

THIS MONSTROUS WAR

Wilfred G. Burchett

JOSEPH WATERS

Melbourne

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This is the first time this book is appearing in the United States. According to Gavan McCormack, “in the United States the entire consignment of the book (500 copies) was seized by US Customs and dumped in the sea on its arrival in that country late in the same year (1953), and as a result no major American library possesses a copy to this day.”

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

When Wilfred Burchett sent me the manuscript of this book, he faced me with a dilemma. Here undoubtedly, was the most important book he had written during a long and honourable career as a correspondent who always has the knack of being on those particular spots where history is being made.

The manuscript was a remarkable one in every way; written right there in the fighting line, at the "peace talks," among the people of North Korea – written, literally, out of the battle. For the first time we were being privileged to read the truth about this "cruel, nasty and hopeless war." The barrage of lies of film, press and radio was being surmounted and the courage and honesty of a great journalist was bringing the real news of the Korean War to the great numbers of people so anxiously awaiting it.

This was a vitally important book if ever there was one, and yet it faced me, as I have said, with a dilemma. It was a very long manuscript – more than 200,000 words; for no statement was allowed to go without documentation, unchecked, unverified. In these days of high costs and falling purchasing power to publish the complete manuscript in book form would be to put it right outside the buying capacity of the ordinary man and woman – the very people who would want to buy it. The true nature of my dilemma therefore was a big book at a high price, restricted sales, and the whole purpose of the book negated. The alternative – an abridged version, retaining all the most worthwhile material, brought within the buying range of workers and their wives, and thus assured a wide sale.

The problem was submitted to Wilfred Burchett himself, as well as to that most remarkable gentleman, his father, and we agreed, the three of us, that the book should be published in the abridged version and the real purpose of the author fulfilled – the truth about the Korean conflict told to as wide an audience as possible. The utmost pains have been taken with the cutting and nothing has been deleted which would mar the intent of the author or affect its truthfulness. I am confident the general reader will support our decision and will join with me in applauding the splendid qualities of this outstanding Australian correspondent who in the first place, made the book possible.

It is the wish of the author and myself that the book will help to strengthen the efforts now being made to end This Monstrous War and to prevent the outbreak of others.

INTRODUCTION

It has been the author's lot to follow fairly closely the developments which led from President Truman's declaration of the "cold war" in 1947 to the outbreak of the "hot war" in Korea in June, 1950. The strivings of the American war-makers to develop a shooting war in Europe in the spring of 1949, primarily in Germany have been dealt with in a previous book, *Cold War in Germany*. Their machinations in Eastern Europe and the attempts to co-ordinate civil war and a Titoist invasion of Hungary with the outbreak of hostilities in Germany were outlined and documented in a sub-sequent book, *People's Democracies*.

The author has attended the historic Korean cease-fire talks almost from the day they started until the Americans finally broke them off on October 8, 1952, with a few intervals during which he visited prisoner of war camps and investigated germ warfare. The Korean cease-fire talks were historic because they were the climax till that time, of the global battle for peace. From the date of Truman's declaration of the "cold war," there has been no doubt in the author's mind that the ruling circles in the United States and Britain were agreed on a new world war to crush the Soviet Union and the People's Democracies. And this followed along precisely the same pattern as the attempts by the imperialist powers to smother in blood the infant Soviet Union after World War I. From conversations with top-level administrators in Germany and from personal observations there, it became clear that the leading American administrators were working for a war to break out in the spring of 1949. The only question was how to arrange the matter. War could only be declared by Act of Congress, and Congress having to take public opinion into account, could scarcely rubber-stamp in advance an overt American-initiated war – even under the guise of a preventive war.

(Some top administration officials later suggested overcoming this dilemma – when it seemed the Korean war would not spread far and fast enough – by actually launching a preventive war. The most candid spokesman for this group was U.S. Secretary of the Navy, Francis Mathews, who on August 25, 1950, made a speech in Boston demanding a preventive war "which would cast us in a character new to a true democracy – an initiator of a war of aggression... the first aggressors for peace." Secretary of Defence, Louis Johnson, made a number of speeches along the same lines, while Truman

made the classic statement that he was determined “to have world peace even if America had to fight the Soviet Union to gain it.”)

The years 1948 and 1949 were bad for the Americans in Europe. People’s power was consolidated in the People’s Democracies. The plans for war in Germany and civil war in Eastern Europe were foiled. General Clay, who had been entrusted with executing the American warmakers’ policy for a war in Europe in 1949, was recalled.

The plans to get the “preventive” war started in Europe were checked but the overall strategy of the war-makers was not to be scrapped so lightly. Their eyes turned to the Far East where matters were also not proceeding very much to their liking. Despite billions of dollars worth of assistance, the American armed and trained Kuomintang troops were being defeated. American taxpayers were becoming more and more restive about contributing good money after bad to support the corrupt and defeated Chiang Kai-shek. It was impossible to mobilise public opinion for a cause so obviously discredited; impossible to ask Americans either to lay down their lives or contribute further dollars to save this badly broken American straw. On the other hand, it was imperative in view of Chiang’s defeat, for America to get back on the mainland of Asia and not let the fighting die out completely. If only a toe-hold could be secured somewhere, the warmakers were sure it could be enlarged and American capital could gradually step its way back into Asia again.

The book which follows will show how a war situation developed in Korea; how it was fostered and exploited by the Americans; how they failed; why they were forced to negotiate; and how the negotiations were conducted.

The delivery of this manuscript to the publishers was delayed for many months in the hope that the author would be able to write “Finis” to the Korean conflict. Virtually no progress was made in the talks for the six months from April, 1952, until the Americans broke off the talks in October, due to American reluctance to take the final steps which would have led to peace.

W. G. BURCHETT

Kaesong, November 4, 1952.

Chapter 1

BACKGROUND TO LIBERATION

The history of all Asian peoples throughout the past centuries is one of unrelieved, bitter suffering. They have all groaned under the yoke of semi-barbarian feudalism. In the case of Korea and a number of other Asian countries, the people during the past century have had a ruthless imperialism grafted on to their own native variety of oppression. The dawn-to-dusk slavery in the fields, the thrifty husbandry of both sexes from earliest childhood to premature old age yielded fat crops of food grains, but the people often enough ate grass and bark, after tribute was paid to the imperialist occupiers, rent to the avaricious land-lord, and taxes to the corrupt state.

A very brief sketch of some of the later aspects of Japanese occupation is necessary to understand the events leading to the civil war which started in June, 1950, and developed into the most brutal of all imperialist wars in Asia.

It is in the nature of imperialism to be brutal and vicious, to deal in wholesale slaughter and plunder, to stamp out national cultures, suppress native arts and customs and even the language of the people. There is no racial distinction about imperialist methods and lest any western readers should think that the form which imperialism assumed in Korea was particularly vicious because it was Japanese imperialism, then they must be reminded of the fact that British imperialism in Malaya and elsewhere to-day, as well as French and Dutch imperialism assume precisely the same forms – and American imperialism in Korea has far surpassed in sadistic violence and wanton destruction the worst excesses of Japanese imperialism. The methods adopted by imperialists are tempered only by the technical means at their disposal and the resistance of their colonial victims.

The difference between American imperialism at work in Korea and that of the Japanese is firstly American superiority in technique, and secondly American hypocrisy in operating under the flag of the United Nations and the slogans of “Liberation” and “Resistance to Aggression.”

During the 40 years of Japanese occupation of Korea which ended on August 15, 1945, the Korean people never ceased to struggle against their imperialist masters. Workers, peasants and intellectuals fought back in factories and forests, in schools and

churches. The struggle took many different forms and had many ups and downs, but it never died out. The belief in eventual liberation was always kept alive by heroic patriots inside and outside the country.

It was only after the October Revolution and the setting up of the Soviet state, however, that the struggle began to take on a planned and organised form. This eventually led to armed struggle together with Chinese patriots in the Anti-Japanese Allied United Front in Manchuria and North China. The united struggle of Korean and Chinese patriots after the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931 provides an example of complete fraternal unity between two peoples unprecedented in history up to that time.

On March 1, 1919, a great mass meeting was held in Seoul's spacious Pagoda Park. It was organised by intellectuals, students, professors and religious leaders. Christian leaders spoke from the same platform as leaders of the native Korean religious group, the Chundo Kyo, or Heavenly Way sect. Although organised by intellectuals the meeting was a reflection of the intense unrest among the whole Korean people.

A fervently enthusiastic audience of Korean citizens unanimously approved a "Declaration of Korean Independence" signed by 33 prominent patriots and intellectuals and read at the meeting. The declaration demanded complete independence and copies of it were forwarded to governments in the outside world – and also to Governor Yamanaishi.

The Pagoda Park meeting was the signal for similar demonstrations throughout the country-and the signal, too, for savage repressive measures by the Japanese. Thousands of patriots were tortured and massacred. At Suwon, for instance, all Christians were ordered into the local church which was then set on fire, the soldiers shooting down any who tried to escape.

Tens of thousands of Koreans went into exile after the suppression of the March 1 movement. They crossed into Siberia, Manchuria and China proper. Some who could afford it went to the United States. The "Declaration of Independence" did make its impact abroad and the movement itself had its effect on the Japanese government. There was a slight relaxation of the former cultural suppression measures. Two Korean language daily papers were permitted, the *Dong A Eilbo* (Oriental Daily) and the *Chosen Eilbo* (Korean Daily). The new policy in no way changed the determination to

throw off the Japanese yoke, although for some time the main burden of organising resistance was borne by those outside the country. The overthrow of Tsarist power in Russia and the successful fight being waged by the Bolsheviks against the armies of intervention sparked the hopes of the Korean people as it did people throughout the colonial world and it generated planned activity inside and outside the country, which eventually led to armed struggle. The March 1 movement had demonstrated clearly enough that only by armed struggle would liberation be won.

By 1920, groups of exiles abroad already formed the first two branches of the Korean Communist Party – one in Irkutsk in the Soviet Union, the other in Shanghai. Formed by intellectuals, isolated from the working people in their own country, these branches were little more than debating societies and were short-lived, but they demonstrated that even such a short time after the Soviet revolution the exiles realised that only through a political party based on the working class, employing scientific revolutionary methods, could the true liberation of Korea be brought about. In 1924 there was a movement inside Korea which provided the basis for unifying workers and peasants into one political party. Unrest due to worsening economic conditions and renewed cultural suppression brought into being a Workers and Peasants General League, a League of Korean Youth Associations, a Women's Federation and a Students' Federation. Young Marxists who returned from exile knit these organisations into one party, and a Korean Communist Party was established on Korean soil on April 17, 1925, and was affiliated with the Third International in March the following year. A Young Communist League was also founded. Under the leadership of the C.P. and the Y.C.L, an anti-Japanese United Front was formed and a move was also launched to fight for better economic conditions. Strikes soon broke out in Japanese factories and peasants began to refuse to pay taxes. The Korean masses recognised the Communist Party as the vanguard of a resistance movement.

The Japanese were not slow to react. In November, 1925, six months after the formation of the Communist Party, they struck, arresting a number of leaders.

