

'Schuman Plan demotes Italy to colonial status' from L'Unità (18 April 1951)

Caption: On 18 April 1951, on the occasion of the signing of the Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in Paris, the Italian Communist daily newspaper L'Unità criticises the system for weighting the votes cast in the Council, regarding it as harmful for Italy.

Source: L'Unità. Organo del partito comunista italiano. dir. de publ. Lajolo, Davide. 18.04.1951, n° 91; anno 28. Milano. "L'Italia nel piano Schuman degradata al rango di colonia", auteur:Boffa, Giuseppe , p. 6.

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Schuman Plan demotes Italy to colonial status

Italy can count on just one vote as against two each for France and the Germany of Bonn, which are also guaranteed the right of veto

(from our correspondent)

Paris, 17 April. — Tomorrow, the treaty setting up the coal and steel ‘pool’ is to be signed in Paris by the Foreign Ministers of France, West Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg. Today the representatives of the six countries, after a series of protracted discussions, agreed on the composition and functions of the administrative bodies, the high authority, the council of ministers and the supervisory assembly.

The decisions taken on these matters are a striking example of how certain powers are riding roughshod over the interests of others. The six member countries have been divided into two categories: the ‘large’ (France and West Germany) and the ‘small’ (Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg). This distinction is to characterise the way all the administrative bodies are to work. In the council of ministers, each country will be represented by one delegate, but when it comes to making decisions, voting will be by a peculiar procedure that allows the two ‘large’ countries always to outweigh the four ‘small’ ones: in a ballot in which two votes each are cast by France and West Germany for one side, while Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg vote for the other, the former will win, not the latter. There are a variety of other applications of this principle: if the votes are three against three but the two ‘large’ countries are on the same side, these will win. A majority vote in the normal sense will apply only when the votes of the two ‘large’ countries are ranged against each other. The same principles will hold true for the high authority, to be made up of nine members. France and West Germany are to have two members each, whilst each of the other four countries is to have just one, with a ninth member being chosen jointly by the other eight. Finally, where the nomination of the president is concerned, the two ‘large’ countries will have the right of veto.

So the high-sounding phrases used by our Foreign Minister, Count Carlo Sforza, about ‘European cooperation’ and ‘the necessity to create Europe’ boil down to this simple fact: Foreign Ministers of other countries will be able to take decisions on Italy’s industry that they judge to be to their own advantage, without any representative of our own country being able to express any effective reservations.

How will Count Sforza justify this betrayal, the latest in an endless list, on his return to Italy? By making yet another little rhetorical speech, or by confessing that the people in command of everything will be the invisible, but nonetheless present, American bosses, so that in practice the voting procedure will count for very little?

The ambition of the American Government and the other Western powers seems to be to deal with the USSR and the other people’s democracies just as they deal with Count Sforza and Prime Minister Alcide De Gasperi. When they finally realise that, as Gromyko said during a session at the *Palais Rose* [the scene of the Big Four conference of Deputy Foreign Ministers in Paris], ‘to harbour such hopes is to live in cloud-cuckoo-land’, they close ranks against the USSR and accuse it of ‘hatching hostile plans’.

The comparison that has been drawn between the two conferences taking place in Paris over the last few days — the Schuman Plan Conference and the Conference of the four Deputy Foreign Ministers — has been most instructive at this level. Sustained by its firmly held, coherent position in favour of peace, the Soviet delegation to the *Palais Rose* has until now confounded all the manoeuvres of the three, has forced them to accept their responsibilities, and has shown the world just who the people working towards international détente really are.

Today, the three, in an effort to sidestep the criticisms levelled against them from many quarters, have submitted a new agenda to the Soviet representatives, presenting it as a compromise formula. In reality, it contains only one point that is a step forward compared with preceding drafts: the insertion of ‘the question of Trieste’ under a separate heading. All the other Soviet requests have been turned down, and a few purely

formal modifications have been introduced to other items.

Giuseppe Boffa