## FRONT PAGES FROM HISTORY

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## The Daily Telegraph, London - Saturday August 26, 1944

nce the Germans hand taken Paris and most of France, from his exile in London, De Gaulle launched a newspaper, "France", and through it and through all his many messages to his countrymen, constantly proclaimed that the duty of every French citizen was to fight against the invader. Some did and some didn't. Those who did risked their lives and terrible punishment to their families and to their fellow citizens. Those who didn't became passive bystander of the German occupation or outright collaborators. It was a truly challenging time for France.

But the fight against the Nazis, which at the time seemed an impossible task, was not in vain. And with the help of the Allies, who had just invaded France in June 1944, France became France again.

After a few days of street battles, insurrection and chaos, and with the Germans



on the run, the defining moment of the *Liberation* came when the towering figure of de Gaulle lead his troops into the heart of the city littered with at least a thousand

bodies still unburied.

But mostly it was a moment for rejoicing. This is how the special correspondent of the Daily Telegraph, who was ar-

riving with the liberating troops, reported the atmosphere in the happy city where people were cheering and singing: "Their reiterated phrase was 'merci, merci', and if there was ever any doubt as to the nature of the Allied welcome it was very quickly dispelled, for never was there a more spontaneous, profounder demonstration of gratitude than I have experienced on the exhaustive drive. Every pause has been filled with hand-shaking and wholesale embracing by both sexes, and even the protection of a pipe does not save one's face from contact with bearded garlic".

Another corresponded said: "The French are dancing with joy at the arrival of our advancing column amid actual fighting, at the risk of their lives".

The long awaited day had finally arrived. Paris was dancing wild with a background of La Marseillese and the corks popping out of Champagne bottles.