

Truman Says Stalin Offered To Aid Chiang

WASHINGTON (AP) — Ex-President Truman says the late Soviet Premier Stalin voiced misgivings about the Yalta agreement—and promised all-out backing of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek in China—as late as mid-1945.

In the latest installment of Truman's memoirs, published in Life magazine, the former President says Stalin expressed his views in a Moscow talk with Harry L. Hopkins, Truman's special representative, and Averell Harriman, then ambassador to Russia.

Truman says in that May 28, 1945, conversation Stalin undertook to have the Red army "properly deployed" to strike against Japan by early August. The former President goes on to say, quoting a cablegram he received from Hopkins:

"Stalin repeated the statement he made at Yalta that the Russian people must have a good reason for going to war and that depended on the willingness of China to agree to the Yalta proposals."

"Stalin made categorical statement that he would do everything he could to promote unification of China under the leadership of Chiang Kai-Shek."

Reds "Not Strong"
"He further stated that this leadership should continue after the war because no one else was strong enough. He specifically stated no Communist leader was strong enough to unify China."

Russia later lent its backing to the Communists who, after World War II, drove Chiang from the Chinese mainland. One of the great controversies stemming from that period concerns the question whether the Western allies made too many concessions—at the expense of Chiang, among others—as the price of getting Russia into the war against Japan.

Truman hopskotch from world politics to private affairs in this installment.

Refused Nomination
He tells of refusing steadfastly to accept the Democratic vice presidential nomination in 1944 until he heard President Roosevelt say in a telephone conversation with then National Chairman Robert Hannegan during the Chicago convention:

"Well, you tell him (Truman) if he wants to break up the Democratic Party in the middle of a war, that's his responsibility."

It was only then, Truman says, that he really believed what many party leaders had been telling him—that he was FDR's personal choice, Truman's comment at the time, as he recalls it:

"Well, if that is the situation I'll have to say yes, but why the hell didn't he tell me in the first place?"

Backed Byrnes
Up to that point Truman had been supporting James F. Byrnes for the vice presidential nomination—in large measure, he says, because Byrnes asked him to do so and assured him Roosevelt had selected him (Byrnes) for running mate.

Actually, Truman says, he later learned Roosevelt had told a private meeting of party leaders long before the convention his personal choice was Truman. Moreover, says Truman, Roosevelt sent word of the decision to Byrnes.

"I believe, therefore," the ex-President says, "that Byrnes knew that the President had named me at the time he called me in Independence and asked me to nominate him at the convention."

