

'France's new course' from the Deutsche Volkszeitung

Caption: On 26 October 1945, the Deutsche Volkszeitung, daily newspaper of the German Communist Party, emphasises the success of the French Communist Party (PCF) in the elections of 21 October 1945.

Source: Deutsche Volkszeitung. Zentralorgan der Kommunistischen Partei Deutschlands. 26.10.1945, Nr. 117; 1. Jg. Berlin: Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands. "Frankreichs neuer Weg", p. 1.

Copyright: (c) Translation CVCE.EU by UNI.LU

All rights of reproduction, of public communication, of adaptation, of distribution or of dissemination via Internet, internal network or any other means are strictly reserved in all countries.

Consult the legal notice and the terms and conditions of use regarding this site.

URL:

http://www.cvce.eu/obj/france_s_new_course_from_the_deutsche_volkszeitung-en-4d03a88a-edb2-401b-bb66-3a82743724e7.html



Last updated: 05/07/2016

France's new course

H. L. In a striking manner, the French elections have given expression to the French people's wish for democratic renewal.

The French Communist Party will be the strongest party in the new French Parliament, due to assemble in the old building on the Place de la Concorde on 6 November. It is followed by the Popular Republican Movement (MRP), led by Foreign Minister Bidault, with the Socialists coming third. The Radical Socialists, once the party of the French middle-class masses, have been reduced to an insignificant splinter group.

With this vote, the French public has now clearly opted for the continuation of the anti-Fascist Democratic policy that originated in the fight against the German occupation troops and the Vichy Regime. Apart from the victory of the three Resistance Parties and the crushing of Edouard Daladier's Radical Party, whose policy had led to the Munich Agreement, these elections are also marked by other significant features: the high overall turnout and women's enfranchisement. The French political masses take an active part in the shaping of their State. The significance of these elections, however, reaches beyond French borders.

The elections were complicated because they were combined with a referendum. Voters first had to face a simple list system in which they elected their party's candidate for the new Parliament. They then had to answer two questions. 92 % of the electorate answered 'yes' to the first question, whether this new Parliament should draw up a new Constitution. This brought an end to the old Constitution of 1875 with its bicameral system. The French people's urgent wish for a renewal of the French Republic clearly found expression in this answer. The Radical Socialists also owe their massive defeat to the fact that they had asked their voters to answer 'no' to the first question. The majority of voters, however, rejected this form of reactionary policy that clearly went against popular opinion.

The second question, whether to entrust the Government with extraordinary powers until the entry into force of the new Constitution, received a two-thirds majority. Millions of French voters nevertheless expressed their distrust of any restriction of parliamentary rights. The French Communist Party had also urged their voters to answer 'no' to this question. This had been a declaration of war against any authoritarian tendencies that had emerged over the past few months during the differences between the Government, on the one hand, and left-wing parties and trade unions on the other.

The Communist Party has won a great victory with candidates being elected not only in numerous industrial cities and départements but also by farmers in many rural areas. Compared to 1936, it has doubled its number of seats. The self-sacrificing fight of the Communists in the resistance movement, their consistent policy in support of a true democratisation of France and a foreign policy guaranteeing peace and freedom is the kind of policy with which large sections of the French people have identified.

The new great French Popular Movement (MRP) has absorbed some of the middle-class masses that have turned away from the Radical Socialist Party because of its unpopular policies. Created during the Nazi occupation, the MRP arose from Catholic Activist circles of the resistance movement who fought side-by-side with Communists and Socialists against the Fascist occupation army and against Fascists in their own country. Its followers are mostly Catholic, and it probably gained a considerable female vote because, during the elections, the Pope had addressed French women who, in broad swathes of France, also follow their priest's advice in political matters. The leader of this new party of the masses is Georges Bidault, a former member of the French Resistance and presently French Minister of Foreign Affairs. His deputy is Maurice Schumann who had been one of the French Resistance's radio broadcasters in London.

Contrary to its own expectations, the Socialist Party has lost some seats, but it will nevertheless enter the new National Assembly as one of the three major parliamentary parties.

On 6 November, when the new Parliament assembles and the present French Provisional Government resigns, Charles de Gaulle, who is supported in many issues by all the French Resistance Parties, will be appointed the new Head of Government. The French Parliament will begin drafting the new Constitution,

and this Constitution will be inspired by the spirit of the French resistance movement that, in the shape of three major political parties, has now taken control of the fate of France. The democratic renewal of France had originated in the resistance against Fascism. It manifested itself anew in last Sunday's elections.

The French people have reached a decision. They want a new Republic, a new stable government under parliamentary control and under the leadership of democratic activists.