

STALIN L.P. Christmas Night - Dec. 25 - '52.

Christmas is a light news day, ordinarily - and sometimes the wire has little to offer except Santa Claus stories, and the way the feast of the nativity is celebrated round the world. But today, for a change, we have a real headliner, which broke this morning, and the news has been busy with it all day long. This welcome Christmas gift is brought to us by a peculiar Kriss Kringle - Joe Stalin with his big mustache.

(It's a great scoop for the New York Times - whose Washington correspondent, James Reston , addressed a set of questions to the Soviet Premier) on December Eighteenth, a week ago. Stalin took his leisure in answering them, and maybe he timed the whole thing deliberately - to have his headline break over here on the night before Christmas, when the good ^{Nicholas} Saint is supposed to be coming down the chimney.

In any case, (a little before midnight last night, the Russian Ambassador in Washington, Zarubin, passed the Stalin ^{reply} message along to Reston of the Times. The statement featuring - A Stalin offer to meet

General Eisenhower. Also - a declaration favoring negotiations for peace ~~is~~ in Korea.)

That's how the news broke over here; and, it's being played up in Soviet Russia too. A Moscow dispatch says the Stalin message was put on the radio, in a special series of broadcasts this afternoon -- and the headlines are expected to be equally impressive in the Russian newspapers tomorrow. All signs from over there give indication - that Stalin wants his declarations to circulate as widely as possible among the Russian people.

Among the most interested, in Moscow today, were the members of the Foreign diplomatic corps - and a lot of Christmas diners were interrupted. The broadcast announcement came at two p.M. Moscow time, when western ambassadors and their staffs and families were at the Yuletide festive board. Hearing about the big news, they broke off and staged impromptu gatherings for conferences to discuss the meaning of it all.

The questions answered by the big boss of world communism were four:- One - inquiring about the possibility of Soviet Russia and the United States living at peace with each other. Stalin said - they can, and ^{that} war is not inevitable. In answer to a ~~xx~~ second query, he charged that the "cold war" was directed by the west against the Soviets.

Then the one about General Eisenhower - and let's note the exact wording. The New York Times correspondent asked: "Would you welcome diplomatic conversations with representatives of the new Eisenhower administration - looking toward the possibility of a meeting between yourself and General Eisenhower on easing world tensions?" Stalin replied tersely: "I regard the suggestion favorably."

Any such meeting would be held, of course, after General Ike becomes President Eisenhower. He knows the master of the Soviets, having talked with him at the Potsdam conference @ which Eisenhower attended as the Commander-in-Chief of the western

forces in World War Two. Shortly afterward, they met again, when the General visited Moscow as a guest of the Soviet government. He was received with honors - invited to join Russian dignitaries on top of the Lenin Mausoleum, in reviewing a Soviet sports parade.

The last time Stalin met an American

President was at Potsdam - where he negotiated with President Truman, in the last of those top level meetings of the Big Three. But Harry Truman would have no more of it - the Potsdam affair was enough for him. He said, afterward, that he'd welcome Stalin, if the Soviet Premier wanted to visit Washington - but that was all.

H.S.T. didn't relish those Big Three proceedings - which the late President Franklin D. Roosevelt favored so much. With British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, ^{F.D.R.} he met Stalin twice - at Teheran, and at Yalta. And history will debate, for years to come - what exactly was the merit of those Big Three conferences?

And to what extent Stalin "put it over" on his allies there at Teheran and Yalta.

Stalin, as late as Nineteen Forty-Nine, he said he'd confer with the American President - but where? Harry Truman said he'd welcome the Red Premier in Washington. But Stalin never took to that. He explained that his health would not permit him to make a trip to Washington. He suggested - Moscow. Or

maybe - Warsaw, or Prague. Capitals of Red Poland and Red Czechoslovakia. In every case - behind the Iron Curtain. We wonder how far the question of a place will affect the whole business now - in whose back yard shall we play? *Is Stalin afraid to emerge from his own balliwicks?*

During the political campaign, General Eisenhower declared that he'd be willing to meet Stalin - if there were any chance that this might help to promote peace. Which, actually, is the big question today. *So how* What's the meaning of the Stalin offer?

We remember - that, at the Congress of the Communist party in Moscow recently, Stalin indicated that there might be a new turn of Soviet policy.

