

Paris—After Liberation

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PARIS—The capital of France, as of September 1944, is not the same nervous, triumphant paradise city that it was when the Allies first made their entry.

The welcome has died down. When you enter the town, today, whether on foot or in a car, everyone is glad to see you. But there are no more mob scenes of riotous greeting exploding around each jeep. Shows are opening up again, and the people are beginning to breathe easier. There's no fear of Germans or collaborationist snipers patrolling the rooftops.

You won't come upon dark, silent streets such as the Rue Victoire, where a German sniper lurked in an upper story of an apartment house last August 22nd. Then, people in the courtyard below greeted the appearance of a jeep with silence and frightened, resentful looks.

Even now the French still remember such scenes. The sight of MPs patrolling the streets may give the average GI a sinking feeling, but it is a source of great comfort to the average Frenchman.

Almost all Frenchmen who can speak English can be found in the crowd that concentrates around the Hotel Scribe trying to get a job as interpreter. All of them are angling hopefully, steadily, pitifully for new jobs and a new life, trying to identify themselves in every way with the Allies. This is one side of the picture.

On the other side, the Parisians appear as a very grateful but proud and self-reliant population. One indication of this was a rather fiery editorial advising the people not to demand cigarettes or chewing gum from the Americans and British. This appeal came out in *Figaro*, a lively and republican news sheet.

At the Café de la Paix a rheumatic old woman in black came up to two GIs and asked them for some money. The French people sitting around her were quite embarrassed and insulted. "Why do you have to annoy the Americans? Why don't you ask your own people for money?" one man yelled at her.

The Pont Alexandre V is one of the most beautiful bridges in Paris. With its four gilded bronze horses springing out against the warm, fresh evening sunlight it is certainly a vision of luxury and peace hard to match in any country. There is an anti-aircraft outfit doing its job under ideal circumstances.

One of the ack-ack men, Pvt. Joseph D. Salvia, of Derby, Conn., said that originally they had been with the 29th Division. About the time of the St. Lo campaign, he said, all the men decided to send their last two months' pay home. "We thought it would be better than getting ourselves shot and giving some Jerry the chance to help himself to our dough," said Salvia. "We never thought of winding up like this—in Paris without a cent."

Those boys were not badly off, though. Around them all day long, milling about in the sunlight is the bright, shrill, swift crowd. There are light brown negroes in pink business suits; blondes in topheavy red hats and yellow silk dresses; priests weaving in and out on bicycles in black cassocks and skull caps; French soldiers in crumpled ODs and light blue overseas caps. There are few dull moments on this job.

THE crowd thins out a lot toward evening, though. One explanation that is offered you, and one that sounds fairly convincing, is the fact that the people of Paris can't yet accustom themselves to the idea that there will be no more curfews. During the days of the German occupation, the curfew was a rather flexible arrangement. If the Germans were in a good humor, they set it for a late hour. Otherwise it came pretty early, around eight o'clock at night. Any woman caught in the streets after this time got off with relatively light punishment such as cooking supper for the Nazis, or cleaning boots. But Frenchmen picked up after dark were often as not sent to labor camps in Germany.

As the clinching evidence to show that Paris is once again waking up, there was an organized tour of the Gestapo headquarters for all correspondents and interested visitors. What several weeks ago was a center of death, terror, and slavery for the French has now become as harmless and picturesque an exhibit as any to be seen at Madame Tussauds.