

Comments by the Soviet press (8 July 1965)

Caption: On 8 July 1965, the Soviet press agency TASS comments on the 'empty chair' political crisis which is sweeping the European Economic Community (EEC).

Source: Pravda. 08.07.1965, n° 189. Moskva. "Krizis ugubliaetsia", auteur:B. Kotov , p. 1.

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The crisis deepens

Paris, 7. Articles by political correspondents in today's French newspapers are peppered with exclamation marks and question marks. 'The Common Market is paralysed by the absence of France!' exclaims the right-wing *Le Figaro*. 'De Gaulle blocks Europe!' echoes *L'Aurore*. And all the newspapers are asking the same question: what's next? What will France's 'empty chair' policy lead to in Brussels? What fate does Paris have in mind for the Common Market?

This is in response to yesterday's decision by France to recall its Permanent Representative from the Common Market's headquarters in Brussels due to the collapse of the negotiations on the financial regulations for the agricultural policy of the Six.

France's decisions did not imply a diplomatic rift with the governing bodies of the Common Market. However, several local newspapers consider that, by refusing to take part in any negotiations on the future evolution of the Common Market, France is evidently trying to prevent the West European Economic Community from developing any further.

It has now become more apparent that the reason behind this serious crisis that the Common Market is suffering is the conflict between the fundamental economic and political interests of French capitalism and those of its Common Market partners, principally the FRG.

The events in Brussels have plainly shown Paris that it is totally illusory to count on the 'goodwill' of its partners-cum-rivals. These partners, and primarily the FRG, are taking advantage of the fact that France has, to some extent, played the role of the applicant, to demand concessions on the more important political issues, in particular on hastening 'political integration' and creating supranational bodies.

Given that, as of 1 January 1966, it is intended that decisions in the Common Market bodies will not be taken unanimously as they are now, but by majority voting, it becomes clear why Paris has so resolutely refused to bow to the blatant pressure from the proponents of 'political integration', the most vocal of which is West Germany.

Steps taken by France to defend its interests against West German encroachment have caused upset in Bonn, where the de Gaulle Government has been accused of pressure tactics, 'the like of which are usually reserved for one's enemies'.

Describing the situation facing the Common Market over recent days, the French newspaper *Combat* writes: 'Someone must give way. But who?'

B. Kotov