Looking - toward better relations with the West. But,

at the same time, anti-American propoganda has grown more bitter and virulent. We hear that, in Moscow, three anti-American plays and one anti-American ballet are now running ^{-- in which we are} ~~we're~~ pictured as bandits and gangsters. So today's news has everybody guessing.

What has General Eisenhower to say? Confronted with the Stalin message today, he refused all comment. At Eisenhower headquarters - Mum's the word. According to all appearance ^{s there} they were just celebrating Christmas. But a lot of ~~the~~ earnest conversation must have been going on.

As for Korea, the question put to Stalin was this: "Would you cooperate in any new diplomatic approach designed to bring about an end to the Korean war?" To which the Moscow Premier replies: "I would agree to cooperate, because the U.S.S.R. is interested in ending the war in Korea."

Which sounds favorable indeed! But, ~~then~~, Moscow diplomacy and propoganda have always been loud about wanting to bring about an end to the war. ^{That is} ~~But~~

on Red terms! -- the actual conduct of the Russians being such as to suggest that they ^{actually} want to keep the war going. We recall, moreover, that the truce talks were instigated by Russian diplomacy - those armistice negotiations which resulted in one long disappointment. So what now? Does the Stalin maneuver, today, indicate any change? We don't know.

All over the world the news has evoked the liveliest interest, with most of the western capitals expressing pretty much the same thought. Typical of their attitude is comment in Rome, where an Italian official said: "the message is a welcome Christmas present for the world, if Stalin is really ready to negotiate in good faith."

FRANCE

The political crisis in France brings about a thing that has never happened ~~xxx~~ before -- a member of the party of General Charles DeGaulle invited to form a ministry, and become Premier. This Degaulist leader, Jacques Soustelle, does not give an immediate reply. He says he will take the offer into consideration, subject to a conference with other DeGaulle leaders.

Right after the war, the general became Premier, thanks to his prestige, as war-time leader of the Free French. But, after a while, he stepped out, and his party has been in opposition ever since. In Nineteen Forty-six, deGaulle attacked what he ~~called~~ called the "Rottenness" of French politics, and came out with a program of drastic change. Ever since, the supposition ~~xxx~~ has been that, if the DeGaulle faction came into power, it would mean something like a parliamentary revolution.

But now, following the downfall of Premier Pinay and his cabinet, nobody seems to want the ~~xxxx~~

task of trying to form a new government. President Auriol called in one politician after another. Finally resorting to - the leader of the DeGaulle forces in the National Assembly.

Jacques Soustelle says he is "greatly honored" but indicates that, if he tries to line up a coalition ministry, it will be on a basis of carrying out the reforms demanded by DeGaulle.

All of which is the subject of political maneuvering in Paris tonight. Leaders for DeGaulle in urgent conference - the General supposed to be in constant telephone communication with them. It would be a striking novelty - if France should ^{now} have a Gaulist premier.

KOREA

A quiet Christmas day in Korea - with nothing more violent than a sweep of enemy jets down in the direction of Seoul. Not so warlike though, because the MIGS flew right back to the Manchurian sanctuary - when thirty American sabrejets took to the sky to challenge them.

On the ground, the Reds went into action with propaganda - loud speakers blaring a proposal for a Christmas armistice from eight A.M. till noon, a four hour truce. The G I's, wary of enemy treachery, paid no attention.

JAPAN

On the islands of Nippon, the Japanese people had the merriest Christmas since the war - with all-out gaiety. Japan is not a Christian country, and Christmas is not one of its religious festivals. But there are about four hundred thousand Japanese Christians - not counting foreigners from the West. They celebrated in style, and the rest of the Japanese ~~just~~ joined in - welcoming a holiday celebration, no matter whose. A million and a half jammed the main street of Tokyo - ~~xxx~~ wearing paper hats, blowing whistles, and singing Christmas carols, [^] in Japanese, presumably.

The usual gifts were ~~not~~ exchanged, and the news dispatch features the luck of a girl named Ikoku. She's in love with General Mark Clark, ^{Lovely, beautiful Clark -} ~~xxx~~ little ^{by the way is} Ikoku, ~~whose~~ [^] four years old. The American commander, proceeding to and from his headquarters, drives past Ikoku's home every day - and rain, or shine, she's out there on the sidewalk - waving to General Clark.