In a comparatively small country like Korea, the Japanese were able to pack even the tiniest village with their police and spies. Illegal work for an inexperienced party became almost impossible. Executions, savage tortures and imprisonment of almost the entire

leadership made organised, mass political work out of the question. The party was dissolved by the Comintern in 1928, although individual Communists continued to lead the resistance movement inside the factories and villages.

Strikes and rent-reduction campaigns became more frequent – and there was never a leading organisation for the Japanese to attack. Between 1931-35 there were 900 strikes involving over 75,000 workers. There were anti-Japanese peasant riots in 1934-36 in Yenching province which adjoins the Soviet Union. Despite many individual arrests the resistance movement inside the country developed steadily from strength to strength from 1931 onwards, heartened by the knowledge that Korean-led armed resistance to the Japanese had already started over the border in Manchuria that year, with frequent forays into Korea proper.

By the time the Mukden incident provided the Japanese with the pretext for the invasion of Manchuria there were already several hundred thousand Koreans living in voluntary exile in Manchuria. The greatest concentration was in the Tien Tao (now the Yen Pien) area where the frontiers of the Soviet Union, China and Korea meet and where by 1931 over 75% of the population were classified as Korean. Even before 1931 there were armed raids into Korea from Tien Tao and from 1920 onwards, despite the fact that it was Manchurian territory, the Japanese exercised considerable control there in an attempt to wipe out the source of the armed resistance.

It is necessary at this point to go back a little in time to 1927, and in space to Kirin in Manchuria, where a 15-year-old Korean boy was playing a leading role in organising students at the Yu Wen High School. His name was Kim Il-sung, and his father had taken him into exile from their native village of Wan Ching Hai, near Pyongyang. 1927 was a memorable year for young Kim. It was in that year that he joined the Young Communist League and it was in the same year that he was sent to prison by the warlord authorities for eight months because of “revolutionary activities.” After the prison term he went back to High School from which he graduated two years late; and became secretary of the local Korean Young Communist League. At this time he made a detailed study of Marxism-Leninism and its practical application to Korean conditions.

The next most memorable year for Kim Il-sung was 1931. It was the year of Japan’s invasion of Manchuria and it was the year that he was accepted into the Chinese Communist Party. It was the

year that Kim – at 19 – organised the first Communist-led Korean guerrillas in the forests and mountains at Tien Tao. It was the year in which the banner of armed resistance to the Japanese was raised.

With its steep high mountains and dense forests, and its proximity to three countries, Tien Tao was excellently placed as a guerrilla base and it served as such from 1931 onwards until the day Soviet troops, with partisan help, smashed the Japanese on the Tuman and Yalu rivers and broke through to liberate Korea. The exiled Korean peasants were first-class political material on which to base a revolutionary, armed resistance. Shortly after the Japanese invasion in 1931, a band of a dozen grim-faced youths met in a wood in the Tien Tao mountains and pledged themselves to fight to the death for the liberation of their country. From this small guerrilla band, whole divisions later sprang up, pinning down vastly superior Japanese forces throughout the entire war against China and later during World War II.

Following the invasion, the peasants in the Tien Tao area had spontaneously staged large-scale “autumn harvest” riots. When they knew armed resistance had started, they flocked to the banner of Kim Il-sung in tens and scores of thousands. The units formed in the Tien Tao area soon had close contact with other units fighting in North Manchuria.

Chinese and Korean patriot fighters fought side by side as brothers, sometimes Chinese under Korean leaders, sometimes Koreans under Chinese leaders. Wherever they operated Korean and Chinese peasants supported them, fed them, hid them, acted as the eyes and ears of intelligence. Koreans and Chinese in Manchuria lived and worked and fought as one family against the common enemy. Under the leadership of the Korean and Chinese Communist Parties the political and military anti-Japanese united front became a living reality.

By 1935 the guerrilla movement was operating over large areas of Manchuria and the various units were knit together in the Manchurian Anti-Japanese United Forces with long-range bases established in the Chang Pai mountain range which runs along the Korean-Manchurian border and along the Sungari river. Frequent “guerrilla-annihilation” campaigns were launched by the Japanese. Many lives were lost, but each campaign with its brutal reprisals against peasants for suspected guerrilla sympathies added more recruits to the fighting units. General Kim’s forces were able to push

their raids deeper and deeper into Korea proper, fanning the flame of resistance inside the country, inspiring local patriots to take action and keeping Japanese forces busy chasing hide-and-peek through the myriad mountain ranges of North Korea. When the Japanese launched their attempted invasion of the Soviet Union at Changkufeng in 1938, General Kim's units launched a highly successful surprise attack in the Japanese rear and drew off important detachments from the main action.

The Tien Tao base was only one of the many areas from which Korean armed resistance was organised, but it was the one which kept continuous and close touch with Korea. A Chinese historian, Kwan Mei-nen, in his *Short History of the Anti-Japanese Struggle in Manchuria*, comments as follows on the part played by Koreans in the armed struggle in that area.

“In the 14 years of the anti-Japanese war, the blood of Korean patriots ran together with the blood of the Chinese people. The Korean Communists and patriots were well aware that the liberation of their fatherland was inseparable from the liberation of the Chinese people. Only by establishing a united anti-Japanese front could Japanese imperialism be overthrown. Recognising this, the people of the two countries during the entire war period were intimately united and this unity turned out to be a model for fraternal cooperation among colonial peoples. In the Northeast (in China, Manchuria is always referred to as the North-east – Author), Korean patriots joined in the anti-Japanese struggle very early. In 1931, Korean patriots attacked the Japanese consulate in Harbin. On May 30 of the same year, the anniversary of the British massacre of Chinese in Shanghai, a large-scale uprising took place in the Tien Tao area. On August 19, another uprising took place along the Kirin-Tungwa railway. In October, Korean residents in Kaiyuan attacked the local public security bureaux. In the initial stages of the anti-Japanese guerrilla warfare in the North-east the Korean comrades constituted the core of the activities.

“The Korean Independence Army in Liaotung province, the Korean Independence Movement which sheltered in the forests of the Chang Pai mountains and the anti-Japanese organisations in Tien Tao successively joined with the Chinese people in fighting against the Japanese... The First, Second and Third Route Armies of the North-east Anti-Japanese Allied Forces were formed by comrades of both countries. Underground activities were also carried

out by both sides acting in unison. Most illustrative is the case of the First Route Army. Its predecessor was the Pan Se anti-Japanese guerrilla force led by the Korean Communist Li Hang-kwan. This force was established in the spring of 1932 after the Chinese Communist Party organ in Pan Se initiated a large-scale uprising of the Korean and Chinese people. The majority of this guerrilla force, later incorporated into the First Route Army, were Koreans. The fraternal deeds of the Chinese and Korean comrades in the anti-Japanese Allied Forces will forever be admired...”

The story of Korean-Chinese unity in Manchuria is duplicated by their activities in North China and a full understanding of how deep and extensive was this unity is essential to any understanding of the fervent enthusiasm with which the entire Chinese people rose to help the Koreans when they were in peril from a new race of imperialists.

I have mentioned earlier that many Koreans fled to North China and that a Korean Communist Party was formed in Shanghai in 1920. Although the Party itself soon faded out as an organisation, many individual Koreans joined other revolutionary organisations, and took part in the Northern Expedition of the Kuomintang-Communist coalition forces in 1925-26, which was intended to consolidate the power of the Sun Yat-sen republic. After Chiang Kai-shek betrayed the republic and the revolution in 1927 by his massacre of the Communists, the Korean revolutionaries split into several groups. A minority went with Chiang Kai-shek and followed him from provisional capital to provisional capital around China and eventually they set up a “Provisional Korean Government” in Chungking with Kuomintang blessing. Another part went to the Chinese Communist liberated areas. A third part remained in the coastal cities and Peking. But to whichever group they gave allegiance, the majority still worked energetically for the overthrow of Japanese imperialism.

The invasion of Manchuria and reports of Korean armed resistance along the Manchurian- Korean border stimulated many into action. After the invasion of China proper in 1937 and the renewed coalition between Communists and Kuomintang after the Sian Incident, Koreans from North and Central China came together again to see what could be done. Just prior to the fall of Hankow a conference of various revolutionary groups was held in that city. It was agreed to create a Korean National United Front with its own armed

force, the Korean Volunteers. The Volunteers took part in the defence of Hankow but after the fall of the city the organisations which formed the United Front split up again. The National Revolutionary Party moved to Kweilin in Kwangsi province in South China, the Youth Vanguard Group went to Loyang and Yen-an where they were received into the Anti-Japanese Military and Political University of the Eighth Route Army.

The real effective activities of the Korean Volunteers only started in 1941 after they were reinforced by Korean graduates of the Yen-an University who had had real military experience with the New Fourth and Eighth Route armies. In January, 1941, young Korean patriots fighting on North and Central China fronts established the Korean Youth Association which attracted recruits from all the scattered Korean groups in Chungking, Loyang, Kweilin and other parts of China. The Youth Association was later to play a notable part in the creation and development of the Democratic People's Republic. By July, 1941, the Korean Volunteers were re-established and went into action with the establishment of the Anti-Fascist Alliance between the great powers.

It must be kept in mind that thousands among the Korean exiles did not wait for units to be formed in the areas where they lived. They joined the Red Army in the early days, took part in the Long March from Kiangsi to Yen-an, joined the Chinese Communist Party and identified themselves completely with the Chinese revolution.

Chinese and Koreans fought, suffered and died together and, when necessary, gladly for each other. A number of Chinese and Koreans who later took part in the cease-fire talks fought side by side for almost two decades in a struggle which for bitterness and hardships on the one hand, and selfless comradeship-in-arms on the other, was monumental.

During these stirring days of the Korean armed struggle against the Japanese abroad, what was happening in Korea? As Japan prepared to enlarge the war against China into a war against the whole of East Asia and take on America and Great Britain as well, the Korean people were ground even further into the dust. The people were as obdurate as ever. A new wave of cultural suppression started as early as 1938.

The new cultural suppression policy kept pace with Japanese war preparations. By 1940 the Korean language was completely suppressed. Under the "Security Maintenance Act" everything con-

nected with Korean national culture was banned. No books or magazines could be published in anything but Japanese. Korean language books were banned from sale. Even the monthly literary journal, *National Literature*, had to be published in Japanese. In schools only the Japanese language was taught and used; children using even one word of Korean at their work or play would be heavily punished if overheard, or their parents fined, or both punishments inflicted.

By August 10, 1940, a new decree was introduced forcing all Koreans to change their names into Japanese. Japanese police scoured the villages and if the peasants could not choose a name quickly enough the police chose one for them. The purpose was to give the police still greater control over every individual, to be able to compile completely new records with every person tabulated in precise characters that the Japanese could understand. Even the tiniest hamlet had a Japanese police station and it was comparatively easy to enforce their policies.

Koreans were humiliated at every turn. Even the traditional, graceful white clothes they had worn for centuries had to be discarded. Men and women alike were forced to wear standard, drab, baggy, dun-coloured trousers and jackets instead of their long, comely gowns. This was one of the most humiliating acts of all and one which aroused the bitterest hatred in the heart of every Korean – the women especially towards their occupiers.

The overwhelming majority of writers and intellectuals steadfastly resisted taking any part in the move to obliterate Korean culture. Only a handful of writers and historians collaborated and later sought protection with the Rhee government.