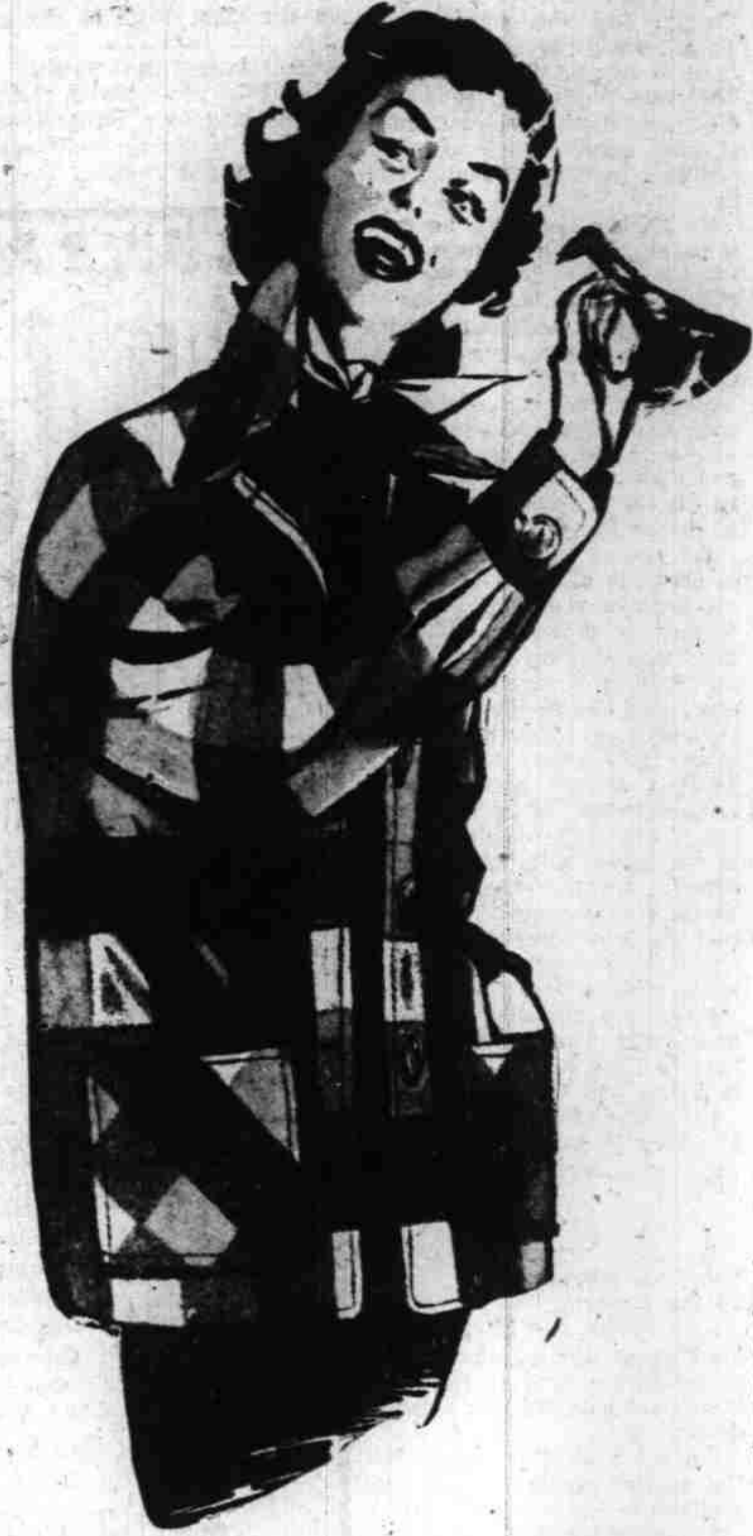
Failed to Read Order
Truman says he made an early fumble in the White House because he failed to read an order given him by two officials for his signature.

The order—which outraged the British and the Russians—called for an immediate cutoff of lend-lease after World War II. Truman understood it was to be only a reduction in American aid.

"If I had read the order, as I should have, the incident would not have occurred," Truman says. "But the best time to learn that lesson was right at the beginning of my duties as President."

Truman's most personal comments about his early White House years come in letters to his mother: "It is rather lonesome here in this old barn. . . It seems to agree with me for I've gained 12 pounds since last January; I guess it's because I have nothing to look forward to but retirement. . . How would you like to be the President des etats unis? It's a hell of a life."

One social note: Truman gave a party—"a big shindig," he calls it—for a man he greatly admired in 1945, Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower. "A real man," he calls the military leader who was to succeed him in the White House—in spite of Truman's best efforts against him in 1952.



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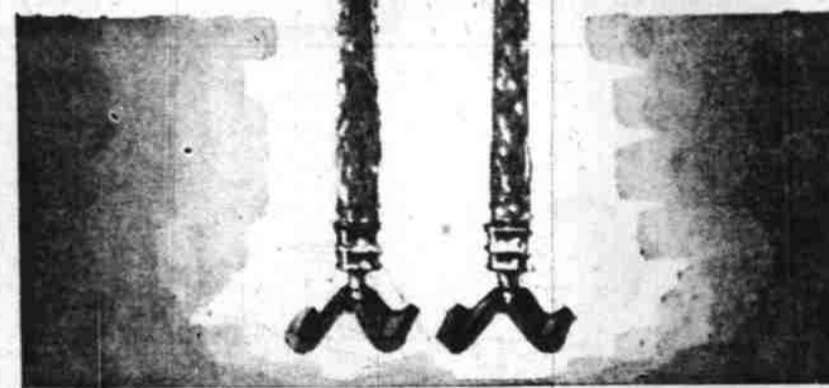
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