

Debates in the German Parliament on the Schuman Plan (Bonn, 13 June 1950)

Caption: The Declaration made on 9 May 1950 by the French Foreign Minister, Robert Schuman, on the pooling of iron and steel production in Western Europe sparks off lively debates in the German Parliament in Bonn.

Source: Verhandlungen des deutschen Bundestages. 1. Wahlperiode. 68. Sitzung vom 13. Juni 1950. Stenographische Berichte. Hrsg. Deutscher Bundestag und Bundesrat. 1950, Nr. 4. Bonn. "Debatte im Bundestag über den Schuman-Plan", p. 2459-2465; 2469; 2475-2476; 2480-2481; 2496-2497.

Copyright: (c) Translation CVCE.EU by UNI.LU

All rights of reproduction, of public communication, of adaptation, of distribution or of dissemination via Internet, internal network or any other means are strictly reserved in all countries.

Consult the legal notice and the terms and conditions of use regarding this site.

URL:

http://www.cvce.eu/obj/debates_in_the_german_parliament_on_the_schuman_plan_bonn_13_june_1950-en-08a5d674-45b2-4c0b-84c8-b05c5f959e7d.html



Last updated: 06/07/2016

Debates in the German Parliament (Bonn, 13 June 1950)

[...]

Dr Adenauer, Federal Chancellor (welcomed by applause from the government parties): Ladies and gentlemen, some time has now passed since the Federal Government forwarded to you a memorandum on the question of accession to the Council of Europe, but I think I can safely assume that you will still recall its substance. However, let me preface my remarks by reminding you of a few of the facts set out in the memorandum.

The Statute of the Council of Europe goes back to 5 May 1949. The basic nature and aims of the Council are set out in the Preamble, where it is stated that the Council's objective is the pursuit of peace for the preservation of human society and civilisation.

The Statute of the Council of Europe provides for two kinds of membership: full and associate. A country that has only associate membership is not represented on the Committee of Ministers. This concept was specifically designed with a view to Germany's future accession, as it is a condition of full membership — and hence of representation on the Committee of Ministers — that the state concerned should enjoy full sovereignty, including sovereign control of its foreign policy. New members are admitted by invitation. The Federal Republic of Germany received an invitation to become an associate member on 31 March 1950; at the same time, associate membership was also offered to the Government of the Saar.

Next, ladies and gentlemen, let me say a word about the North Atlantic Pact, and remind you that the Council of Europe and the Pact are not the same thing, either in terms of their objectives or as regards the composition of their membership.

(Intervention from the German Communist Party (KPD): That's what you think!)

Well, ladies and gentlemen, the time has now come when you must decide whether the Federal Republic of Germany should accept or decline the invitation extended to it. It is for the Bundestag to reach a decision on one of those two alternatives.

The memorandum circulated by the Federal Government included a section in which the arguments in favour of acceptance were weighed against those advanced against it. Since the memorandum was written, the foreign policy situation has changed once again, and the changes have been substantial, so that the section in question, entitled 'For and against', needs to be expanded. There are three significant events that have contributed to these changes: first, the Schuman Plan; secondly, the London Conference; and thirdly, the resolution adopted by the Hamburg Conference of the German Social Democratic Party ...

(Hear, hear! from the KPD.)

... to decline the invitation.

Let me begin with the Schuman Plan. I think I can assume that you are all familiar with the French Cabinet's decision, the essential purport of which is to pool the resources of the German and French coal, iron and steel industries ...

(Mr Rische: A war cartel!)

... and that a new High Authority is to be created, which will not be an institution that is raised above the Member States that sign this treaty but, in the words of the French President, Vincent Auriol, will be a repository of the sovereign rights of the various parties to the pact.

(Mr Rische: Just like the Comité des Forges!)

In other words, ladies and gentlemen, the instructions given by this High Authority, though subject to certain rights of appeal (I cannot go into detail here), will be binding within the remit entrusted to it.

The Schuman Plan was initially conceived for France and Germany.

(Mr Rische: And America!)

But, from the outset, the intention was that other countries should also be able to join. And, indeed, immediate public declarations were made by the Governments of Italy, Luxembourg, Belgium and the Netherlands that they were prepared to join negotiations on the basis of this programme put forward by the French Cabinet.

At the conference of the Social Democratic Party, Dr Schumacher put a number of questions to me regarding the Schuman Plan. I may return to those questions at a later stage in my remarks. But let me say here and now that all the answers to those questions are readily apparent from the statement made by the French Cabinet. Let me emphasise that: the French Cabinet. Because, here again, Dr Schumacher was mistaken in what he said: the Schuman Plan did meet with the unanimous approval of the French Cabinet, which is the French Government.

Let me add this. The statement issued by the French Cabinet expressly emphasised that international treaties would be concluded and that those treaties would have to be ratified by the national parliaments. And so you, too, ladies and gentlemen of the Bundestag, once matters have proceeded that far, will be in possession of all the relevant facts and will only then be required to decide whether the treaty should be adopted or rejected.

(Mr Rische: Acheson will decide on that!)

So there can be no question at all of this Parliament being bypassed or of its rights being infringed in any manner whatsoever.