The situation on the economic front was parallel to that on the cultural front. From 1940 the Japanese established a “General Federation of Overall Mobilisation” to co-ordinate the myriad different organisations set up to drain the very life blood out of the people in various forms of taxes and tribute. These were 60 different forms of contributions which people had to make to one or another of the organisations in the “General Federation.” Collection was organised right down to village and even family levels with a Japanese-nominated head of each 12 families responsible for turning in the tribute. In effect, everything a peasant could grow, all his rice, wheat, millet and maize, all his potatoes, the produce from his cattle, pigs and poultry if he had any, and eventually his capital stock

as well, disappeared from 1940 onwards into the maw of the insatiable Japanese war machine. Not only the produce from the tiny farms had to be handed over, but each peasant had to contribute set quotas of grass roots for fertiliser, had to put in hours of back-breaking work daily in the forests, digging out pine-tree roots which the Japanese turned into lubricating oil.

Each household had to give up any precious metals or ornaments it possessed and as time went on, its brass cooking and eating pots and the hair from wives' and daughters' heads. Virtually the entire rice output went to Japan and even the best restaurants in Seoul – unless the diners were Japanese – served a thin, watery gruel with scarcely a grain of rice in it. The peasant youth were conscripted into the Japanese army.

By the 1940's in Manchuria, the former guerrilla units were already arrayed in divisions and armies, engaging in positional warfare with the Japanese.

First-class officers had been trained on the field of battle, combat-hardened troops were ready to do battle on their own or even at times, on the enemy's terms.

In North China the Korean Youth Association developed their organisation in July 1942 into the "Korean Independence League" a broad organisation which allied several hundred thousand Koreans living in North China (apart from Manchuria) into united front activity against the Japanese. The League became an important wing of the whole Korean national liberation movement and was headed by Kim Doo-bong, now Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly, and Choi Chang-ik, now Minister of Finance in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The Korean Volunteers became the military counter-part of the Independence League in the North and in order to train new cadres a Korean Revolutionary Military and Political Institute was set up on Chinese soil.¹

The rapid hammer blows which the Soviet Army aimed at the famed, so-called elite Japanese Kwantung Army in August, 1945, broke the 40 years yoke of Japanese imperialism in Korea and made

¹ I have drawn heavily from the Chinese translation of Chol Chang-ik's "History of the National Liberation Struggle In Korea" in preparing the historical pre-liberation background. – Author.

possible the realisation of the united front program, at least in the northern part of the country. Koreans flocked back to their fatherland after August 15, 1945, but many stayed also, to help the Chinese Communist armies defeat the American-trained and equipped divisions of Chiang Kai-shek which poured into Manchuria aboard American transport planes and which dealt with the people in the same manner as the Japanese had done.

In the as-yet-unwritten history of the final stages of the Liberation War in China, Korean forces played an important role. Many of the best cadres in the Korean armed forces did not return to their Fatherland until Manchuria and North China were cleared of Kuomintang troops and the victory of the Chinese People's Liberation Army was assured. There were many who returned just in time to take up arms again in defence of their own territory at the 38th parallel. They were soon joined by their comrades-in-arms redeeming pledges sealed in blood on countless battlefields in China. Koreans and Chinese fought as one against imperialism in China; Chinese and Koreans fought as one against imperialism in Korea. When Chiang Kai-shek's hordes threatened the families of Chinese officers and cadres in the North-east in 1946-47, many of these families found sanctuary in North Korea. When the American and Rhee forces were murdering and torturing families of cadres of North Korea in the autumn of 1950, as many as possible were evacuated over the Yalu into Manchuria. The Chinese People's Volunteers were doing more than defending China's frontiers when they moved across the Yalu into Korea. They were continuing a twenty years' revolutionary comradeship-in-arms, the like of which the world had never seen before between two countries.

Chapter 2

LIBERATION

When the Japanese capitulated on August 15, 1945, Soviet troops were already on Korean soil. The bright new day for which Korean patriots had worked, organised and fought for 40 years was about to dawn. Overnight the first great symbol of freedom appeared. Throughout Korea in every town and village, Koreans discarded their drab, ungainly Japanese-imposed dress and appeared in their graceful, snow-white summer garments in a spontaneous salute to liberation.

The commander of the Soviet forces, Guard Colonel-General Chistiakov, captured the imagination of all when he issued the first proclamation of the Soviet Army in Korea. It read like a poem, an answer to the hopes that beat so strongly in Korean hearts for so long.

It was addressed:

TO THE KOREAN PEOPLE!

“The Soviet Army and Allied forces have driven the Japanese plunderers from Korea. Korea has become a country of freedom. However, this is only the first step in a new era of Korean history. An abundant fruitful orchard is the result of man’s effort and foresight. Therefore the happiness of the Korean people will only be achieved by the heroic efforts that you Korean people will exert. Remember those bitter days that you have suffered under Japanese rule. The very stones testify to your sufferings. You are all aware of the fact that the Japanese could afford to live in lofty, spacious pavilions, well-clad, well-fed, despising Koreans and humiliating Korean customs and culture. Such a past of slavery will never be repeated. Like a nightmare, this humiliating past has now disappeared forever.

“Korean people! Remember you have your future happiness in your own hands. You have attained liberty and independence. Now everything is up to you. The Soviet Army has paved the way and created the conditions for you Korean people, for the free and creative ventures you are bound to embark on. Koreans must make themselves the creators of their own happiness. The owners of mills and factories, the merchants and manufacturers will restore the factories, mills and enterprises which the Japanese have wrecked. They

will create new enterprises for production. The headquarters of the Soviet Army is fully prepared to safeguard in every possible way the property of all manufacturing facilities and ensure their normal functioning.

“Workers of Korea! Display your heroism and creative effort through your industry which is one of the most splendid characteristics of your race. Those who exert the most appropriate efforts in furthering the economic and cultural development of Korea by means of their own efforts will become the patriots and honoured citizens of Korea. Long live the Korean People!”

Under a war-time agreement between the Great Powers, the Soviet Army was to enter Korea to accept the surrender of the Japanese troops north of the 38th parallel; American forces were to accept the surrender south of the parallel. There was fairly heavy fighting in a few places when Soviet troops broke through into Korea. There was a severe battle at Chongjin, in which Soviet fleet units and planes took part, and there was vigorous resistance at other scattered points along the Soviet and Manchurian borders with Korea. How liberation came can best be described by recounting one of hundreds of eye-witness accounts from Koreans north of the parallel. Some accounts were more dramatic, some more prosaic but what happened in the little village of Tonglim, eight miles north of the city of Sunchon and about 40 miles north of Pyongyang, seems typical of what happened in villages throughout North Korea.

The Japanese in Tonglim knew by the early morning of the 15th that Soviet forces were in Korea and that Japan had capitulated, but the villagers first heard of it around 3 p.m. There was a skeleton youth organisation in the village and an underground representative of the Youth Association, referred to in the previous chapter. As it was the only organisation of any sort, it took the lead in the events which followed. A youth meeting was called in the afternoon of the 15th and a list of urgent tasks prepared and responsibilities allotted. One of the first things was to organise a mass meeting for that very night and even before that, flags and slogan-bearing banners had to be prepared.

Word was quickly passed and sewing circles were soon at work. By nightfall, the village square was packed with cheering, gay people already dressed in their traditional white, with scores of red flags and banners making a brave show. The youth organisers ran the meeting, but proposals as to the first steps to be taken came

from the crowd and everything was decided by a show of hands, with, of course, guidance from the platform.

Soviet troops were still fighting along the Yalu and at Chongjin. The Japanese had a full division of troops and air units at Pyongyang. At the meeting's close, however, the entire population of the village marched to the Japanese police station and after a short struggle in which the police chief fired on the crowd the Japanese were disarmed and locked up. The police station was taken over and a Korean guard was placed in charge. From there the crowd went to the village administration headquarters and dealt with the Japanese and puppets whom the Japanese had installed there. Korean flags were hoisted over the police station and other former Japanese offices. The local symbols of Japanese oppression were in the hands of the people by midnight. By next morning, plans had been approved for taking over the administration, registering all Japanese property and preventing sabotage and establishing contact with other villages and the district centre.

For the next few days Tonglim was a bustling bee-hive of committees and patriotic young people working almost 24 hours a day. Within three days the following tasks had been carried out.

The village school was open again with lessons conducted in Korean, from Korean text-books. This was of course not organised from Tonglim alone, but by working with other village committees. There were no Korean text-books as they had been banned and destroyed by the Japanese, but teachers, writers, historians and workers got together to produce within three days mimeographed sheets which could serve as text-books until policies and publishing houses could be organised. A village Self-Administration Committee had been set up as the local administrative organ. The rural bank was open for business again. The post office was also functioning and a bus service was organised between Tonglim and the nearest town; the train service between Tonglim and Sunchon was also restored.

The Tonglim Self-Administration Committee had established contact with other villages in the district and elected a district Self-Administration Committee. Every scrap of Japanese property in the district from factories down to pencils and note-paper and stocks of seed, were carefully registered in the Committee's register. Guards were posted in factories and buildings as a precaution against sabotage.

When the committee members of Tonglim had time to draw breath at the end of the first three days, they and their fellow citizens could survey with pride what had been done. Their faith in themselves was justified. There were those amongst them who doubted whether Koreans were capable of organising and administering. For 40 years they had been educated to believe that Koreans were an inferior people who had to be ruled by a “superior” race. The general population within those first few days of liberation could now see that Koreans could organise and run their lives without outside interference. The encouraging words of General Chistakov, which had reached them by this time, took on added meaning. This revived faith in their future was enormously strengthened too, by the knowledge that they would have powerful support from the Soviet Union, that such support was already on the horizon and would soon be felt throughout the land.

The fact that such a smooth take-over of power could be accomplished within a few days and that the day-to-day administration of the country was running smoothly in Korean hands, was a heavy blow for the national traitors and top collaborators whose excuse for treachery had always been that Koreans were an inferior, ignorant people incapable of running their own affairs.

Village and district committees were quickly set up by mutual agreement between the various political and social organisations which quickly sprang into being, the Peasants’ Associations, the Youth, and Women’s Leagues, the Communist Party and others. The Self-Administration Committees had the complete support of the people – or they were quickly changed until they did. The only people banned from taking part in the Committees or in taking over responsible administrative tasks under the Committees’ control were the out-and-out collaborationists. In general it was the young people that played the leading role, but their selfless energy inspired the whole population.

The majority of the population knew very little about Communism. In the first days after liberation, the pro-Japanese collaborators spread slanderous stories about what would happen when the Communists – in the shape of the Soviet Army – spread over the country. But doubts and fears dissolved like snow on a hot stove when Soviet troops actually appeared.

The only type of army the people knew was the Japanese Army – an inhuman, cold and brutal machine that ground Korean dignity

and individuality into the ground. Officers were aloof and unapproachable; the troops were themselves treated like animals and passed on the inhuman treatment they received to the Korean people. When Japanese troops entered a town or village, the people withdrew behind closed doors.

