

Graham Avery

# Robert Schuman on Hungary and Europe

**R**obert Schuman (1886–1963), French statesman and ‘founding father’ of European integration, once declared:

*Nous devons faire l'Europe non seulement dans l'intérêt des pays libres, mais aussi pour pouvoir y accueillir les peuples de l'Est qui, délivrés des sujétions qu'elles ont subies jusqu'à présent, nous demanderont leur adhésion et notre appui moral.*

We must make Europe not only in the interest of the free countries, but also to be able to welcome the peoples of the East who, freed from the subjection that they have suffered until now, will ask to join us and request our moral support. (my translation)

During the enlargement of the European Union (EU) to include the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, which I helped to plan in the European Commission in Brussels, I often quoted this far-sighted remark of Schuman. Before 1989 he was practically the only politician in the West to predict that one day we would welcome into the EU the Europeans who were separated from us by the Iron Curtain.

But I had a problem: I could not discover the source of the quotation. It was not in Schuman's published writings, and although the secondary sources dated it to 1963, I could not find a reference to the original documentary source. This irritated me, and I even began to wonder whether the quotation was authentic. Since much of the literature concerning Schuman is hagiographic in nature, maybe one of his followers had invented it.

However, I recently discovered that the quotation was first published in 1963, just after Schuman's death, in an article dedicated to him,<sup>1</sup> and that in

1 ■ *France-Forum*, no. 52, November 1963.

---

**Graham Avery**

*is Visiting Fellow at the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, European University Institute, Florence, Senior Member of St. Antony's College, University of Oxford and Honorary Director General of the European Commission.*

fact he made the remark in a speech in Luxembourg on 3 November 1956, of which I have obtained a transcript.<sup>2</sup>

It is clear from other remarks in the speech—whose text has not previously been published—that Schuman’s appeal to Europe to “welcome the people of the East” was a response to the events in Budapest of October–November 1956, of which reports were reaching the West when he made the speech. Together with the discovery of the true date and source of the quotation, I found that Schuman had a particular interest in Hungary, beginning with visits to Budapest in the 1930s and continuing in the postwar period. So in this article<sup>3</sup> I will:

- describe briefly Robert Schuman’s life, his visits to Hungary, and his relations with Hungarians in France
- reproduce the relevant extracts from his speech of 1956, of which only a few phrases have been published before
- conclude with some reflections on Schuman’s vision of European integration.

## Schuman’s life

**R**obert Schuman was born in Luxembourg in 1886 into a family and a culture that was both German and French. His father, Jean-Pierre Schuman, was from Moselle in the French region of Lorraine, but as a result of the transfer of Lorraine to Germany in 1871 he became a German citizen; after settling in Luxembourg, he married a Luxembourg woman, who consequently became German, and their son Robert, born in Luxembourg, also had German nationality according to the principle of *jus sanguinis*.

Although his mother tongue was Letzbuergisch, the language of Luxembourg and neighbouring regions, Robert Schuman was also fluent in German and French. After studying law at the universities of Bonn, Munich, Berlin and Strasbourg, he began a legal practice in Metz in Lorraine, which was then part of the German Reich. Recruited into the German army in the Great War, he was seconded into the civil service. After the war Lorraine was transferred to France in 1918, so Schuman became a French citizen, and in 1919 he was elected to the French Parliament as a representative of Moselle.

In political life Schuman was a member of parties of the Christian Democrat family, and from his early days was a militant social Catholic. He probably

2 ■ I am indebted to David Price, director of the Schuman Project (<http://www.schuman.info>), for informing me of this document and for kindly making a copy available to me.

3 ■ In the preparation of this article I am grateful for advice, comments and encouragement received from László Bruszt, Professor at the European University Institute; Györgyi Kocsis, Deputy Editor-in-chief of the political and economic weekly *HVG*; Jean-Marie Palayret, Director of the Historical Archives of the European Union; Jean-Marie Majerus, Robert Schuman Centre for European Studies and Research (CERE); David Price, Director of the Schuman Project; János Rainer, Director of the Institute for the History of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution; Zsófia Zachár, Editor of *The Hungarian Quarterly*.

considered the possibility of becoming a priest; he never married, and was involved in many Roman Catholic causes. However, his actions and writings show no trace of the anti-Semitism that was common in Catholic circles. Since his death, the procedure has begun in Rome for his beatification.

