

# They Asked, 'Has America Gone Mad?'

## London

"We pray for the American people that they may come to their senses."

The prayer was read on British Broadcasting Corporation radio yesterday morning, two hours after the shooting of Senator Robert F. Kennedy.

Throughout Western Europe, officials and editors and ordinary citizens expressed similar concern about the state of American society.

## 'MADNESS'

Reports from New York Times correspondents in many countries spoke of fears of "violence" or "madness" or "anarchy" in the United States. There was horror at the continued free American sale of guns. There was renewed talk of conspiracy in the shooting of President John F. Kennedy.

Europeans spoke of an underlying social illness that created a climate for violence in the U.S.

"Has America gone mad?" a West German asked an American correspondent.

The question was not just rhetorical, the correspondent said. Many Germans wanted reassurance that the U.S., with its power, was not moving toward an orgy of violence.

## GUNS

A correspondent in Switzerland spoke of a feeling that "guns had become instruments of United States political life." A well-dressed man in a Brussels cafe asked:

"Will anyone want to become President of the United States?"

That it was Robert Kennedy who was the victim made the tragedy especially poignant for Europeans. Many had revered his brother, and Senator Kennedy was himself widely known and admired in Europe — certainly more than any other presidential candidate.

Germans "identified with him more than with any other American politician," a correspondent in Bonn reported. In Britain, a recent poll had chosen him the British favorite for the Presidency.

## LIFE

The terrible news dominated the life of most of Western Europe through the day.

In offices and in cafes men and women sat listening to transistor radios for the latest reports. In France striking communications workers decided to restore transatlantic links "in view of the important event in the United States."

*New York Times*