

'European revolution' from the Corriere della Sera (15 January 1962)

Caption: On 15 January 1962, the Italian daily newspaper Corriere della Sera describes the significance of the measures adopted the previous day by the Council of Ministers of the Six in favour of the establishment of the Customs Union and the implementation of the first package of agricultural legislation.

Source: Corriere della Sera. 15.01.1962, n° 13; anno 87. Milano: Corriere della Sera. "Revoluzione d'Europa", p. 1.

Copyright: (c) Translation CVCE.EU by UNI.LU

All rights of reproduction, of public communication, of adaptation, of distribution or of dissemination via Internet, internal network or any other means are strictly reserved in all countries.

Consult the legal notice and the terms and conditions of use regarding this site.

URL:

http://www.cvce.eu/obj/european_revolution_from_the_corriere_della_sera_15_january_1962-en-98518a0d-ea13-4b7b-98e4-cc174bdbd2f9.html



Last updated: 05/07/2016

European revolution

During the night of 13 and 14 January 1962, an event of enormous significance took place in Brussels: the age-old, patriarchal European agricultural model, the bastion of political, economic and social conservatism and a thorn in the side of governments because of its recurring crises, entered a revolutionary phase.

Here is what has happened. The governments of the six member countries of the European Economic Community have decided, according to the provisions of the Treaty of Rome, to initiate the second stage of the Common Market, which, until now, has been limited to industry. The second stage aims for full European integration. Rather than the rule of unanimity, which automatically entails the right to veto, the qualified majority rule will apply, requiring at least twelve votes out of seventeen. France, Germany and Italy will each have four votes, Belgium and Holland will have two and Luxembourg will have one (for decisions regarding agriculture, unanimity of voting will still be required for the next four years). Decisions will be taken by a majority, and will be enforceable across the Community. Accordingly, the principle of integration, and therefore of supranationality, finds a practical application.

A European common market, in the true sense of the term, would not have existed had agriculture been left out of the equation, not only because it is an essential part of the economy but also because it raises large-scale political and social issues. Putting to one side the technological aspect of the decision taken in Brussels, let us not forget that, as far as Italy is concerned, our agricultural industry would benefit enormously from the free and uninhibited movement of its goods overseas. Naturally, the common market for agriculture will require some adjustments, a new direction and, perhaps, radical changes in ideas and conduct within each country. But this is a matter for the experts. Here, we shall concern ourselves only with the political repercussions regarding European unity, which, as we have said, are revolutionary. How many times have agricultural problems been the cause of crises for government and society, how many times have differences arisen between States due to those very problems of agriculture! The proposed customs union between France and Italy, devised in 1948 by Carlo Sforza, the Italian Foreign Minister, failed largely because of French tomatoes from Vaucluse.

It is, therefore, appropriate to emphasise the importance of the events taking place in Brussels and to list the Italians who have made a significant contribution to these revolutionary proceedings. At an international level, it is only right to mention Senator Giuseppe Caron, Vice-President of the Commission of the European Economic Community; at a national level, we should cite the names of Antonio Segni, Foreign Minister, Mariano Rumor, Agriculture Minister, and most importantly Emilio Colombo, Minister for Industry. It is also fitting to list the names of other State officials such as Ambassador Cattani, secretary general to the Foreign Minister, and Professor Paolo Albertario, Director General of the Ministry of Agriculture. The names of these men will be enshrined in the history of European revolution and integration.

For several weeks now, we have maintained that the best policy for Italy is a pro-European one. Indeed, it is the policy that best suits Italian interests, as well as the universalist spirit of our people. It is the only policy that can protect, strengthen and develop our democracy. We oppose the isolationist and neutralist ideas and behaviour of certain politicians, for isolationism and neutralism would leave our democracy at the mercy of opposing forms of totalitarian extremism, exposing Italy to the foolish temptation of autarchy. Not to mention the even less appealing possibility of Italy strengthening its ties with Communism.

This is an argument that should be put to the forthcoming Christian Democrat conference in Naples. The main national party, which for 15 years has governed the State and whose leaders, starting with Alcide De Gasperi, have involved themselves in pro-European policies, should stress the arguments in favour of European unity and the risks of Italy's regression and isolation, at a time when President Kennedy is proposing closer links between America and Europe and is floating the idea of a vast Euro-American community. As Paul-Henri Spaak, the eloquent and dignified Belgian Foreign Minister, referring to the possible admission of new members into the Community, said the other night in Brussels: 'Remaining neutral is not an option, we are here to create a new Europe'.

A new Europe will be able to come together to tackle the problems that are raised by the problems already

solved, particularly in view of the negotiations with the British who, as is well known, have asked to join the European Community.

What is more, a new Europe will more easily be able to confront the vast and complex African problem. It will be necessary to adopt a common policy on Africa instead of implementing unilateral, conflicting policies, which lend themselves to imprudent and dangerous jealousies and lay us open to the use of blackmail by certain African dictators.

Unfortunately, the concept of community operates more on a hypothetical and intellectual level than on a political level. Nevertheless, we must follow the path mapped out in the Treaty of Rome, now lengthened and broadened by the decisions in Brussels, if we really want a strong Europe, freed from fear and the risk of a subjection that would be tantamount to the historic end of this noble and glorious continent, the living source of reason, culture and vitality.