As a parliamentarian in the 1920s and 1930s Schuman was active in the politics of Alsace-Lorraine, and with his international background he naturally became interested in foreign affairs. He travelled in Central Europe, visiting Germany and countries of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire, including Hungary in 1930, 1934 and 1935.

In 1940, after the outbreak of the Second World War, he was appointed to a junior post in the French government, but resigned at the time of the Armistice, and on his return to Metz was arrested by the Gestapo because he refused to collaborate with the new regime.<sup>4</sup> He was put under house arrest in Germany, but after escaping in 1942 he remained in hiding in various places in France for the rest of the war.

After the war he was elected again to the French Parliament, serving as a representative of Moselle from 1945 to 1962. During the period from 1946 to 1955 he was a member of several French governments, as finance minister, prime minister, foreign minister and justice minister. Later he was the first president of the European Parliament and president of the European Movement.

Already before the war Schuman had developed ideas for new European structures and for the reconciliation of the peoples of Europe, which he put into action after 1945. The French government of which he was a member launched plans for what became the Council of Europe and the Convention of Human Rights.

In an important speech on 9 May 1950, as foreign minister and with the approval of the French government, he launched the Schuman Plan. This proposed the creation of a supranational Community for coal and steel, with a High Authority based on a new type of European legal order. Schuman had already outlined in speeches his ideas for European integration, but they were opposed by other politicians—nationalists, Gaullists and Communists—and by officials in the Foreign Ministry. To avoid the plan being sabotaged, the text of Schuman's declaration was drafted secretly by trusted colleagues in the Foreign Ministry, with the aid of Jean Monnet, head of the French planning bureau.

Schuman's initiative led to the European Coal and Steel Community being created by the Treaty of Paris in 1951; this was the precursor of the European Economic Community created by the Treaty of Brussels in 1956, and later of the European Union created by the Treaty of Maastricht in 1993. Schuman is

4 ■ François Roth, *Robert Schuman. Du Lorrain des frontières au père de l'Europe*. Paris: Fayard, 2008, p. 235.

thus considered to be one of the ‘founding fathers’ of the European Union, and the ‘Europe Day’ celebrated in many countries on 9 May commemorates his 1950 declaration.

Although Robert Schuman held high office in France, he was more honoured abroad than at home; in the eyes of French Gaullists he was too German, and he was also criticized for being too Catholic and too austere. He was in fact a true internationalist, both by experience and by conviction, and his speeches and writings on European integration have had a lasting influence.

### Schuman’s visits to Hungary

In August 1930 Schuman took part in a visit to Budapest organized for a ‘Groupe d’études de l’Europe centrale’ (Study Group for Central Europe) of French parliamentarians.<sup>5</sup> Its leader was Abbé Bergey, a Catholic priest and member of the French parliament, who had already organized visits to Hungary and sympathized with the ‘National Christian’ ideas prevalent in Magyar circles, as did many Catholic conservatives in France. In Budapest Schuman and Bergey stayed—as they requested—in a seminary rather than a hotel.

The official purpose of the visit was to attend ceremonies for the 900th anniversary of Saint Imre (Emerich), son of Saint István (King Stephen), but it also responded to the Hungarian government’s wish for better links with French political circles. The government paid part of the cost of the visit, provided the services of a guide to accompany the visitors, and arranged for them to meet the President of the Parliament, Foreign Minister Lajos Walkó and Social Affairs Minister József Vass.

Although the visit from 16 to 22 August was brief, it seems to have had a considerable influence on Schuman’s thinking. The situation in Central Europe was not well understood in France at that time, but Schuman was one of those who realized that the economic crisis threatened the chances of peace, and that the growing power of Germany required a change in French foreign policy towards the countries of the Austro-Hungarian Empire which had been ‘losers’ of the First World War. The idea was for France to develop a counterweight to the power of Germany by improving its relations with Austria and Hungary, to encourage cooperation among the states of the Danube Basin, and even to bring back in some way the Catholic Habsburg monarchy.

Four years later in May 1934 Schuman visited Vienna and Budapest with a group of politicians and journalists led by the French parliamentarian Xavier Vallat, who hoped to develop an alliance between France, Italy and the Central Europeans

5 ■ This section concerning Schuman’s visits to Hungary draws largely on Gergely Fejérdy’s important article “Une relation oubliée: Robert Schuman et la Hongrie.” *European Issues*, no. 194, Paris: Fondation Robert Schuman, 2005.

in order to inflect the policies of the Third Reich following Hitler's rise to power. The visit to Hungary was made at the invitation of the newspaper *Pesti Hírlap*, and its aim was to show the visitors the country's political and economic situation. Their tour included not only the capital but also Esztergom and Bábolna.

