



As We See It

By DAN PATRICK

Some of our amateur and professional pessimists predestined the San Francisco conference to certain failure before it even got underway.

Then we have those idealists who looked down from their ivory towers and felt that San Francisco should bring forth an international Utopia overnight.

Fact of the matter is that both are wrong. San Francisco certainly won't wind up with a detailed panacea for all the world ills.

There have been compromises but in a game of international give-and-take, you must compromise to a certain point.

It is therefore, a matter of deep encouragement to hear the Holy Father's pronouncement on the San Francisco conference for it was undoubtedly that conference to which he was referring in his address to the College of Cardinals when he said:

"The thought of a new peace organization is inspired — nobody could doubt it — by the most sincere and loyal good will. The whole of mankind follows the progress of this noble enterprise with anxious interest.

"What a bitter disillusionment it would be if it were to fail, if so many years of suffering and self-sacrifice were to be made vain by permitting again to prevail that spirit of oppression from which the world hoped to see itself at last freed once and for all."

It was the late A. Hitler who stormed that the "decadent democracies" were incapable of waging a victorious war against his vaunted Wehrmacht.

Now these same democracies which won the war in the west must prove to the people of Europe that they can wage peace with the same efficiency. Otherwise these people will turn to

communism. That is the conclusion of Drew Middleton of the New York Times, generally rated as a competent observer on the European scene.

Midleton reports that the average citizen of western Europe who is having a hard time keeping his family alive on meager wages which preclude dealing in the black market isn't becoming wrought up over the Polish, Trieste or Syrian questions.

"What is the Russian or Communist appeal to millions of workers in western Europe? Primarily one feels that it is the appeal of a government of their own. Whether or not it is true, the workers of Belgium, Germany and France with whom this correspondent has talked all feel that Communist governments in their countries would put the working man on top.

This is a condition which certainly challenges all the resources of the democracies. They can prove their system of government superior to communism. Whether they will or not depends on the manner in which the democracies are administered in the critical months ahead.

It is good to hear that Governor Dewey plans to name a Negro to New York's newly authorized Anti-Discrimination Commission.

From time to time we still hear the intolerant remarks of some people on the subject of the colored man — even after some of them have fought and died to preserve a democracy which still persists in denying them some of its benefits.

In the course of the bitter debate over this measure, these same people argued that such legislation was unnecessary because it sought to correct an evil which doesn't exist.

From time to time in this column, we have disagreed with Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt. However, we always have applauded her courage in resigning from the Daughters of the American Revolution when that august body refused to permit Miss Marion Anderson to sing in Constitution Hall in Washington.

When her trust in him is finally shattered, Anna thought for a moment she actually heard the thin sharp crack of the child's heart breaking. Her finest flower is the future king, young prince Chulalongkorn, who through her teaching becomes generous enough to destroy the inveterate institution of slavery in Siam.

Then there is the story of Tuptim. Tuptim, barely fifteen, who is almost like Joan of Arc in her sublime death call: "I have not sinned! The holy Buddha in heaven knows all! Like a martyr dies this little girl in the flames, for her pure and innocent love. And much too late came the king's repentance and his tributary inscription: "Suns may set and rise again, but the pure and brave Palat and Tuptim will never more return to earth."

Spiritual sisters to Tuptim are Son Kinn, the Hidden Perfume whose fragrance of kindness permeates the wretched harem, and L'Ore, the slave-girl, chained in an abandoned courtyard for four years, who sobs bitterly: "Do you want to know my crime? It was loving my husband!"

You feel great joy in finding such heroines in so abandoned a place. But a shadow of sadness hovers over the picture, and becomes the darker, the finer the characters are drawn.

They called Anna "The White Angel." She took great risks many times, trying to help these forlorn creatures. And this is not only a story, although it reads like fiction, in its terse and vivid style; it is a true story of actual happenings. Margaret Landon, in an interesting postscript, tells how she met Anna Leonowens — figuratively, of course — and how her book is based upon Anna's own stories and actual documents.

Young people will love the excitement and oriental color of Anna and the King of Siam. Older persons will be fascinated by the spiritual struggle of Anna with the King of Siam, and by the almost magical lure with which a stubborn young mother sows the seed of complete reconstruction of a whole country.

"Anna and the King of Siam" is being placed in the Catholic Evidence Library.

The Literary Cereals

'Poland and Russia'

By John O'Connor

When are some of the editors in the secular and in the Catholic press of these United States going to give some sound and consistent publicity to Poland and Russia by Ann Su Cardwell? (Sheed and Ward, \$2.75).

