

by Hal Coffman

INTERVIEW WITH A DUKE by Frank Tripp

One thing that the average convention addict decides never to do a second time is to stay a day after the rest of his pals have gone home. It's a depressing experience.

For days the hotel lobby, corridors, peacock alley and the bar are crowded with people glad to see each other. They wait in queues to grasp each other's hands. When they finally make it, the guy from Tulsa slaps the one from Passaic on the back and here's what he says:

"Gee, it's swell to see you again. You look great; not a day older. Never saw you look better."

Then the other liar says: "And so do you. You look younger every time I see you." This over, each discovers that he had nothing else to say.

They stammer to make further conversation and they part after about one minute and 15 seconds, with this adieu: "Well, you'll be around for a day or so, won't you—I'll be seeing you again."

A listener could imagine that each had mistaken the other for somebody else. Thereafter they pair off with an everyday associate from their own home office and, as they pass their friend from afar, they just nod—or maybe don't even do that, if one of them is en route to the bar for a Dick Smith snifter.

Old Pals Meet.

Attending one of these enclaves of backslappers recently I had a most delightful visit with the Duke of Windsor. That's a nice thing about conventions; you get to see pals whose path you seldom cross.

As I jostled with the crowd, someone rubbed against my elbow and spoke into my ear: "I wonder where is table number two?" I turned and lo and behold there stood my old friend the Duke, whom I hadn't seen since 12 years ago at Hot Springs—through a pair of field glasses.

I had my hand raised to wallop his royal highness on the back and tell him how well he looked, when he turned his head the other way and found the man to whom he thought he was speaking.

I was enthused to meet the Duke and have this nice little chat with him. I told Amon Carter about it and suggested that I might get a column out of the incident.

"A column!" exclaimed Amon. "Hell, with all of that material, I'll be expecting you to write a book."

Alternated with four 15-hour nights of cocktail parties, I attended one rather unique affair.

It was a customers' party at which by some strange technique (on which I'd like to hold a patent) not more than 80 per cent of those present were competitors or employes of the host. This is a surprisingly low percentage of free lunch hounds who can do nothing for the guy who entertains them except proselyte his customers and drink his liquor.

Don't Stay Over.

At the Banshees, super-duper host Frank Nicht was table-hopping with George Sokolsky; I imagined to remind the prospects casually that George writes a column and he sells it.

I asked Frank to come back and take me around, and George said, "You might just as well fall right in behind me; I haven't met anybody so far but competing columnists."

The most important discovery of the week was a new kind of newspaper. One enterprising manufacturer is working on a transparent sheet, thinner than the present product—just a little.

On it will be able to read an analysis of Mr. Hoover's government economy program and at the same time look right through it at a television picture of Milton Berle nailing a roof of overlapping silver dollars on the Pentagon Building.

Conventions seem quite necessary things—to railroads, air lines, hotels and distillers. Further dependent sayeth not.

But never stay over. Go home when the gang goes. For when your boys move out and the undertakers move in to backslap each other, you'll feel like you are the corpse that they came to the morgue to embalm.



-Hal Coffman's Cartoons Appear Exclusively in The Star-Telegram

Fumbled the Ball

Reporter Tells Why We Are Losing Asia

America has won notable victories against communism in the Balkans, the Italian election and in helping stabilize the picture look like? Have you heard communism? Chicago Daily News asked respondents around the world to report on these questions. The following answer is from the Far East.

BY KEYES BEECH.

YONKERS (CDN).—As the plane landed on the barren hills and sped over the Japan Sea, the pilot sat brooding.

I had traveled thousands of miles. He had talked to many people—Chinese, Japanese, Malays, Filipinos, Malaysians, and Indonesians. He was travel-stained—and puzzled. Then he blurted out the question:

"Why, when we give these people millions of dollars, do they turn Communist? Why are they losing Asia?"

"Many people, some of them 'authorities,' could have given him many answers. They have given him facts and dates and neatly worded arguments.

Basically there is only one answer to the congressman's question.

"I puzzled foreign correspondents expressed it: 'If we make a change, I'd like to see a revolution instead of a buck one.'

"We began to lose Asia the day after the war. Because, since the war ended we have been having revolutions in Asia instead of backing them.

"We are the most powerful nation on earth. But our greatest weakness is our greatest weakness. We were too fat, too prosperous, too self-absorbed, too soft on the harsh realities of the postwar world.

"We have forgotten that our country was born of bloody struggle—against a foreign power.

"No Program for Asia. When the war ended we didn't have a program for Asia. We had no care. We were ready to spend more than a billion dollars because of our abysmal ignorance of their culture, their aspirations.

"The Russians cared. And we had a program. We had the ball when we liberated Asia from the Japanese. Our prestige throughout the world couldn't have been greater. We didn't know what to do with the ball once we had it, so we fumbled it.

"The Russians picked it up and are running it. They've been going ever since. We've been going, too—backwards, some falling over ourselves.

"The man's slogan, 'Asia for the Asians,' had a tremendous appeal for millions of brown-skinned people. It took time for us to discover that Japan was 'Asia for Japanese.' That Pearl Harbor were Japan's mistakes.

"Not even Japan's iron heel could stamp out the seed of nationalism that Japan itself had sown.