During their visit they were received by Regent Miklós Horthy, Prime Minister Gyula Gömbös and President of the Parliament László Almásy. Among other public figures whom they met were the Primate of Hungary Jusztinián Serédi, Foreign Minister Kálmán Kánya, Minister of Education Bálint Hóman, Kálmán Darányi (who became Prime Minister in 1936), Pál Teleki (who became Prime Minister in 1939) and Andor Lázár.

One of the group's visits was to the Kisgazdapárt (Smallholders' Party) whose chairman was Tibor Eckhardt, Hungary's High Commissioner at the League of Nations. During a visit to the Nemzeti Radikális Párt (National Radical Party) Schuman switched at a certain moment from French to German to facilitate the conversation, which evidently irritated the group's host Endre Bajcsy-Zsilinszky, who was a Germanophobe. Seeing this, Schuman remarked "Gentlemen, if the German language doesn't worry me, it shouldn't be a problem for you."

This visit to Hungary, and another which he made to Yugoslavia in August 1934, seems to have reinforced Schuman's belief that French policy should be directed towards a rapprochement with Austria and Hungary in order to restrain German expansionism. From his origins in Lorraine, Schuman understood well the problems of minorities with which many of the Central European countries were struggling and the difficulties caused by the frontier adjustments which Hungary and its neighbours had experienced.

In September 1935 Schuman visited Hungary again with another group of French parliamentarians and journalists, invited to study the economic situation by *Pesti Hírlap* together with Magyar Gyáriparosok Országos Szövetsége (Hungarian National Association of Industrialists) and Magyar Gazdasági Egyesület (Hungaria National Association of Economists). They were received by Regent Miklós Horthy at his residence at Gödöllő, and by members of the government including Finance Minister Tihamér Fabinyi. During their visit, which lasted from 13 to 20 September, they were also taken to the village of Rösztke to see the problems caused by frontier changes. After leaving Hungary they returned to France via Vienna, where they met Chancellor Schuschnigg.

### Schuman's contacts with Hungarians in France

**D**uring the period after the Second War when he held government office in Paris, and particularly when he was Foreign Minister in 1948–53, Robert Schuman had further contacts with Hungarians. His acquaintance with Pál Auer was probably significant for the development of his views not only on Hungary, but also on Europe.

Auer, who since 1924 had been a member of the Pan Europa movement founded by Count Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi, was legal adviser at the French Embassy in Budapest before the Second War and Hungary's first minister in Paris after it. In 1947 when Prime Minister Ferenc Nagy was forced to leave Hungary, Auer was one of the diplomats who resigned, and he stayed in France where he became an active member of the Hungarian émigré community and was a correspondent of Schuman. From 1948 he was a member of the Board of Magyar Nemzeti Bizottmány (Hungarian National Committee) of which Schuman knew several other members as a result of his visits to Hungary. Auer founded in 1949 Magyar Európa Tanács (Hungarian Council for Europe) and later Közép- és Kelet-Európai Bizottság (Committee for Central and Eastern Europe) to which Schuman was invited to speak. In 1955 Schuman also became a member of the Comité France-Hongrie founded by Pál Auer and Jules Romains with the aim of pursuing cultural relations between the two countries.

Auer was succeeded as minister in Paris by Count Mihály Károlyi, known as the 'Red Count'. At a meeting in 1949 with Henry Gauquié, French minister in Budapest, who was then in Paris, Károlyi complained that he had not yet succeeded in obtaining a meeting with Robert Schuman, who had been appointed foreign minister four months previously, and he asked Gauquié to intervene on his behalf. Károlyi reported that during this conversation Gauquié remarked ironically concerning Schuman "*Qu'est-ce que vous voulez que je fasse avec un homme qui prie tout le temps?*" (What can one do with a man who prays all the time?).

