

## ‘The new order’ from the Saarbrücker Zeitung (6 March 1950)

**Caption:** On 6 March 1950, the regional daily newspaper Saabrüucker Zeitung gives a positive assessment of the Paris negotiations on the agreements between France and the Saar and considers the implications of these agreements for the Saar.

**Source:** Saarbrücker Zeitung. 06.03.1950, Nr. 54; 6. Jg. Saarbrücken. "Die neue Ordnung", auteur:Zimmer, Peter , p. 1.

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## The new order

by Peter Zimmer

The newly created order demonstrates a high degree of political maturity amongst all those who can claim responsibility for it. This applies equally to those who have played a part on both the French and the Saar side. It was clear to all in the know that the Saar representatives would fight to the last for a settlement that was fair to us. However, one would hardly have dared hope that the French representatives would prove so accommodating and acquiescent. This is especially true for anyone familiar with the draft settlement arrangements that originally served as the basis for the negotiations.

A comparison of these initial documents with the final outcome actually confirms what the leader of the Social Democratic Party of the Saar, Karl Etienne, wrote on Saturday in the *Volksstimme*, namely that some of these original documents have almost been turned around to mean exactly the opposite — in the Saar's favour. That is the highest praise and best recognition of the achievements of the Saar's representatives.

Moreover, this very fact also reveals the great political maturity with which the French delegates have set about finding a solution to the problem. Without any kind of nationalistic, selfish greed for power, they have consented to the Saar's wishes in so far as they saw no threat to the economic, currency and customs union between France and ourselves. The agreements leave France nothing in the way of administrative, legislative or other powers, other than what is required to safeguard the economic union. We are, to a large extent, as autonomous and sovereign as any other European state is or will be, as will be the case in the future European economic community, not to mention the desired European federation. Every aspect of this new arrangement is merely an inevitable consequence of the last war, which presented European society with the task of finding a new regulatory structure, of which task the settlement of the Saar question is a part, albeit a small one.

We may primarily welcome the fact that the most powerful party to this settlement has not insisted on victor's rights and national predominance, but has let itself be guided solely by a spirit of peaceful community and cooperation, which it has determined to follow provided that it is convinced it is in the interests of its own security to do so.

This is most apparent in the provisions on direct economic cooperation, for instance in the management of the railways and mines. It is not a question of rental payments or a lease, but of a community of interests or a trustee relationship operating on the basis of the recognition and safeguarding of mutual interests.

It will be interesting to compare the regulatory situation for the Saar's mines with the system to control mining in North Rhine-Westphalia set up by the Allies' International Authority for the Ruhr. We are convinced that the Saar settlement will prove by far the more advantageous for miners. There is also the fact that these very agreements on the property, operating and administrative rights concerning the Saar's railways and mines were adopted subject to the provisions of the future peace treaty with Germany.

This removes any reason for the German Federal Republic to adopt a critical position towards the agreement as a whole, as all the other agreements merely serve to adapt the Saar's constitutional and administrative law to the Constitution of the Saar in force since 1947, which is clearly already recognised by all the Western allies. It is to be hoped that Bonn does not disregard this point of view, as any other behaviour could easily be attributed by the rest of the world to a dangerous feeling of resentment with regard to the past, which would only fuel mistrust and delay progress in the development of a European community.

However, this new legal order also presents the Saar itself and all Saarlanders with a great responsibility and a lofty task: the responsibility and task of free democratic self-rule. It is primarily the Government and Parliament which will have to shoulder this responsibility. The comfortable days of hiding behind a stronger brother, in which some happily indulged whenever awkward questions or tricky problems presented themselves, is finally over. In political discussion and propaganda, 'yes' must again mean 'yes' and 'no' 'no', if one wishes to be taken seriously. This applies particularly to all those in government or the

legislature. Today, in a democratic system, they are clearly visible to the Saar and its electorate under the spotlight of the radiant sun of freedom, and no longer stand in the sometimes all too pleasant shadow of a neighbouring forest. And yet an advantage will emerge from all this, namely that the younger generation will find the path to democracy an easier one than in the past. It is precisely they who frequently argue that the whole issue of democracy in the Saar is just play-acting, as the director stands somewhere in the shadows (see above), running the whole show. It will soon become clear that, in this very regard, they have taken too pessimistic a view and that the Saar's politicians really have no need of a nanny, just as they have previously had much less need of such a figure than many suspicious minds seem to think.

Anyone who still doubted the maturity and independence of our leading politicians has now been shown otherwise by the agreement these politicians have brought home from the thorny negotiations with the best-versed representatives of France. It is now vital that the whole of the Saar stands firmly behind its political leaders and helps to furnish this newly built house. It is particularly important for our younger generation to do so, as they must now show whether they have recognised the value of working in freedom to achieve peace, which is the only path towards advancement, social prosperity and greater fulfilment. With this agreement, much has already been done to secure peace, as the French Foreign Minister, Robert Schuman, highlighted at its signing. Spoken by this man, such a statement is more than just a sentence. It allows us to conclude that Mr Schuman believes that this is a definitive settlement that will remain in place in the future peace treaty.

Whatever happens, we in the Saar will show that we know how to govern ourselves independently and freely, and that we are willing and able to do the very best for our small territory and its people.