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A USEFUL GUIDE FOR PUBLIC APPEALS

HASTY readers might get the impression that sponsors of the local chapter of the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis will not be permitted to conduct a 1954 drive because the Solicitations Information Committee did not approve the campaign.

That is not the case. The committee has no legal power to prevent anyone from conducting a campaign. It is purely a voluntary community agency, representing many groups and organizations, formed to "examine and evaluate" public appeals and either approve them or withhold its approval as a guide to potential donors.

The committee's only weapon is public opinion, as reflected in the willingness of donors to accept the committee's opinion and be guided by it in making or withholding gifts.

It should be understood that the committee, in withholding its approval of the upcoming polo drive, was not in any way critical of the real drive by the Foundation through the years. On the contrary, it noted that the Foundation had done good work in this community.

As a matter of routine, the solicitations committee asks for a complete financial report from every sponsor of a public campaign. Without an audit of what was done with funds in the past year, and what will be done with the new funds, the committee would have no way of knowing whether the cause was just and the campaign goal reasonable.

It is the national policy of the Infantile Paralysis Foundation not to make public complete and detailed audit of its financial transactions. In declining to furnish such information to the local solicitations committee, the chairman of the Mecklenburg County chapter made it clear he was governed by national policy.

The solicitations committee had no alternative but to withhold its approval from the polo drive. The decision took some courage, for the Infantile Paralysis Foundation enjoys widespread popularity.

In our opinion, the committee made the right decision. We know of no valid reason why an organization that asks for public contributions should not be willing to make public a complete annual audit. Refusal to do so indicates either contempt for public opinion, or fear that such an audit would disclose excessive costs of raising funds or other improprieties.

The committee also disapproved the American Korean Foundation appeal and the International Rescue Committee because they have no local sponsor, refuse to submit a budget to the National Information Bureau, and employ expensive fundraising techniques.

The committee feels that some kind of public information committee was needed in Charlotte so that donors might be more fully advised about the many appeals made to them. The value of such a committee has been firmly established by this week's action.

A Number of Things Made It Good To Be Alive In 1953

By FREDERICK C. OTHMAN

WASHINGTON

NINETEEN fifty-three struck me as being a first-class, hang-up year and I'm going to miss it. If 1954 is as good, there'll be no complaint from me.

End of the shooting in Korea was 1953's greatest accomplishment, but the old year came up with a number of other items that helped make it good to be alive:

The Electric Boat Co., of New London, Conn., sent me a formal invitation to the launching of the Nautilus, world's first atomic-powered submarine. This event in itself should help to keep the peace, but it indicates also that atoms at long last are about to be put to practical use.

I trust that the champagne bottle breaks cleanly across the Nautilus' bow and that in her wake will flow all manner of peaceful atomic developments. Good old 1953 brought us color television. It has provided a few bargains, for a change.

AUTOMOBILE DEALS
Especially have I been pleased by the automobile boys asking my favor again. They're offering deals exactly as they did in the dear, dead days I recall, and I must say in my favor. A dealer here in the deluxious V-8 luxury car ever made has been bombarding me with letters, all offering immediate delivery on any model.

This is flattering to the ego of a citizen who drives a 1952 sedan with a bulging middle; it's also in contrast to the last half dozen years when a customer for the \$4,000 parking job had to wait eight months for delivery.

The government sliced its operating costs drastically in 1953 and promised another equally hefty hike. It got ready to cut income taxes by a solid 10 per cent, as of Jan. 1, and that's the first good news for taxpayers in a dozen years.

Washington somehow seemed to return part way to normal in 1953 and to old residents that was a pleasing thing. So many new flats and houses were built that desperate folk no longer had to settle for so-called apartments in cellars. I know about these latter.

The velvet rope in our town has disappeared; a fellow can get a seat any time in a restaurant. Ham has returned to the ham sandwiches. Clerks in the stores have stuff to sell and if it's electrical equipment you want, a whopping big discount usually is available. If this is the recession the big-dome has been talking about here this year, I like it.

FARM LIFE

Life on the farm at McLean, Va., was more good than bad in 1953. The push-button gadgetry in the kitchen, the furniture with the electronic controls and the red tractor with headlights front and rear (for plowing backwoods at night) all functioned as perfectly as the advertising promised.

The lack of horrendous blue flashes, chow-up crockery, bath room droughts, and puffs of black smoke in unexpected places caused a justification to the verge of spreading for the paper about this city man's operations in the country. But it also made life in Fairfax County a good deal more bearable and if I never again find cracked ice in the crank case of the automatic water pump (while the electric spewer sparks), I'll be just as pleased.