Nevertheless, as a result of this meeting, Schuman received Károlyi two days later and treated him courteously. As a fervent Catholic, Schuman had been shocked by the treatment of the Church in Hungary; after the arrest and trial of Cardinal Mindszenty in 1949 he expressed his disapproval in a statement to the press. Later, in 1949, Schuman accepted a courtesy visit from the new Hungarian minister in Paris, Zoltán Szántó, who was one of the founders of the Hungarian Communist Party supported by Moscow.

### Schuman's speech of 3 November 1956

Come now to the speech made by Robert Schuman in Luxembourg on 3 November 1956 in which he appealed to his audience to "welcome the people of the East". At the time, Schuman was no longer a minister but still a member of the French Parliament. Luxembourg was not only his native place but also the seat of the institutions of the European Coal and Steel Community including its High Authority,<sup>6</sup> although its Assembly<sup>7</sup> was based in Strasbourg.

6 ■ The High Authority was the precursor of the European Commission, which is now located in Brussels.

7 ■ The Assembly was the precursor of the European Parliament, which is still based in Strasbourg.

The speech was given at a dinner of the Luxembourg Rotary Club, which took place at the Casino and was attended by many important figures, including the Prime Minister of Luxembourg, Joseph Bech, four ministers of the Luxembourg government, several members of the European Coal and Steel Community's High Authority, the Grand Marshal of the Court (representing Luxembourg's Grand Duke), the ambassadors of France, Belgium, Germany, Italy and the USA, as well as members of Rotary Clubs from neighbouring cities in France and Belgium. The theme of the event and of Schuman's speech was "*L'intégration européenne est-elle un objectif valable et d'actualité?*" (Is European integration a valid aim at the present time?)<sup>8</sup>

In his speech<sup>9</sup> Schuman begins by asserting that despite current difficulties Europe is still on the agenda and is relevant to contemporary political problems. He refers to the situation in different parts of the world where "Europe is being attacked", mentioning particularly the Middle East, Suez, Asia and Africa, where attacks are being made on French interests and on Europeans living in the former colonies. The French government, he says, wants to launch a European programme of aid for these countries and for Europe itself. He continues:<sup>10</sup>

*Notre solidarité devra jouer en faveur des régions, de toutes les régions sous-développées en Europe d'abord—et il y en a—puis dans les régions que les nations européennes ont prises en charge. En deuxième ligne, ce qui fait l'actualité du problème européen, c'est la nécessité de concentrer nos ressources et nos énergies sur le plan économique d'abord. Inutile de vous en parler longuement. Les entreprises doivent être modernisées, doivent se spécialiser, les investissements doivent être plus rationnés, il faut mettre en commun les matières premières, la main d'œuvre, les capitaux, les inventions, les progrès techniques. Tout ceci suppose une organisation européenne. Dans le domaine politique, il y a les blocs de puissance qui se sont créés, les anciens: les États-Unis d'Amérique, Commonwealth Britannique, les nouveaux: le bloc soviétique (qui aujourd'hui subit certains ébranlements dont nous ne pourrions pas encore à l'heure actuelle mesurer la portée, nous ne savons pas si, ce qui est mis en cause, est la doctrine ou simplement la discipline), nous avons des ensembles*

8 ■ The text of Schuman's speech and the introductory and concluding speeches of the chairman of the event, Albert Wehrer, are recorded in a typewritten report of 17 pages, apparently made by the Luxembourg Rotary Club. My copy of the document bears the stamp 'Hohe Behörde Bibliothek' (Library of the High Authority) with the number 7736 and the date stamp 10 Dec 1956. The report appears to have been compiled on the basis of notes or a tape recording made at the dinner, since—as indicated in the notes below—some passages in the typescript represent (or mis-represent) spoken words. Probably Schuman used written notes for his speech, and added remarks extempore as he spoke.

9 ■ I reproduce here not the full speech (12 pages of typescript) which concerns mainly the challenges facing the six members of the Community at the time, but two sections (equivalent to about 2 pages of typescript) in which he refers to Eastern Europe.

10 ■ Page 6 of the typescript.

