

cleaned up a lot of corruption, but he had too much power for too long. They worship false gods in Europe — that is the trouble — Europe is too full of pictures of Napoleon and statues of the Caesars.”

**26 April 1945. San Francisco.**

The San Francisco Conference. San Francisco is as lively as a circus — the setting and the audience are much more amusing than the Conference performance. No one can resist the attraction of the town and the cheerfulness of the its inhabitants. Nowhere could have been found in the world which is more of a contrast to the battered cities and tired people of Europe. Colours are of circus brightness, the flamboyant advertisements, the flags of all the Conference nations, the brilliant yellow taxis. This seems a technical-or world glossy with cheerful self-assurance. The people are full of curiosity about the Conference delegates. They crowd around them like the friendly, innocent Indians who crowded around the Spanish adventurers when they came to America and gaped at their armour and took their strings of coloured beads for real. The delegates are less picturesque than they should be to justify so much curiosity. There are the inevitable Arabs and some Indians in turbans who are worth the price of admission, and the Saudi Arabian prince who gleams like Valentino, but in general the delegates are just so many men in business suits with circular Conference pins in their buttonholes making them look as if they were here for the Elks' Convention. The exceptions are the Russians — they have stolen the show. People are impressed, excited, mystified and nervous about the Russians. Groups of wooden-looking peasant Soviet officers sit isolated (by their own choice) at restaurant tables and are stared at as if they were wild animals. They are painfully self-conscious, quiet, dignified — determined not to take a step which might make people laugh at the beautiful Soviet Union. The crowds throng outside the hotel to see Molotov, that square-head is much more of a sight than Eden. He is power. When he came into the initial plenary session he was followed by half-a-dozen husky gorillas from N.K.V.D. The town is full of stories about the Russians — that they have a warship laden with caviare in the harbour, etc., etc.

Meanwhile the local Hearst press conducts an unceasing campaign of anti-Russian mischief-making — doing their damndest to start a new world war before this one is finished.

The Conference arrangements have so far been conducted with characteristic American efficiency. The Opera House in the Veterans' Memorial Building where the sessions are to be held is like something out of a Marx Brothers' film. A mob of delegates, advisers and secretaries mill about in the halls asking questions and getting no answers. Where are they to register their credentials? Why have no offices been allotted to them? Where are the typewriters they were promised? To answer them are half-a-dozen State Department officials white with strain and exhaustion who have themselves not yet got office space, typewriters or the remotest idea of how the organisation is to work. Meanwhile, American sailors are shifting office desks through too-narrow doors. The San Francisco Boy Scouts are shoul-