

'In league with France' from the Süddeutsche Zeitung (22 January 1963)

Caption: On 22 January 1963, the German daily newspaper Süddeutsche Zeitung comments on Franco-German cooperation, on the occasion of the signature, in Paris, of the Elysée Treaty between France and the Federal Republic of Germany.

Source: Süddeutsche Zeitung. Münchner Neueste Nachrichten aus Politik, Kultur, Wirtschaft und Sport. Hrsg. DÜRRMEIER, Hans ; Herausgeber PROEBST, Hermann. 24.01.1963, n° 21; 19. Jg. München: Süddeutscher Verlag. "Im Bund mit Frankreich", auteur:Fackler, Maxim , p. 1.

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In league with France

By Maxim Fackler

De Gaulle's visit to Germany had produced the anthem to German-French reconciliation; the Treaty of Paris provides the instrument to make such reconciliation succeed. At the time, the people had joyfully shouted out their heartfelt approval of the idea of intensive rapprochement to the towering representative of the other nation; now, the governments have drafted articles and paragraphs. So the pact has been agreed between the states, but on the basis of the unanimous will of the people. Without this, the ability of the magnum opus to endure would be cast in doubt. The doubts as far as France is concerned, however, have already been dispelled by the ancestral line of the proponents of an understanding with us, their neighbours; these men should have been commemorated with grateful respect on a day like 22 January 1963. The fact that, in the Federal Republic, the Treaty is not regarded as a simply one-sided affair had been demonstrated by that anthem in September.

The Governments have not only concluded the Treaty, they also have to implement it, as it has been put down on paper. Germany and France, of course, remain in existence as two states side by side, as they have become and as they will develop. There was, therefore, no question of integration, and for this reason alone: de Gaulle considers that only states are capable of entering into contracts. Trying to find the appropriate expression for this novel form of relationship would, in fact, cause something of a predicament. Can we speak of two *associés*, as we can with a good old, well-established company? That sounds too much like a business, when, in fact, there is a no mistaking a touch of romantic élan about the whole thing. Let us just say that France and Germany have offered each other their hand for an alliance, and the word alliance is to be taken here in its human as well as in its political sense.

The joint declaration drafted by Adenauer and de Gaulle, in spite of its high level of imaginative flair, concludes with the down-to-earth idea of *cooperation*, after previously having eulogised the concept of *close solidarity*. It is laid down to perfection at all levels of government, with so many obligatory meetings of lower, upper and the highest authorities, that no one can do anything any more without the other knowing about it and without it having been subject to deliberations between the parties. The intention can only be to exert an influence on each other as well, as is, in fact, the ideal in an alliance of becoming one heart and one soul. We shall be constantly confronted by differences, since a centralist state and a federal state are seeking a common path. In the case of education policy, therefore, the German side had to insert the proviso that it is obliged to respect the *Länder*. However, here in Germany, we shall nevertheless have to ask how the promises may be honoured in practical terms.

Cooperation does not simply spring from abstract friendship, in fact, a vessel is cast for it, while any judicious policy bringing neighbours together in an alliance can also only take the form of cooperation. Therefore, specific coordination is, in fact, only one small constituent part of the general, overall cooperation. In the Treaty, reference is made to various organisations, including the United Nations, and also NATO and the EEC, in which Germany and France both wish to present a united front. This means they are and they remain higher-ranking functional organisations, and this applies particularly to NATO and the EEC. Those of an anxious disposition may glimpse the use of protection clauses against separatism in the reference to NATO and the EEC. After the visit by de Gaulle, the concerns of our fellow Europeans were voiced loudly and were, after all, not entirely groundless; work is now under way to establish a union between Paris and Bonn which, although constructed on noble foundations, might prove to be obstinately unwieldy. And then there were the doubts about whether the somewhat surprising conclusion of the Treaty in the middle of the argument about Britain's accession to the EEC was not an action taken out of spite. The solemn Declaration of Paris has now adopted a *united Europe* as its objective, as a denial of isolation. However, Europe is neither geographically defined, nor are the objectives of the united Europe stated.

Since the views are notoriously wide apart here, the signed and sealed consultation now has an exciting topical aspect: this consultation process is intended to 'reach a position that is synchronised as far as possible'. This is what has been laid down with regard to the field of foreign policy. If agreement is not reached, then each party has the right to pursue its own line — as in the case of Great Britain, for example.

There are dangers lurking here, but it also has some advantages. If Germans and French are, henceforth, going to put their heads together on all issues in a spirit of trust, they will not be doing it as whispering conspirators. Without Franco-German cooperation, none of the achievements that Europe has already managed to pull off would have been accomplished. Conversely, however, Franco-German friendship has grown on the basis of this Europe, so that they will not want to rock the boat that they themselves have built. The fact that the alliance means an end to the discord of the past is a matter for astonishment; the way that the pact views the future is the work of determined good sense. This has our backing.