories this afternoon. This is the first in a series of measures adopted by French and German Communist trade unionists to sabotage the Schuman Plan. This measure was announced by the Central Bureau of the chemical workers’ trade union and circulated by the Soviet-German information service ADN.

L’Epoque

UNITY

How will the propaganda machine apply this first principle of the Resolution of the National Defence Conference?

4 July 1950

Over the 11 months between the Declaration of the European Communist Parties and the position adopted by the Soviet Delegate Arutiunian in Geneva, the same slogans have circulated and, although the contradiction in the detail is easy to detect, it will nevertheless be crushed by the weight of the pathetic and gratuitous professions of faith which they will make ‘to thwart the belligerent alliance of arms sellers ... millions of people who do not want war ...’

Declarations of the European Communist Parties

12 April 1951

So while the Schuman Plan underwent the evolution required to move from the planning to implementation stage the Communist argument remained unchanged. How was this so? It does not rely on the wording of the Treaty, something which one would expect to find underlying any methodical opposition. Communist speakers prefer to attack the personalities of those involved in Schuman Plan, as demonstrated by the many insults directed at Schuman and Adenauer, rather than the detail of their work.

Humanité

May 1951

It is necessary to open the *Revue des Comités d’Entreprise* (the CGT magazine), which is targeted at a limited public, to find partial explanations about the Institutions.

IN CONCLUSION

This propaganda, based on opposition of principle, does not seek to convince objective minds; it uses the techniques of well thought-out advertising: striking, if untrue, images, exaggeration, simplification and repetition.