

The United Nations Conference

By J. E. WALLACE STERLING

THE United Nations Conference on International Organization opened in San Francisco on Wednesday, April 25, 1945. It was an historic moment. For the second time in a generation world statesmen had come together to organize as well as they could an international body which should operate to preserve peace and promote prosperity. As they met, Europe was still shaking from the bombs and shells of history's greatest war. The Allies had just begun their last great offensive against what was left of Hitler's arrogant Reich. In the Pacific the Allied blockade had been drawn so tight around Japan that she was being slowly strangled into military defeat. B-29's were demolishing her war factories; submarines, aircraft, and mines continued to take heavy toll of her diminishing shipping; and American troops on Okinawa were wresting from some of her finest troops the all-important advance base from which invasion of the Japanese home islands could be staged.

These stupendous events on the world's battlefronts, representing as they did the near culmination of five and one-half years of war, lent a particular urgency and seriousness to the task to which the San Francisco Conference addressed itself. Yet at the same time there was a touch of the unreal about the labors of men who strove early and late by the manipulation of words and phrases to insure the end of aggressive war. In essence the men at San Francisco were trying to make good an opportunity which had been won for them and the world by victorious Allied forces, millions of whom had died. That was the setting. San Francisco did what it could to make the beginning auspicious, for it braced the representatives with clear, crisp and sunny weather.

It is a matter of record that the decision to hold the United Nations Conference in San Francisco was made at the Yalta Conference early last February. It followed that because the United States thus became the host country, the State Department should have to make arrangements for the housing and staffing of this historical meeting. But pressure of work flowing from the Yalta decisions and the Conference in Mexico City delayed the detailed planning for the meeting in San Francisco. It was, in fact, late in March before much action was taken. Then State Department officials moved to San Francisco to make the necessary arrangements. In the Veterans War Memorial Building and the Opera House in San Francisco's Civic Center they found attractive and commodious facilities for the housing of the Conference proper. Committee meetings were held in the former, plenary sessions in the latter building. In the Veterans Building accommodations were also arranged for press and radio, post office, express and banking facilities, and a cigarette and candy counter which provided a well-patronized oasis in a desert of shortages.

These same State Department officials were likewise concerned to insure adequate hotel accommodations for the Conference delegates and their staffs. Some 50 hotels were made use of, and of these a dozen were the main centers. From these latter regular and free transportation service to the Civic Center was provided by Navy buses. Delegates and advisors were also transported hither and yon by special Army cars and a few limousines provided by interested San Franciscans.

While these arrangements were being made in San Francisco, the organization of the Conference was being planned in Washington. For this, the State Department had behind it the experience of the inter-war period during which many great international conferences were held; more recently, there were the conferences at Bretton Woods, Dumbarton Oaks, and Mexico City. And for the San Francisco Conference an agenda was already at hand in the Dumbarton Oaks Proposals.

CONFERENCE ORGANIZATION

Some knowledge of the organization of the San Francisco Conference is helpful to an understanding of how it operated. What might be called the sovereign body of the Conference was the plenary session where delegates of all states were represented and met on a basis of legal equality. Manifestly this body with up to 50 delegations represented was too large for the efficient conducting of business. Therefore, it was broken up into commissions and committees. There were four commissions. Commission 1 had to do with Principles and Purposes of the organization to be created, Commission 2 with matters concerning the General Assembly, Commission 3 with provisions concerning the Security Council, and Commission 4 with matters concerning the new World Court. Each of these commissions was in turn divided into technical committees of which there were 12 in all.

In addition to these technical committees there were others. There was a steering committee composed of the heads of all delegations. This was really the clearing-house of the Conference where items of procedure and thorny substantive matters were first threshed out. But even it was a large committee, so a smaller one, an Executive Committee of 14, was set up to give direction and energy to the proceedings. On this executive committee the Big Five Powers were represented and nine of the smaller nations were selected with an eye to geographical representation: three from Latin America, three from Europe, Canada and Australia respectively (from North America and the Southwest Pacific), and Iran (from the Middle East).

There was, too, a Credentials Committee whose task it was to make sure that all delegates were properly accredited and that the delegates who ultimately signed the Charter for their respective governments were fully empowered to do so. And every conference has to have its Coordination Committee in order that the work of all the technical committees may be fitted together into a complete and flawless whole.

