

THE SAN FRANCISCO CONFERENCE

July 10, 1945

The Conference at San Francisco suffered from inadequate preparation and lack of fundamental agreement among the Big Three; from an unfortunate Press which praised it beyond all limit at its commencement which paved the way for subsequent disillusionment both in England and in this country.

The finished Charter is a product of these weaknesses --- but it is also the product of the hope, and even more, the realization that humanity can ill afford another war.

In practice, I doubt that it will prove effective in the sense of its elaborate mechanics being frequently employed or vitally decisive in determining war or peace.

It is, however, a bridge between Russia and the Western world and makes possible discussion and a personal relationship which can do much to ease mutual suspicion.

The great danger is that the mechanism will not be employed; the trusteeship machinery will be used for only unimportant islands; the Social and Economic Body of the General Assembly will merely issue significant pamphlets on world conditions -- significant in their content but not in their effect. And lastly, in far greater importance, because none of the larger countries will be willing, in the final analysis, to put the decision of war or peace in the hands of a delegate to a

council, the Security Council will wither on the vine.

Instead, the Big Three meetings will continue to be called to settle ticklish problems -- which is good for temporary emergencies but a poor solution over long periods of time for it arouses distrust through the world and does not contribute to building a firm foundation for peace based on principle -- but rather makes a virtue of expediency.

As to the future, I do not agree with those people who advocate war now with the Russians on the argument "Eventually, why not now?" Fortunately, or unfortunately, depending on how you view it, democracies have to go through a gradual disillusionment in their hopes of peace; war must be shown to be the only alternative to preserve their independence -- or at least they must believe this to be true.

This was the great contribution of Neville Chamberlain who by giving Hitler every possible opportunity, shaming himself and indeed England to the world, finally convinced not only the Empire but even the United States that Germany was truly headed down the road to war. He made the way easy for his successor, Mr. Churchill, for he paved the eventual way for the entry of the United States into World War II. They were an admirable team - Mr. Churchill and Mr. Chamberlain - in securing our declaration, and of the two, I think that the latter did the most. He is given scant credit for it, particularly by the English people themselves, but perhaps history will be more generous.

I think that the clash with Russia will be greatly postponed. It will come perhaps, as its avoidance depends chiefly on the extent of Russia's self-restraint, and that is a quality of which powerful nations have a limited quantity.

The clash may be finally and indefinitely postponed by the eventual discovery of a weapon so horrible that it will truthfully mean the abolishment of all the nations employing it. Thus Science, which has contributed so much to the horrors of war, will still be the means of bringing it to an end.

If this is not done, the clash will take place -- probably involving first the British, perhaps in Persia, for the British are in great danger of sinking to a second-class power under the onslaught of Communism both in Asia and Europe. And they may prefer to fight rather than face it.