*comme la Chine, l'Inde, ensembles techniques et culturels. Nous avons la Ligue Arabe dont je vous ai parlé tout à l'heure. L'Europe seule est déchirée, désunie, malgré ses affinités réelles et profondes, et c'est là, Messieurs, le véritable scandale de l'heure actuelle. Ce rôle de l'Europe, loin d'être achevé, se renouvelle. Il nous faut l'Europe à l'égard des territoires d'Outre-Mer, j'en dirai un mot tout à l'heure, je l'ai dit tout à l'heure, à l'égard aussi des peuples de l'Est qui aujourd'hui s'affranchissent. L'Europe doit se sauver et se maintenir non seulement pour elle-même, mais pour le monde qui a besoin d'elle plus que jamais. Aucune diversion, aucune de nos difficultés ne nous en dispense. Au contraire, toute difficulté nouvelle fait apparaître davantage encore cet impérieux devoir.*

#### Translation:

We must show our solidarity in helping the regions, beginning with all the underdeveloped regions of Europe—and there are plenty of them—and then the regions for which the European nations have taken responsibility. In the second place, and this is what makes the European question topical, we need to concentrate our resources and our energy above all on the economic level. I don't need to talk to you at length about this. Firms need to be modernized, to specialize, investments need to be rationed, we need to pool raw materials, the workforce, capital, inventions, technical progress. All this requires Europe to organize itself. In the field of politics, power blocs have been created: old ones, like the United States of America and the British Commonwealth, and new ones like the Soviet bloc (which today is undergoing disruption whose extent we cannot measure at the present time; we do not know if what is being challenged is doctrine or simply discipline), we have entities like China and India, technical and cultural entities, and we have the Arab League, which I mentioned earlier. Europe alone is divided and disunited, despite its real and deep affinities, and that, gentlemen, is the true scandal of our time. Europe's role, far from being finished, is renewed. We need Europe for the overseas territories—I will say a word about them in a moment—and as I said a moment ago, we need it also for the peoples of the East who today are freeing themselves. Europe must preserve and maintain itself not only for its own sake, but for the world which needs it more than ever. No diversions, none of our difficulties, can absolve us from this. On the contrary, every new difficulty highlights further our compelling duty.

Schuman goes on to explain what he means by European integration. One of its requirements is the possibility for authority to be exercised without unanimous agreement, for decisions of the majority to be binding on the minority, as is the case in democracies. Reviewing the experience of international organizations he argues that after deliberation you need to take decisions, and comments that in the European Coal and Steel Community the mere fact that a decision of the Authority is possible incites the member

states to reach agreement. *“Il suffit d’avoir le pouvoir pour n’avoir pas à s’en servir”* (It’s enough to have the power for its use not to be necessary).

The major part of the speech is devoted to the ideas under discussion at the time among the Six for the creation of the common market (European Economic Community) and Euratom (European Atomic Energy Community). He explains that with the common market there will be a single market for the six member countries, in the same way as for a single country without internal frontiers. This will involve the free movement not only of goods but also of services, labour and capital. The purpose of the common market will be to improve living standards, and it will need to be regulated. National economic policies will have to be coordinated, and currencies will need to be unified or at least made convertible. He admits that France, with its tradition of protectionism, lags behind its partners in explaining to the public the benefits which the common market can bring. Lessons can be learned for the Six from cooperation between the three Benelux countries.

Schuman concludes his speech:<sup>11</sup>

*L’Europe n’est pas une chose simple, parce qu’elle n’est pas une vue de l’esprit que chacun peut construire à sa façon, elle est une entreprise qui exige en dehors de toute technicité éprouvée, la confiance que la nation a en elle-même et la confiance qu’elle place dans la bonne foi de ses partenaires. Messieurs, j’ai parlé longtemps de technique et je m’en excuse. Après un repas en Luxembourg, c’est un grand effort. Mais j’ai voulu ce soir, aussi brièvement que possible vous faire les confidences de nos préoccupations, de notre volonté à la fois de réussir avec les autres partenaires, mais aussi de mettre de notre côté les meilleures chances. Mais vous ne me comprendriez si, avant de terminer, je n’insisterais pas sur un nouvel aspect du problème européen. Nous devons faire l’Europe non seulement dans l’intérêt des pays libres, mais aussi pour pouvoir y accueillir les peuples de l’Est qui, délivrés des sujétions<sup>12</sup> qu’elles ont subies jusqu’à présent, nous demanderont<sup>13</sup> leur adhésion et notre appui moral. Depuis de longues années, nous avons douloureusement ressenti la ligne de démarcation idéologique qui coupe l’Europe en deux. Elle était imposée par la violence, maintenue par la force, avec effort. Puisse-t-elle s’effacer dans la liberté. Nous considérons comme partie intégrante de l’Europe, de l’Europe vivante, tous ceux qui ont le désir de nous rejoindre dans une communauté reconstituée. Nous rendons*

11 ■ Pages 14–15 of the typescript.