An account of the Conference organization would be incomplete if it did not include something about the International Secretariate. There was, of course, a Secretary General of the Conference whose office did the chores for the Steering and Executive Committees. But the International Secretariate was exactly what its name implies. Its personnel was procured from many nations. Its responsibilities were to no particular country but to the Conference as a whole. It prepared the agenda for each meeting of every committee and commission. It kept the records of all these meetings and in the end prepared the final text of the Charter. The load of work carried by its staff was tremendous. The decision of the

Conference to have five official languages—English, French, Spanish, Russian and Chinese—meant that records had to be kept in all these tongues. The task of doing so and at the same time keeping abreast of Conference progress entailed work 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Some idea of the paperwork that all this involved may be gathered from the fact that in the nine weeks of the Conference the Documents Section of the International Secretariat used 30 million sheets or 100 tons of paper. An average day's work consumed about a half-million sheets; the record days' consumption was one million, six hundred thousand.

PERSONALITIES

All of this may seem a little drab, although the readers of this magazine should not be disinterested in machinery even though it does concern a Conference. The color was provided of course by dramatic episodes of the plenary sessions, but most particularly by the Conference personalities. In the early days of the Conference, the delegates who attracted most attention from an avidly curious public were the Saudi Arabians, Foreign Commissar Molotov, and Foreign Secretary Eden. About the Saudi Arabians there was an air of romance and adventure. On one occasion as some of them strolled through the crowded lobby of their hotel, a susceptible woman exclaimed: "What strange and handsome creatures," whereupon one of these creatures replied with a broad wink and in good English, "Really, Madam, you should see us on horseback." About Mr. Molotov there was an air of mystery. Many of those who came to gape did so as if to ascertain whether he was man or beast. Wherever he went he was proceeded, surrounded indeed, by a flying wedge of protectors reminiscent of football at the turn of the century and accompanied by his interpreter. About Mr. Eden there was an air of old world charm. He achieved sartorial distinction without effort and made friends and influenced people by a ready smile and an alert mind. There was no one in the United States delegation that could compete in romance, mystery, and glamour with these men from foreign lands, but in terms of ability and effectiveness Senator Vandenburg and Commander Stassen were in the front rank.

Perhaps some mention should be made of Dr. Herbert Evatt, Australian Minister of External Affairs. Stockily built, his large head resting almost directly on broad shoulders, his clothes looking very much as if he slept in them, which he may well have done, his hair closely cropped and rebellious to comb and brush, his ready speech in the Australian version of a Cockney accent—all these characteristics seemed to endear him to the public. And very soon it was recognized that his energy, boldness and ability were to make him one of the strong men of the Conference and the outstanding champion of the smaller nations.

There were distinguished personalities too among the representatives of radio and press: Walter Lippman, poised, confident, and well connected; Raymond Swing, intense, well informed, and displaying even at breakfast more of an appetite for news than for food; and Walter Winchell, brash, breezy, and sizing up San Francisco and its Conference through his accustomed keyhole. During the first 10 days of the Conference, when it passed through its exhibitionist stage, there were almost two thousand representatives of press and radio on the scene. But when the Conference in its second week got down to hard work not more than five hundred remained. Among those who left were many distinguished columnists and commentators like Lippman and Swing, but

the general exodus was comprised of the sort of which Winchell and, I may add, Hedda Hopper and Gracie Allen were representative.

CHARTER DRAFTING

As already indicated the agenda for the San Francisco Conference was the Dumbarton Oaks Proposals. For six months these Proposals had been the subject of public discussion and examination. All the countries represented at San Francisco had had ample opportunity to study them and prepare amendments. The text of the Proposals can be set down in about eight pages. The amendments submitted at San Francisco filled about seven hundred pages. The initial task of the Conference committees, therefore, was to sift these recommendations for duplication and then to sort out those retained in such a way that each could find its way into the appropriate technical committee. When this had been done, the technical committees serving the four commissions as set forth above set to work to draft the Charter. All these committee meetings were closed. The public learned of what transpired therein through press conferences and through the time-honored practice of buttonholing committee members, some of whom saw fit to exchange "confidences" with friendly reporters.

THE VETO ISSUE

There is not space here to discuss in detail the provisions of the Charter which was finally signed on June 26. I may point out, however, a few of the most difficult problems that engaged Conference attention. The biggest of these concerned the veto power claimed by the Big Five. The attack on the veto was led by Dr. Evatt. *Speaking for the smaller powers, he was willing to concede that the Big Five should have a veto over any enforcement action considered necessary to prevent or check aggressive war. He was not willing to concede, however, that the Big Five Powers should enjoy the right to veto the discussion of a dispute considered likely to result in war, or the right to veto a thorough investigation of such a dispute. In the end the smaller nations won their point with regard to freedom of discussion but they were obliged to accept the right of any of the Big Five, who was not party to the dispute in question, to veto the investigation of said dispute. The Great Powers felt that when a dispute had reached the stage where investigation was considered necessary, it had already reached a stage where enforcement action had to be seriously contemplated. It was on this basis that the problem of veto was tentatively solved. The smaller powers, even though they disliked the veto power, recognized that they had to accept it if there was to be a Charter at all.*