It is a matter of very keen regret to me that the British Government has not hitherto felt able to accept the invitation issued by the French Government. I must place it on record that I regret this very much and that I have not abandoned hope that, as negotiations proceed, the United Kingdom may yet take a more positive attitude towards this Plan. When I say that, I should make it quite clear that I am not in any way motivated by economic considerations, and, as far as this whole issue is concerned, I would also like to make it completely clear — and here I am in total agreement not only with the French Government but with the man who has been the main architect of the entire Plan, Mr Monnet — that the significance of this entire proposal is primarily not so much economic as political.

(Approval from the government parties.)

Ladies and gentlemen, if you read the statement issued by the French Cabinet — on, I believe, 7 or 9 May — with the attention that that document deserves, you will find it clearly stated at several points that this pact is to constitute the foundation stone of a federal structure for Europe. It would be hard to imagine any clearer statement of the political significance of this proposal, and, similarly, on the basis of personal discussions that I have held with Mr Monnet, I can only confirm that his view, too, is that the political implications carry the greatest weight. Ladies and gentlemen, when it was decided that a determined effort must be made to resolve the centuries-old differences existing between the French and German peoples, there is a very good reason why it was felt that a Plan of precisely this kind, based on iron, steel and coal, offered the best approach, ...

(Mr Rische: You can say that again!)

... a reason you will all understand.

(Mr Rische: Oh, we do, we do!)

There could be no better way of assuaging any doubts felt by the French people regarding the peaceful intentions of the German people than for France and Germany to pool their resources of the very products — iron and steel — that would once again be the mainstays of any future rearmament, so that France, specifically, as our partner in this pact, would be fully informed of everything that is taking place anywhere in the iron, steel and coal industries.

(Mr Rische: You mean the American monopolists, that's who you're talking about now! — Mr Niebergall: But the Allied Control Authority is already making sure of that. — Unrest among the government parties.)

Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to state from the podium of this House that the German people as a whole, with a few exceptions — I believe I can say that — ...

(Laughter from the KPD.)

... wants to see a future in which all the psychological barriers between Germany and France are swept away, so that peace will finally prevail in Europe.

(Loud approval from the government parties — laughter and heckling from the KPD.)

Next, although this is not strictly connected with my subject, I should also like to say this about the Schuman Plan. Not to join the Council of Europe, to refuse Europe's invitation, would also amount to a rejection of this French proposal.

(Approval from the centre.)

There can be no doubt at all about that; because the political intent underlying this French proposal is, after all, and specifically, the creation of a European federation, as has been made abundantly clear. We all know that the Council of Europe, even though it is certainly still far from perfect, is pursuing that same aim. Well, I can hardly turn down the invitation in one breath and say in the next that I am nevertheless interested in pursuing the alternative route to a federal Europe. That, ladies and gentlemen, really is out of the question. So if we decline the invitation to join the Council of Europe, we also prejudice our stance on the Schuman Plan. We would not even have to specify half a dozen conditions.

[...]

I also feel compelled to state publicly, in this House, how much I regret the way in which Dr Schumacher has treated the Schuman Plan. The motives that prompted the Schuman Plan were genuinely ethical and honest.

(Mr Renner: So war is ethical?)

To describe the Schuman Plan as 'Council of Europe Ltd' is, in my view, to do an injustice to the French Government.

(Dr Schumacher: And I said no such thing; you must know that! — Heckling from the KPD.)

The same applies to other remarks concerning the Plan. Let me quote a passage or two from that speech:

'The excess of European zeal demonstrated by the big bosses and tycoons of heavy industry seems to me to be based on the hope that, by moving forward towards their objective in tandem with French heavy industry, they may find an escape route from the prospect of Socialisation and the workers' right of codetermination.'

And another passage reads as follows:

What has the Federal Government done with this? It has already twisted the meaning of the French proposal to such an extent that it would be no exaggeration to say that it borders on falsification. The Government has appropriated the right of negotiation to itself and intends that the Plan should be discussed among experts.

Well, the form that Mr Monnet and the French Government see the negotiations taking is as follows. They are in no doubt that, when the technical experts from six countries first sit down together to discuss the Plan, they will be confronted by such enormous technical problems and differences of opinion and will then discuss them in such detail that the whole Plan may well be talked out of existence. Mr Monnet's idea, therefore, is that the conference of all the participating countries, to be held in Paris on 20 June, should not be attended by any technical experts. He wants it to be attended by those who can take the broader economic view, ...

(Mr Rische: From big business!)

... standing on European soil and thinking in European terms — that is the essential thing — and by people who are capable of drafting and discussing international treaties.

(Mr Rische: Mr Pferdmeniges is the man for that!)

Not until then, ladies and gentlemen, when the conference in Paris — which will work as fast as it possibly can — has reached agreement on the terms of reference of this High Commission, when it has been decided what form the future international treaties will take, and when the parliaments of the six countries have given those agreements their seal of approval, only then, ladies and gentlemen, in Mr Monnet's view, which I think is absolutely right, will the technical advisers be sent into action.

(Mr Renner: And when will you be consulting the unions?)