Today, on Christmas, it was the same -
except that, this time, the official car stopped.
And out climbed the tall American general, carrying
three toys. Which he gave to the small Japanese girl
-- Christmas presents for Iko.

JERUSALEM

The Holy Land celebrated Christmas with throngs of pilgrims, who went in procession to the Holy places - as pilgrims had done for many long centuries.

"Peace on earth, good will toward men". That spirit prevailed - even in an unexpected quarter.

At one of the gates in Jerusalem, arrangements for the passing of pilgrims had to be made today - by Jewish and Arab commanders. ~~Hitherto~~ Hitherto, the rival officers had not been on speaking terms - not having exchanged a friendly word for five years.

Well, there doesn't seem to be any particular reason why Christmas should have made any difference -neither Israel nor the Arabs making much of Christian festivals. But today, the two exchanged messages of good will. We don't suppose the Jewish and Arab commanders said: "Merry Christmas" to each other. But it was in that spirit.

QUEEN

The royal Christmas message in Britain had a pleasant, sentimental touch today - thanks to the fact that the sovereign is a young wife with two children. At Sandringham, the Royal residence in the country outside London, Queen Elizabeth delivered her first yuletide address to the people of Britain and the empire - just as Kings and Queens have done before. But the stateliness of a throne was missing, when she said: "I am speaking to you from my own home, where I am spending Christmas with my family - and let me say, at once, How I hope that your children are enjoying themselves as much as mine are. On a day - which is especially the children's festival, kept in honor of the child born at Bethlehem nearly two thousand years ago today."

Her Majesty! -- Mama and the kids!

BERLIN

At Berlin, U.S. Lieutenant Horace Sincore has reappeared -- after having been missing for twelve days. During military maneuvers in East Berlin he strayed across the border line and vanished. The Reds refused to give any information about the Lieutenant and the whole thing was a mystery. But now, without explanation, they have turned him loose -- and sent him back.

~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ At the same time, the Russians declare that two American M.P.'s went across the border and asked for political asylum. Joining the ~~xx~~ Reds behind the Iron Curtain, according to the Communist account.

CHRISTMAS

Few parts of the country had a - White Christmas. There were flurries of snow in the mountains from New England to West Virginia. The same thing - for parts of the Middle West. But very little of that heavy snowfall which can make the morning of the nativity such a characteristic, cheery scene of winter. People had to be content with just plain - good weather, for the most part.

West Tennessee and East Arkansas had a slight earthquake on Christmas eve. Nothing serious, no damage done -- just a reminder of the tremendous forces that are locked deep down in this globe.

There's the usual bad news about traffic accidents. Good driving weather brought out record-breaking numbers of cars - and by mid-afternoon, the fatalities, nationwide, were mounting up above ~~in~~ one hundred. The worst accident was near Indianola, Mississippi, where eight persons were killed in a collision. At Memphis, Tennessee, a crowded bus ran into a big truck, loaded with Christmas packages. Nobody

hurt seriously, but the truck turned over, spilling Christmas packages all over the landscape.

... wedding. Jack was all excited, with Christmas and wedding car both at the same time. With two boxes of presents - gifts and gifts, wedding gifts.

You bring me backpacking the presents - leaving the house if I can't bring them and follow. She was looking at things over the fence and throwing the waste paper away. Jack, in her excitement, she took to her wedding presents. Which looked like a disaster, because you can't get married without flowers.

However, the owner drove, Roger Appleton, in a sports car. He looked at a friend and a friend - it was a special case of it - leaving a car license. ...

BRIDE

At Detroit, Jean Kosub got married today - though it looked as if she had put the kibosh on her own wedding. Jean was all excited, with Christmas and wedding day both at the same time. With two kinds of presents - Christmas gifts, wedding gifts.

The bride was unwrapping the presents - tearing the paper off, her hands moving fast and furious. She was gasping in delight over the gifts, and throwing the waste paper away. When, in her excitement, she tore up her wedding license. Which looked like a disaster, because you can't get married without a license.

However, the county clerk, Edgar Brannigan, is a sympathetic soul. He listened to a frantic appeal, and made a special case of it - issuing a new license. ^{TP}

So, Nelson - Jean
~~So Jean~~ the excited bride, got married on Christmas. I hope you all have had an equally merry Xmas - and
S-L-U-T-M-