Smaller powers made another gain along this same line. The Security Council of the new World Organization is to be made up of representatives of the Big Five nations plus representatives of nine of the smaller nations. Membership of the former is to be permanent; that of the latter non-permanent. The smaller nations succeeded in having written into the Charter the provision that the non-permanent members of the Council shall be elected by the General Assembly with "due regard being especially paid, in the first instance, to the contribution of Members of the United Nations to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the other purposes of the Organization, and also to equitable geographical distribution." This means that countries, sometimes called the Middle Powers, like Australia, Belgium, Canada, and the Netherlands who already have demonstrated a considerable war potential, shall have a greater

say in the Security Council than countries like Guatemala and Liberia, and that only after consideration has been given to the war potential of all countries shall the non-permanent members of the Security Council be elected with an eye to equitable geographical distribution. Further, the smaller powers, led by Canada and the Netherlands, insisted that whenever the Security Council considers the application of force against an aggressor, the nation whose troops are to be called into action shall have a voice in the deliberations of the Council whether or not it had at the moment representation thereon. This is in effect the principle of no military taxation without representation.

TRUSTEESHIP

The problem of trusteeship loomed large in San Francisco. Treatment of non-self-governing peoples had not been mentioned in the Dumbarton Oaks Proposals. It had been given preliminary consideration, however, by officials of several governments before the San Francisco Conference opened. Three categories of territory were brought under consideration: (1) Territories mandated at the end of the last war. (2) Territories to be detached from enemy powers at the conclusion of this war. (3) Dependent territories within existing empires. There is general agreement that the government which finds itself in charge of any of these territories has a prime responsibility to respect the culture of the peoples concerned, to protect them against abuses, and to lend them every assistance and encouragement in achieving eventual self-government. But it remains a matter for subsequent agreement as to which territories in the foregoing categories will be brought under the trusteeship system and upon what terms. This needs some further explanation.

Dependent territories at present within existing empires will not be placed under the trusteeship system except by voluntary acts of the imperial power. This would apply, for instance, to Kenya and French Indo-China, which would not be brought under the trusteeship system except by decision of the British and French governments respectively. As for territories within categories 1 and 2, presumably they will be placed under the trusteeship system in the very near future, that is to say as soon as the international organization becomes an established fact. It remains to be decided, however, what power will be assigned the task of administering these areas on behalf of the Trusteeship Council, an agency of the new International Organization. Some of these territories, such as Okinawa, or parts of them, will be designated as strategic areas. All functions of the United Nations relating to strategic areas are to be exercised by the Security Council and not by the General Assembly as in the case of non-strategic areas. This is important for it means that the Big Five will be in a position to determine what areas are to be strategic and how those strategic areas are to be developed. In this way, the trusteeship system, with its prime purpose of aiding the development of native peoples, becomes at the same time a part of the whole Security system.

REGIONALISM

The Conference also labored long and hard on the issue of regionalism. The Dumbarton Oaks Proposals had recommended that existing regional organizations, like the Pan-American Union, should be made use of within the general framework of an international body. The question was to determine what place such regional groups were to occupy. Quite early in the Conference the American delegation stated strongly its belief that the world organization should be paramount, that under

no consideration should it be permitted to become a dog wagged by a regional tail. It was finally agreed that the settlement of local disputes through regional arrangements or agencies should be encouraged, but that enforcement action should be not taken by regional agencies without the authorization of the Security Council. Nothing in the Charter impairs, however, the inherent right of any state or group of states to defend itself until such time as the Security Council has taken measures necessary to insure security.

There is another aspect of this on which I might comment briefly. France and Russia have a 20-year alliance. Its purpose is to provide for combined force against possible future German aggression. These two countries were anxious to have their alliance become operative, should the occasion arise, without the necessity of gaining authorization from the Security Council. They feared that the delay which such authorization might entail would prove fatal. Accordingly the Charter provides that any regional arrangements directed specifically against enemy states of this war may become operative without prior authorization from the Security Council.

