

'The Indochinese conflict and Europe' from Europe (25 janvier 1973)

Caption: In his editorial of 25 January 1973, Emanuele Gazzo, Editor-in-Chief of Agence Europe, expresses regret that the Nine did not seize the opportunity of the war in Indochina to establish a common foreign policy.

Source: Europe. Dir. of publ. RICCARDI, Lodovico ; Editor GAZZO, Emanuele. 25.01.1973, n° 1208. Brussels. "The Indochinese conflict and Europe", auteur:Gazzo, Emanuele , p. 1.

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The Indochinese conflict and Europe

The event which dominates world headlines today is, of course, the announcement of the cease-fire in Indochina.

Unfortunately, as Europeans, we do not have very much to say on the matter. However, this very fact can inspire us to reflect on a number of topical points.

In the conflict which is about to come to an end, Europe - both the Europe of the Community and the Europe of geography - has had virtually no voice in the matter although, paradoxically enough, it is to Europe, the colonising if not the colonialist Europe, that the first origins of this conflict can be traced. It is true that there has been discreet and worth-while activity, public demonstrations, in varying senses of the word, by certain governments and opinion. However, there has never been a European "political line" on the matter, nor any attempt to define one. With even greater reason, Europe has never taken any "political action".

This total absence of Europe as such can certainly be considered as inevitable. Some parties do not consider it to be completely regrettable because they believe that sufficient leeway had to be left for national policies to make themselves felt. And certain governments would, at all events, never have stopped asserting a national policy in this matter. This argument cannot be accepted. For national positions (which never transformed themselves into political action) were often contradictory or at the very least different and consequently they had no effect. It is not by playing the mediator that one creates a policy. As a result, the absence of a European policy on the matter is serious. We are doubtless perfectly aware of the difficulty of the undertaking. Yet this is not a sufficient reason for giving it up.

Finally, some say that Indochina is so very far away ... But is the Middle East far away? However, everything is happening there in a similar manner. The new dimensions of the Community of the Nine mean that it ought to have a foreign policy, to be drawn up by the appropriate procedures. And this foreign policy has to have world-wide scope (we note with satisfaction that Mr. Dahrendorf defends this argument in a study on which we shall be commenting in detail). This is true: (a) for economic reasons, because the largest economic power in the world is affected by everything which happens in all corners of the globe; b) for political and security reasons, since any alteration in the world equilibrium is of vital importance to it and (c) for moral reasons, because a Community which intends to transform the very kind of relationship between peoples and which wishes to found a new kind of society cannot remain indifferent to the very fact of war and particularly not a war like the one which has been torturing these peoples for the past eighteen years.

Are these reflections after the event which have no bearing on reality? This may well be, but all this might at least encourage an effort to ensure a massive and truly European presence in the essential work of material and moral reconstruction.

Em. G.