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The Curtain Rolls Back

(By Barnet Nover)

It is difficult to find a parallel in modern history for the publication by the department of state of the captured documents dealing with the short-lived Nazi-Soviet partnership that was ushered in with the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact of 1939.

Governments do not customarily go out of their way to expose, as the United States government has now done, the grisly skeletons in the closet of a "friendly" nation.

Usually such documents, however come by, are carefully buried away in archives and kept there for a generation or even a century until they have lost all their contemporaneous significance and until all the principals have passed from the scene.

However, we are not living in normal times. We are living in times in which the once-clear distinctions between "war" and "peace" have become extremely blurred.

Certainly it would be stretching even the extremely flexible language of diplomacy to the breaking point to describe Russia at this moment as a "friendly" nation.

For many months the policy which Russia has pursued toward the United States has not been friendly but distinctly and sharply hostile. Short of employing actual military measures, Russia has been engaged in an unceasing offensive against the west and particularly against the United States as the most powerful nation in the west.

There has been no limit to the falsifications of American motives, aims and aspirations which the Kremlin and its spokesmen have constantly indulged in. At the same time, those spokesmen have sought to persuade the world that Russia is a knight in shining armor, moved only by high idealism and full of the milk of human kindness.

The Nazi-Soviet documents should help set this highly distorted record straight. Although dealing with events that, in some instances, took place nearly a decade ago, the documents have a startling contemporaneity. The Stalin of today is the same Stalin who toasted Hitler in August, 1939.

The Molotov of today is the same Molotov who with brutal cynicism made a deal for the butchery of Poland, who allowed himself no twinges of conscience in bartering peoples and nations in the Baltic region and the Balkans as though they were so many herds of cattle, who congratulated the Germans on the capture of Warsaw and, playing a ruthless game of power politics, did not even render lip service to moral principles.

It is this same Molotov who now accuses the United States of being in league with the Nazis in Germany and in pursuing an imperialistic course.

The significant fact is that since the destruction of Nazi power the policy which Russia has pursued has been only the continuation and extension of the policy of ruthless expansion upon which she embarked in 1939, when the moment for such a course seemed propitious.

Significantly, it was not the Nazis but the Russians who made the first move that led ultimately to the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact and did so in full awareness that an attack by Germany on Poland was imminent.

There was, to be sure, no love lost between the partners. They double-crossed each other at every turn, whenever the opportunity presented itself. But in this as in other respects, as the documents abundantly reveal, they acted like two of a kind.

Stable French Govt. Vital to ERP

(By Palmer Hoyt, Jr.—Foreign Correspondent)

ON VITAL FRENCH PROBLEM over which the

WHAT'S UP, THERE ?



United States can do little more than pray is the question of French government stability, which is vital to reconstruction of this country and to the success of the Marshall plan for European recovery.

Because of the structure of the fourth French republic there is little that can be done about the problem. The only thing that keeps a government stable here seems to be continued improvement, or good times, and even then the slightest whiff of foul wind might throw it over.

Also it is true as soon as a French government comes to power, it loses some of its popularity. The Schuman government can serve as an object lesson in that line.

Late last November the Communist call for a general strike caused the fall of the Ramadier government. After the usual haggling, the Schuman government of Popular Republicans, Socialists and Radical Socialists took power.

At first, throughout non-Communist circles, there was great joy, for the new government quelled the strike in short order—aided by the unwillingness of the majority of French workers to follow the Communists' particular brand of politics at that time. But at the strike's end, the government promised wage increases, and higher cost of living allowances.

French prices went up, and so did French tempers.

Then, in December and January, the government brought forth its new supertax-forced loan plan, which would hit the farmers, businessmen and professional people. The Communists opposed it bitterly, and the de Gaulle groupe offered to support only a plan that would provide for a 5 per cent tax rise rather than the proposed 20 per cent excess levy.

When the noses were counted, the Schuman government won out in its program, but with a loss of thirty-three votes in the chamber of deputies. This meant that 33 of the 339 deputies who supported the Schuman government in the beginning had fallen by the wayside somehow. And in the end, if any government cannot persuade such wayside-fallers they are forced to yield to another group.

The narrow vote (306-273) by which the Schuman government won its victory on the tax question does not represent a "crisis" in the French cabinet. But it represents a situation which might turn into a crisis, and that is where the difficulties come.

The Schuman government's plans call for three factors in long-range planning. First, this government believes that it must institute fiscal reforms, for at present there are four French tax gathering agencies—a system which has evolved from the time of Napoleon with little or no change. To consolidate these into one efficient agency would take at least six months.

Secondly, the government wants to begin administrative reforms, in both colonial and home administration. This would reduce the number of civil servants materially and would cut the budget cost of physical government. It would take from two to three years to accom-

plish this.

Finally, the Schuman government believes that for reconstruction the nationalized industries must be rendered much more accountable and efficient. They would do this by a series of legislative acts which would take an unknown length of time.

But the point is that no French government can undertake such actions when it is unsure. It would do no good to reform the fiscal system if the next government made drastic changes, nor to begin administrative reform if a new government is expected to modify them in a short time.

To some extent, this appears to follow the line of reasoning of de Gaulle and the Rally of the French People—who demand a strong executive form of government. But actually, the Schuman government does not want this. It wants merely enough confidence to keep in power, and to work out this system. If their programs work, they may get it.

Passport to Freedom

(By Dorothy Thompson)

On Jan. 30, the birthday of Franklin D. Roosevelt, I thought of a memo to him, which he certainly would have approved. It would be, in his name, an act of penance for policies which were forced upon him, bringing unutterable human woe. It would be a move, in morality, to fulfill the wartime pledge of four freedoms. And it would solve the problem perplexing the international refugee organization, which is considering every means, except the simple, obvious one, of solving it.

What is a "displaced person"? A displaced person is unique from the rest of humanity, not in his needs and dreams, skills and ambitions, but in one particular only: **He lacks a piece of paper.** It is monstrous—when one thinks of it—but nobody is really alive in today's world, nobody can work, found a home, live like other people, unless he is attached to a piece of paper. That piece of paper is the certificate of a government that he exists, and without it he does not exist. It is a passport.

Therefore I suggest that there should be issued to all the persons in Europe who have been rendered homeless, reduced to non-existence by the inhuman policies of government, a Roosevelt passport, bearing on its cover Roosevelt's portrait, his promise of the four freedoms, and valid without further visas for every civilized country in the world. By this, I mean every country which affirms the rights of man as a human individual. That includes the United States, Britain and the commonwealth, the western European states, the Latin American states.

I then suggest that a non-interest-bearing fund shall be set up for the purpose of issuing to holders of these passports a loan of not more than \$500, to be repaid within five years. And therewith the places of their confinement shall be opened and they simply shall be allowed to go.

There will be no more jobs for bureaucrats, card catalogers, committees, organizations, no more continuing appropriations—no more problems at all. No one will have to be paid a salary to consider how to "place" the displaced. Each will place himself, just as you and I placed ourselves and all our ancestors placed themselves. They will go, find a country, a job, and become persons instead of