“When the huge columns of Soviet troops moved through Tonglim,” one old white-bearded resident told me, “we thought, ‘this is not an army. These are real people.’ Well,” he remembered, “it’s true, at first we were a little afraid. They looked so different to any people we had seen. They had big-noses, blue eyes and hair on their wrists. At least the Japanese soldiers looked more like us, with small noses, black eyes and black hair. But those soldiers from the first moment talked and laughed with the people. Within an hour or two, they were playing with the children and were using some Korean words they had learned on their way down from the north. And the children were trying to stumble over Russian words. When we saw them, we remembered the Soviet general’s speech. We knew it was right what he said about a rich new life ahead of us. We knew Communism must be all right and that we had powerful new friends.

“Even on that first day there was tremendous laughter and enthusiasm. All suspicions were gone. Our villagers gave the troops gifts of food and tobacco and the troops always gave something back in return. At first it was only the men and the children that turned out, because many of the women believed the stories spread by the reactionaries. But soon everybody was on the streets. I saw one woman running alongside a Soviet lad, stitching his torn tunic as he marched. Within one day, the women folk were helping the troops wash their clothes and darn their socks. How could such a thing have been possible with the Japanese? One old friend of mine had nothing to offer but a pipeful of tobacco to a Soviet soldier. The soldier pressed on him a packet of cigarettes in return, so my friend motioned him to wait while he went and borrowed a glass of paika (a Korean type of vodka). The soldier was very moved and then insisted my old friend should take his horse. My friend was very embarrassed and had great difficulty in refusing it.

“What pleased us most was the complete lack of racial feeling with the Soviet troops. They made us feel we were equals and friends immediately. We are rather a proud people, you must understand,” he said shyly, “perhaps some people think we are too proud,

but we feel that we have a tradition of honesty although we are a poor people. The thing which we hate most, is for people to show racial feeling, to despise us because we are Koreans. That is why we all hated the Japanese. The worst thing you can do to a Korean is to look down on him. But with the Soviet troops from the first few minutes we met them until the time they left our country, there were only language barriers between us. Otherwise we were like one family. Wherever there were Soviet troops, there was an accordion and you would find Koreans and Soviet troops singing together. We learned each other's songs. If Soviet troops were having a drink, they would invite us to join them. If a boy asked for a ride on a horse, he would be picked up and galloped away with a soldier's arm around him. One saw soldiers showing children how to take machine guns apart and put them together. If the children insisted they would even fire a few shots. You could really say that our hearts flowed into each other. They were simple people like us. Many people in our village thought that if Communism could produce such an army then it must be good. There was nothing stiff or inhuman about it.

“We saw how soldiers and officers mixed together as one, but yet if there was work to be done or some drill, then the soldiers obeyed their officers well. But still they behaved and looked like real people, not like machines. We saw that not only was it an army without race but also without feelings about rank.

“Another thing that was quite new to us was the fact that here was an army which did not come to steal from the people or even to live off the people. If they needed something which we could supply, then they bought and paid for it fairly. No soldier accepted a gift without giving something at least as valuable in return. One felt that this was really an army of liberation and not of suppression.”

There is no doubt that the bearing and attitude of the Soviet troops exercised an enormous influence on the people in the North. This was testified to by every person to whom I have spoken who was in the North at the time. It was a factor that no amount of American propaganda at that time or subsequently, could outweigh. The Soviet Army did not interfere with the civilian administration except to lend advisers when and where requested by the Korean authorities. There was no such thing as Soviet Military Government, no counterpart for the elaborate machinery the Americans had set up in the South to control every facet of the country's administration. Where

Soviet forces were garrisoned, there were one or two political commissars whose duties were strictly for their own units. But if a village or district Committee had some particularly difficult problem and wanted advice, they could usually go and talk matters over with the Soviet political commissars who would advise them in an informal way how such a situation could be handled. But the Soviet army made it quite clear from the first days that it had not come to take part in the administration of Korea. It limited itself to the agreed task of disarming Japanese troops north of the 38th parallel.

In the neighbouring town of Sunchon, the development was similar to that in Tonglim, with cultural life springing into creative activity immediately. A group of artists, writers and musicians organised a cultural committee without waiting for orders or guidance. The group was recognised by the Self-Administration Committee and was allotted the former Japanese theatre together with Japanese stocks of stage props and costumes. An orchestra and opera group were formed and by the time the Soviet troops entered Sunchon in early September, the group was able to present an unforgettable performance of the most dearly-loved of all Korean operas, the *Chun Hyang-chon* (of which more later).

The Japanese control was exercised more strongly and for a longer period in the case of Pyongyang which was an important garrison and air force headquarters in the North. The first concrete signs of liberation for the people of Pyongyang came on August 12, when Soviet planes appeared over the city and on the three succeeding days. No Japanese planes rose to meet them, which was an unusual occurrence. From the 12th onwards there was a tenseness, an expectancy that something dramatic would happen. But no immediate reactions followed the reading of the surrender proclamation over the radio. The event was so stupendous that people seemed stunned at first and could not grasp the fact that 40 years of servitude under the Japanese had suddenly come to an end. With Japanese troops, police and gendarmes still in the streets, the radio news hardly seemed to be true even.

Except for the universal, spontaneous act of appearing in white clothes again, there were no public demonstrations for the first few days. But there were secret meetings organised by Youth Association members; of students and illegal workers who had slipped back into the city from underground hideouts. The threads of organisations were picked up again and woven together.

There was a great food shortage in Pyongyang at the time of the surrender. Distribution of foodstuffs had been a Japanese monopoly and by the end of August with most of the supplies hidden in Japanese warehouses, food was only available at famine prices. A committee combed through the Japanese military warehouses and found enormous stocks of clothing, rice and other food which were immediately distributed to the people at nominal prices. Rice on the open market fell in one day from 300 won per bushel to 20.

When Soviet troops began to arrive in large numbers by train and started to mix with the people, there was the same acceptance of them as saviours, liberators and friends as described earlier in the country villages. Even the sophisticated Pyongyang citizens had never imagined an army could be like this one, soldiers simple, kindly and human, an army which did not come to suppress people but to encourage them to exert their best efforts to run their own affairs. Early in September, there was a great welcoming rally in the grounds of the Soongsil College, headed by a parade in which Pyongyang's citizens marched gaily together with blazing banners and welcoming slogans, Soviet infantry and motorised units at their head, in Pyongyang's greatest demonstration till that time.

Pyongyang was a rather unique city in North Korea and even in Korea as a whole. At the time of liberation it was, of course just another Korean city. There was no thought of a North and South Korea, no feeling that a second capital would be needed. It was simply one of the largest cities in Korea with a population of about 300,000. It gradually emerged as a centre later, when it was seen that a division along the 38th parallel would be in force for some time and when political parties and social organisations from the provinces began to hold their conferences there. Also it was the city chosen by General Chistiakov for his Command Headquarters. Although it was just another city, Pyongyang was the main stronghold of Christianity and of national capitalism in Korea. The two things went hand in hand.

In general there was little scope for national capitalism in Korea because of the almost complete Japanese monopoly in all fields. But in Pyongyang, there was a certain amount of light industry, cotton-weaving, small textile plants, shoe-making and other small manufacturing enterprises in the hands of Koreans and especially Korean Christians. Most of the latter were educated in American missionary schools, some of them in America itself – and certainly until the

outbreak of the Pacific war they held a privileged position in Korean society. Apart from the landlords, this tightly-welded national capitalist group in Pyongyang, highly susceptible to American influence, represented the only reactionary political grouping in the whole of North Korea. They had no counterpart in other centres outside of Pyongyang.

Within a few days of liberation, two main political groupings clearly emerged. The first was centred around the Communist Party, the second around the nationalist conservative groups under the leadership of the Christian Nationalist, Cho Man-sik. (Later these groups fused into the Democratic Party of North Korea with Cho Man-sik as leader.) The workers, the peasants, the entire youth and most of the intellectuals rallied around the Communist Party; the landlords, manufacturers, merchants and a small part of the intellectuals supported the national conservative groups at this stage.

The Communist Party, organisationally, was at a great disadvantage as most of its leaders had been killed and those who had survived had not yet returned from exile or had just been released from long-years in gaol. Kim Il-sung had not yet returned to Korea in those early days after liberation. But four stalwart figures stepped forward to gather up the threads of organisation again. They were Chang Si-wu (now Minister of Commerce and Chief of Supply for the Korean People's Army) and Kim Yong-bum (both of whom had spent more than ten years in gaol as illegal political workers), Pak Den-ai and Hyun Chun-yun, both of whom had been doing underground party work. (Hyun Chun-yun was assassinated by a nationalist within a month of liberation and Kim Yong-bum died in 1949 as a result of his long years of maltreatment in Japanese gaols. Pak Den-ai, who was the wife of Kim Yong-bum, is now Secretary of the Central Committee of the Korean Workers' Party, a Stalin Peace Prize winner and a member of the Presidium of the Women's International Democratic Federation.)

Within ten days of the arrival of the first Soviet troops, leaders of the various political groups in South Pyongyang province met together in Pyongyang and by consultation among themselves set up a coalition, Temporary People's Political Committee of 30 members, 16 of whom were from groups supporting the Communists and 14 from those supporting the Nationalists. At the end of September, 100,000 of Pyongyang's citizens turned out to welcome Kim Il-sung returning from his 15-year-long heroic struggle as leader of the

armed resistance to the Japanese. His name had long since become legendary throughout Korea and all political groups turned out to pay him homage. Cho Man-sik made a powerful speech in which he hailed Kim Il-sung as the great national hero of Korean armed resistance. Towards the end of October, the People's Committees from all provinces met together in Pyongyang to establish a central organ to co-ordinate their activities. They set up a Temporary People's Political Committee of North Korea and elected Kim Il-sung chairman of what was the chief administrative organ of North Korea.

Within a few months of the arrival of American troops, MacArthur who was determined not to allow the Koreans any say in their own affairs but to deal with them as an enemy people to be ruled, had reported to his government that the unification of Korea was beyond his powers, and accordingly the problem was handed over in December, 1945, to the Moscow meeting of the foreign ministers of America, Britain and the U.S.S.R. Actually, of course, the problem of unification was one for the Korean people to solve. Had they been left alone by the Americans there was no problem. The Korean people had no desire for their country to be politically divided because of a military arrangement to facilitate the disarming of the Japanese. MacArthur knew he had no case for preventing the Korean people from uniting politically as the Soviet Union wanted, but he pretended it was a very complicated matter. The Americans were sure of a two-to-one vote in their favour for any policy they wished to put across at the Foreign Ministers' Conference.

As a result of the Moscow discussions, at which the Americans made it clear they would not allow the Koreans themselves to unify their country, it was decided to establish a Soviet-American Joint Commission to achieve the unification of the country. Specifically the Joint Commission was charged with the task of "working out, with the participation of the Korean democratic government and Korean democratic organisations, the assistance required to promote political, economic and social progress and to establish the national independence of Korea. These measures to be considered by the three powers in working out an agreement on trusteeship for Korea covering a period of up to five years."

This was not an ideal solution, but in view of Mac-Arthur's ruthless assault against democratic organisations in the South, the dissolution of the People's Committees and in view of the fact that the Americans had adopted the technique used so often later, of

transferring questions from their correct sphere of solution to one where the Americans were sure of a majority vote to rubberstamp their policies, it was the best solution available.

