

From the London End

Paris in Perspective

GLOOM pervades the diplomatic world. There is renewed talk, partly inspired, that the cold war is once again in the oiling and that the dangers of a nuclear holocaust have never been so real as they are now. The public campaigns for nuclear disarmament are being shown to have been based on the most naive of assumptions. Expanded estimates of the required militarisation of Western economies are being made. The New York Stock Exchange enjoys a sudden burst of buying activity and in London, the *Guardian* declares that "the failure in Paris gives fresh impetus to the review of British defence policy". Most alarming of all is the spurt given to the hitherto temporarily unemployed "analysts" of Soviet policy. New outpourings of clearly tendentious opinion fill the press columns and a Korea-type atmosphere is being carefully fostered. The precise nature of the tragedy enacted in Paris is being lost in the process. What is most regrettable is that statesmen on both sides are doing nothing to correct this dangerous trend—indeed their speeches carry just that combination of threat and fire as to inflame further the wild passions evident in some quarters.

It goes, without saying, that the peoples of the world as a whole have been frustrated in their hopes that the Summit portended a detente in which the prospect of a nuclear war would be removed. This frustration has led to a certain feeling of dangerous helplessness in a rapidly deteriorating international situation. The propaganda organs, especially the mass circulation papers, are never very helpful in situations like the present—by taking sides, they dent the desire for disarmament and the hopes for another Summit.

The all-important fact that emerges from the performance in Paris as the *Economist* rightly declares, is that the machinery of international diplomacy has suffered a brutal shock". For, once again, major discourtesies abound and the normal channels of communication are sorely bruised. How was this possible when, on the surface of things, the

movement for a detente up to May 1st appeared so promising? No attempt will be made here to "apportion the blame" or to examine the particular features of Mr Khrushchev's behaviour—these can well be left to those who find such exercises rewarding. Nor is it necessary to repeat the details of the U2 spy-plane incident, in spite of its immense relevance to the Paris fiasco. The *Times* in a leader Rearing the title, "On the Brink" noted that "the U2 incident was admittedly a bad business, made worse by the clumsy handling of the news in Washington" and that "at a stretch, it could be made an excuse" for an ultimatum. In other words, this was no ordinary spy story, and could by no means be classed in the more normal but nevertheless unsavoury category of land-based spies and intelligence activity.

It would rather appear that the causes for the wreckage in Paris go deeper than the U2 incident, though the latter was no less than the final evidence of these causes. Mr Walter Eippman, writing in the *New York Herald Tribune*, relates a conversation he had with an emissary of Mr Khrushchev and states that

"the burden of Mr Zhukov's complaint was that about March 15th, American policy had suddenly hardened against a negotiation about the status of Berlin and that this was a reversal of the understanding given to Mr K by the President at Camp David."

And almost in the same vein, the *Economist* enquires that "the West should first ask itself how it came about that the Summit conference was being held at all." Shri Nehru, on arriving in London for the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference, recalled his early enthusiasm for the Summit, but went on to explain that he was no longer as enthusiastic about it being successful. Mr Douglas Dillon, who has emerged as the most powerful man in the U S State Department, started what the *Times* described as a "stiffer tone" about the whole German problem following Dr Adenauer's visit to the United States in March. On April 15 (some three weeks before the Summit), the Washington

Correspondent of the *Times* in a special feature article entitled "U S Sees Clouds on Summit" recorded that:

"The absorbing marathon of electing a new President tends to restrict Mr Eisenhower's freedom of action in Paris; when Mr Macmillan was last at Camp David, he insisted that he could not bind his successor to any limp limit beyond his term for a moratorium on underground nuclear tests. There might be ulterior motives for that position as many have suspected that the US will resume testing below the ground before the end of the year." and further that the "State Department is pervaded by an almost chronic scepticism, perhaps because its objectives in Paris are so limited."

The limitations of American objectives in Paris were part of a process which started with Mr Khrushchev's American visit and ended with the Istanbul session of the NATO Council at the end of April. In this period, a succession of Western visitors to Washington, especially the visit of Dr Adenauer, had narrowed what the *Economist* described as "the meagre room for manoeuvre" and as a result, "the thin chance of success (at the Summit) whittled away."*

The most explosive question in Europe is that of the status of Berlin. The basic fact that surrounds the Berlin question is that at least three of the Big Four Powers (i. e. Britain, France and Russia) have decided against the re-unification of Germany. From this there emerges a logical requirement that the status of Berlin should be revised. So much was acknowledged by President Eisenhower when Mr Khrushchev visited the United States and by Mr Macmillan when he visited Moscow last year. And yet, when it came to agreeing to a revision of the Berlin Statute, the whole issue of Dr Adenauer's prestige came into play. Britain, which worked with remarkable persistence for a Summit, found herself subject to massive pressures to fall into line with the increasingly fixed attitudes which Dr Adenauer had engendered in Washington. The final Western position on Berlin adopted at Istanbul

but, at some distaste to Britain, took somewhat the following form. West Berlin should remain an integral part of West Germany; what was negotiable was the size of allied troops and the placing of nuclear weapons in the City. In other words, the final position was tantamount to a retraction of the previously acknowledged requirement for a revision of the status of Berlin. The NATO Council, following its Istanbul meeting issued a particularly damaging *communique* in which the following declaration appeared :

"The Council reaffirms the view that the solution of the problem of Germany can only be found in re-unification on the basis of self-determination. It recalls its declaration of December 16, 1958 and once again expresses its determination to protect the freedom of the people of West Berlin."

In the House of Commons a very much saddened Mr Selwyn Lloyd had to state (on the eve of the Summit) that "the Government were prepared to do all in their power to ensure the genuine freedom of 2,250,000 people of West Berlin." And so the Berlin question became non-negotiable.

Against this background, the failure of the Summit was inevitable. The cold war of suspicions and obduracy had become very much a renewed feature of American policy. And Britain, so it appeared, had to "string along".

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