

DE GAULLE TRIUMPHS

The unpredictable, enigmatic De Gaulle has resumed his role as Savior of France. That centre of political drama, the President's Palace, saw the final exit of M. Pflimlin, and perhaps the last Parliamentary government of the 4th Republic. The dejected Premier could not stay in office after some key-colleagues resigned. It looked as if the path were at last open for De Gaulle to take over. The drama gained speed.

Next day, from the Elysee Palace, came a new sensation; President Coty, astute, courageous, sent a message to the National Assembly that he would ask the General to form a government. It was the only alternative, declared Coty, to civil war. He himself would resign if the Assembly bowed to Left Wing demonstrators, now very vocal on the boulevards, and rejected De Gaulle.

Every hour, the situation seemed to change or modify. Even ex-premier Mendes-France - one of the keenest political brains of the country - was against De Gaulle even at so late a stage. The General's enemies had only one trump card; they insisted that he is a Fascist (which he certainly is not) or that, once in power, he would pave the way for fascism. That charge, said De Gaulle's followers, ran counter to all his past actions and beliefs.

Holding the key to the position now were the Socialists. At last, from the Elysee Palace, came their leader, Guy Mollet, on his way to confer with De Gaulle; another act in the drama at Colombey Les Deux Eglises. Between his house there and Paris the General had travelled several times during the fortnight since he electrified France with his bid for power, but now the ball seemed to be at his feet. Paris, mercurial as ever, swung to De Gaulle's side. That night the Capital behaved as if the load were lifted from its mind.

It has come home to the French people that through unstable government they have lost colonies, respect abroad, and were ceasing to be a first class power. They felt that drifting was now over. They had come to safe anchorage, they hoped, in the leadership of General De Gaulle.