The Moscow decisions were first made known in a Moscow Radio broadcast on the night of December 27, 1945, followed by a Tass commentary which explained that American aims at the conference had been to secure a permanent division of the country and that the Joint Commission was the best compromise that could be salvaged at that time. By the following day the Communist Party, trade unions, youth committees and other social organisations began publicising the Moscow decisions. In meetings throughout the North, they urged support from the masses in town and country for the Joint Commission's efforts to unify North and South. The main line in these meetings was that if the Soviet Union had not agreed to the Joint Commission and had withdrawn from Korea immediately – as it was prepared to do if MacArthur had allowed the Koreans to run their own affairs – the Americans would overrun the whole country.

In the whole of North Korea there was only one prominent political personality who opposed the Moscow decisions and that was Cho Man-sik. He pushed the hypocritical line which the Americans had developed in the South to the effect that Korea needed unification and independence immediately and not in five years' time. (This was a scandalous piece of sabotage by the Americans who had consistently opposed unification both at the Moscow conference and at their military government headquarters in Seoul and who had themselves suggested the five-year trusteeship period.) In February, 1946, elections were held throughout the North for People's Committees at county levels. The four political parties in the North – the Communist Party, Democratic Party, New People's Party and the national religious Chung Wo Dong Party joined together in a United Front in July, 1946. A month later the Communist and New People's parties fused into the North Korean Workers' Party. By this time every party and every mass organisation in North Korea, including social and religious groups (both Christian and Buddhist), trade unions and peasant associations, youth and women's groups, students' and exiles' groups had unanimously gone on the record for unification of the country under the guidance of the Joint Commission.

One of the first tasks after the February 8 elections was to tackle the age-old problem of land reform. Immediately after the liberation, the Communist Party had raised the demand for a 30-70 distribution of harvests – 30% for the landlord and 70% for the peasants. Agriculture of course was almost exclusively on a landlord-peasant basis. In the days prior to the great squeeze on the country which the Japanese initiated just before the Pacific war, landlords had taken 80-90% of the peasants' crops. From 1941 onwards the Japanese took the 80-90% and the landlords were forbidden to collect rents. For the landlords after liberation, even 30% seemed generous and where the Peasants' Associations were strong enough, the landlords settled on that basis – until land reform started.

It was a measure which commanded immediate support from all but the handful of landlords who represented something like 5% of the rural population. Landlordism was a remnant of feudalism, a remnant which had to be swept away as the country marched forward on the road to a modern, planned economy. The People's Committee approved the request. A decree was signed. Meetings were held throughout the country. The newspapers and radio began to publicise the decision. The fate of landlordism was sealed.

Organisers and propaganda committees from the political parties and cultural organisations went to every province to help carry the reform through. In every village, as the propaganda teams passed through, land reform committees were set up comprising seven to nine persons elected by their fellows. Their job was to assess the total land and stock in the village confines and to carry out the actual distribution.

The landlords were in most cases given 24 hours to move out of their houses. They could take furniture and personal belongings, but not their stock or farm implements. Exceptions were made in cases where they had taken an active part in resistance to the Japanese, or where their sons or fathers had been killed or gaoled because of resistance.

Almost all the landlords were capitalists as well, with investments in small industry, commerce and transport and in most cases they moved from the countryside into property they owned in the cities.

The whole historic project was completed by March 12, within less than a week of its approval by the People's Committee head-

quarters. Within three months the new peasant proprietors had splendid red-sealed documents which confirmed them in possession of their own farms. Not in their wildest, most optimistic dreams did the peasants believe anything like this could happen within one year of liberation. Land reform brought the entire mass of the peasantry in North Korea firmly behind the People's Committees and it filled with yearning the hearts of peasants in the South for similar reforms. Doubtless it filled the hearts of the landlords in the South with quite different emotions.

The year 1946 saw great progress in the North. The Labour Law passed on June 24 established the eight-hour working day – with seven hours in mining and other dangerous or unhealthy occupations, and six hours for juveniles – paid annual holidays for two to four weeks, rest days on Sundays, equal pay for equal work regardless of age or sex, five weeks vacation on full pay for expectant mothers before child-birth and seven weeks afterwards, social insurance for all workers to which they contributed only one per cent of their wages and salaries. State and municipal concerns paid 15-18% of their total wage bills into social insurance, private firms paying 10-12%. Social insurance provided for sickness and old-age pensions, holiday funds and other social benefits. Pregnant women could be shifted to light work in their sixth month of pregnancy and paid at the average rate of earnings during the previous six months. For one year after childbirth, mothers must be granted two half-hour rest periods before and after lunch. Special benefits included cash allowances in case of funerals or other unexpected family misfortunes.

In the same month a law protecting women's rights was passed giving absolute equality in all economic, social and political fields to women. All occupations and professions were open to women. They were given the same rights to education and higher training. Forced marriages (which were the normal thing in most Asian countries) were abolished; women were given freedom of choice in marriage, the right to initiate divorce and to demand maintenance for children. Polygamy, concubinage, the sale of girls and women, prostitution and the geisha system were all abolished. Women received the same inheritance and property rights as men and in case of divorce would receive back the share of land brought into the marriage.

These two laws represented a revolution in themselves, brushing away in one broad sweep the remnants of feudalism in industrial

and social relationships. In one great step forward they placed North Korea amongst those countries with the most progressive social laws. They provided the inspiration for the speed with which the country's economy was rebuilt and the heroism and passion with which the North Koreans later defended these gains. They cleared the way too, for a modern planned economy. In August 1, 1946, the People's Committee Headquarters passed a decree nationalising all former Japanese property, industry, mining, transport, banking and communications.

Before liberation, 91.2% of the total investment in the Korean economy, excluding agriculture, was held by the Japanese. In industry the figure was 94% and it was 99% in banking, communications and mining. According to a very conservative estimate made in a U.S. State Department pamphlet on Korea, released in October 1947, the U.S. military government was still holding in South Korea as at September, 1947, "former Japanese properties in 24 basic industries which amount to 80% of the South Korean economy." (It was claimed later that these were gradually being handed over to the Rhee government. Actually Rhee was parcelling them out to political cronies on the understanding that American capital would be invited in to set them on their feet. By September, 1948, for instance, contracts had been signed between the U.S. and Rhee governments allowing American commercial firms to exploit the So Lim gold mine and the valuable San Dong tungsten mine. American capital was already dominant or in complete ownership in the Greater Korea Electric Co., Greater Korea Oil Tanker Co., Far Eastern Import and Export Co., Associated Mica Exploitation Co., Mining Exploitation Co, Mining Development Co., and many others. American firms had the sole right to exploit, produce, distribute, fix rationing and price policies for coal and petroleum products in South Korea. American capital in fact replaced Japanese and the workers had about the same rights and conditions as under the Japanese. Small wonder that the Americans found "difficulties" in the way of uniting North and South.

In the North, Japanese industry and property had nominally been taken over by the Soviet commander, but in fact from the very first days of liberation, they were being administered and worked by Koreans for Korea. As soon as the nationalisation decree was passed, the Soviet commander formally handed over to the North Korean People's Committee the entire Japanese assets in North Ko-

rea. Local Korean capitalists and industrialists, unless they had been active collaborators with the Japanese, were allowed to keep their enterprises and were given financial help to develop them.

In the last days before the Japanese surrendered and on August 15 itself, they had carried out large-scale demolitions and sabotage. By the end of 1946, many of these enterprises had been fully rehabilitated. With the nationalisation and new labour laws, the stage was set for the first one-year economic plan, which went into effect in February 1947. It was aimed to restore the major enterprises, to double the 1946 level of production and to increase labour productivity by 48%.

The plan was successful beyond the best expectations. Industrial production was more than doubled. All the major enterprises were fully restored. Korea began to produce for the first time rolled steel products, copper wire, chemicals and other products of heavy industry. North Korea by the end of 1947 was on the road to a planned economy. The one-year plan was followed by a two-year plan for 1948-49 and this by another plan which was interrupted when hostilities broke out in June 1950.

By the end of 1949, industrial production was four times greater than the 1946 level, machine production was half as much again as under the last year of Japanese occupation. Grain harvested in 1949 was 20% more than under the Japanese.

Astounding progress had been made in education. There was not a single university in North Korea under the Japanese. By the end of 1949, there were 15, including the beautiful Kim Il-sung University at Pyongyang. There were 18 times as many primary schools and 17 times as many primary students compared to pre-liberation, 20 times as many elementary schools and 23 times as many students, 12 times as many schools and institutes of higher learning and ten times as many students.

In the South the picture was precisely the opposite. The Americans had no interest in seeing local industry prosper – except those connected with exploiting the natural resources which were in American hands and exploited for American needs. Production of machinery dwindled to 5% of the level under the Japanese; the total number of industrial enterprises shrank to 36% of the pre-liberation figure by mid-1949. The total acreage of crops also diminished tremendously, partly due to the policy of clearing tens of thousands of peasant families out of areas suspected of harbouring guerrillas,

partly by the merciless policy of tax in kind and other compulsory grain contributions which forced many peasants off the land.

It should perhaps be explained here why the Temporary People's Committee was still the supreme power in North Korea up till the time the reforms mentioned above were carried out. The People's Committees, as we have seen, were set up first on a village and district basis, then elected on a county and provincial basis from which the Temporary People's Committee and later the People's Committee for North Korea were elected. It had been hoped parallel committees would be elected in the South to form a provisional administration until nation-wide elections could be held. Politically there was no North Korea and South Korea until the Americans carried out separate elections in South Korea in May 1948. In the North where the overwhelming majority of the people favoured peaceful political unification, there could be no question of holding elections for a legislature in the North alone. This would be taking the first step to make the division at the 38th parallel a permanent one. At the time of which I am now writing, that is 1946-47, the Joint Commission was still supposed to be trying to unify the country on the basis of the expressed wishes of the majority of the people.

Representatives of all political parties, social organisations and delegates from district and provincial People's Committees of North Korea took part in a conference in Pyongyang in March 1947 and set up the North Korean People's Conference. A drafting committee was elected by the Conference to draw up a provisional constitution for a Korean People's Republic.

The constitution which was drafted called for the setting up of the Korean Democratic People's Republic with Seoul as capital. Sovereign power rests with the people and is based on the Supreme People's Council which is the highest organ of the People's Committees – themselves local sovereign powers. All representative organs, from the People's Committees up to the Supreme People's Council, are elected by the free will of the people exercised through direct secret ballot. Every person of either sex over the age of 20 has the right to vote and to be elected, Committee members at any level may be recalled in case he or she is found to be irresponsible in carrying out assigned tasks. Freedom of press, speech, organisation, assembly, demonstration and freedom of religious expression are guaranteed. Also security of the home and secrecy of mails. Habeas Corpus is recognised and arrests can only be carried out after

court decisions or by procurator's order.

Primary education is compulsory and the State guarantees assistance for higher education. Parents are responsible for the care of their children, including children born out of wedlock or the children of only one of the parties to a marriage. No discrimination against children born out of wedlock is permissible. Minorities have the same rights as Koreans and the right to speak their mother tongue and develop their own culture.