Dr Schumacher then went on to say that the negotiations would be conducted on the basis of expert opinions. As I have just explained, that is absolutely wrong. He also said:

We know who a number of these experts are: they are nothing but representatives of heavy industry, the old capitalists and bosses.

(Quite right! from the SPD.)

They include a number of Members of the Bundestag, but not a single Social Democrat Member or economic policy expert.

Ladies and gentlemen, all these assumptions by Dr Schumacher are mistaken.

(Mr Rische: That can be changed!)

The composition of the delegation that will go to Paris has not yet been finalised. It is still under discussion. But you can be quite certain of one thing, ...

(Dr Schumacher: No, you can't!)

... and that is that all Dr Schumacher's assumptions will be shown to be mistaken in a week's time, when we publish the names of the members of the delegation.

(Mr Rische: After the elections!)

Obviously, this delegation will have to remain in constant touch with the Federal Government and its Ministers. So we are doing exactly what the French are doing: setting up a Committee of Ministers, to be chaired by myself, which will remain in constant contact with the delegation that will travel to Paris.

Ladies and gentlemen, I find it very distasteful that Dr Schumacher — who has a taste for the picturesque phrase, though not always for the poetic — says that we are being dragged into the Council of Europe at the rear end of the French nag.

(Much hilarity — Mr Renner: One of your Ministers said the same thing!)

I too have spoken at party conferences before now, and I can well imagine that this elegant phrase of Dr Schumacher's was very well received.

(Laughter.)

But my own feeling is that one should always consider how such expressions will be received abroad. And that, in my view, applies especially to the Chairman of a great German political party.

(Mr Schoettle: The same goes for the head of government who is also a party leader.)

— I am always glad to reply to an intervention by Mr Schoettle, a party leader who is not just a politician but a human being; ...

(Mr Schoettle: Thank God for that! — Laughter.)

... you are absolutely right: the same goes for the head of government who is also a party leader.

(Mr Schoettle: But if we were to debate your speeches here, occasionally some things would come to light that you wouldn't like.)

Ladies and gentlemen, speeches should be quoted from the original. For example, Dr Schumacher — following on from the previous point — also said that I made an appeal to the other members of his party before the Hamburg party conference.

(Dr Schumacher: That's right, you did.)

Where did I do that, Dr Schumacher?

(Dr Schumacher: In Cologne. — Mr Renner: And you've been at it again here for the last quarter of an hour! — Hilarity.)

I believe Dr Schumacher has been misinformed, and I am glad to hear that Mr Renner is gradually reverting to his former tone.

(Loud laughter — Mr Renner: And me knowing you so well! — More laughter.)

Before I continue, there are a few comments I should make on other things that were said at the SPD Conference in Hamburg, and the reason that I must do so is precisely because of the majority decisions reached in this House and the attention that those decisions may attract abroad. Dr Schumacher said that a fundamental policy implemented without the assent of Germany's Social Democrats means very little.

(Quite right! from the SPD — Hear, hear! from the KPD.)

He also said that the French proposal was addressed to the entire German people, including the Opposition — that is true — and especially the Social Democrats, without whom it cannot be adopted.

(Intervention from the CDU: How modest!)

Now that, you know, is a mistake. I can tell you that if you choose to reject cooperation, we can indeed manage without you.

(Approval from the government parties.)

But I believe that remarks like that are better left unsaid, because their only effect is to create the impression abroad that the majority in this House, and the decisions they adopt, do not enjoy the backing of the majority of the German people. If we could ask the German people to vote today on whether we should accept or decline the invitation to join the Council of Europe, I can tell you that there would be an overwhelming majority in favour of acceptance.

(Loud applause from the government parties.)

The Hamburg Party Conference resolved by an overwhelming majority to reject the invitation to join the Council of Europe, and the reason why it did so was that Dr Schumacher said, 'We say no to this ersatz Strasbourg Europe, which is simultaneously offering membership to the Saar.' Dr Schumacher said a few other things about the Saar question, too. He said:

It was not the Social Democrats that linked the Council of Europe and the Saar question. To our deep regret, it was the French Government, in July 1949, that linked the two issues.

He also said:

The Saar question is not an isolated one. For that very reason, the Saar question must not be treated as if it were trivial. The presence of representatives of the Saar on the Council of Europe is a declaration of a principle. Verbal protests are just words, they achieve nothing. The only way to achieve anything here is by refusing recognition, by facts and by deeds. There is no either-or here between the Council of Europe and the Saar question: the way in which that question is dealt with will provide the answer to the question of the Strasbourg political design.

There was one sentence there that caused me some bewilderment. Dr Schumacher says, 'The presence of representatives of the Saar on the Council of Europe is a declaration of a principle.' Fine words! But, if memory serves, members of the Social Democratic Party of the Saar — which is represented in the Saar Government — joined representatives of the German Social Democrats at various COMISCO conferences.

(They did! from the right.)

I really cannot see the difference here: if I can sit down with representatives of the Social Democratic Party, which backs the Saar Government, at the COMISCO table, then why can I not sit with them at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg?

(Dr Schmid [Tübingen]: Because one produces legal effects and the other doesn't!)