"Our wartime broadcasts were a promise of freedom. In Southeast Asia some people listened and believed—and waited for the day when we would free them from Japanese rule.

We came and the Japanese went. And after us came the colonial masters of Southeast Asia—the British, French and Dutch.

Driven out by the Japanese, defeated and discredited, they were back by force of American arms to reclaim what they considered theirs.

They carried American arms. They wore belts "made in U.S.A." They rode in American tanks and strafed native populations from American planes—to "restore order."

Philippine President.

The Communists loved it.

We gave the Philippines their independence, although the results have been discouraging. After three years of vacillation, we persuaded the Dutch to give the Indonesians their independence.

But in the disillusioned eyes of the people of Southeast Asia the damage was already done.

Now, in Indo-China, we have just confirmed their opinion of us by recognizing the Bao Dai regime.

Bao is an expatriate playboy, rather a nice guy according to reports, whom the French picked up off the Riviera and deposited on his throne with the fond hope that he could save their colony from the Communists.

It doesn't really matter whether Bao is a French puppet, which he is or he wouldn't be there. The important thing is that the Indo-Chinese think he is a French puppet.

One reason we have failed in Asia is that we can't believe that people really starve to death. We are too well fed to believe it.

I found it hard to believe it myself until I saw it happen in China.

Millions will starve there this year under the Communists. And some Americans will say, "See what heartless brutes the Communists are. They're letting millions of people starve rather than take food from us."

But I saw enough in China to convince me that if I were a Chinese peasant I would be a Communist.

Not that I would know anything about communism. But because whatever the Communists offered couldn't be worse and might conceivably be better than what I had under the Nationalists.

People have starved to death in China for centuries. But that doesn't mean they like to go on starving.

They don't like to scabble in garbage cans for food while sleek American automobiles roll by carrying fat-faced merchants with their exotically gowned, mink-coated wives and mistresses.

Freedom to Starve.

To our credit, we tried to feed them. But China's rich got richer and the poor got poorer.

We have talked of freedom to people whose only freedom was freedom to starve. You can't eat freedom.

We have talked about democratic processes and parliamentary government to people who can't read or write.

We poured billions of dollars into Chiang Kai-shek's corrupt government while the Communists were busy liquidating land-

lords and giving land to the peasants.

We deplored violence while forgetting that our nation was born of violence.

We urged change by peaceful means when no such means existed.

We lost China because Chiang sold out the revolution inherited from Sun Yat-sen. And we continued to support him when it was obvious we couldn't win with him: We are still supporting him.

These are some of the reasons why in Asia today democracy stands for the status quo and communism is the "wave of the future."

It may be too late to stop communism in Asia. Some fairly intelligent people—not Communists—think so.

We certainly aren't going to stop it with the defeated and discredited Chiang, who is trying to set up a model shop on Formosa after losing all China.

Or with South Korea's president Syngman Rhee, a venerable but querulous old patriot who is holding elections in his country next month only because we put the heat on him.

Help the People.

Or with President Elpidio Quirino, the "merry widower of Manila," a shifty politician whose office is stained with the blood of murdered voters, and who is on our side only so long as we continue to funnel more millions into the Philippines.

Or with playboy Bao, even if he is a nice guy.

It could be that the answer is to help people rather than governments. To back a revolution instead of buck one.

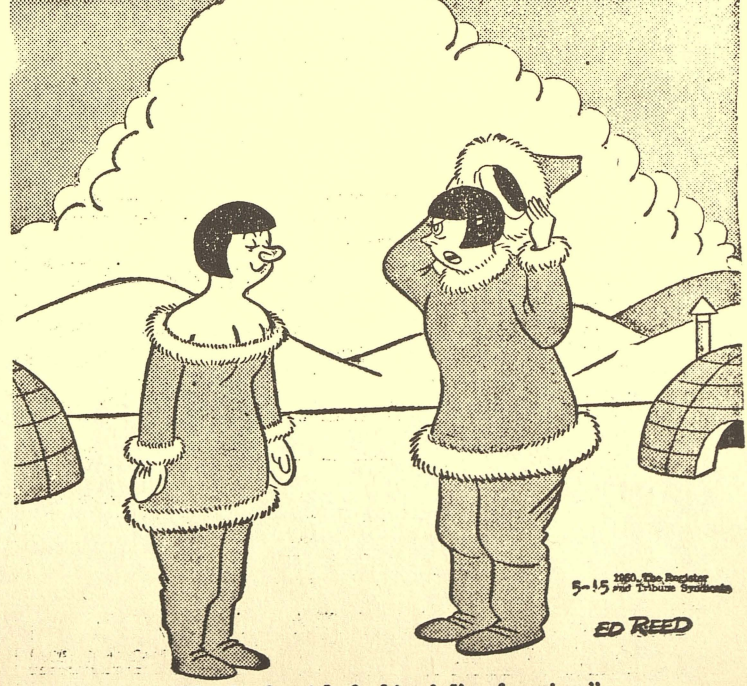
That could get us into an awful lot of trouble. But we are already in a lot of trouble out here. And we're getting the bejabbers beaten out of us every day.

Do we go on taking a beating? Or do we try something else?

The opinions expressed by Mr. Beech in this article are his own and not necessarily those of the Star-Telegram.

OFF THE RECORD

by Ed Reed



"The heck with fashion! I'm freezing."