12 ■ The typescript reads ‘suggestions’ which in this context cannot be correct, but is easily explicable by the fact that in spoken French the words ‘suggestions’ and ‘sujétions’ sound similar; presumably the person who transcribed the speech (perhaps from a tape recording) chose the more familiar word ‘suggestions’.

13 ■ The typescript reads ‘demanderons’ which is grammatically incorrect (first person plural instead of third person plural). As in the preceding case, the error is easily explained since the French words ‘demanderons’ and ‘demanderont’ are pronounced identically. The text as published in *France-Forum* in 1963 read ‘demanderaient’ but in my view ‘demanderont’ is more appropriate here.

*hommage à leur courage, à leur fidélité, comme à leur souffrance et à leurs sacrifices. Nous leur devons l'exemple d'une Europe Unie et fraternelle. Chaque pas que nous faisons dans ce sens constituera pour eux une chance nouvelle. Ils ont besoin de nous dans l'immense tâche de réadaptation qu'ils auront à accomplir. La Communauté Européenne doit créer l'ambiance pour une compréhension mutuelle dans le respect des particularités de chacun, elle sera la base solide d'une coopération féconde et pacifique. Ainsi s'édifiera une Europe nouvelle, prospère et indépendante. Messieurs, notre devoir est d'être prêt.*

Translation:

Europe is not something simple, because it's not a way of thinking that you can make up just as you like, it's an enterprise that requires not only tested technical expertise but also the confidence that a nation has in itself and in the good faith of its partners. Gentlemen, I'm sorry, I have talked for a long time about technical matters, and that's a big effort after a meal in Luxembourg. But this evening I wanted to share with you, as briefly as I could, our concerns and our wish to succeed with the other partners and to give ourselves the best chance of success. But you would not understand if, before concluding, I did not underline a new aspect of the European problem. We must make Europe not only in the interests of the free countries, but also to be able to welcome the peoples of the East who, freed from the subjection that they have suffered until now, will ask to join us and request our moral support. For many years we have been painfully conscious of the ideological demarcation line that cuts Europe in two. It was imposed by violence, and maintained—with an effort—by force. Let it disappear in freedom! We consider all those who wish to join us in our renewed community to be an integral part of Europe, the living Europe. We salute their courage, their fidelity, as well as their suffering and their sacrifices. We owe them the example of a united and fraternal Europe. Each step we take in this direction will be a new opportunity for them. They need us in the immense task of adaptation that they will need to complete. The European Community must create the atmosphere for mutual understanding, while respecting each one's individual characteristics, and provide a solid basis for fruitful and peaceful cooperation. In this way a new, prosperous and independent Europe will be built. Gentlemen, our duty is to be ready.

What can we deduce from this speech? Although Schuman does not refer to Hungary explicitly, his reference to “the Soviet bloc undergoing disruption” must surely allude to the events which had been taking place in Budapest in the preceding days. His parenthetical remark that “we cannot measure the extent of this disruption at the present time; we do not know if what is being challenged is doctrine or simply discipline” reveals that Schuman was concerned by the implications of the Hungarian uprising, but—like others in the West—did not yet understand what was really happening. The way in which this remark is

introduced, as a digression from Schuman's main theme, suggests that it was added at the last moment in response to the news coming from Budapest.

After returning to the theme of European integration, he reverts implicitly to Hungary with his remark about "needing Europe... for the peoples of the East who today are freeing themselves."

Finally in his conclusion, after apologizing for the length of the speech, he speaks again of the events taking place in Hungary, and in a passionate exordium denounces the subjection of the peoples of Eastern Europe and salutes their "courage, fidelity, suffering and sacrifices". Concerning the demarcation line that divides Europe, his exhortation "Let it disappear in freedom!" strikes us now as a forerunner of later declarations about the Berlin Wall. We can see now that Schuman's appeal to "welcome the peoples of the East", his prediction that when "freed from subjection, they will ask to join us" and his call to "consider all those who wish to join us... to be an integral part of Europe" were extraordinarily prescient. With these words Schuman effectively forecast the situation which came about more than 30 years later when the Iron Curtain finally disappeared.