Dr Schumacher went on to say that ‘this recognition’ — by which he means Germany joining the Council of Europe at the same time as the Saar Government — ‘would have fateful implications for our legal and moral position in our opposition to the Oder–Neisse Line and that such recognition might be dangerous, or even fatal, in its consequences for our people who were displaced from their homes in the east and their right to return home. We have to think about that.’

Well, a settlement was recently agreed between the Government of the Eastern Zone and Poland regarding the Oder–Neisse Line. I have read through all the published opinions of the German Socialist Unity Party (‘SED’), the KPD and, as far as I was able, of the satellite states and Soviet Russia, looking for any reference to the Saar Conventions in connection with this matter. I concluded that it had not occurred to a single representative of any of them to mention the Saar Conventions in this context at all.

And I would also say this. It has been expressly stated by the High Commissioners — you will find it in the memorandum — that the invitation to the Saar Government does not imply any anticipation of the decision on the peace treaty.

And one more thing: the Schuman Plan makes the Saar problem very much less important, ...

(Absolutely! from the centre.)

... because the mines and foundries in the Saar are included in that agreement. I am confident, therefore, that, if the Schuman Plan goes ahead and if we allow the Saar enough time before the next elections to be held there, the Saar question will answer itself.

But for the Saar Government to join the Council of Europe and for Germany to decline its invitation are not really comparable. It is not true at all that the accession of the Saar will create some kind of principle. I still hope very much — and, ladies and gentlemen of the Social Democratic Party, this hope is something I take very seriously — that, in the course of the debate, you will after all be able to persuade yourselves that, as things stand in Europe and the world today, you, too, should vote in favour of joining the Council of Europe.

When this invitation first seemed likely, I exchanged letters with the High Commissioners, trying to gain an additional concession here or there. I did so, not because I needed to fortify my own belief in what we must do but in the hope of achieving a formula to which the Social Democratic Party would feel able to agree. Obviously, as Head of this Government, I regard it as very important that the Federal Government’s proposal should be adopted by this House by a very large majority. But, if the majority is not a very large one, even if it is not large at all, well, ladies and gentlemen, we will act in accordance with the decision in any event — and other countries will see our decision for what it is.

(Bravo! from the government parties.)

To conclude this part of my remarks, let me also draw the attention of the Social Democratic Party to what Mr Spaak said recently in Dortmund. Mr Spaak, as you all know, is a Socialist, and an eminent European. Speaking in Dortmund on the 11th of this month, he said that the question of German accession had nothing whatsoever to do with the question of eastern Germany or with the Saar question. The idea that German membership would entail relinquishing any claim to the Saar or to the territories east of the Oder and Neisse was, in his view, entirely mistaken. It was, he said, the intention of all members in Strasbourg to embrace the whole of Europe, including those territories which, today, still lie outside its borders. The Federal Republic will find allies in Strasbourg, not enemies, when it comes to press its claims for the return of the eastern provinces and Mr Spaak’s desire, your desire, for the unity of Germany. He also believes that other German problems, especially the refugee question, can be solved only within a framework of European cooperation and certainly not by an isolated Germany.

[...]

Dr von Brentano: I should like to quote from the same source as the Chancellor, albeit in a different context — the President of the Consultative Assembly, Paul Henri Spaak. On 28 January 1950, Mr Spaak said:

Any practical action is worth more than any amount of dreaming. It is essential to take positive action, however limited it may be. We can no longer be satisfied with saying, ‘I am in favour of European integration,’ or, ‘I should like to see a United States of Europe.’ We must act!

I believe that we in this House can endorse every word of what he said, and that we should also adopt as our motto a tried and tested French saying: ‘The absent are always in the wrong.’

There are those, too, who tell us that there is no need to rush into this decision. We could wait, they say, until the conditions, the omens, are more propitious for Germany’s participation. Ladies and gentlemen, I would caution you against that idea, against believing that time is on the side of European cooperation, that time is working to preserve the Western democracies and their democratic freedoms. I believe that time is short, all the more so because — and here I agree with what the Chancellor was saying — in saying ‘No’ to Strasbourg we should also be saying ‘No’ to the Schuman Plan. I believe that none of us doubts that saying ‘No’ to this Government’s motion would also, inevitably, imply the rejection of the French Government’s Plan — the very Plan that seems to me to point the way to solving what is probably the most urgent of Europe’s problems, the problem of relations between France and Germany. Europe must not be shaped by Germany and France. But Europe can only come into being if the historic enmity that has divided our two peoples for centuries and has visited so much misfortune upon the continent of Europe is replaced by a friendship based on honesty and trust. We believe that the Schuman Plan is the right tool for this job; because even the most imaginative of us would surely agree that this Plan would bury for ever the possibility of another outbreak of hostilities between our two states.

As I said, Europe must not and will not be shaped by Germany and France alone. I can only echo here the hope expressed by the Chancellor: that no European power — least of all Britain — decides to remain aloof from European cooperation and from cooperation on the implementation of the Schuman Plan, even though we are, of course, aware that Britain’s particular constitutional structure, her strong ties with and obligations to the Commonwealth, mean that decisions are more difficult for Britain to take than they are for other European countries.

