

We are in a feverish scramble to get through the work — an unhealthy atmosphere in which we are liable to push things through for the sake of getting them finished. The Russians are taking advantage of this state of affairs to reopen all sorts of questions in the hope that out of mere weakness we shall give in to them. Their tone and manner seem daily to become more openly truculent and antagonistic.

Once the labours of the committees are finished, the Articles they have drafted and the reports they have approved are put before the Co-ordinating Committee who plunge into an orgy of revision. There is no pleasanter sport for a group of highly intelligent and critical men than to have delivered into their hands a collection of botched-up, badly-drafted documents and be asked to pull them to pieces and to point out the faults of substance and form. This could go on forever.

However hot, tired and bad-tempered the other delegates may become, Halifax remains cool and Olympian and makes benevolent, cloudy speeches which soothe but do not satisfy. Senator Connally of the U.S. delegation roars at his opponent waving his arms and sweating. It is somehow reassuring to come out from the committee meetings into the streets and see the people in whose name we are arguing so fiercely and who do not give a damn how the Charter reads. Sailors hand in hand with their girls — (this is a great town for walking hand in hand) on their way to a movie or a dance hall.

If the people were let into the committee meetings they would have broken up this Conference long ago.

Alice was sitting across the table from me today at the committee meeting, in glowing looks from her week-end in the country and wearing an exceptionally low-cut flowered dress. I was not the only one to be distracted from the dissertation of our pedantic El Salvadorean rapporteur.

Every day going to and from the Conference we pass a Picasso picture in an art shop window — two elongated and distorted forms are in silent communion. They gaze at each other in trance-like stillness. I find that by looking for a few minutes at this picture I can get into a sort of dope dream.

19 June 1945.

The Soviet delegates have got very little good-will out of this Conference. They use aggressive tactics about every question large or small. They remind people of Nazi diplomatic methods and create, sometimes needlessly, suspicions and resentment. They enjoy equally making fools of their opponents and their supporters. Slyness, bullying and bad manners are the other features of their Conference behaviour.

Their system has some unfortunate results from their point of view. They have no elbow-room in committee tactics — they cannot vary their method to allow for a change in mood and tempo of the Conference. They are paralysed by the unexpected. They always have to stall and cable home for instructions. It is unfortunate from our point of view as well as theirs that they should have made such a bad showing, for I think they are proposing to make a serious effort to use the organisation and are not out to wreck it.

28 June 1945.

Back in Ottawa the Conference is over. It is going to be a little disconcerting at first living alone again after our group existence in San Francisco. The hotel sitting-room which Norman Robertson and Hume Wrong shared was a meeting place for members of our delegation and there was a perpetual flow of drinks on tap. There we foregathered to talk Conference gossip. The pace of the Conference got more and more hectic towards the end. Meetings would end at four or five a.m., when we would fall into bed and drag ourselves up three or four hours later. It also became increasingly difficult to relate the Conference to other events going on in the world and form an estimate of the real importance in the scheme of things of what we were doing in San Francisco. While we were there the war against Germany was won, the occupation of Germany took place, the Russians installed themselves in Prague and Vienna and made their first bid for a port on the Adriatic and bases in the Straits. We were preoccupied with the Battle of the Veto and with the tussles over the powers of the General Assembly and the provisions for amending the Charter. How much were these mere paper battles? How much was the San Francisco Conference a smokescreen behind which the Great Powers took up their positions? These doubts were floating about in the backs of our minds but we had not much time for doubts — the daily time-table was too gruelling.

At any rate, if the Conference was a gigantic bluff, it bluffed the participants — at least some of them.

The final public sessions were decidedly too good to be true. The Opera House was packed with pleased, excited, well-fed people. There was a felling of a gala performance. On the floodlit stage ranged in front of the flags of the United Nations were standing hand-picked specimens of each branch of the United States Armed Forces — very pretty girls from the Women's Forces made up for the floodlighting and wore very becoming uniforms — soldiers and sailors preserving even on this occasion an air of loose-limbed sloppiness.

One after another the speakers mounted the rostrum and addressed us — most of them in their native languages. The text of the speeches in English had been circulated to the audience, but this was hardly necessary as we knew what they would say, and they all said it — in Chinese, Arabic, French and Russian we were told that mankind was embarking on another effort to organise the world so that peace should reign. We were told that the success of the Conference showed that this ideal could be attained if unity was preserved — that we owed it to the living and to the dead to devote all our efforts to this end. Almost all the speeches worked in a reference to the inspiring example of Franklin D. Roosevelt and a flowery tribute to Stettinius (rather wasted as he resigned next day).

It all went off very well — there was really nothing to complain of — no outrageous bit of vulgarity or juke-box sentimentality. Even that great ape, Stettinius, was rather subdued and contented himself with grinning and signaling to his acquaintances in the audience during the playing of the United States National Anthem. The speakers were dignified and sincere — Halifax, Wellington Koo, Smuts,