

Interview with Jean-Pierre Gouzy: the pro-European tendency in France after 1945 (Paris, 19 October 2007)

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[Jean-Michel Guieu] Could you describe the extent of this pro-European tendency, especially in France, and tell us a little about how the general public reacted to it at that time?

[Jean-Pierre Gouzy] This European tendency in France — in, say, 1946, 1947, 1948 — was, paradoxically, somewhat of a counter-tendency, in the sense that the tendencies dominating our country at that time were the Communist tendency, which saw the Communist Party securing 25% of the vote during elections, and also the tendency supporting the charismatic personality of General de Gaulle, who also appealed to a section of the general public. Intellectual opinion was very concerned by the rise of the Communist Party and other related parties or groupings. Therefore, the movement in support of Europe and of a federal type of Europe, or even a united Europe, was one that went somewhat against the general trend but one that had its use. It gained ground by itself, it wasn't something that was manufactured, rather something that arose from a genuine need, at a given point in time, that needed a response.

[Étienne Deschamps] Is it also a trend that transcends, except for the Communist Party, all other philosophical and political trends, or is it one that is encountered, at all events, predominantly in some political families more so than in others?

[Jean-Pierre Gouzy] It is a trend that encompasses a very wide range of ideas. In spite of everything, among those involved were Socialists, Social Democrats, Christian Democrats, Liberals, eminent trade unionists and so on. It was, therefore, an extremely pluralist trend, and it always had been.