

'Europe in danger' from Combat (24 October 1950)

Caption: On 24 October 1950, the French daily newspaper Combat expresses concern that European integration will entail West German rearmament and deplores the risks inherent in such a policy.

Source: Combat. de la Résistance à la Révolution. dir. de publ. SMADJA, Henry. 24.10.1950, n° 1961; 9e année. Paris: Combat. "L'Europe en danger", auteur:Gimont, Marcel , p. 1.

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Europe in danger

In reply to all those content to shake their chains with glee, we say that the future of France and Europe is being played out before the National Assembly. Daring to question Parliament's right to discuss the problem of German rearmament would imply a lack of duty, if not of freedom.

We are not taking a step back; we are no longer denouncing a policy whose costs we inevitably had to meet. The trapdoor has now opened up beneath our feet. If we must fall, then, before we disappear, we should take the final opportunity of raising our voices and ensuring that our partners face up to their responsibilities.

After all, the objections and protests of a whole nation often carry more force and weight than grave and complicated governmental negotiations. We can stand up against the position that has already been taken, and if, by some misfortune, we were neither heard nor listened to, we would at least have the satisfaction of knowing that we have given our testimony in public. We shall not lapse into sentimentality. That would force us to recall the sacrifices to which we agreed and to show some of those whom we wish to persuade around the cemeteries of Verdun and the Somme. We will speak the only language that can be maintained in a world dedicated to ideology and to its abstractions.

Accepting West German rearmament under the conditions proposed to us would, first of all, mean giving up the respect and support of our neighbours — Mr De Gasperi believes the time is right to invite Chancellor Adenauer to visit Rome. Moreover, it would mean delivering a fatal blow with our own hands to European unity, which is our ultimate reason to live and hope. Europe will not be constructed by mercenaries or slaves but in a burst of rebellion against the inevitability of war.

Some have been surprised by our partiality for Mr Robert Schuman's plan, despite its imperfections and the interests which it is likely to cover up. But drowning nations seize the first lifeline that comes along. It cannot be denied that the Schuman Plan is intended to act as a dam against a raging sea and that, tomorrow, France will give in to everybody and everything and this dam will be swept away permanently. This thought is all the more tragic since the British will not join in with us on a series of ruins.

Europe will either be constructed as a priority or it will become a battlefield, that is to say a desert. Our first article in 'Combat' five years ago was entitled: *In favour of a Franco-German alliance to sustain Europe.*

Marcel Gimont