

BIG FOUR CONFERENCE ON GERMANY - KEY TO PEACE

In Paris - at the historic Palais Rose (the city's famous "Pink Palace") the representatives of the big powers arrive for a momentous meeting in the history of international affairs. Britain's Ernest Bevin - the only Minister who has attended all conferences since Potsdam - meets his colleagues on the Council - greying Robert Schumann, French Foreign Minister, and the representative of Soviet Russia, who initiated this meeting, bespectacled Andrei Vishinsky, the Kremlin's successor to Molotov.

In the words of America's Dean Acheson, this Conference may well prove to be a decisive turning point. The background to these talks can be found in Berlin, where, on the Autobahn, the Russians re-impose a miniature blockade, barely a week after the re-opening of the highway. Transport Chief Sir Robert Inglis visits the scene, to see for himself the results of this latest act of obstructionism. He sees fresh food rotting as its ice-packing melts. One supply route to the city is temporarily plugged. Another steps altogether as the strike of the West-Sector railway workers paralyzes traffic on the Russian-controlled Berlin railway system. Demanding payment in West marks instead of quarter-value Soviet marks, they battle with Communist Berliners resisting the strike, as well as the Soviet-dominated police called in to free the stations.

Later, news comes that British police are gradually restoring order. But still the city is torn between itself, as German fights German.

While Berlin is caught up in ideological friction, New York gives a hero's welcome to General Lucius Clay whose determination to remain in the German capital helped the West to win the Battle of Berlin. On the following day, Congress honours the retiring commander. The General says:

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In Paris, the German problem looms heavily over the Big Four. If political skirmishing does not overshadow the true purpose of the conference (which is to arrive at political and economic unity for Germany) new hope for Europe may be born. But if the lesson of postwar international strife has yet to be learned, the nations will again be faced with a continuation of the uneasy peace.