

'The Chamber approves the Schuman Plan' from the Luxemburger Wort (14 May 1952)

Caption: On 14 May 1952, the Luxembourg daily newspaper Luxemburger Wort publishes part of the parliamentary debates that led to the ratification of the Schuman Plan by the Luxembourg Chamber of Deputies the previous day.

Source: Luxemburger Wort. Für Wahrheit und Recht. 14.05.1952, n° 135; 105e année. Luxembourg: Imprimerie Saint-Paul. "Die Kammer stimmte den Schumanplan in ihrer gestrigen Sitzung", p. 3.

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The Chamber approves the Schuman Plan

During yesterday's session

The debate on the Schuman Plan continued with statements by the Communist Member, Arthur Useldinger. He complained that such an important project was being railroaded through. (Émile Reuter, President of the Chamber: 'All those who wish to speak will get their turn.' René Urbany: 'The others are agreed.' Mr Reuter: 'And you get satisfaction. What more do you want?!') Mr Useldinger quoted an excerpt from the book by Léon Metzler in which the author puts forward a French point of view, expressing fears of German hegemony in the Schuman Plan. He then commented that the High Authority would be made up of nine people, eight of whom would be appointed directly by the governments, and all of whom would be bankers. Pursuant to Article 23 of the Protocol on the Court of Justice, there would be no possibility for the Court to reverse a decision made by the High Authority, as it would have no rights in this area. The parliamentary guarantee accompanying the Schuman Plan was minimal. Owing to its supplies of coal, Germany would be in a position to exert great influence within the Authority. American capital would dictate, together with German capital. The German capitalists had retained the right to coal distribution. No less a person than Walter Hallstein himself had asserted this. Mr Useldinger then quoted criticisms that were being made in Belgium regarding the Schuman Plan. He reproached the Socialists for now approving the Schuman Plan, whereas, for years previously, they had rejected it and recognised the fact that Germany stood to gain everything by it. In his view, no fundamental modifications had subsequently been made, despite current claims to that effect.

The Schuman Plan would deliver the workers into the hands of the SS gangster, Alfred Krupp. Workers would be disadvantaged. Wage cuts and deportations would be possible in the Schuman Plan economy. Competition would dictate ever decreasing prices. The Schuman Plan was also directed against the railway workers and members of the middle classes, including farmers.

America had established a bridgehead in Europe. That explained the opposition that was growing in certain capitalist circles.

Ultimately, the aims of the Schuman Plan were connected with war. It was a war plan.

After Mr Useldinger, Jean Fohrmann took the floor. In a more objective manner, he began by describing the Plan's mechanism. In his view, it was now much less authoritarian than was previously the case. The High Authority had very many powers, as Joseph Bech had explained in detail. Its composition had also been taken sufficiently into consideration. It was extremely advantageous that there were to be nine members of the High Authority, instead of just five. The ninth member would be a representative of the European working classes, so that the interests of the workers would not be neglected. It was necessary for the High Authority to become a comprehensive organisation, which would entail tremendous expenditure. The workers were likewise represented in the Consultative Council. If the trade unions of the five countries were to join forces, then it would be impossible to use the Schuman Plan against the workers. It was clear that, with the adoption of the Schuman Plan, the individual countries would have to give up a part of their sovereignty. In Mr Fohrmann's view, the economic issues were the most important. The free establishment of cartels was not what was needed at the current time, for it would provide no guarantees. The Schuman Plan was in a position to eliminate the difficulties that currently existed in Europe. Moreover, the purpose of the Schuman Plan was to bring about wage increases. Finally, Mr Fohrmann believed that not only the idea of the Schuman Plan should be approved but also its implementation.

The Schuman Plan was then adopted by 47 votes to 4.

Tony Bieber emphasised that the third part of the central section included proposals to which the Government should pay heed when implementing the Plan. Mr Bech promised the Government's cooperation regarding the requirements of the central section. The rapporteur proposed that a vote of confidence in the Government be adopted on the basis of this precondition.

Eugène Schaus explained that he could not agree with the proposal, for it involved having confidence in the

Government. Moreover, his demands had not been included in the remarks relating to the central section. He therefore proposed that a vote should be taken.

On the basis of the wording of the central section, Mr Biever pointed out that Mr Schaus' proposals had indeed been taken into consideration.

According to the Foreign Minister, Mr Bech, the Opposition could agree with the Biever proposal, since it did not amount to an overall vote of confidence in the present Government. Mr Bech remarked that it was the task of the Ministers and the Assembly to call for an extension to the transitional period, once it had expired.

Mr Schaus called for a split vote.

Antoine Wehenkel then took the floor, commenting on the Schuman Plan, with particular regard to the problem of restructuring the railways. The Treaty provided for an upward levelling out of prices. The attacks made by the author of a book on the Schuman Plan against the railways and their statute could not be upheld. Mr Wehenkel compared the current situation with that of 1913 in order to demonstrate that there was evidence of improvement in the performance of the railway workers. The railways were running a deficit because certain tariffs were below cost price and because of the amount of the financial burden originating from abroad. Mr Wehenkel regretted the fact that, along with the ratification of the Schuman Plan, the question of the Government's investment policy, especially in the area of transport, would not be addressed.

The session was closed.