In the economic field, all the means of production belong to the State, municipal, public or cooperative organs, or to private individuals. Mineral or other underground resources, forests, rivers, mining enterprises, banking, railways, canals, irrigation works, navigation, waterworks, natural power, former Japanese-owned enterprises and those owned by national traitors belong to the State. Foreign trade is conducted by the State or under State direction. The land belongs to those who cultivate it, with a maximum of 20 acres per household. (The general maximum is five acres, but up to 20 acres are allowed in case of large families or poor land.) The State and cooperatives have the right to own and cultivate land.

Individual ownership of land, stock, agricultural implements and other means of production, of small industries and enterprises, houses, facilities, furnishings and personal bank deposits are guaranteed and protected by law. The State encourages individual initiative in production as well as the development of co-operatives. The State develops economic plans to utilise to the full the nation's resources. Workers of both sexes have the right to work, to paid leisure and social insurance. Women have equal rights in all fields with men.

The draft constitution embodied the dreams and hopes of generations of Koreans. It corresponded to the aspirations of the broadest mass of the people. It was circulated to every political party and social organisation both north and south of the parallel. In the North it was openly discussed. In the South, discussions had to be held in secret, but most of the political parties, the trade unions, peasant associations and other social, religious and cultural bodies discussed the draft and together with those in the North, submitted their resolutions of approval, comments and amendments. The constitution was to be adopted only after nation-wide general elections had been held.

But at this stage it is necessary to glance at developments south of the parallel since liberation.

Chapter 3

LIBERATION OR OCCUPATION?

Both north and south of the parallel, a great deal of the disarming of the Japanese garrison forces and police was done, in the early days after August 15, by the Korean people themselves. The People's Committees, which had been elected both north and south of the parallel, in composition and in action were democracy at work in the best sense of the term. They were of the people, chosen by the people and working for the people. In South Korea, for the three weeks prior to the American landing, it was the democratically elected People's Committees that virtually administered the country.

The Japanese were disarmed, except in Seoul and a few other centres. The people felt that for the first time in centuries they had power firmly in their hands. They awaited the arrival of the American forces to hand over their Japanese captives and expected the Americans to round up the Japanese in Seoul, arrest Governor-General Abe and the worst of the Korean traitors. On September 6, two days before the Americans landed, the People's Committees held a congress in Seoul, where measures were discussed to form a democratic republic of Korea, with the unification of the People's Committees north and south of the parallel as the first step. The future for a united, democratic Korea had never looked brighter than on September 6, 1945.

The next day a bucket of icy water was dashed in the eager faces of Korean patriots, While U.S. forces were still off the Korean coast, General MacArthur broadcast his Proclamations 1 and 2. The cold, steely wording of these documents was an ominous portent of things to come. They read like a funeral dirge to murdered hopes. Both were signed by MacArthur and were liberally sprinkled with his favourite pronouns "I" and "My."!

PROCLAMATION No. 1.

TO THE PEOPLE OF KOREA:

As Commander-in-Chief, United States Army Forces, Pacific, I do hereby proclaim as follows...

Article I

All powers of government over the territory of Korea south of 38 degrees north latitude and the people thereof will be for the present exercised under my authority.

Article II

Until further orders, all governmental, public and honorary functionaries and employees, as well as all officials and employees, paid or voluntary of all public utilities, services, including public welfare and public health, and all other persons engaged in essential services, shall continue to perform their usual functions and duties, and shall preserve and safeguard all records and property.

Article III

Your property rights will be respected. You will pursue your normal occupations, except as I shall otherwise order.

Article V

For all purposes during the military control, English will be the official language. In event of any ambiguity or diversity of interpretation or definition between any English and Korean or Japanese text, the English text shall prevail.

Article VI

Further proclamations, ordinances, regulations, notices, directives and enactments will be issued by me or under my authority, and will specify what is required of you. Given under my hand at Yokohama

This Seventh Day of September 1945,

Douglas MacArthur

General of the Army of the United States,
C-in-C, U.S. Army Forces, Pacific.

* *

PROCLAMATION No. 2.

To THE PEOPLE OF KOREA:

In order to make provision for the security of the armed forces under my command and for the maintenance of public peace, order and safety in the occupied area, as Commander-in Chief, United States Army Forces, Pacific, I do hereby proclaim as follows:

Any person who:

Violates the provisions of the Instrument of Surrender, or any proclamation, order, directive given under the authority of the Commander-in-Chief, United States Army Forces, Pacific, or does any act to the prejudice of the life, safety, or security of the persons or property of the United States or its Allies, or does any act calculated to disturb public peace and order, or prevent the administration of justice, or wilfully does any act hostile to the Allied Forces, shall, upon conviction by a Military Occupation Court, suffer death or such other punishment as the Court may determine.

Given under my hand at Yokohama

This Seventh Day of September 1945,

Douglas MacArthur

General of the Army of the United States
C-in-C, U.S. Army Forces, Pacific

For those who heard these, it was a stunning blow. And within a few days the proclamations were posted up all over the South in English and Korean.

Government officials to remain at their posts! They were all Japanese or Korean traitors. Throughout most of the country, they were locked up anyway – a fact which MacArthur must have known. Did the proclamations mean they were to be reinstated? English to be the sole official language! They had only just started to use their own language again. Now English was to be substituted for Japanese. Talk of death penalties! Or military government! Was this liberation? No mention of punishment of Japanese or collaborators! Did this not smack of American oppression to replace Japanese oppression? Or even American-Japanese collaboration to maintain oppression?

Within less than 24 hours there was a reaction to MacArthur's proclamation. While the American forces were still offshore, General Hodges (former commander of the U.S. 24th Corps on Okinawa) received a radiogram from Japanese Governor Abe, appeal-

ing for immediate help in Seoul, where, he complained, Communists and People's Committees were taking over. When the invasion fleet anchored in Inchon Harbour, a launch put out with an official aboard who demanded to inform General Hodges immediately about People's Committees and appealing for American protection against the Communists. The Japanese and their puppets would not have dared to make such approaches to their late enemies, had it not been for the line laid down by MacArthur.

One of Hodges' first acts was to demand that Koreans continue to obey Governor Abe and that all Japanese officials be retained or in case they had been dismissed, be restored to office.

Representatives of the People's Committees had met at Seoul soon after the Americans arrived and decided to organise a Korean People's Republic which it was hoped would attract support from the North. Such a proposal was supported by all the main political parties and social organisations. Syngman Rhee, who had arrived in the meantime from the United States where he had spent the previous 40 years; was invited to become the president of a provisional government which would arrange with the Committees in the North to hold nation-wide elections. Rhee, who one week after his arrival back in Korea, had organised a "Rapid Realisation of Korean Independence" party, declined to take part in such concrete steps towards real independence. He gave as his reason that it was "impractical" to have two sovereign powers. The U.S. Military governor, General Arnold, promptly disbanded the Korean People's Republic on the grounds that it was "detrimental" to USAMGIK (U.S. Military Government in Korea). Arnold then launched an all-out assault against the People's Committees. These latter, as in the North, were the concrete expression of democracy in Korea. They worked for the people and were accepted by the people. They were careful to act in a constitutional way. The leadership of the Committees leaned over backwards to avoid offending the stern edicts of USAMGIK. This did not save them.

Japanese-trained Korean police from USAMGIK, on instructions from Arnold disbanded the Committees, confiscated all their documents and, as early as 1945, started arresting some of the leaders. Many were returned to gaols from which they had only been recently released after years of imprisonment under the Japanese. USAMGIK was to be the sole administrator in South Korea and its

power was based at first on Japanese police and later on Japanese-trained Korean police.

Popular outcry in the first few weeks of the American occupation forced the Americans to revise their original plans for maintaining Japanese administrators and by the end of 1945 most of the latter had been shipped back to Japan. But the Korean quislings, the hated “janissaries” who had served the Japanese to suppress and torture their own people, now replaced the Japanese in all key positions in the USAMGIK administration, especially in the police, The deputy chief of Korean police, Choi Kyang-chin who worked under Colonel Maglin, the American police chief at USAMGIK was one of the highest ranking police officers under the Japanese. He was commissioned by Maglin to organise the new police force.

The Americans and Rhee from the first days based their strength on the pro-Japanese elements in the population – elements which owed in some cases their lives and in almost all cases their positions to protection by the Americans.

A typical incident occurred in Namwon in September 1945 within two weeks of the American landing. Koreans gathered together to demonstrate against the policy of maintaining Japanese police. When the demonstrators began to shout: “Down With the Japanese Police. We Don’t Want Japanese Police Again!” American Military police from the U.S. 6th division opened fire, killing three and wounding many more Koreans. A protest was lodged, but produced not even an enquiry.

The developments in South Korea from “liberation” to civil war will provide historians with several volumes and can only be briefly sketched here as a necessary background to the armistice talks which followed the civil war and American intervention. Documentation is available in the form of official reports from the Americans themselves, from United Nations Commissions and from even that portion of the press which Syngman Rhee permitted to survive in South Korea, to reveal the American policy of suppressing all democratic movements in South Korea, to make the division at the 38th parallel a permanent one; to install a regime hated by the Korean people but subservient to the aims of American imperialism. And the documentation is supported by masses of evidence from responsible witnesses, many of whom held high posts under the Americans and the Rhee government.

From the first days of the end of overt Japanese rule, the Koreans tried to assert their independence. There was naturally a trend to form political parties of every hue, but all devoted to the cause of a unified and democratic Korea. The matter of unification would have been a very simple one if the Americans had not decided to suppress the People's Committees and set up their own totally unnecessary military government as the supreme administration in South Korea. It would also have been a simple affair if the Americans had allowed those parties and organisations which supported unification to express their views to the Joint Commission.

National independence and national unity was the desire of the entire Korean people and it was the prime task of the Joint Commission to assist them attain these two prizes. But independence and unity were the last things the Americans wanted – and the things which the pro-Japanese collaborators feared most. The Americans knew that national unity meant real democracy in Korea; it meant the end of penetration by American capital and politically, as they saw it, it meant “Soviet influence” extended over the whole of Korea. The lowliest peasant who wanted land reform was, in American eyes, a conscious tool of “Soviet influence” and must be suppressed. For the collaborators, national unity on a democratic basis meant for many of them, that they would be swept out of office and into gaol. The Americans and the collaborators had identical interests in sabotaging the Moscow discussions by every means in their power.

The people in the South as in the North hailed the Moscow decisions to appoint a Joint Commission with enthusiasm. They had no doubt, that as the overwhelming majority of the people wanted a unified country, the Commission would lose no time in bringing this into effect. Every newspaper in South Korea, every political party with any mass following, every social organisation, every important figure in the cultural world was for unification. But a terror campaign was launched against these organisations, newspapers and individuals. Political figures were assassinated including – in the early days of the Commission's activities – Lyun Won-hung, leader of the middle-of-the-road Working People's Party. Gangs of thugs burst into newspaper offices and beat up editors, smashed up printing presses, confiscated editions carrying articles in support of unification. And always they acted under the protection of the police. The whole countryside was smothered with posters urging “Anti-

Unification” or “We Oppose Trusteeship” and time and again it was found that funds and paper come from USAMGIK. Of all the political parties operating in South Korea at that time, the only ones opposing unification were Syngman Rhee’s “Rapid Realisation of Korean Independence” party and the numerically and influentially unimportant “South Korean Democratic” party of the landlords and capitalists. Both these parties lacked mass support and were subsidised by the U.S. State Department.

