

Soviet Puppets Relax Toward Western Writers

(Editor's Note: Wes Gallagher, AP Bureau chief in Germany, recently visited Bulgaria with other correspondents. Here is his report on what seems to be an abrupt and significant change in Communist Europe's policy toward western newspapermen.)

By WES GALLAGHER

SOFIA, Bulgaria—(AP)—Soviet-dominated Eastern Europe apparently has abruptly changed its policy towards western correspondents, particularly Americans.

After months of refusal to grant visas to American correspondents, Bulgarian Communist Foreign Minister Kolarov suddenly informed U. S. Minister Donald Heath he would be delighted to have some American reporters visit Bulgaria.

To get them there, the Yugoslav government granted the first clearance for an American plane to fly over its territory since two American transports were shot down by the Yugoslavs almost two years ago.

About the same time, Communist Premier Gvozden of Romania gave a farewell dinner for New York Times correspondent William Lawrence.

When a prime minister gives a correspondent a dinner, it's news. When the correspondent works for a western newspaper and the prime minister is a Communist—it's not only news, it's unique.

Iron Curtain "Myth"

In a long speech to the American correspondents visiting Sofia, Deputy Foreign Minister Popov took pains to point out that the so-called "iron curtain" was a myth, since correspondents were free to come and go in Bulgaria.

The guests were polite by not pointing out some visa applications for such visits had been pending for seven or more months.

Every effort was made to make the visit pleasant. The visiting correspondents were quartered in the best hotel, entertained with a perfect deluge of cocktail parties, luncheons and dinners.

After months of negative attitudes of not outright hostility, the sudden switch in press relations between the Eastern and the Western press could only be interpreted as a change in policy.

Motive Theorized

What caused this change is a matter of opinion.

It is no secret that Bulgaria is most anxious to get into the United Nations, and blames America for blocking such entry. It is

theorized the ex-enemy states want to prove to the western world they are "democratic" regimes supported by their people and ready for United Nations entry.

Another theory held in some diplomatic circles is that eastern Europe hopes to convince the west the "Iron Curtain" is a myth and create an impression they want full relations with the west.

Whatever the reason, there has been a change. How long it will last is another matter.

At the final luncheon for the correspondents, Popov warned his guests they must be objective in their reporting. There was little doubt by "objective" he expected favorable reports on his country.

American and British journalists replied they could not expect to be in sympathy with all they found in Bulgaria and would write on what they saw and found.

All Seven Women In Congress Again To Seek Election

WASHINGTON—The seven women members of Congress are tossing their bonnets into the ring again this election year.

Margaret Chase Smith, Republican of Maine, elected to the House to complete her husband's unexpired term in June 1940, and re-elected to succeeding congress, is out to capture a seat in the Senate.

She is competing against Horace A. Hildreth, the incumbent governor of Maine; Sumner Sewell, a former governor, and the Rev. Albin P. Beveridge, in the Republican primaries June 21. Not permitted to quit.

Mary Norton of New Jersey, dean of women members of Congress and the first to be elected to Congress by the Democratic Party, says she had wanted to withdraw from politics and get back into social welfare work.

But her supporters back home

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Phone User Clamors in Vain for Return of 5c

MARBLEHEAD, Mass., Feb. 23—(AP)—Police received a call early yesterday that someone was attempting to break into the Marblehead telephone exchange building.

They rushed to the scene and found a man pounding on the door and shouting, "gimme my nickel back!"

The man explained that he tried to make a phone call at a diner and that he not only didn't get his party, but the coin was not returned.

After a brief lecture, police sent the man on his way—still without the nickel.

Special Sale!

Handsome Helen Gahagan Douglas of Hollywood, now serving her second term in Congress, expects to enter the Democratic primaries June 1. Former stage and concert star, she is the wife of screen actor Melvyn Douglas.

Mrs. Georgia Lusk, Democrat, New Mexico, first woman elected to Congress from her state, will also seek re-election. She is serving her first term.

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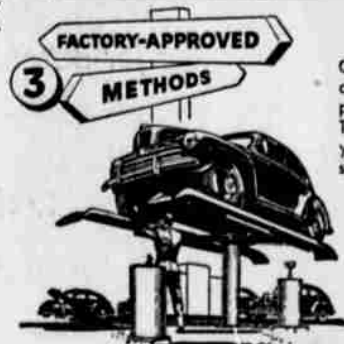
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