Ladies and gentlemen, as we confront this decision today, we should also pay careful heed to the views of those who sent us here. I feel confident in saying that the concept of European reconciliation, the idea of creating a united Europe, is one of those that have been most warmly received by the German people, and especially by the young.

(Applause from the CDU.)

Perhaps Mr Schmid will permit me to quote a brief sentence from the speech that he gave at the constituent session of the German Council of the European Movement in Wiesbaden on 13 September 1949. Mr Schmid said on that occasion:

‘I should like to close with some words that I heard spoken a while ago when I was with a group of young people: if the older generation delays any longer than due caution strictly requires, then it will be time for us to take over the helm, because there is only one course that will bring the ship of our future safe into harbour — a course for Europe!’

(Hear, hear! and Bravo! from the CDU.)

Mr Schmid added — and I emphasise his words on that occasion: ‘The youth of this continent will steer that course!’

(Bravo! from the CDU.)

We are determined to heed those voices — voices that I hear constantly, wherever I may happen to be speaking. They are the voices of the younger generation, which now believes that a genuinely European peace is the only possible constructive conclusion to the terrible war we have experienced. We intend to listen to this younger generation, which by immutable biological laws will one day replace us here and may then reproach us for having failed them at a historic moment.

(Bravo! from the CDU.)

And that, ladies and gentlemen, is why we have decided — I say this in the name of the Christian-Democratic Party and of the Christian Social Union, and I also speak for the parliamentary parties of the Free Democratic Party and of the German Party — to accept the Cabinet's proposal. I believe that, in so doing, we shall be doing our duty and following the dictates of our consciences as responsible elected representatives.

[...]

Dr Schumacher: The Chancellor has just made a number of declarations. Now, he can make those declarations in his own name, or in the name of the Cabinet, or perhaps even — I only say 'perhaps' — in the name of the government parties. But he cannot make them in the name of the German people. The Social Democrats do not feel committed, or even impressed, by the Chancellor's pronouncements on this matter.

(Intervention from the CDU: But this is a democracy!)

Also, we must make it clear from the outset that we feel no great confidence regarding the make-up of the Paris delegation in the light of what we learned a few weeks ago about some individuals from press releases put out by the Chancellor's party. Nor do we know what kind of person or people will be responsible for drafting a German counter-proposal. Everything that we have heard about this matter to date compels us to be extremely suspicious; because the central figures in the circles concerned here are, after all, people who played leading parts in the dreadful events that have scarred the past forty years of German and European history.

(Loud approval from the SPD.)

It would be very valuable if, in addressing this new problem, the Chancellor would, for once, follow the line he has so often promised to follow and so often abandoned — and keep the Opposition informed.

(Quite right! from the SPD.)

I believe that I am correct in saying that the Chancellor has not, to date, held so much as a single briefing meeting with a representative of the Opposition or of the Social Democratic Party as part of that Opposition.

(Hear, hear! from the SPD.)

I believe that a man who intends to invoke parliamentary democracy should have a clearer understanding of the division of responsibilities between Government and Opposition. Chancellor, it would have been no great loss to mankind if you had never given your instructive talk on the role of Opposition as you see it.

(Approval from the SPD.)

I believe that it is now the turn of the Opposition to explain what it believes to be the functions of government.

(True! from the SPD.)

We certainly welcome the fact that the Chancellor has committed himself to a line that favours the West — and, I venture to hope, Western democracy as a whole, ...

(Very true! from the SPD.)

... without reservation! But because it was the Chancellor himself who ventured upon the tactically difficult course of equating — at least potentially — objectively necessary and justified criticism with a declaration of partiality for the East, for that reason, and for that reason alone, I feel that I must read you a quotation that dates from late November 1948, a time therefore when everyone in Germany must already have known exactly where the lines were drawn and that the decision was final. This comes from a speech given on 23 November 1948, printed in the CDU newspaper *Der Tag* — published under licence by Jakob Kaiser — on 24 November 1948. It reads, and I quote:

It seems to me to be the most appalling stupidity to believe that a war between Germany and France could be possible at all in the age of the atom bomb. And yet the French still fear a threat from a revitalised Germany, a Germany that might then ally with Russia. The choice of allies made by that revitalised Germany will depend entirely upon how Germany is treated by the rest of Western Europe.

(Hear, hear! from the SPD)

That message should be passed, especially, to France and the Benelux States, and to Britain as well.

(Intervention from the CDU: Yes, so what?)

— The speaker's name was Konrad Adenauer, and he is now Federal Chancellor of Germany.

(Disturbance and heckling from the CDU: What are you getting at?)

I would say just this to the Chancellor. If someone else, say a Social Democrat, had said that — especially at this time — ...

(Intervention from the SPD: Not enjoying this, are you?)

... then we would have expelled him from the party on the following morning!

(Loud approval from the SPD.)

As far as the structure of the Council of Europe is concerned, I can say one thing now: Europe cannot be built primarily on a foundation of business interests. It cannot be built primarily on a foundation of the interests of national business or the business classes or a business clique or private businessmen. Europe, ladies and gentlemen, means something rather more than adjusting the balance of steel production in favour of one country or, perhaps, the balance of coal production in favour of the other. There are more important and more valuable issues at stake in Europe than supplying the new French steel industry with cheap coke from the Ruhr.