Rhee’s status at this time needs some explanation. He had been given considerable publicity prior to his arrival in Korea, as a great patriot who – although he had spent several decades in the safety and comfort of the U.S.A. – had nevertheless always had the interests of his native land at heart. Throughout the war years the U.S. Office of War Information broadcasts to Korea kept Rhee’s name to the fore as Korea’s outstanding patriot. It was because of this prestige – albeit artificially created – that Rhee was offered the presidency of the short-lived first Korean People’s Republic. But Rhee declined this honour and for several months remained comparatively in the background of Korean politics.

The big issue, when he arrived in the country, was the patriotic movement against the Japanese and their collaborators in the administration. The universal slogan throughout the South at this time was “Oppose Pro-Japanese Collaborators and National Traitors.” But Rhee was in a position to know that it was on just those elements that the Americans were going to rely. Rhee had lived long enough in the U.S.A. to know that politics there were based on the coalition between strong-arm thugs and those who could give them protection. It needed no Kefauver Report² to teach Rhee that in America the capitalist system operated on a tight coalition between gangsters and congressmen, between crime and politics. The gangsters produced votes, the political bosses produced concessions and protection for crime.

Rhee found he had a ready-made team of strong-arm toughs at hand who badly needed protection. They were Japanese collaborators who occupied just those positions in the police and administra-

² The Kefauver Report produced in 1951 traced the very close connection between crime and politics, gangsters and politicians at almost every level of American public life. – Author.

tion where they could be of most use to Rhee. Let the fools go after mass support; Rhee would mobilise armed support. Rhee knew that USAMGIK aimed at putting all the pro- Japanese back into power and he knew that with his American backing, if he led a political party pledged to protect the collaborators they would be his slaves. He developed the slogan “Unity of All Koreans” which promised protection and salvation for the collaborationists. Let bygones be bygones, he said, let’s forgive and forget – which was sweet music in the ears of the traitors but not in the ears of the masses. Rhee captured intact however, a machine which was strong enough to challenge even the Americans on specific issues, particularly as the police knew that American protection might be withdrawn one day and they must rely exclusively on a local political power for their support. And so matters developed.

With Rhee as their chief political satrap the Americans developed a campaign against unification and Rhee had the police and gangs of thugs to support the campaign.

The Moscow decisions called for all democratic parties and organisations to be consulted on unification. A U.S. State Department brochure reported that “thirty-eight organisations in the North and 422 in South Korea submitted applications for consultation with the Joint Commission.” The report omits to mention that 95% of the organisations of the South were manufactured by the Americans or Rhee specifically to oppose unification and consisted often of only one or two members. Indeed one protest made by the Soviet delegate on the Commission was against the inclusion of the “Old Men’s Association Worrying About the Fate of Our Country” which had about six members.

In April 1947, Mr. Molotov was constrained to write to Secretary of State Marshall about the developments on unification. “The United States,” wrote Molotov, “has included seventeen political parties and social organisations opposed to the Moscow decisions in the list of their candidates for consultation in the establishment of a provisional government of Korea and has included three parties and organisations from our camp which whole-heartedly supports unification. It has excluded such organisations as the National Federation of South Korean Trade Unions, the Federation of the National League of Peasants, the Korean People’s Patriotic Party (a right-wing party on which the Chungking-sponsored provisional government of Korea in China was based), the Federation of Democratic

Youth Leagues, which comprise the largest social organisations in South Korea.” The trade unions, peasant associations, youth leagues and women’s federations (which were also excluded from expressing an opinion) represented about 90% of the organised citizens of South Korea.

For their terrorist activities the Americans, and later Rhee, had at their disposal armed thugs whom the Japanese had organised as so-called “anti-air raid corps,” but which in effect were plainclothes security police who worked directly, though unofficially under the regular police. They were available for any special work, from breaking up meetings to assassinations. They played the same role as Hitler’s storm-troops but without the distinguishing brown shirts.

At the end of 1946, USAMGIK had begun to organise a Korean “interim” government with an “interim” Legislative Assembly. The chief of government would still be General Arnold but a special position of Chief of Civil Administration was to be created, open to a Korean. In order to conform to the theory that Koreans were not fit to govern themselves, the person concerned would be nominated by the Military Governor and his power would be limited to advising the Military Governor. Half of the 140 members in the Assembly were nominated by General Arnold, the other half recommended by such political parties and organisations as wished to take part. The South Korean Workers’ Party which was formed on November 13, 1946, by fusing the Communist Party, the People’s Party and the New People’s Party, decided to boycott an Assembly which was to be a mockery of self-government. Rhee also took no part in the Interim Assembly. He preferred to remain in the background and consolidate his machine. He feared the Assembly would probably take some action against collaborators and he did not want to compromise himself at this stage. He was playing for much bigger stakes – for complete power when the Americans withdrew. The inaugural meeting of the Interim Assembly was held in Seoul on January 1, 1947.

A typical example of what was happening occurred at Pusan, during the performance of the most popular of all Korean traditional operas, the *Chun Hyang-chon*. The story of the opera, although traditional, was too close a reflection of the situation in South Korea at the time to please USAMGIK and the corrupt Korean satraps.

The son of a high government official, so the story goes, was on holiday with his father at Namwon, near the South Coast, when he

met a beautiful girl with whom he fell in love. The girl was the daughter of a geisha, and as such she automatically belonged to the lowest stratum of society as it existed in those days. The father forbade further meetings, the son was sent back to Seoul to study – but not before he had pledged his undying love to the lovely Chun Hyang-chon. Later a new mayor came to the city of Namwon. In ancient days, as in 1947 when the opera was produced at Pusan, a mayor bought his position at considerable cost and when he took up office he soaked the population to recover his investment with good interest. As soon as he arrived, as was customary, he had the most beautiful girls of the district rounded up and brought to him, so he could select the most palatable as mistresses. The beautiful Chun was brought forward but refused to accept the high honour offered her. Every pressure and inducement was brought to bear, but she still refused to go to bed with the mayor. Eventually she was brutally beaten, exposed in the public stocks and thrown into gaol.

Years passed. The mayor soaked the local population, the peasantry and the poor groaned in misery. One day the mayor was giving one of his frequent enormous feasts, for which the people paid, when a beggar-poet walked in. As was the custom, he was given a token meal and a glass of wine, and then he asked permission to read a poem. In the midst of the merry-making, the music and feasting, he recited: “One cask of this wine is equal to a thousand men’s blood. The songs are loud, but the sound of men’s curses, – though yet unheard, is still louder.” In the dramatic hush which followed the recitation of these lines, followers of the “beggar-poet” entered and arrested the corrupt mayor and his henchmen. The “beggar” was the son, who had completed his studies and been appointed to the very high position of Inspector-General and who had the right to investigate corruption throughout the land. And of course the opera ends with the girl released from prison and the lovers happily united in marriage.

It is a particularly beautiful opera, based on a legendary folk-tale which existed, in many variations, throughout Korea. And in the South, riddled with corruption after even less than two years of American occupation; it hit the mark exactly and was enthusiastically acclaimed because of its sharp tilt at current corruption. While the Pusan performance was in progress, thugs hurled dynamite on to the stage. Fortunately most of the performers were able to rush to the back of the stage before the explosion. Apart from the ballerina

Chang Choo-hua who had a leg badly burned and several others who had burst ear drums, no great damage was done. Sui Chang-sik (Under Secretary for the Interior) investigated the incident and protested in person to General Arnold, but as usual in such cases, no action was taken.

The cultural organisations had taken a strong stand for unification and did a great deal to popularise the Moscow decisions. In 1947, a general assault started against them and attacks on theatres, even in the heart of Seoul were frequent. The fact that the Koreans had their own Interim Assembly made no difference. Military government conducted a merciless campaign against Korean culture in almost all its manifestations and handed out draconian punishment for the slightest imaginable offences. C.I.C. spies attended all political meetings, all public performances and pointed the finger at those citizens whom they wanted the Koreans to arrest. Editors and journalists were constantly being arrested for the faintest criticism of USAMGIK policy. Pai Wun-su, for instance, editorial writer on the liberal *Jayu Shimun* (Free Press) was arrested for a mildly critical article which the court maintained was “detrimental to USAMGIK policy.”

In a summary trial with single prosecutor and judge, he was sentenced to three years’ imprisonment and a fine which equalled 40 years of his salary. Energetic action taken by the Lawyers’ League and some progressives succeeded in securing his release the day after he was sentenced. Yu Chin-oh, a brilliant young poet, was arrested for reading his own poem at a youth rally on the Seoul Sports Ground. It was a poem in praise of youth and was received with such acclamation that he read it a second time. He was immediately arrested and taken to the police station. The poet was sentenced to nine months, re-arrested a few months after he had served his sentence and executed in gaol in 1949.

Another of scores of cases in which the Civil Liberties Union was called to investigate was that of Kim Sun-nan, rated by many as Korea’s finest composer. The police were looking for him in 1947 and as they did not find him at home, they arrested his mother, sister and younger brother and tortured them to make them disclose the composer’s whereabouts. Kim Dong-sok, a leader of the Civil Liberties Union, was notified and took some samples of the musician’s work, including some symphonies and chamber music to Ely Haimowitz, chief of the music section of USAMGIK. Haimowitz

played some of the music over on his piano and was very impressed. “Who is this chap?” he asked, “where can I get hold of him?” Kim recounted the whole story and a shocked Haimowitz promised immediate action. He took Kim to one of his friends, a captain in the U.S. military police, where the story was repeated. Some enquiries were made and it was confirmed that the family had been arrested. Immediate action was promised to release the family and punish the Korean police responsible. Sure enough, a few days later, the family members were released.

Within a week, a pale and agitated-looking Haimowitz called on Kim Dong-sok. Kim asked why he was so upset and Haimowitz answered:

“I’m in serious trouble. Probably I’ll be court-martialled. Why didn’t you tell me that composer is a Communist?”

Kim told him that this was nonsense. The composer had never taken part in politics and was not a member of a political party.

“But he wrote the music to a communist song,” Haimowitz persisted, “and now I’ve been involved in protecting him. We’ve stirred up a regular hornet’s nest with the Korean police.”

Kim explained that the poem which the composer had set to music was a song of people’s resistance, written during the resistance to the Japanese. “Can you divide even music into red and white categories?” he demanded. Haimowitz grudgingly admitted that he personally did not accept such theories but added that he was in serious trouble.

He was not court-martialled but was shortly afterwards relieved of his post and sent back to the United States. When he arrived in San Francisco, the F.B.I. gave him a thorough overhauling on the grounds of suspected “Communist sympathies.” The composer, together with his family, managed to flee to the North before the police could lay hands on them again and Kim Sun-nan is now Vice-President of the Musicians League of North Korea.

These were the conditions prevailing in South Korea in 1947 while the Joint Commission was supposed to be trying to bring about the unification of the country. This was Korea under American military rule. These were the conditions which prompted a World Federation of Trade Unions delegation visiting South Korea to send an indignant protest to USAMGIK; in which they stated, among other things, that in South Korea “organised terror deprives the Korean people of their right to exercise freedom of speech, free-

dom of the press, freedom of political expression and freedom of trade union organisation.” (The W.F.T.U. was at that time, even in the western world, a “respectable” organisation with the British T.U.C. and the American C.I.O. affiliated. The same report praised conditions in the North. Among the delegates who signed the protest to USAMGIK was Bell of the British T.U.C.) They might well have added that any organisation and any individuals trying to carry out the Foreign Ministers’ Moscow decisions were subject to brutal police persecution.

