

'Another blow for the EDC fanatics' from L'Humanité (31 August 1954)

Caption: On 31 August 1954, the French Communist daily newspaper L'Humanité welcomes the failure of the European Defence Community (EDC) and publishes figures which differ from those of the official results.

Source: L'Humanité. Organe Central du Parti Communiste Français. dir. de publ. Cachin, Marcel ; Réd. Chef Vaillant-Couturier, Paul. 31.08.1954. Paris: Humanité. "Nouvel échec aux partisans fanatiques de la CED", auteur:Bouvard, Georges , p. 4.

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Another blow for the EDC fanatics

National Assembly rejects pro-EDC challenge to Government's foreign policy by 418 votes to 162

Out of pure bad-tempered spite — after their crushing defeat yesterday, when the Assembly irrevocably rejected the EDC — the supporters of the rearmament of the German revanchists opened a new debate by tabling a series of questions challenging government policy.

Once again, the debate turned against them and the so-called Europeans suffered yet another defeat. By 418 votes to 162, the Assembly deferred the questions to 3 November, a new date set by the Government.

Following the Assembly vote that killed off the EDC, its tearful supporters conducted a full-blown funeral ceremony. Nothing was missing. There was the gravedigger Paul Reynaud, who tabled most of the questions, the undertaker Pinay, and family mourners Schuman, Plevin, Bidault, Guy Mollet — all looking more solemn than ever. It was abundantly clear from the expressions on their faces that the French people had won a great victory for peace.

Their parliamentary manoeuvres nevertheless gave rise to an interesting debate on the issues outstanding after rejection of the EDC.

Predictably, after a discussion that dragged on all afternoon and into the early evening, it became clear that certain parties' main concern now was to find a way to restore the Wehrmacht in West Germany.

That was precisely the point of questions put by Paul Reynaud, Teitgen, Schuman, Guy Mollet, Pinay, Halleguen and a few others.

Mendès France himself admitted that rearmament of West Germany was one of the key issues he would be discussing with the Americans and British.

So despite yesterday's great victory, the danger of the rearmament of a revanchist Germany has not been averted entirely.

There is, however, one solution — and only one.

Since the first fears on the matter were voiced in France, not a day has passed without our Party making this clear.

Speaking in the Assembly yesterday afternoon, our Party Secretary, Comrade Etienne Fajon, stated plainly the three principles underlying that solution [...]:

1. In opposing the EDC, the French people sought primarily to condemn the rebirth of the Wehrmacht in any shape or form.
2. It is totally untrue that German rearmament is inevitable.
3. The only answer is negotiation of a peaceful solution to the German question within a framework of collective security.

President Herriot's speech the day before yesterday suggests that the Communists are not alone in this approach.

In any event, the French people, who have already forced rejection of the EDC, are equally determined to frustrate any attempt to restore the Wehrmacht. They have every intention of ensuring the success of the only approach that will guarantee peace and the vital interests of their country.

Georges Bouvard