(Approval from the SPD.)

But if the discussion once begins along those lines, Europe will find the obvious answer in the self-assertion of other steel industries. If all we do is fight over steel quotas, we shall achieve not a union of peoples but, at the most, a reluctant distribution of profits.

(Very true! from the SPD.)

And so we say this: if we want to advance the cause of the Schuman Plan — which we welcome in principle, precisely because the initiative behind it comes from France — then something more has to be staked than the interests and members of governments who have rather too much sympathy for the interests of these interested parties.

(Quite right! from the SPD.)

We want to be quite clear about this. The most important aspect of the organisation of the new High Authority for the Schuman project is in fact the responsibility of that authority. But that aspect is being skirted. Only a few foolish German newspaper hacks are writing about ‘free personalities’ who ‘are not answerable to anyone’, a naïve reference to the captains of industry. We saw under the Third Reich what sort of ‘free personalities’ they are.

(Intervention from the SPD: They’re still there!)

A superstate of big bosses would be our mortal enemy, because we would see it as the end of European democracy and an objective benefit to the Soviets.

(Loud approval from the SPD.)

The Social Democrats have put forward a number of preconditions. I myself said that our people must be free to decide who owns its heavy industry. But we must also do away with the constant French political threat of unilateral internationalisation of German property; otherwise negotiations will serve no purpose. We must see that the Schuman project and the continued existence of the Ruhr Statute and the Ruhr Authority are mutually incompatible and that no talks are possible on that basis.

(Applause from the SPD.)

We must be aware that it cannot be any task of ours to help carve what remains of Europe into two separate pieces. If we merely bring together the six countries with relatively high unemployment and low real wages, that will not be a process of concentration of Europe’s resources — still less so when we recall that they will still have to compete against the other Western European countries where there is full employment and where real wages are relatively high.

(Approval from the SPD.)

We have heard from imprudent individuals about certain plans. Mr Pertinax has, of course, stumbled into the arena. When does he not? And the German Federal Finance Minister, Professor Erhard, is quoted in a report in the *Neue Zeitung*, which is licensed by the Americans, as saying that any European association involving states with Socialist economies is an impossibility.

(Hear, hear! from the SPD.)

Ladies and gentlemen, you have two choices. You can speak out in favour of Europe: then we can play a positive part in the debate, and we shall know how the balance is to be struck between our respective interests and convictions, what is possible and what is not. Or what you want is to create, within this mini-Europe, a micro-Europe of the extreme West. But, in that case, what you want is nothing to do with Europe. And you want nothing that would enable Europe to stand up to the threat of Eastern totalitarianism.

[...]

Dr Schäfer: Ladies and gentlemen, let me say a few more words about the Schuman Plan. It implies a

broader and deeper development that has hitherto been absent from the results achieved by the Council of Europe. Many obstacles have been placed in the path of the Council of Europe. As you all know, there has been a great deal of resistance; various forms of hostility towards the Council have been displayed. The Schuman Plan fills a gap here. In fact, it means one thing: by interlinking and interconnecting the basic industries of coal and iron production, it means the creation of a skeleton of steel to bind the economies of Europe.

In order to secure peace within a geographical area, it is not enough simply to draw external frontiers around it. Cohesion can come only from the existence of vital social forces within that area, creating a dense network of links between the people that inhabit it. In that sense, the Schuman Plan seems to us to be a vital support and realistic stimulus for what we shall be trying to achieve if we are willing to join the Council of Europe.

At the same time, we are well aware that, if things are not organised as they should be, we may run the risk of seeing the creation of a strong, monopolistic concentration of power. It will be necessary to develop structures that ensure a maximum of free association. The first necessity will be to use this raw materials plan and the institutions that will support it and be the main essential of its formation, to make good the deficiencies and eliminate the failings that, sadly, have become apparent in the existing form of the Council of Europe.

Ladies and gentlemen, Dr Schumacher has said or, perhaps I should say, protested, that the question of accession to the Council of Europe is being made the subject of party political considerations. On that point, we cannot but agree with him.

(Dr von Brentano: Yes.)

The issue today is not whether that internal life of this future Europe will be governed by any particular set of political or social principles.

(Dr von Brentano: Very true.)

We are certainly prepared to stand by our convictions in the context of European development, as we do elsewhere. But the issue now is not whether some form of Europe is to be built according to this or that particular formula to achieve this or that theoretical system. I must say this: I read in a newspaper what Dr Schumacher had said at the Party Conference in Hamburg, where he rejected a Europe that might possibly take on a form that did not reflect his party ideologies and called for a Socialist Europe. But, in so doing, he revealed that, basically, the standards of party politics had been responsible, at least initially, for suggesting and stimulating the intention to vote here in the Bundestag against joining the Council of Europe.

(Quite right! from the government parties. — Mr Arnholz: You would think that! — Further intervention from the SPD: The same as you, Mr Schäfer!)

— No, ladies and gentlemen, it is not a matter of what I think. Do you know, I believe that you are in a very special kind of danger.

