

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 signalling 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, Paul-Boncour — all spoke out of long experience and were impressive. True, they said nothing, but this seemed an occasion when nothing was better than too much. President Truman made a sensible, undistinguished speech — just too long. (He looks like a sparrowy, little, old, small-town, American housewife who could shut the door very firmly in the face of travelling salesmen and tramps.) He got the biggest hand from the audience and after him Halifax. They fell completely for