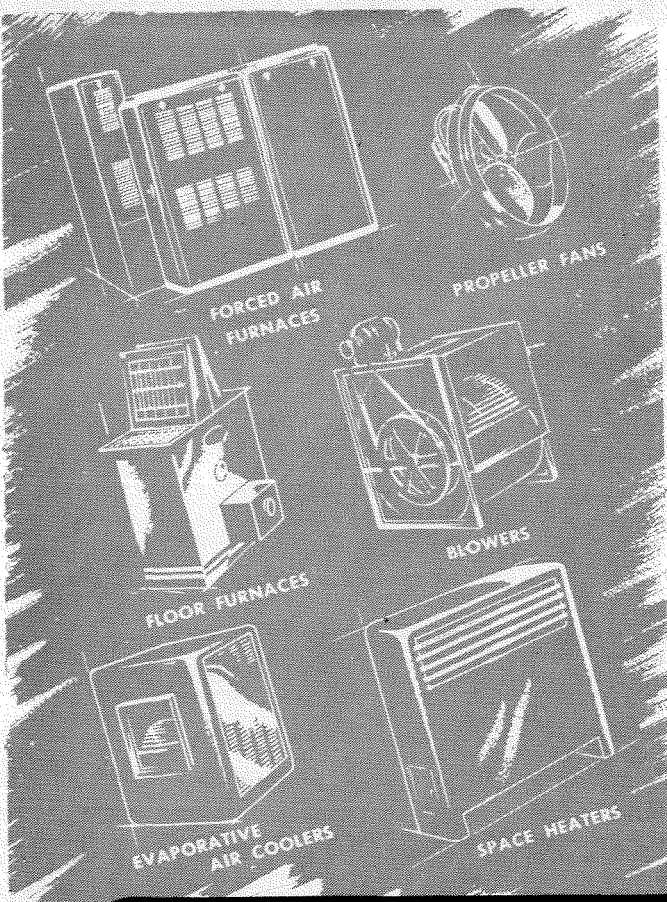
One of the great improvements of the new Charter over the League Covenant has to do with economic and social matters. As Field Marshal Smuts repeatedly emphasized in San Francisco the men who made the peace at the end of the last war were concerned mainly with political matters. The experience of the intervening years has served to underline the importance of removing social and economic inequalities and abuses, for it is in these that the roots of war are nourished. To the end, then, that a more determined effort should be made to remove the causes of war, an Economic and Social Council is to be established under the auspices of the General Assembly. Its assignment is comprehensive and, being couched in broad terms, a little vague. But under the inspiration and direction of determined and forward-looking men the studies it initiates on economic and social matters and the recommendations it makes on the basis of these studies may yet prove to be among the most effective advances made by mankind in its long crusade against war.

APPRAISAL

The statesmen of from 44 to 50 nations spent nine weeks drafting the Charter. I have spent but a few pages touching, but lightly, on a few of the more interesting and stubborn problems with which they were confronted. There is much in the Charter worthy of further study. As it stands it is an imperfect document. Much of its strength comes from the realization that it is imperfect. Indeed, the tenor of every speech made at the closing sessions of the Conference, whether on behalf of a great or a small power, admitted these imperfections. Every speech then made also expressed recognition of the fact that it was the best Charter that could be drawn at this period of world history. Every speech expressed also a determination to apply steady effort to eliminate the imperfections and improve the Charter through the passing years.

The responsibility for making the Charter work rests heavily on the Big Five Nations. As theirs is the power, so theirs is the responsibility. If they fall out among themselves, the predictable result is another world war. If they stick together in applying the principles of the Charter the world is truly on the threshold of a new era of peace and prosperity. Among these great powers

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voted not to act in a certain direction. This action has not met with favor by some of the administering group who constitute a minority. The minority have attempted or threatened to cancel memberships.

Certainly unions can be of benefit to their members and to society as a whole, but they must be run on a democratic basis and not on that of dictatorship. When it gets to the point where no man can work where he chooses, vote as he chooses, financially support or not support political groups as he chooses, life in these United States ceases to be free. May we hope that the conditions which seem to be prevailing at present in connection with certain organizations will improve. Improvement can only come through the exercise of the democratic rights of each citizen. If these rights are not exercised, through laziness or disinterest, those rights will naturally be lost.

A few lines taken from "Autumn Leaves" by P. W. Litchfield seem appropriate:

"While there is one untrodden track
For intellect or will,
And men are free to think and act,
Life is worth living still."

Let us hope that we shall remain free to think and act and that the professional group will maintain themselves on a high democratic plane.

The United Nations Conference

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the greatest strength, now and in the foreseeable future, resides in Russia and the United States. Both of these powers are comparatively new to leadership in world affairs. It is to be expected that comparative inexperience in their new roles will make at first for some awkwardness. Understanding between them will remain more difficult because of the differences of their political heritage and their present economic and political systems. But neither country can lightly consider the alternative to successful cooperation.

C. I. T. NEWS

FOOTBALL

By HAL MUSSELMAN,

Director of Physical Education

BUCKLING down to work in mid-summer heat, the 1945 football squad of 45 men opened practice the middle of August in preparation for a six-game season. Games have been scheduled on consecutive weeks with Redlands, Occidental, Cal Poly, U.C.L.A. Junior Varsity, San Diego State, with a return game with Occidental concluding the season.

The new coach, Pete Brown, who has an enviable record both as a player and assistant coach at Colorado State, appears quite optimistic over the 1945 Tech team. However, it would be asking almost too much to expect the squad to duplicate the phenomenal record of the 1944 squad.