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WHEN the Labour Party was in power in Britain, it rejected the plan for a federal Western Europe as the scheme involved cession of a part of national sovereignty to a supra-national organisation. In the main, the Labour Party's objection to the 'American-sponsored federal idea was based on entirely different grounds. None of the Western European countries was then governed by the Socialists. Sir Winston Churchill, then Leader of the Opposition, might have felt it more politic to show his inclinations to the Christian Democrats of Western Europe. But the British Labour Party was right in concluding that there could be no profitable coalition or co-operation between it and the parties then in power in Western Europe.

After hesitating for two years, France has now rejected EDC on similar political grounds. "You are not," M Mendes-France was rebuked by M Spaak at Brussels, "as good a European as your predecessors." M Mendes-France is, perhaps, as good a European as M Spaak. But the French Premier is not a Christian Democrat. EDC, with its supra-national basis, can function only if all the participating countries are governed by Christian Democrats. It is not a mere coincidence that EDC and the federal European idea are the pet. themes of the Christian Democrats in all the Western European countries. It is also not a mere coincidence that France has finally rejected EDC only after the coalition Cabinets dominated by the Christian Democrats have been replaced by coalition Governments of a different political complexion.

Whether or not France's rejection *at* EDC is, as President Eisenhower interprets it, a major set-back in the Western Powers' fight against Communism, it is an indirect reflection of France's disapproval of the Christian Democrats. They came to power in Western European countries after the failure of the French Socialists. It was a tactical mistake of the French Socialists to rely on the Christian Democrats in their struggle for power against the French Communist Party. Though the tactics of the French Socialists may have prevented the Communist Party from coming to power in France, the strategy has had the unintended effect of fostering political conditions in Western Europe which prevent any agreed arrangement with the Communists. The Christian Democrats started well. But, as they gradually seized power, they disclosed their true political colours. From the Centre, they gradually shifted to the Right of Centre. To ensure their hold, they espoused the federal idea. This, and their inclinations to the Right, cemented the co-operation between them and America. France's rejection of EDC may have caused the wrath of Washington. But it may well mean the beginning of the end of the influence of Christian Democrats in Western Europe.

France is unwilling to transfer a part of her sovereignty to a supra-national organisation. She has discovered that the Schumari Pool means expansion of the Ruhr for potential exploitation by a sovereign, re-armed Germany. She is opposed to any poetical or military integration with Western Germany without active participation by Britain and America in any such arrangement. Britain and America are reluctant