

'Keep your promises!' from the Saar-Volksstimme für Sozialismus und Demokratie (26 October 1955)

Caption: On 26 October 1955, the Saar Socialist daily newspaper Saar-Volksstimme für Sozialismus und Demokratie outlines the political and international implications of the outcome of the referendum held on 23 October 1955 on the Statute of the Saar.

Source: Saar-Volksstimme für Sozialismus und Demokratie. 26.10.1955, Nr. 249; 1. Jg. Saarbrücken: Sozialdemokratische Partei des Saarlandes. "Versprochenes halten!", auteur:E.K. , p. 1.

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Keep your promises!

I.

The referendum campaign has been brought to an end. The European Statute for the Saar has been rejected by the people. This rejection, the result of a decision that has been freely made, is binding on all democratic politicians. This applies on both foreign and domestic policy fronts.

It can be noted with satisfaction that the demonstrations of which we were forewarned and which could very possibly have carried the risk of serious unrest never happened. It must also be noted with satisfaction that the French Government has refrained from any intervention. Since the Saar Government immediately drew the obvious conclusions from the referendum result, it can now be safely said — two days after the referendum — that widespread peace has been restored to our homeland. (It must nevertheless be noted here that — as far as we are aware, especially in the district of Merzig — our staff members are still being subjected to various kinds of petty harassment.)

II.

From a foreign policy perspective, the initial reactions of the press and the statements made by various leading politicians reveal that the referendum result has certainly been a major disappointment, but also that people everywhere are striving to keep the peace. France and Germany seem determined not to let the result interfere with their plans. Furthermore, the statements made by the homeland federation parties with regard to France are already saying the exact opposite of what was said during the referendum campaign. This is a good thing if they are being sincere.

At the moment, no one knows when and under what circumstances new negotiations will take place between France and the Federal Republic. There are currently many issues that have yet to be properly addressed.

It is already enough for us, however, that we are now witnessing a determination not to rush things. For the foreseeable future, at all events, there are still plenty of risks involved in adopting such a policy. In France, the elections are just around the corner. Over the next two months at least, the Saar must make every effort not to provide the French nationalists with even more material to fuel their election campaign. This observation especially applies to the homeland federation parties.

III.

In the area of domestic policy, the following observations must be made: although the rejection of the Statute does not legally result in the resignation of the Government or the *Landtag* (*Land* parliament), politically speaking, this rejection is nothing but a condemnation of the policy pursued hitherto. It is, therefore, obvious that regional elections must be held as soon as possible. However, for technical reasons (formation of a transitional government, consultation of electoral law and establishment of the 1956 national budget — at least as far as recurrent expenditure is concerned), this will not be possible before late January. (No election campaigns should take place during Advent and over the Christmas and New Year period.)

The Social Democratic Party of the Saar (SPS) could not agree to the elections being postponed for any length of time. In a democratic political system, political power must be handed over to the election victors as quickly as possible. They must be given the opportunity to deliver on their promises. We should now like to remind our voters of these promises, which are as follows:

1. Reintegration of the Saar into the Federal Republic of Germany.
2. Introduction, where required, of an interim solution involving the dissolution of the Franco-Saar Economic Union, the conclusion of a new economic agreement between France and Germany, and the resolution of all problems associated with this economic agreement on more favourable terms than was

previously possible for the Saar.

3. Duty-free import of German goods into the Saar and, conversely, duty-free export of goods from the Saar to the Federal Republic.
4. Transfer of the Saarbergwerke coal-mining company to a purely Saar administration.
5. Abolition of all privileges enjoyed by the French inhabitants of the Warndt. Immediate end to dismantling.
6. Granting to Saar industry the necessary investment loans at the lowest possible interest rate.
7. Reduction in the tax burden for industry, trade and commerce. Also a reduction in social security charges (depending on which party wins the elections).
8. Increase or decrease in pensions (also depending on which party wins the elections).

We therefore not only take it for granted but also see it as nothing less than a requirement that the three parties assume governmental responsibility and live up to their promises. We shall not miss a single opportunity to draw their attention to any broken promises, even if they should fail to keep just one. Should they successfully follow through with everything that they have promised, then we shall gladly admit to them that they are more capable than we are. If they fail to do so, well, then, we shall have something to say during the next election campaign in five years' time.

E. K.