

‘Only four days to go!’ from the Neue Zeit (4 February 1950)

Caption: On 4 February 1950, in anticipation of the opening in Paris of diplomatic talks on the Saar between France and Germany, the Saar’s Communist periodical Neue Zeit considers the political and economic future of the Saar.

Source: Neue Zeit : Zeitung des schaffenden Volkes an der Saar. Organ der Kommunistischen Partei. 04.02.1950, Nr. 15; 5. Jg. Saarbrücken: Kommunistische Partei - Landesverband Saar. "Nur noch vier Tage!", p. 1-2.

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Only four days to go!

By Fritz Nickolay

The Government of the Saar is making the final preparations for the trip to Paris.

The Government's retinue, consisting of representatives of affiliated parties and trade unions, have been given their final instructions and are packing their suitcases.

With the imminent Paris talks beginning on 7 February, we are on the eve of serious decisions for the future of our homeland in the Saar. The people do not know anything of the purpose or content of the treaties which are to be concluded as a result of the Paris talks.

Vociferous claims have been heard, maintaining that everything has already been decided and all that is needed is the signatures, and that we have been freed from the 'burden' of having to manage the Saar's mines and railways ourselves.

There is a view that the Saar region should provide the workers whilst the others, the 'chosen ones', the 'skilled labour', take on the management.

The 'usufruct' of the Saar's mines and railways and the 'rights of the Saar Government' are to be laid down in Paris through the conclusion of the treaties.

This is how Foreign Minister **Robert Schuman** described the task facing the negotiating partners in Paris. We ask the question: will it not achieve anything more? It is not in the interests of our people to lease the Saar's mines and railways. Through the conclusion of these treaties, the path of economic annexation of the Saar will lead to the further integration of the French and the Saar economies.

This development has, and will continue to have, political consequences. There is more behind it, and there is no point in talk of autonomy, which is in any case expressed only administratively, or constitutes an obligation transferred by the French Government, by the Government which already controls the entire economic centre.

The Saar region will never be economically, politically and culturally autonomous. It has economic, structural, political, linguistic and cultural characteristics like other German regions, although we should not overlook its special position as a border area. To disregard historical developments and any attempt to seek something different or to interpret things in any other way is bound to give rise to differences and opposition, because this offends the national feeling of our people and takes no account of their interests.

The Communist Party is opposed to any separatist or autonomist policy because it is not consistent with the economic and political unity of Germany.

The Potsdam decisions define Germany as an 'economic whole'. That Germany includes the Saar. No one can change our mind about this.

The economic and political practice pursued by the Government and affiliated parties here is not consistent with the decisions taken at the Potsdam Conference, as we have so often pointed out. The legal basis for the German people to undertake the democratic reform of Germany was created specifically by the Potsdam decisions.

The conclusion of the treaties is intended to create new realities. However, new realities of this kind make it more difficult to conclude a peace treaty with Germany.

This policy forms part of the Western powers' policy on the German question, which is common to the various countries and is guided by the forces of US monopoly capital.

The Saar is an object of US imperialist policy, through which France has been integrated into the Atlantic Pact system.

Moreover, the position of US monopoly capital is geared to slotting West Germany into the Atlantic Pact system and securing France as a partner in the anti-Soviet war plan.

The Saar's mines and railways, as well as the ironworks and steelworks, are German property. With the conclusion of the treaties, that property slips from our grasp and is passed to a French company or to the French Government.

We have not forgotten the period from 1918 to 1935. How should it be better in the present? Have the power relationships in France changed, for example? Are the workers there not fighting for their daily demands? Do they not also have an outrageous inconsistency between wages and prices, between the unsatisfactory income of the working class and rising prices?

This question concerns the entire working class. Who controls the economy? Who controls the banks and businesses? Who is ruling in France? Not the workers, who are struggling for their daily bread, for a better life, for freedom and French national autonomy.

We feel unity with the French workers. They are interested not in the conclusion of treaties, but in the safeguarding of peace and understanding, and in cooperation between nations. They share our view that industry belongs in the hands of the people. So, together with them, we say a resolute 'no!' to conclusion of the treaties.