

'Pressure for unity' from the Süddeutsche Zeitung (16 January 1962)

Caption: On 16 January 1962, commenting on the decisions adopted in Brussels two days previously, following the first European 'agricultural marathon', the German daily newspaper Süddeutsche Zeitung welcomes the gradual establishment of a common agricultural market.

Source: Süddeutsche Zeitung. Münchner Neueste Nachrichten aus Politik, Kultur, Wirtschaft und Sport. Hrsg. FRIEDMANN, Werner; GOLDSCHAGG, Edmund; SCHÖNINGH, Dr. Franz Josef; SCHWINGENSTEIN, August ; Herausgeber PROEBST, Herman. 16.01.1962, n° 14; 18. Jg. München: Süddeutscher Verlag. "Zwang zur Einheit", auteur:Simon, Kurt , p. 1.

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Pressure for unity

by Kurt Simon

The European Economic Community has come through its baptism of fire. In four weeks of tough negotiations that drove participants to the brink of physical exhaustion and beyond, the basis for the second and decisive transitional phase on the way to the Common Market was established. The understandings embodied in the Treaty of Rome have already created, in the first four years, an economic bloc that is enjoying growing esteem all over the world, even behind the Iron Curtain. Even if the principles of the Economic Community were, at first, only roughly outlined, it is now fair to say that the six national economies moving towards a Community have since reached agreement on how to attain that target as quickly as possible. The latest discussions have proven that the realisation that European unity must not be delayed has prevailed over all national interests, no matter how justified they might be. Behind cereal market regulation, the interpretation of European monopolies law or equality of wages for men and women there was always the political pressure for unity.

Echoes from the negotiations in the EEC Council of Ministers have again shown how closely economy and politics are interwoven. The State Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Karl Carstens, developed this point in Bonn when he explained that the pressure for a common foreign policy was growing as the six national economies moved closer to fusion into a new economic unit. Both Moscow's attempts at disruption and Washington's efforts to reach an agreement with the EEC in the area of economic policy show that today, just four years into the transitional period, the esteem in which this economic bloc is held is already greater than most of the political pragmatists originally predicted.

In the negotiations concerning the United Kingdom's entry, the Community has closed ranks to an extent not seen previously. By the time the UK joins, some further important agreements between the Six will have come into force, so that its accession, expected for the second half of next year at the earliest, can no longer put the Community seriously to the test. The essence of the Common Market can no longer be changed, nor can the agreement to realise fully the Economic Community within seven and a half years. The transitional period is likely to be shortened once more. Reconciling Britain's interests with those of the six EEC partners can hardly be more difficult than the original coordination among the Six. By offering the members of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) a 20 % decrease in the common external tariff, on a reciprocal basis, the EEC has shown that it is willing, on its own initiative, to level out as far as possible the disadvantages that the emergence of a common market of this extent entails for outsiders.

The delight at what has been achieved should not, however, detract attention from the dangers and difficulties with which the Common Market has still to contend on the inside. These call not only for theoretical solutions but for agreements that encourage, rather than hinder, economic dynamism. Pessimists may point out that the most controversial problems, namely the market regulations for agricultural produce, have so far been solved only on paper. It is true that the agreements reached on agricultural policy are some way removed from orthodox market economics, but even this most powerful bastion of autonomous state economic policy has now also been abandoned in Brussels by all six countries. The transition by stages to a common agricultural policy, though some may see it as too slow and others as too fast, has been carefully defined and programmed. It is no exaggeration to say that, as from 1 July of this year at the latest, national agricultural policy will be a thing of the past. From the same day onwards, all national subsidies will be forbidden, the only exceptions being for milk, beef and sugar, and even in those areas the end is in sight for national competence. Externally, the transition from national to European agricultural policy will be apparent in the repeal of national market regulations and other protective laws and in directives in furtherance of an EEC agrarian law.

All that the Federal Minister for Food, Werner Schwarz, could guarantee German farmers was another three-year period in which to adjust to the conditions of the Common Market. It would be wrong, therefore, to leave our farmers secure in the belief that, thanks to political influence, nothing will change for them. Fortunately, there are good grounds for thinking they will remain successful in the face of competition. And in the long run, we should also see what advantages a common market brings for consumers who, until now,

have tended to draw the short straw.