

'Heinrich Schneider: Europe or a colonial statute' from the Deutsche Saar (28 July 1955)

Caption: On 28 July 1955, Heinrich Schneider, first President of the Democratic Party of the Saar (DPS), publishes an article in the Deutsche Saar, the newspaper of the DPS, in which he condemns the threats posed by the future Statute of the Saar.

Source: Deutsche Saar: Stimmen der Demokratischen Partei Saar (DPS). 28.07.1955, Nr. 1; 1. Jg. Saarbrücken: Demokratische Partei Saar. "Europa oder Kolonialstatut", auteur:Schneider, Heinrich , p. 1.

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Europe or a colonial statute

by Dr Heinrich Schneider, first President of the Democratic Party of the Saar (DPS)

On 23 October 1955, the people of the Saar will be called upon either to approve the Saar agreement concluded in Paris precisely one year earlier, along with the Franco-Saar economic agreement of 3 May 1955, or to reject it with a majority **NO** vote. Independent and unaligned representatives of the Saar population were not consulted when the agreements were drawn up. Others acted on behalf of those not admitted to the process. Only between the French Government and the present Saar Government of Prime Minister Johannes Hoffmann was full agreement obtained beforehand. Since 1945, there has been nothing but full agreement between Paris and whichever government has been in power in Saarbrücken.

The French Saar Agreement is also known as the **Statute for the Saar**, which, once it has been approved by the people of the Saar, cannot be amended without French consent. The settlement goes by the name of **'European Statute for the Saar'**. Where precisely, vocabulary notwithstanding, the truly European arrangement (of Europe) is to be found is impossible to say. Separatist politicians claim, in their confusion, that the Saar's entitlement to participate in 'European' bodies such as the Council of Europe, the European Coal and Steel Community and Western European Union represents the 'Europeanisation' of the Saar. Others see the 'European' Commissioner as the heavyweight, as he will subsequently have to monitor the application of the Statute, ensure the participation of Saar inhabitants in Western European military defence, and look after the foreign policy interests of the 'Saar' left intact by the Franco-Saar economic agreement. The economic agreement is, however, in all respects nothing but a colonial statute, just like those concluded by France for Morocco, Tunisia and Indochina. Poor Europe, if that is the way things are to begin.

Creating Europe means doing away with borders. As long as customs barriers, different currencies and other forms of obstacle continue to stand in the way of free and unimpeded economic exchanges between European nations, no one can talk seriously even of the vaguest appearance of European integration. And it was the French themselves, and no one else, who, by rejecting the EDC Treaty on 31 August 1954, made the first tentative steps towards the achievement of true European supranationality impossible. Did the *Saarbrücker Zeitung*, the 'non-meddling' mouthpiece of the Quai d'Orsay on the Saar, not write on 8 May 1954 the following significant sentence: 'European economic union has sadly yet to see the light of day, and even the most optimistic Europeans do not expect it to happen for another 10 years.'

The **STATUTE FOR THE SAAR** merely perpetuates the artificial borders and tariff barriers in relation to our ancestral German fatherland. Following the signing in Paris of the Saar agreement by the Chancellor and the French Prime Minister, Mr Mendès France, the latter summed up its content as follows: 'The solution we have reached with regard to the Saar question is a very good one, as it maintains the Franco-Saar **economic union, with the effect that there will never be customs barriers between France and the Saar, while those between the Saar and Germany will remain in place**' (*Le Monde*, 5 November 1954). That is one of the decisive aspects of the Paris Statute for the Saar. And if a Saar German should venture into the rest of Germany, he will be reminded by French customs officers and French customs tariffs at Einöd and Eichelscheid, at Nohfelden and Nonnweiler, at Britten and Saarhölzbach, at Weiten and Nennig, that **this, for all Saar Germans, is where Europe ends.**

That is the true face of the wrongly named European Statute for the Saar. No less a personage than the Federal Chancellor himself bears witness to the fact that the Saar settlement was the only outcome left on 23 October 1954 in the light of France's unyielding position. On 30 May 1951, Dr Adenauer told the Bundestag, 'We are striving to achieve a united Europe, in which borders should be coming down. It seems outdated at this stage of European development to want to create European micro-states. I cannot imagine what convincing arguments the French representatives can provide in favour of this idea. There is no answer to the question "Why should an independent Saar State be created?" unless it is rooted in an image of the past, when territory passed from one power to another and it was deemed necessary to protect oneself by means of buffer or satellite states. And I am speaking from a European point of view.'

We have nothing to add other than to draw the inevitable conclusion from such a statement: the Saar

agreement of 23 October 1954 is not a European but an anti-European settlement in its every effect. It will not create stability, peace and understanding for those it concerns, but will become a constant source of strife and conflict.

We therefore reject this Statute as un-European. We demand fresh negotiations aimed at reaching a settlement that is truly in the European spirit.

We will present the specific details of such a settlement to the people of the Saar in the next few weeks.