

Fight mark Mendes-France rally  
Paris, Velodrome d'hiver, January 10, 1957  
Positive developed: 66 meters - 220 ft

Former French Premier Pierre Mendes-France barely escaped injury last night in Paris when a tear-gas bomb aimed at him, hit the speaker's platform where he was seated and set it on fire during a political meeting which ended in a free-for-all fight.

The meeting taking place in the Palais des Sports was called off as partisans of the former Premier fought contradictors who threw tear bombs at the audience. In a matter of seconds the hall was in an uproar after the first bomb which barely missed Mr. Mendes-France was hurled. Frightened crowd rushed to the exits as the bombs fell, burst into fire and then released billowing clouds of smoke.

Although no serious injuries were reported many in the crowd of about 10,000 went home with bruises and minor burns caused by the bomb explosions. Material damage was estimated to several million francs. Despite appeals for calm some of the crowd in the center of the hall started exchanging blows while others tried to shield their faces from the smoke. Several of the bombs hit the rostrum where friends of Mr. Mendes-France were gathered and one of them almost set fire to the huge Tricolor flag hanging behind it. Firemen and silvery helmeted police rushed in with rubber hoses and with some dampness resulting for members of the audience the fires were put out in a few minutes. Helmeted riot squads carrying rifles then moved in and surrounded the rostrum. Finally they marched forward "En masse" and cleared the hall without difficulty by literally pushing the few remaining people in the center of the hall towards the nearest exits.

The meeting which had started quietly was in connection with a by-election which will take place next Sunday in one sector of Paris to fill the seat of Me. de Moro-Giafferi who died recently.