(Intervention from the SPD: From Mr Dehler!)

— No, it's you I'm talking about now, I believe you are gradually heading towards the kind of policies that could be described as the partial — or even total — eclipse method.

(Laughter.)

Because what you are doing is placing between yourselves and the light the dead and frozen lunar landscape of obsolete ideologies, long-since fossilised and petrified notions and doctrines of social development and classification and, as a result, constantly exposing vital aspects of your philosophy to the tragic effects of

underexposure to light, and so arriving at the kind of misinterpretations and erroneous conclusions we have heard here today.

(Applause from the government parties.)

Ladies and gentlemen, my colleague Dr Becker will be addressing you on the detailed consequences in terms of constitutional and international law and economic policy arising from the Strasbourg expectation. I should like to end with a brief reference to the particular environment in which we are negotiating here. I would like to focus — in order to draw your attention to the broader associations of political developments, as I did at the start of my remarks — on the progressive and dynamic aspects of this decision. First, let me remind you that this town was the birthplace of Beethoven, one of whose most magnificent works was the setting of Schiller's moving ode with its reference to embracing the millions of this world. And that, ladies and gentlemen, is the kind of broad view you should be taking when you consider today's decision. It is about whether the peoples of Europe are to be driven apart or brought together, whether national economies are to be fragmented into separate compartments or combined to form major trade areas. If you look at your decision in the light of those alternatives, I do not see how any of you can vote against.

(Applause from the FDP and CDU.)

Bundestag President Dr Köhler: I call Dr Becker —

Ladies and gentlemen, I have just reached an arrangement with Dr Becker: Mrs Wessel has to leave at 2 p.m. Dr Seelos has asked to speak first; he will do so now. Then Mrs Wessel, because she has to leave. Dr Becker has been kind enough to agree to speak after Mrs Wessel.

I call Dr Seelos.

Dr Seelos (Bavarian Party — BP): Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, I was glad to hear the previous speaker once again striking the kind of note that I expected from this very important debate on matters of high policy; the lightning flashes and thunderbolts hurled from the Olympus of politics are not really of much interest. This debate is not about party tactics: it is about a European issue, not the election campaign in North Rhine-Westphalia.

(Very true! on the right — Mr Zinn: The Chancellor's gone, Mr Seelos, he can't hear you!)

Nor do I want to engage in polemics of that kind. I want to address the main issue, which is such a fateful one for the German people; not for many years has there been any idea as exciting as this European idea. If it is not to remain a mere pipe dream, if it is to become a reality, we must calmly and realistically take the necessary steps that will gradually bring us nearer to that goal.

And that is why we should extend such a warm welcome to the Schuman Plan — because it may represent a practical step towards the realisation of this European idea. We are convinced, at any rate, that, unless the political idea of Europe is endorsed in principle, any economic association and cooperation within Europe will prove impossible to achieve. A supranational organisation, a European federation, is a necessity if only because all the existing international organisations within Europe, such as the Marshall Plan office of the OEEC or the future office of the Schuman Plan for the European management of the steel, iron and coal industries, cannot function in a vacuum, without democratic accountability, as authorities exercising control over the economies of the European states.

We should also be wary, as Dr Schumacher so strongly emphasised, of any thought of planning this future Europe as a third force between the two superpowers of the United States and Soviet Russia, a kind of *arbiter mundi*. The sorry fact is that we have gambled away Europe's former position of power in a grandiose tragedy of self-destruction, and our efforts must now be directed towards not allowing ourselves to become completely dependent on other, non-European powers. We want to preserve the European way of life, to safeguard the ethical and cultural necessities of European existence and to renew our economic

foundations. This Europe must on no account be built as an antithesis to the United States of America but by a process of mutual cooperation. Nothing could be more damaging to the European idea than for its sponsor, the United States, to come to believe that Europe's only aim is to use American money and resources to unify itself as an economic and political competitor of America. We must not destroy the enthusiasm with which the United States is placing its youthful power at the service of worldwide, and especially European, reconstruction. We want the United States to be able to believe in its mission, to accept responsibility for the economic and political integration of Europe. On the other hand, the Americans must not hold it against us if we want to keep our European tradition, our ideas and feelings. It may perhaps be our last priceless asset: to preserve the heritage of occidental culture as we take the necessary steps to ensure our economic survival, even if the United States has already replaced the European order throughout the world.

Together with the United States, we want to form an Atlantic community and free ourselves from the concept of the North Atlantic Pact as a purely military arrangement. The resolute commitment of America and Canada to the organisation of the OEEC's Marshall Plan demonstrates the intent, as Georges Bidault did in a different way with his Atlantic concept, that the Atlantic community should certainly not be restricted to a purely military basis. It is only a peaceful Atlantic community that we intend to strengthen by joining the Council of Europe, and we resolutely reject the idea that, in so doing, we shall be setting the scene for our involvement in the Atlantic military pact. I welcome the fact that the Chancellor has declared his position so clearly on this point.

[...]

Bundestag Vice-President Dr Schäfer: I call Mr Nuding.

