

What the press is saying about the accords

A sampling of last weekend's press coverage of the new French-Soviet accords shows enthusiastic responses from France and Italy, lies from Britain, and a total blackout by the U.S. press

In France

Le Figaro, April 28-29, editorial by Paul Marie de la Gorce entitled "Realism": "So much has been said against the very existence of this policy baptized 'detente, entente and cooperation' by its first promoter, General de Gaulle, 15 years ago, and which the current President of the Republic has just rebaptized with the same name. Yesterday, it was so many accusations of complacency, of dividing the West, and as always, of nationalism. Today, it is reproaches of blindness on the Soviet menace, of negligence with respect to the increasing power of the USSR, of error on the results of detente, which we are told will only benefit the Russians. ... It has also become fashionable to use the curious word 'finlandization,' a rather insulting term used against a respectable country, a free country, an admirable people. ... But reality has prevailed ... and this reality is very simply defined. If we don't want to be fighting a war against each other, we have to organize relations between rival nations to make them as rational as possible, that is to say to ensure what is called detente. ..."

Les Echos, April 30, article by Thierry Doelnitz entitled "The Franco-Soviet rapprochement should favor industrial cooperation": The Franco-Soviet summit ended on a note of optimism, inspired it seems by the will of the USSR to improve its relations with the West. President Giscard d'Estaing declared that the commercial exchanges between the two countries had gone through a 'very clear upswing' during the first months of 1979. The goal of tripling trade in five years will be 'practically achieved' this year, the joint communiqué affirms. Mr. Brezhnev declared that the 'perspectives for cooperation between the USSR and France have become clearer and more confident,' ..."

Le Monde, April 29-30, article by Jacques Amalric: "The communiqué devoted to disarmament calls for a 'collective examination by all the states that signed the Final Act of Helsinki. ...' What would this 'collective examination' consist of? No one can say yet for sure,

since the USSR and France will not be the only countries deciding. But one can nonetheless note that the formulation used considerably broadens the initial idea of Giscard, since it is not made explicit that it will be (limited to) conventional weapons, and since the expression 'attenuation of the military confrontation' covers several Soviet proposals, in particular a ban on first use of nuclear weapons, a non-aggression pact, etc."

L'Humanité, the French Communist Party daily, April 30, article by Max Leon entitled "Converging interest of the two countries": "If this last idea (of a "collective examination" etc.) were followed through—we are still far from it—we could conceive of an interesting initiative, made simultaneously by France and the Soviet Union which, addressed to the 33 countries of Europe, the U.S., and Canada that signed the final act in 1975, would invite them to prepare for a new Pan-European conference...."

In Italy

Corriere della Sera, April 28, article entitled Spectacular offer from Brezhnev to Giscard: A French-Russian Space Team": "It's the first time that one of the two great powers has offered a 'space ticket' to a country from the other ideological camp ... without too much expense, and without many risks, the Soviet Union can demonstrate its willingness to share its own space technology with a country that is an integral part of the political and economic alliances of the West...."

In Britain

Financial Times, April 30: "... Although Mr. Giscard d'Estaing described the meeting as 'the most useful' he had had with the Soviet leader since he became President in 1974, and although Mr. Brezhnev said the Soviet Union had every reason to be satisfied with the outcome of the talks, it was clear that Paris and Moscow continue to disagree on a number of important problems. The main bones of contention remain the two countries' different policies on disarmament. ..."

In the United States

New York Times, April 28: The full extent of coverage of the trip consisted of a 200-word UPI blurb entitled "Soviet Offers to Send Aloft An Astronaut from France."

Washington Post, April 30: There were no reports. Like the *New York Times*, its weekend headlines were devoted to "President (Carter) Likens Soviet Dissident to Bible Figure."