This concluding passage of the speech, departing from its main themes of European integration and the common market, was no doubt also an addition. One may suppose that the principal materials of the speech were prepared by Schuman in advance, with the aid of his preceding speeches, but the concluding section, referring to a "new aspect" of the European problem, was added at the last moment in response to the events in Hungary.

It is noticeable that nowhere in these passages does Schuman refer by name to Hungary or to communism, and his reference to the "Soviet bloc" occurs only in the sober part of the speech, not in its passionate conclusion. Although the allusions are rather clear, he refrains from making them explicit. This was presumably the result of his experience in the field of diplomacy, where foreign ministers prefer to be discreet and to make verbal attacks under cover of vagueness.

His reference to "the peoples of the East" shows that he viewed Hungary not as an isolated case but as indicative of other countries under Communist rule. In Poland riots had taken place in Poznań in June 1956, and when the Polish Communist Party elected the liberal-national Władysław Gomułka as its First Secretary on 19 October 1956, Soviet troop manoeuvres began at the Polish border; however, as a result of Gomułka's assurance that domestic reforms would not lead to Poland abandoning communism or its treaties with the Soviet Union, no military intervention took place. After information about the Polish events reached Hungary, it was a student demonstration in support of Gomułka that sparked the uprising in Budapest in the last week of October.

We do not know exactly what information Schuman received in the days before his speech about the events which had taken place in Budapest. It is reasonable to suppose that his main source of information was the French press, since he

was no longer a member of the French government. The information reaching the West was extremely confusing, with the demonstration in Budapest on 23 October, Soviet tanks entering the city on 24 October, Imre Nagy replacing András Hegedűs as Prime Minister, the announcement of the retreat of Soviet troops, and then Nagy's appeal to the United Nations on 1 November. After Schuman's speech on 3 November, Soviet tanks re-entered Budapest on 4 November and were met by the resistance that continued until 10 November.

Having examined the speech, let us look at the political context in the West at the time when it was made.

Concerning Schuman's remarks about the common market, we may note that negotiations were under way in 1956 for a European Economic Community that would create a new framework for European integration with a wider scope than the Coal and Steel Community which had existed since the Treaty of Paris in 1951. An intergovernmental conference of the six member states, which had begun at Val Duchesse in Brussels in June 1956, led to the signing of the Treaty of Rome in March 1957.

Concerning Hungary, the speech was made at a moment when the public in Western Europe was aware of the uprising in Budapest and the Soviet intervention, but many in Hungary and elsewhere believed that order had been restored. The shocking images in the Western press of tanks in the streets<sup>14</sup> provoked a wave of sympathy for the Hungarian people, but at the same time the explanation propagated by Moscow that it was helping the Hungarian government to suppress a counter-revolution organized by fascist reactionaries was widely reported. As we have seen, this version was not accepted by Schuman, but it was endorsed by the French Communist Party, the country's largest left-wing party; in a confused debate that took place in the National Assembly in Paris on 7 November many members were critical of the Hungarian uprising and of the French government's support for moves at the United Nations to condemn the Soviet intervention.

The international position of the French government was handicapped by the fact that it was itself conducting an invasion in another part of the world. Following Nasser's nationalization of the Suez Canal in July 1956, a secret plan for invasion had been formed by the governments of France and Britain; the bombing of Egypt commenced on 31 October, and the country was entered by British paratroops on 5 November and by French forces on the next day. In his speech in Luxembourg on 3 November Schuman referred, as we have seen, to Suez as one of the regions of the world where Europe and the interests of France were being 'attacked', but he made no mention of the Franco-British intervention that had begun in the preceding days.

14 ■ I myself remember seeing in the British press at the time the images of tanks in the streets of Budapest; as a schoolboy of 13, I understood nothing of the situation, but I recall those press reports as one of my first encounters with international affairs.

## Schuman's vision of European integration

**A**fter retiring from politics Robert Schuman published in 1963 the book *Pour l'Europe*<sup>15</sup> in which he set out his reflections on European integration. This, the only book that he published, is a distillation of ideas and themes from the notes, articles and speeches which he had previously made on European affairs.

It is also a testament, concluding with a passionate appeal: "*L'Europe se cherche; elle sait qu'elle a en ses mains son propre avenir. Jamais elle n'a été si près du but. Dieu fasse qu'elle ne laisse pas passer l'heure de son destin, l'ultime chance de son salut.*"<sup>16</sup> (Europe is seeking itself, it knows that it has its future in its hands. Never has it been so close to the goal. May God ensure that it does not let pass its hour of destiny, its last chance of salvation.)