Mr Nuding (KPD): Ladies and gentlemen, as I listened to the speeches of Mr Becker and, especially, Mr von Merkatz, it occurred to me that the society you are defending has had the opportunity to unify Europe for nearly a century. In that time it has proved incapable of doing so. What you are trying to do today is even more worthless than your previous attempts: all you have left to unite now is a rump Europe. But even that possibility has been denied you, because you can only go as far as American imperialism will allow you to go.

(Quite true! from the KPD.)

There is no other possibility.

What this whole debate has made clear is that the driving force behind the unification of Europe — and, it must be said, the creation of the Western European Union — is fear. Fear of what? The answer to that has been made clear in various ways: fear of the mighty social forces that you can no longer hold in check ...

(Very true! from the KPD.)

... and that you are trying to combat. Mr von Merkatz has tried to do it with the inappropriate means of a Metternich, and the Pied Piper of Braunau 1 would have enjoyed that speech if he had lived to hear it. Because, after all, he too wanted to push his borders as far east as possible.

(Mr Spies: It's the other way round now: the East pushing westwards!)

The result of his seesaw policy was the reverse of what he intended. And the same will happen to you. Because the problem that requires solving is not the coordination of arms profiteers and warmongers past and present but the creation of different social conditions that will enable people to live in peace.

(Very true! from the KPD — laughter from the government parties — intervention on the right: Russian conditions!)

— People have laughed at those words before. They are not laughing now!

(Mr Schröter: Like Mr Müller! He is not laughing now, either.)

They were hanged in Nuremberg by the same people that you now want within that European union about which your Mr von Merkatz waxed so lyrical.

Now let me say a few words about the Chancellor's speech. The Chancellor opened his remarks with an argument along these lines: the North Atlantic Pact and the Council of Europe are institutions with different aims and different members. — Is that really so? Let's think about it: who are the founding fathers of European union after the Second World War? After the First War, efforts towards union still had a very European flavour. Admittedly, the same enemies of progress were responsible, but they were trying to achieve their aims from a European base. Now, after the Second World War, the sole driving force is American imperialism, backed by those circles within Europe that want to achieve what Hitler, using the same arguments and the same pretexts, never did.

Mr Adenauer and various other speakers in this House have said that they want union under a single motto, a single watchword — the creation of a counter-pressure to resist the pressure coming from the East. But no one, not the Chancellor nor any other speaker who followed him, was able to tell this House exactly what form that pressure takes.

(Dr von Brentano: They didn't need to.)

There was a time when people spoke in this House about western Germany and Western Europe being a magnet for the peoples of the East.

(Very good! from the KPD.)

It would seem that the age of magnetism has passed; ...

(Intervention from the KPD: Someone turned the power off.)

... a new age has come. As we have lost the ability to be a magnet, to exert an attraction, we have to exert pressure. Of course, if people in West Germany and Western Europe cannot be offered work or bread, then they must be offered propaganda and European union.

(Very good! from the KPD.)

That is the purpose of this Western European Union, this pooling of forces to resist the pressure upon which no magnetic power can be exerted.

And what is the North Atlantic Pact? I believe that no further evidence is needed to prove that it is a military pact. After all, we really had enough airfields in western Germany already. When we now see their number increasing, direct and indirect armaments production starting up everywhere, and everything possible being done to ready people for war once again, it becomes clear that this Pact is aggressive in nature, that it means nothing more nor less than the preparation of an assault on the East. The Americans, from Truman and Eisenhower down to a host of journalists, make no bones about that.

So the aims of the two institutions are the same, and the people that are creating them are the same as well. When such significant institutions are created, the people who create them know that they are doing so to defend their interests. The imperialists created this North Atlantic Pact, and they will create other institutions as well, in defence of their capitalist interests. Whether or not it is of any benefit to mankind is a matter of indifference to them.

It is in that context that we should consider the function of another project about which the Chancellor spoke today: the function of the Schuman Plan from the standpoint of preparations to shift the frontiers.

Mr von Merkatz, I am grateful to you for having put it so clearly. From the standpoint you mentioned, it is also necessary to set the appropriate economic machinery in motion. To underpin this military pact, the German coal and French steel industries will be combined so as to create a greater military potential as a basis for the preparation and waging of World War Three.

(Very good! from the KPD. — Intervention from the government parties: The things you notice!)

And all this is being passed off as an effort to heal the rift between Germany and France! This unification has been the Chancellor's dream for 25 years.

(Intervention from the centre: You certainly are well informed!)

He said so himself. Don't you read his speeches? You ought to, they can be very instructive.

(Laughter.)

There is no doubt about it: the result of this Pact will not be the laying of the foundations for friendship between the German people and the French people. What will happen is something very different: the French and German armaments industries will join forces to exploit the German and French peoples! The youth of both countries, though, have something to look forward to: the war that has been prepared and desired by the American imperialists will offer the young people of France and Germany the opportunity to fight and die — not on opposite sides, but together on the side of those same imperialists!

(Quite right! from the KPD.)

And we are against that. We want to prevent it, and that is why we are also rejecting this pact between the German and French industrialists.

[...]

1. A reference to Hitler; Braunau, Austria, was Hitler's birthplace.