Fact is, our countryside is growing up. City water is coming out the way. So are sewers and subdivisions and I'm not complaining. One of these days I'll be selling my beat-up acres at city lot prices and be moving out a little farther into the woods.

'When Do They Open This Place, Anyhow?'



Reconstruction A La Poiret

The Story Of Beria's Death

By Joseph Alsop

LONDON

HERE IS A mystery story for New Year's reading.

Reconstruction of the death of Lavrenti Beria, made in the Hercule Poirot manner, but by a very different method, is to be published whether it is true or untrue. But at least it fits all the facts, which no other theory does. Thus it has a bit more current interest than the ordinary paperback.

First, following the Poirot method, what was the character of the dead man?

Lavrenti Beria was a brilliant, ruthless intellectual who had the reputation of knowing rather more about the real world than most of his rivals in the Kremlin. He was a man who reached the pinnacle of power in the rather odd way of the mercenary police chief, appointed to halt the fearful Soviet like rockets in the hierarchy. And he showed his hand only once before the death of Stalin.

MURDER IN THE KREMLIN

At the most dangerous moment in the crisis of the Berlin block, a Russian General who was known to be Beria's man in memory was publicly dishonored, Berlin came secretly and by night to the house of the United States political adviser in Germany, Ambassador Robert Murphy. The Russian explained that he "represented certain groups" in Moscow who feared that the Berlin situation was getting out of hand. He pleaded with Murphy to try to negotiate a settlement through these "groups."

This overture, which our own State Department believed Beria had submitted, led nowhere in the end. Yet the incident must be placed in the Beria file, along with the fact that Beria headed Russia's two successful postwar atomic programs. Knowing more of the nature of atomic hot war than anyone else in the Kremlin, and he perhaps has disliked the risks of the Stalinist policy of all out cold war.

Then, second, where were the roots of Beria's death?

Beyond doubt, the process that ended in the execution of Beria was begun by the possibility of his being kicked out as security risks.

One can imagine Beria replying that half the world was brought by his Silyok-like refusal to light on his military-economic burden. For this was the sure road to empire. For the building of Soviet power could easily continue, while the end of the cold war would bring disarmament and disunion in the West.

BERIA IN A HURRY

If the debate in the Kremlin was delicately balanced, Beria must have been in a hurry. In line with this are the reports that Beria made an overture to the approach to Murphy, through the semi-professional intermediaries that do business in Switzerland some time in April. This was the probable climax of the Winston Churchill's famous speech last May, calling for talks about an East-West settlement "on the highest level."

While Churchill's speech was being welcomed in Moscow, it was being denounced in Washington as the White House's top State Department. One can picture the Soviet Bureaucracy, who had been convinced by their own propaganda about "Western aggression," wagging their heads and saying "I told you so" when they heard the Washington reaction.

Then in early June the relaxation of the tyranny in East Germany produced the uprising in the Stalin Allies. Again, one can picture Beria's former allies in the Red Army hardening their hearts against any abandonment of the German position, which would give dangerous ideas to the peoples of Russia's other European satellites. So Beria must have last the life and death debate.

The Stalin Allies uprising was on June 17. The arrest of Lavrenti Beria was on June 26. But although Stalinism has come back, and the only way to end the cold war now is for the free world to accept defeat, the end of Stalinism is precluding disunion and disunion anyway.

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EMPHASIS TURNS FROM A SUBDUED EVIL

FROM 1913 to 1922 there were 597 lynchings in the United States.

During the next decade there were 175.

From 1933 to 1942, 103.

From 1943 to 1951 there were 21.

(Three in '49, two in '50 and one in '51.)

And during the past two years there have been none.

Thus has the United States stamped out a vicious form of mobocracy that blighted the nation.

The Tuskegee Institute, which has annually compiled the lynching record, has decided that lynching has lost its significance as an index of race relations. A new, positive system of measurement will be inaugurated this year by the Institute, one which takes into account income, voting participation, education and employment.

As emphasis is turned from an evil that is no more, white and Negro alike can take pride in this great gain in race relations. Now the issue moves onto a higher plane. With the decline of the poll tax as a prerequisite of voting, and the equalization of educational opportunities, the burden of becoming active and informed participants in democracy will be upon the Negroes. Adjusting the inequities in income and employment rests jointly on white and Negro.

The Negro, who has long been the employer who offers a job, heretofore filled exclusively by white persons, to a qualified Negro, will be getting at the roots of the problem.

NOW THE FRENCH ARE BEING 'CORNQUERED'

THE "Coca-Colonization" of Europe, much lamented by French growers, may be a minor revolution compared with a new development which will, perhaps, come to be known as "corn-quest."

