

Jantzen, Günther

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Emergency in the EC

Observers of the events in 1973 and the first months of 1974 may well have reached the conclusion that the European politicians — their attention diverted by national controversies — have lost their eye for European reality and are oblivious of the threats to the very existence of the Community. The explanation is perhaps that under the impress of a policy of "détente" and conferences of East and West Europe their sense for unity has withered as their sensibility to external threats has dwindled! How else is it to be explained that the oil crisis made the governments scatter like a cluster of fluttering hens? The European Community has got stuck in the mire of a crisis so deep that one is justified to speak of an emergency.

From the American point of view the happenings in the EC were recently summed up by the Chase Manhattan Bank as follows: "Throughout the nineteen-sixties the EEC appeared to be progressing rapidly and with no disagreement that could not be overcome. Many of the original objectives were being achieved." The American observer thought, that by 1970 "the concessions made by the member states were relatively minor. Not much in the way of national sovereignty was really given up." With the Werner-Programme however the problem of a "substantial delegation of authority in areas that were at the very core of governmental responsibility" had become acute. Even so an intention to accomplish the "Union" by 1980 was sol-

emnly expressed at the conference of the heads of government of the enlarged Community in Paris on October 19/20 when the executive agencies of the Community were instructed to take in the course of 1973 the requisite decisions for transition to the second stage of economic and monetary union on January 1, 1974.

At the Paris summit it had already become clear, however, what national preferences the heads of government wanted to be included in the Community concept. Some observers had already an uncanny feeling that the Community members were not thrusting towards but away from each other. Pompidou laid the stress on adherence to the concluded treaties, claiming priority for the agricultural market policy, the old-style association policy and Mediterranean policy; Heath was talking of the essentials of regional policy, with Scotland and Wales in mind; Brandt spoke in favour of harmonizing social policies. Each had his say about "integration". And each went his own way.

The latest French solo passage in monetary policy could be interpreted as a sign that Paris no longer expected a monetary union to be attainable by 1980. But this is not the only distressing question! More important is whether the politicians still believe in the "Union", whether they are willing and ready to surrender national sovereignties and, as a consequence, postpone some political decisions.

They must now make up their mind what they should tell their

peoples and what they should suggest to them. If it is their opinion that the "Common Market" can in the long term only survive in the shape of a customs union around which specific agreements giving the plain customs union an European aura can be concluded, they must say so. If they believe that the "Community" should be completed, they must take action and tell their national electorates honestly, as the issues involved demand, that the European Community requires of them a sacrifice of national sovereign rights — in almost all sectors! The policy of "muddling through" can only lead to a permanent crisis.

Why not take the plunge and ask the nations of the Community in *one* plebiscite whether they want the Community of Integration. Let the nationals of all EC states show their true colours as mature Europeans and with their thoughts on their future decide whether they can bid their national governments to act as *one* government, which will in future be responsible to a European Parliament. If we do not succeed in raising political impulses for the development of the Community, we should opt for a customs union and summon the energy to make it a trade alliance which by its weight earns international respect for itself. This much is certain: Magniloquent declarations of intent about the common future which vanish into thin air the moment the economic and political skies cloud over in the world are not worth discussing! *Günther Jantzen*