

'Founding a state' from Die Welt (7 September 1949)

Caption: On 7 September 1949, the German daily newspaper Die Welt recalls the issues arising from the establishment of democratic institutions in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and underlines the importance of the renewed confidence of the German people in their political institutions.

Source: Die Welt. Unabhängige Tageszeitung. Hrsg. Küstermeier Rudolf ; R Herausgeber Scherer, Hans. 07.09.1949, Nr. 135; 4. Jg. Hamburg: Die Welt. "Staatsgründung", p. 2.

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Founding a state

Will they be more sensible this time? Or will they once again waste their energy on tactical games? That is the major question that is worrying the German people today and which is being discussed everywhere with contemplative concern. The first freely elected German Parliament in 17 years is not made up of miracle workers. All that may be expected of them is that they work sensibly and maintain their course of action, without letting the joys of tactical manoeuvring seduce them into behaving irrationally and making party-based decisions because of a chance majority. In this respect, the Parliamentary Council, the predecessor of the Bundestag, allowed itself several weaknesses. They will have to proceed further in order to gain the people's trust. Juggling coalitions is of interest only to those involved. The people expect rapid action to meet their daily needs. In many cases, the solutions are dictated by external pressures, so that the ideological clamouring to promote the various party manifestos is unnecessary.

The Bundestag is a torso. Seventeen million Germans from the Soviet Zone and Berlin are not represented by it. The more we remember this the better. Many topical decisions can be solved only if there is a constant awareness of this gaping wound. If, for instance, the topic arises of whether Germany's capital should be Frankfurt rather than Bonn, then this question has to be put more precisely. That is, which of the two cities is a more suitable temporary replacement for Berlin? The fact that, in the long run, only Berlin can be Germany's true capital is something on which we all agree. If much store is set by the people's respect, minor problems, such as the national anthem or national symbol may be tackled in the Bundestag only once the necessary hours have been invested and tangible provisional solutions have been found for more burning issues such as unemployment and the rights of refugees.

We must expect parliamentary tactics not to be used where only new initiatives and ideas can flourish. If we judge the general mood of the majority of Germans correctly, then we can see that they are most concerned about the effective implementation of an emergency programme, with the clear division of opinions deflecting any ideological stubbornness: under the current circumstances, neither private initiative nor a planned economy can be totally implemented without using a certain measure of force. Our Members of Parliament must, after the Hitler era, utilise this situation properly and rapidly. Only then will they slowly secure what the German people will not be prepared to give to any parliament or government without concession, but which is vital for running a country: trust.