

'Foundations of a new European stability' from the Luxemburger Wort (20 June 1950)

Caption: On 20 June 1950, the Luxembourg daily newspaper Luxemburger Wort considers the political and economic scope of plans for a European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC).

Source: Luxemburger Wort. Für Wahrheit und Recht. 20.06.1950, n° 171; 103e année. Luxembourg: Imprimerie Saint-Paul. "Grundlegung einer neuen europäischen Stabilität", p. 1.

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Foundations of a new European stability

There is no escaping the Schuman Plan at the moment. Some are in favour of it, others — the minority — against. The British Socialists are on the outside, looking on from afar with mixed feelings as representatives of the six countries involved sit down for round-table talks at the Quai d'Orsay this afternoon to give form and substance to the French Foreign Minister's idea. They could have been there. Everyone wishes they were. But they did not want to be there, and they must now come to realise how little they succeeded in persuading their continental political cousins to join them in this isolationist position. Yesterday, at the International Labour Conference in Geneva, the French trade union leader, Léon Jouhaux, declared that he was unreservedly in favour of the Plan for a European coal and steel union. Such a declaration of unconditional support may not have sounded quite so pleasant to the Labour Party. Yet that declaration confirms what continental Socialists think of the Plan, or at least what they have to think, given the pressure of public opinion upon them.

The Communists have also taken up their position. Through the French CGT, which they control, and the equally Communist-dominated *Freier Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund* (Federation of Free Trade Unions) in the Eastern Zone of Germany, they have attacked the Schuman Plan with what amounts to a full-blown declaration of war on it. We had expected nothing less.

In one respect, the joint declaration of the French and East German Communist unions is quite right — namely that they see the Schuman Plan, the Marshall Plan and 'the third element that completes the triptych, the Atlantic Treaty', as part of one and the same overall design. All three do indeed serve one purpose, but it is not that put forward by the Communists. Since they know no better, the Communists maintain that the plans serve the cause of war. On the contrary, they serve the cause of peace. All men of good will know that. In their high-minded resolve to achieve this aim, each plan completes and complements the others. And because of this high-minded resolve, one really ought to think twice before rejecting the plans on purely party political grounds.

Some say that anyone who is a realist cannot yet say 'yes' to the Schuman Plan. But it is quite possible to say 'yes' to the reality of the aims of the Schuman Plan. And, with the best of any knowledge or ability, anyone can help to create the conditions so that these realistic aims may be achieved by realistic means. In other words, there is no need to be on the outside. In fact, no one should be on the outside, but all should do their bit to work out the details of the Plan in the best interests of their own country and Europe as a whole. That is why representatives of the six countries involved are meeting today at their Conference at the Quai d'Orsay in Paris. Alongside representatives from the government departments concerned and from industry, Luxembourg has sent representatives from the two largest trade unions. This shows the spirit in which we are approaching the way in which this Plan is worked out, a Plan on which so much of the future of our continent depends — as we are all agreed.

We really should not expect overnight miracles from the Paris Conference. The Conference is merely trying to point the way that the European economy and political Europe will have to take if they are to become aware of their role and existence once again. To create new difficulties would be madness. Europe already has enough old ones, as has Luxembourg. You will remember that, during the most recent budget debates in our Parliament, the Foreign Minister, Joseph Bech, spoke about the economic problems facing Luxembourg. By helping to formulate the Schuman Plan, we want to do our best to master them. The fact that we are convinced that the Plan will further the cause of overall prosperity — even if it is only through the foundation of a new European stability and the further consolidation of peace — has ensured that our answer to the Schuman Plan is 'yes'.