Europeans, you know, long have looked down their noses at corn, that strictly American crop which sustains Indians, mountaineers, and the Midwest. They regard corn as fit food for cattle or hogs. But for humans? "Mais non, monsieur!" During the late war the Franco-American alliance once was strained when a boatload of corn instead of wheat, went to France through an error in translation, but corn, now, is sprouting up all over the continent. A \$40,000 expenditure in hybrid seed corn, made last year by the U. N. Food and Agricultural Organization, has resulted in a 60-fold increase in the value of the European corn crop. On top of this development, French exporting ex-GIs have overcome Parisians' disregard for popcorn, and are doing a thriving business with street-corner sales.

Soon, possibly corn-on-the-cob will take its place alongside the escargots and pate de foie gras on French menus. *Cafe au lait* and delicious French bread will be flunked aside in favor of cornpone and corn flakes, and little Pierre will gleefully cut masks of Genghis Khan from the containers and send in his boxtops. Perhaps even some of America's cornier music will be played to Piaf.

Dismal times are ahead for American expatriates who yearn to get away from American influences. Looks as if they'll have to head for the French Quarter of New Orleans.

Gift For Waltonians

(An editorial from The St. Louis Post-Dispatch)

THE FOLLOWERS of Isaac Walton as devoted to the Christmas season, since they have always been quick to take a cup or intone a song. Yet they are less tuteous than most about the gifts under the Christmas tree. After all, unless they are of the distinctly marked species which fly through the air or rows to the middle of a lake in December, they will have no use for new tackle before the first biting discards of winter blow along the rivers.

So here is a present for the nation, contemplative devotees of the fly-rod, those anglers who, no matter how much they enjoy the sport, often get the smallest catch for the greatest effort. The Ontario Department of Lands and Forests has a brand-new fish for them, the spikie. It is a hybrid half brook trout and half togue or narmayush as the Algonquians

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WHAT IS YOUR AMERICA?

WHAT is America? When we live here to try to tell the rest of the world what it is, the spirit becomes elusive. The Voice of America, subsidized by the government and reporting the affairs of state, cannot speak with America's voice. The books, pamphlets, speeches, newspapers speak with many voices. To what voice shall they listen?

A young German girl asked the question of Lewis Gannett, book critic for the NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE. She had been reading books about the tobacco roads, the Okies, the disenchanted and the de-generated, the extravagant rich and the tired poor. Surely this was not the America, and these were not the people, that made up the spirit which was the hope of the world. What book could she read that would speak for the real America?

Mr. Gannett could not answer. But he asked people who have written many books about America. This is what John Steinbeck wrote in reply:

"The German girl student asks questions which should be answered. In effect she asks... Who speaks for America? She demands authority—finality. She would like to pin America to a board—examine it, dissect it, identify it. Well, she can't do it. There are no such books because there is no such America."

"Our writers, except those politically inspired, do not say, 'This is America.' They say—'This is a part I know and love and criticize and understand and also it is only my attitude toward that part.'"

"I can think of only one book for this girl. Let her read very carefully the telephone book of one of our cities. The names and combinations of names will perhaps give her a sense of the complication of America. If she would supplement

this with an Atlas with large-scale maps, she might be more aware that her search for 'The Book' is in vain."

"The German girl student asks a dim view of any humorous or amused attitude on the part of a writer. She feels that this is sinful in these grim times. I submit that grin though they are—these are also the most ridiculous times in all history. A reasonably detached man must find them very funny. History will hardly believe them—the humless comic-opera Kremlin, Berlin split down the middle and fed by air lift, armies marching and counter-marching nowhere, nations threatening each other knowing that a war will destroy both of them, whole peoples whose full preoccupation is escape to the moon, the skies full of flying saucers, great inventions in the hands of children. Call it grin if you wish but it is also pretty silly."

"Europeans seem to believe that the last book about America speaks for America. McCarthy speaks for America, Nixon speaks for America. Adlai Stevenson speaks for America. Does your correspondent know that Al Capp and Fred Allen also speak for America, that Steve Canyon is a voice—that Rodgers and Hammerstein and Frank Loesser (composer of 'Kiss the Boys Goodbye' and 'Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition') are voices, that Mickey Mouse and the Minute Women have their places? ..."

"I feel that your correspondent should know that if anyone presumes to speak for and about All America, he is a fool, a demagogue or a liar. She will find some of America in all of our books from com-com to the new translation of the Bible and she will not find all of it anywhere, for there are as many Americas as there are Americans."

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