Although the book touches on several of the themes mentioned in Schuman's speech of November 1956, such as the need for majority voting, the arguments for a common market, and the lessons to be learned from the European Coal and Steel Community, the Luxembourg speech is not quoted and does not seem to have been a direct source for the text of 1963.

Many passages in the book are of historical interest, such as the analysis of Franco–German relations and the factors which led to the Second World War. Schuman writes as a French citizen and statesman, but with a deep understanding of Germany as a result of his origins in Alsace-Lorraine and Luxembourg. Referring to himself as "a man of the frontier" he argues for a reduction in the importance of frontiers—not their removal, since one cannot rewrite history, but less rigidity so that they become zones of contact rather than barriers between countries. Many themes of the book remain pertinent today, and among them I select for mention two passages which continue to have salience.

Firstly, despite his critique of nationalism (which, he explains, is not the same as patriotism) and notwithstanding his arguments for a supranational authority, Schuman insists on the role of nations and states. "*Il ne s'agit pas de fusionner les états, de créer un super Etat. Nos états européens sont une réalité historique; il serait psychologiquement impossible de les faire disparaître. Leur diversité est même très heureuse, et nous ne voulons ni les niveler ni les égaliser.*"<sup>17</sup> (It's not a question of merging states or of creating a super-state. Our states in Europe are a historical reality; it would be psychologically impossible to make them disappear. In fact their diversity is a good thing, and we do not wish to level them or make them the same.)

Secondly, although he was a man of broad ideas and vision, Schuman understood from his experience in politics that the construction of Europe

15 ■ Paris: Les Editions Nagel, 1963. Lajos Nágel, originally a bookseller and publisher in Budapest, emigrated during the Second War to France where he founded a publishing house.

16 ■ Ibid, p. 196.

17 ■ Ibid, p. 24.

required a gradual and practical approach. “L’Europe ne se fera pas d’un coup, ni dans une construction d’ensemble: elle se fera par des réalisations concrètes, créant d’abord une solidarité de fait.”<sup>18</sup> (Europe will not be made at one go, nor in an overall construction: it will be made through concrete achievements that create real solidarity.)

The book ranges widely over questions of foreign affairs, but makes no mention of Hungary and few references to Eastern Europe. In fact the first reference to communism in the text is a denunciation of the “so-called popular democracies” for refusing to recognize the Church.<sup>19</sup> However, in an important passage on the Cold War<sup>20</sup> Schuman notes that both Europe and Germany are divided because of the West’s disagreement with Russia, and he speculates—without optimism—on the chances of ending it. One possibility, he writes, would be an urgent desire for *détente* on the part of the peoples under the Soviet regime, leading to the recognition of a common interest in reconstruction and a suspension of the revolutionary ideals of Marxism. He discusses the possibility of the reunification of Germany through free elections, remarking that this could be done in such a way that Russia and its satellites would obtain guarantees against the risk of it returning to hegemony. He argues that a satisfactory conclusion could be found to the problem of Germany, and implicitly to the problem of Europe, by creating a wide community accessible to all, in a spirit of peaceful cooperation.

Although this passage expresses Schuman’s hope, mentioned already in his speech of 1956, that the reunification of Europe would result from pressure for change by the peoples under communism, it seems that when he published the book in 1963 he was not expecting it to happen soon. Nevertheless, the passage shows that he maintained his vision of a community accessible to all Europeans. Thus he foresaw, many years in advance, the enlargement of the European Union, which brought Hungary and its neighbours into the European community in 2004 and 2007.

As a friend of Hungary, Schuman would, I think, have appreciated the fact that the remarks which he made in 1956 in response to the uprising in Budapest are now published in a Hungarian journal, and that its publication takes place as Hungary prepares to assume for the first time the Presidency of the European Union’s Council of Ministers. During the first half of 2011, when Ministers from Budapest preside meetings in Brussels and Luxembourg that decide common policies for the EU’s 27 member states, Hungary will indeed, as Schuman foresaw, be functioning as “an integral part of Europe, the living Europe”. 🇹🇷

18 ■ Ibid, p. 201 (this passage is from Schuman’s Declaration of 9 May 1950).

19 ■ Ibid, p. 74.

20 ■ Ibid, p. 187–192.