What has been the fate of the Polish officers and men in the Siberian labor camps? How many communities of exiles from Poland dot the map behind the Urals with stains of anguish and despair from Kazakhstan to Yakutskaya? What has been the record of the government of the Soviet — once described by Franklin D. Roosevelt as one of the most ruthless on earth. . . .

Do you want the story of Soviet elections in their great "democracy"? It is in this book.

Would you know of the "people's assemblies" which request "admissions into the Soviet Union" while the Red Army grinningly watches a people vote after having despoiled the towns . . . and actually carried ballot boxes to your home!

What has been the record of the Polish Government in Exile in the face of these sub-human activities? And what has been the record of the government of the Soviet — once described by Franklin D. Roosevelt as one of the most ruthless on earth. . . .

It must be emphasized that Mrs. Cardwell is a scholar who has done much work in philology. She is Not a Catholic. She has lived in Poland for 17 years, speaks Russian and Polish fluently — and has traveled as extensively as one might in Russia, with the payroll loaded with OGI PU apies.

She writes simply — with but truth and justice in view. She

does not stint her work for the sake of expediency or some political end as do the writers of left-wing persuasion. In her approach and her extensive background (she lived in the Pacific area for ten years before going to Poland) she is far ahead of such armchair commentators as that old contributor to The New Masses, parlor-plat Clinton Follman, whose knowledge of Russia is limited to selected books, the opinions of selected friends

and the newsmen. And I believe that Mrs. Cardwell might be assumed to know more about Russia than the former vaudeville boomer of the team of Wischell and Green, Walter Winchell who stated two years ago that Lenin "would be a handy man to have around a government." What is the reaction of such as these? It is all here!

It would be interesting to see these left-wing editors in this country, having already tried to make capital of the fact that our senators have seen the Nazi horror camps, press the Soviet for the right to visit their camps in Yakutskaya or Kamchatka where the Polish exiles languished. It is not necessary to have reputable American publishers such as Ralph Puskas, Amos Carter or Arthur Barker to visit these camps. If Mr. Browder and Mr. Fadiman and Mr. Winchell are so appalled at German horrors, they should be appalled at horror anywhere. Why shouldn't they visit these camps of the great "democracy" they praise and protest. . . . ?

Would it not be easy for Mr. Browder — in touch with Moscow as he is — to arrange for a camp tour?

I bring Mrs. Cardwell's book forth again at this time because it is necessary to the American people. It was never more important than it is right now. The Catholic press was prudent in handling it. The secular press — so it was rumored — was asked to play it down in the Sunday review sections last Fall.

Well, note it well. Your own future may find its past and present in this book.

Library Signpost By Rev. Benedict Ebenzer

GOVERNESS IN A SIAMESE COURT

Marie Bell, Norwich College '44, has written one of the most unusual books of recent years, the account of an Englishwoman who became a governess in the court of a Siamese king before Kipling wrote about "East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet." The twain met here with results that are often humorous, often sad, and always interesting. Let Marie have her say now . . .

ANNA AND THE KING OF SIAM, by Margaret Landon. (John Day Co.)

When President Roosevelt died, the nation received a telegram of sincerest sympathy from the Japanese government, while at the same time thousands of Americans were dying inch by inch in the concentration camps of the Rising Sun! Strange and awe-inspiring is the dualism of the Oriental mind. On one side there is extreme gentleness, devotion, charity — and on the other, absolute tyranny and barbarism.

Into this dim, fearful world called a young English teacher, back in the 1860's. The first glimpse of it was such that Anna Leonowens and her little boy would fain have returned without further discussion. But Anna had a rather substantial feeling of what was due to her and of the cowardice of shirking an unpleasant duty — and so the carved palace-door closed on her.

What is a young, lonely woman to do in a country where women are considered more or less like a valuable chattel. You will alternately laugh and blink at Anna's courageous efforts to stand her ground, to teach the royal children and the royal harem, and — subtly — to help wherever she could. You will live with her through the pageants and ceremonies of the Far East. There is a strange mixture of an enlightened monarch who writes to Queen Victoria and offers to send Abraham Lincoln a herd of elephants to breed, and a tyrannical dictator who has people chained and tortured and burnt alive.

Anna is like a crystal vase which holds a varicolored bunch of flowers; around and in her little school center many stories, some of them almost too beautiful and gossamer-like to describe. There is the gentle, beloved Fa-yang, a little prince who dies in the midst of an excess of love. And there is Wani, adoring her cruel father;

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