

'The coal and steel pool links Germany to the West' from Corriere della Sera (19 April 1951)

Caption: On 19 April 1951, the day after the signing of the Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in Paris, the Italian daily newspaper Corriere della Sera notes that the ECSC does not enjoy unanimous support in Germany.

Source: Corriere della Sera. 19.04.1951, n° 92; anno 76. Milano: Corriere della Sera. "Il «pool» dell'acciaio e carbone lega la Germania all'Occidente", auteur:Sansa, Giorgio , p. 6.

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The coal and steel pool links Germany to the West

The importance of the agreement stressed in Bonn — Strong opposition from Schumacher

From our correspondent

Bonn 18 April, evening

The Paris Conference for the signature of the Schuman Plan has been a very important conference, not a simple closing formality. This was noted today by the German press, which has followed the work of the six Foreign Ministers with an interest and concern that can be readily understood when it is borne in mind that the conclusion of the Schuman Plan offers Germany, in a sense, a guarantee that it will not be 'sold out' at the conference of the four representatives or at the conference between the four major powers. The coal and steel pool links Germany to the West through commitments that cannot be entirely severed, if the signatures have any value, by any future solution, however unfavourable, that the four great powers bring to the German problem. In the past few days, German political circles have not failed to point out the contradictory nature of the two diplomatic meetings in Paris between the six powers for the Schuman Plan and between the four; and of course they welcome the fact that the most promising of these has been concluded positively.

The fact that the discussions of the last week have been difficult, despite being brief, is seen as an excellent sign here. They could not be purely formal. As was reported in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, they dealt with a reciprocal renunciation, for a period of 50 years, of national sovereignty over a substantial part of the countries' own production economies. Inevitably, it has been necessary to wrangle about the problems that always arise when unions of States are discussed. And a treaty of 50 years is an 'everlasting' treaty. Although it applies only to the economies of the contracting countries, and in fact to one sector of those economies, the repercussions of such a pact on policy in the broad sense can readily be envisaged.

The positive German reception is obviously not unanimous. The Schuman Plan has many opponents here, and not just the Communists. Throwing down the gauntlet, Dr Kurt Schumacher, leader of the Social Democratic Party, declared this evening that 'signing is not ratification' and that, since the French have decided that the Schuman Plan will be approved by the Parliament emerging from the next elections, ratification by France is not certain either. The Schuman Plan, according to Schumacher, is a 'more urbane and more legal' version of the economic policy that the Government in Paris has been relentlessly pursuing from 1918 to the present day; it is therefore a French victory. The only difference has been the replacement of the adjective 'French' by the adjective 'European'. The Federal Government has therefore taken on a 'monstrous responsibility', he said; the pact is the child of the right of occupation, which will thus be perpetuated for half a century through the vote of the official Germany.

The Social Democrats will fight the Plan on all fronts. Schumacher will follow this declaration on Monday with a memorandum in which he will criticise the coal and steel pact article by article. The Socialists, who have set out on the road of nationalism for electoral reasons, are now presenting Konrad Adenauer as a revisionist; however, judging from Schumacher's arguments, the Europeanism that he would welcome is no more than a simple reversal of the French version, which, according to him, Adenauer had shamefully accepted today. Schumacher, who claims to be more Europeanist than Adenauer, is essentially not so at all.

The German Labour Confederation is not, however, following the Social Democratic Party's lead in adopting such a radical position. It has reserved the right to study the Schuman Plan in its final version, and then it will decide. It is not true that the trade unions have promised unconditional support for Adenauer, as has wrongly been claimed by various sources in Paris; but neither have they denied it to him *a priori*. To find out whether the ship floats and how to sail it, say the leaders of the confederation, it is necessary to wait for it to be launched. In the circles of the ruling coalition — formed by Christian Democrats, Liberal Democrats and the German Party — the ratification of the Plan in the Bundeshaus is seen as assured, but on the condition that the Chancellor succeeds in convincing the Parliament that the future of the Saar has not been prejudiced by the inclusion of that coal mining region in the pool under the temporary auspices of

France. The Government spokesman gives assurances this has not happened. Certainly, the Social Democrats will keep on raising this subject; they say that Adenauer, as well as selling the independence of the German economy, has sold the Saar to the French for a mess of pottage. The mess of pottage would be that small but significant step towards emancipation that Germany is making by participating in an international pact.

Where will the capital of the pool be? Everyone has proposed one of their own cities, except for the Italians. The Germans are suggesting Essen in the Ruhr. The feeling, however, is that Brussels will be chosen and, moreover, that the first President of the High Authority of the pool will be the French Jean Monnet and the Vice-President will be a German iron and steel expert. Germany will certainly include many trade union delegates in its representations in the various bodies of the pool; this can be explained not only by Adenauer's desire to have the labour confederation on his side, but also by the new law in force under which German iron and steel workers and miners will in future participate in the running of their respective major industries.

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