

## POSTSCRIPT

by

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### George Gets Me A Paris Hotel Reservation

My first trip to Europe was very shortly after the German surrender. I was to go to Zurich to meet Mr. Buehrle of Oerlikon Machine Tool Works, who had been blacklisted in USA and in England, and then to Paris to see about getting First National City Bank reestablished after the war debacle. In Zurich my hotel reservations had been made by the Oerlikon Company and the Bank reported they had, they hoped, reserved a room for me in Paris at the Hotel George V, but that beds were scarce. They recommended that I send cables to Hotel George V when I left New York, giving my schedule and planned arrival in Paris, again from Geneva when I arrived there confirming my schedule and then a cable as I was leaving Geneva for Paris, stating the hour of my arrival and that I expected the room reserved for me by First National City Bank. All of this I did.

When I arrived at George V, I lined up behind about thirty men trying (most without success) to register, but when my turn at last came the manager got very excited. He said I shouldn't have lined up, tore up my signed registration card, left the line standing there and with my suitcase in hand personally escorted me to a big suite of rooms. Here I lived lavishly for a week. Every day there were fresh flowers in my rooms and I entertained and signed checks freely. I figured First National City Bank underestimated its influence in Paris.

When I tried to check out the manager refused to give me a bill. Of course not—did I not know that I was the personal guest of the hotel owner—Monsieur Francois Duprey! I said I certainly did not know that; that I was there on business for First National City Bank and they were gladly paying all my expenses in Paris. But the manager refused to budge, insisting that if he accepted a single franc from me he would lose his job.

I left Paris very perplexed and all the way home on the plane I brooded. I had met Monsieur Duprey before the war and when I was in Paris under the German occupation I had seen him again at a dinner

party with some high German officers and French collaborationist officials. I was worried and disgusted with myself for leaving without having insisted on paying my bill: Monsieur Duprey had been to some extent, at least, a collaborationist with the German invasion forces; he had continued to run his fine hotel in something like normal fashion and had made the German High Command quite comfortable; but the bakers of Paris had continued to bake good bread and the bus and Metro operations kept their equipment in good shape and ran things on schedule for their German conquerors; perhaps he was no more of a collaborationist than all the Frenchmen who had continued to run their respective businesses in as near normal condition as was possible; but he must be a slick fellow and would undoubtedly show up in New York and ask me for favors I would not be willing to grant. I was disgusted with myself for getting into such a bad situation.

Soon after my brother, George, got back from the war we spent time together preparing notes and he told me of his telephone call from his friend, Col. Lew Weinstein, about "that guy in Paris" who claimed to have known me. Great relief—I owed Monsieur Duprey not a thing!

Some years later I met Monsieur Duprey at a dinner party where we were both guests. We had a few pleasantries, but no mention was made of Paris under the German occupation nor of my being his guest at his Hotel George V.