

A FIRST-HAND REPORT

Paris: No Longer the 'In' City

(Press-Herald staff writer Jerry Reynolds returned to his desk recently after a 30-day tour of principal European cities. This is the fifth in a series of reports planned for Press-Herald readers. Today's report concerns the "new attitude" which pervades Paris.)

By JERRY REYNOLDS
Press-Herald Staff Writer

It used to be the place to go, but even that glory has now faded. Still, few Americans think of a trip to Europe without at least seeing it.

The city is Paris—former jet set capital of the world, former haven of American tourists, and once THE CITY.

Paris is still Paris, but politics—mostly the international kind—have cost Paris some of her magic. Americans still go there—in great numbers, but they rush through the city in a few

hours or a few days, only to linger somewhere else on the continent.

I spent 48 hours in the French capital, and, unlike the other cities I visited, had no regrets about my departure. There are many places in Europe where that old familiar character, the "rich" American, is a special target, but in Paris he has become a plain sucker.

American money is welcome, but American tourists could stay home and few Parisians would care. A smile works miracles in many places in Europe, but in Paris it evokes only a sneer.

Still, Paris must be seen. To miss the quaint beauty of this city, to miss the treasures of the Louvre, to miss partaking of her night life is to miss an important aspect of modern Europe.

It is, I am sure, unfair to apply the general impression

to all of Paris and her people. Here, I am concerned with the general impression—and more important, with some of the reasons behind it.

Today's Paris is a product of centuries of French history and politics. Her great treasures—masterpieces in the Louvre, great and small palaces, even the Eiffel Tower—are part of that history. They tell of a Paris that once was the center of the world.

And they tell of a Paris which has lost her great position in the world of art and fashion and politics and history.

Her fall began after the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, but the darkest hours came in the Second World War. Barely a victor in 1945, she fell victim to a succession of governments and her power slipped still more.

Now, France has emerged as a stable nation under the leadership of General Charles

DeGaulle, the would-be king of a would-be world power. Americans—and, incidentally, many Frenchmen—view DeGaulle as the cause of the new attitude.

But he is, I think, only the outward manifestation of the new national attitude. France resents her fall from power. She is trying to recover it and in the process, she has developed a contempt for American power, prestige, and might.

And the Parisians, who view themselves as more French than any other Frenchmen, reflect the French dream and attitudes with great vigor.

The result of this political process has been to effect a change—unseen, but felt—throughout Paris.

The Paris of old is still there, but resentment has spilled into virtually every aspect of her life.

Walters are slow. Taxi driv-

ers are silent—until its time to pay the tab. Shopkeepers want only the money you can shell out—as fast as you can shell it out.

Some of the scorn and ill treatment tourists bring on themselves. They forget they are guests. They complain when things aren't "like they are at home." (Of all the cities I visited, Paris offers the least cause for complaint about food, but it happens, believe it or not!)

But Paris and her people must assume most of the blame. In their drive to outdo the rest of the world—to recover past glories—Parisians have adopted those very attitudes they find so disagreeable in Americans. And that has brought about a contempt for Paris not only in American tourists, but in German, Italian, and British tourists which has contributed to her decline as the "in" city of the world.



ARTIST HONORED . . . Artist Bob Click (right) of Manhattan Beach was honored last week for his award winning entry in the 14th annual All-City Outdoor Art Festival. He is pictured accepting a medal from Jerome B. Scott, manager of the Torrance branch of Home Savings and Loan Association, patron sponsor of the annual contest.

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