The people who really controlled the land under the Americans were the police – the same police who controlled the country previously for the Japanese. But now they were promoted to leading posts, except at the highest level where they were bossed by Americans instead of Japanese. The same police arrested the same people as under the Japanese for the same “crimes.” They took particularly brutal revenge on those patriots who had taken part in removing them from office in the early days of liberation. It is difficult to choose from the enormous number of incidents which have come to my notice as having taken place under USAMGIK rule and there is space only to cite one which typifies the whole.

In 1947, in the small town of Jool Po, in Chulla province, a peasant was returning to his village in the outskirts of the town when he was stopped by the police. It was ten minutes after curfew time and he was warned he would be arrested if he repeated the offence. As he moved off from the police-box, the policeman fired at him and the bullet grazed his neck. The villagers were furious when they heard what had happened. Similar things had happened in the past; they had suffered a great deal from the police and they decided to make this incident the excuse for a showdown. Next day they caught two policemen patrolling the village street and locked them up as hostages. Then they appointed a delegation to go to the police station at Jool Po and talk matters over. The delegates said in effect: “We don’t want trouble. We want to get along with you, but let’s be reasonable. Don’t use arms against us. Give us this promise and we’ll release the two policemen we are holding.”

The police reply was prompt. They fired into the deputation and launched a bayonet charge at the delegates and the villagers who accompanied them. Dozens of peasants were killed and wounded. Before the dead and wounded had been carried back to their homes enraged villagers had rushed back and executed the two hostages.

Reinforced police bands then rounded up the entire population of several villages in the area including women, children and old people. Hundreds of people were herded into rice fields surrounded by armed police who beat the villagers unmercifully as they moved. Women were raped in front of their husbands and children and after raping, pointed sticks were thrust into their vaginas. The rest of the populace were forced to kneel on all fours and were ferociously beaten with rifle butts and heavy sticks. For several hours the fields ran with blood and echoed the screams of the tortured villagers. An American sergeant stationed in Jool Po witnessed part of the scene and reported it to his superiors. (The only result was that he was later transferred to Seoul.) After the beatings and sadistic tortures were finished, scores of people were arrested and flung into gaol. The villages from which they came were at first plundered and then burned to the ground.

A Korean doctor with a clinic in Jool Po and who was completely non-political, got into serious trouble for treating the victims. "How could I fail to treat the wounded?" he pleaded in defence later, "I am a doctor. There were dozens of violated women and bleeding children."

The police were furious with him, but could take no official action. Instead plain-clothed thugs were sent to deal with him. The doctor heard them enter his clinic and managed to escape through the back. He fled to the police to explain his case but they laughed at him. He went to the Chief Justice and the Chief Public Prosecutor of Chulla province, but they shrugged their shoulders and said in effect: "We are just as afraid of these thugs as you are, but we can do nothing." In despair he went to his own father-in-law, Kim Yong-moo, chief of the Supreme Court of South Korea, but the latter had to admit he was powerless to take any action. Finally he went to the Civil Liberties Union, still pleading in a bewildered way that he had only acted as a doctor trying to heal the wounded. The American sergeant was produced and he confirmed the whole affair, but no action could be taken. The doctor dared not return home for several months and when he finally went back to Jool Po, his clinic was completely wrecked.

The last year of American overt rule in Korea was 1947. By the middle of the following year the Rhee government was in power. But the pattern had already been set. There had been no liberation. The oppression remained the same as before, the change at the top

level was one of race only. Real power was exercised by the same police and the same thugs as formerly. Colonel William Maglin, chief of police at USAMGIK justified his policy of putting the Japanese-trained police back in office in an interview with the American writer Mark Gayn in the following words: "Many people question the wisdom of keeping men trained by the Japanese... We feel that if they did a good job for the Japanese, they would do a good job for us. It would be unjust to drive men trained by the Japanese out of the force." Of course, there is not a hint in Maglin's explanation that the wishes or feelings of the Korean people might be taken into account. What is good for us, the occupiers, is the thing that counts. Maglin's remarks typify the entire outlook of USAMGIK in its so-called "liberation" policy. The Public Prosecutor of Seoul city rounded off the Maglin policy by announcing that all Koreans arrested by the Japanese under the Peace Preservation Act and since released by the former People's Committees were liable to immediate re-arrest if located, for "criminal activities."

By the end of 1947, there was no choice for any Korean patriot. If he was for a free, independent and united Korea, he was necessarily an enemy of USAMGIK, and he had to decide to fight against it just as he had previously fought against the Japanese. From the USAMGIK viewpoint a patriot was considered just such a criminal as he had been considered by the Japanese and USAMGIK had exactly the same apparatus as its disposal, manned by mainly the same personnel, as the Japanese had had to deal with patriots. And USAMGIK used the apparatus in the same way.

Under these conditions it was impossible to expect the slightest success from the Joint Commission's supposed efforts to unite the country, but on which only the Soviet members were working for unification. The Commission was condemned in advance to failure because of overt sabotage by the Americans to whom unification meant the spreading of "Soviet influence" in the South, diminished chances for economic exploitation of the South and the loss of an important foothold in Asia, from which to launch a new war against People's China and the Soviet Union.

Chapter 4

KOREA DIVIDED

The Moscow decisions were not carried out. The Joint Commission failed in its task because of American sabotage and America was able to take the question of Korea to the United Nations where Truman was sure of an automatic majority vote of approval for whatever policies America wanted to carry out in Korea. Without even the formal consent of the Korean people, without even a sample test of Korean public opinion, the American delegates at U.N. sponsored the appointment of a U.N. Commission to come to Korea "to unify" the country through U.N.-controlled elections. The implication that Koreans could not arrange their own affairs was rejected by every political and social organisation in Korea except the same two parties that opposed the Moscow decisions. Koreans of every political colour except the Japanese collaborationists, on whom Rhee's party was based, and the Democratic Party based on the landlords who feared land reform, had been incensed by the antics of the American representatives on the Joint Commission. They had no faith that a U.N. Commission would produce any more positive results. They rejected with disgust and indignation the implication that they could not govern themselves. The greatest indignation was expressed throughout the country and in the majority of newspapers in South Korea when it became known that separate elections would be held in the South on May 10, 1948.

On the invitation of the Temporary People's Committee of North Korea, a conference was held in Pyongyang in April 1948 to discuss the question of the unification of North and South. This conference was of tremendous historic importance in view of those taking part in it and in relation to the decisions taken and subsequent events. Representatives of every political party except the two mentioned above, and of every social organisation in South Korea of any importance at all, took part in the conference. Numerically most of the parties from the South were moderate or right-wing, but in actual mass support probably the left-wing had the strongest participation. Korea is a country of workers and poor peasants with a comparatively small and weakly developed middle and capitalist class. The decisions of the historic Pyongyang conference were signed by delegates – in most cases the leaders – of the following

parties and organisations from South Korea who took part in the conference.

The Korean Independence Party (a right-wing party headed by Kim Ku, head of the Kuomintang-supported Korean provisional government set up in Chungking), Party of National Independence, Working People's Party (of which the founder was Lyun Won-hung, assassinated in Seoul), People's Republican Party, New Progressive Party, Social Democratic Party, Chung Do Party (national religious party), Democratic Korean Independence Party, Democratic Independence Party, Korean Peasants Party, Labouring Masses Party, Mass League Party and the extremely powerful South Korean Workers Party.

Organisations represented included the General Federation of Trade Unions, the Federation of Peasants Leagues, Democratic Patriotic Youth League (affiliated to the World Federation of Democratic Youth), Democratic Women's League, Federation of Cultural Leagues; League of Christians, League of Confucians, Association for the Unification of the Korean People, the South Korean Press Association and a score of other organisations. Many of these bodies were extremely right-wing but they were all genuinely interested in Korean unity. They represented more than 90% of all organised South Koreans; and most Koreans were members of some sort of organisation. The trade union and peasant organisations were the two most important mass organisations in both North and South, with the bulk of the workers and peasants enrolled in their ranks. All political and social organisations from the North also took part in the conference. Altogether delegates from 56 political and social organisations from both sides of the parallel, representing over 12,000,000 people – an overwhelming majority of the entire adult population of Korea – took part.

The decisions were announced in a communiqué on April 23 and read in part as follows: "In order to obtain information and discuss thereof, we representatives of political parties and social organisations of both South and North Korea have met for the first time since Korea was liberated from the Japanese and we note the fact that our country is still divided into two parts because of the temporary line at the 38th parallel..." (The decision then reproaches the Americans for having taken the question of unifying Korea to the U.N. for discussion without first having asked the consent of the Korean people.) "...The United States has used the Little Assembly

of the United Nations to decide to hold separate elections in the South to establish a so-called 'National Government' which in substance is bound to be a puppet regime. By this plan, the United States intends to divide this country at the 38th parallel. At present we are faced with the most critical moment in our history with such reactionaries as Li Seung-man (Syngman Rhee) and Kim Sung-su (leader of the landlord-capitalist Democratic Party) rampantly active in the South and supporting the American reactionary policy. We brand them as traitors and we will brand as traitors all those who collaborate with them. Because of these reactionaries, the South Korean people have been unable to obtain the precious privileges of democracy. On the other hand, in the North, which was liberated by the Soviet Army, the people are able to create what they desire and through the People's Committees which they established, they were able to realise democratic reforms and lay down a firm foundation for a sound national economy and revive our national culture. We are in firm opposition to the American policy of colonising backward countries and we oppose traitors and pro-Japanese who have now been established in power by the Americans. We are also opposed to the United Nations Commission to Korea which is designed to deceive the Korean people. In order to prevent the colonisation of our country by American imperialists, we, both South and North Korean political parties and organisations are united so that we can further develop a movement throughout the country to oppose separate elections and to support the Soviet proposals to establish a unified, independent country by having foreign troops withdrawn from Korea. To this end we will exert all our efforts."

This declaration was the authentic voice of the Korean people and it represented a most sweeping repudiation of American policies in South Korea. It cut through all the artificially created obstacles, all the hypocritical arguments and pretension of the Americans that the Koreans themselves did not know what they wanted. (This hypocrisy of the American position and their pretended sincere efforts for unification is exposed by the passing of the Korean Aid Bill by Congress in February 1950 when for the first time Congress went on the record as opposing unification – which in fact the State Department had been thwarting already for five years. The Aid Bill contained a proviso that aid would be terminated "in the event of the formation in the Republic of Korea (South Korea) of a coalition government which included one or more representatives of the

Communist Party or the party now in control of the government of North Korea.”)

The fact that right-wing parties and virtually every leading political figure from the South, some of whom the Americans had been grooming for top positions, took part in the conference and lent their prestige and names to denouncing American policy, was a bitter blow to USAMGIK. And bitterest blow of all was that the ageing, conservative elder statesman Kim Ku, who had headed the provisional government in Chungking and had great prestige among the conservatives, took part in the conference and signed the decisions.

During the conference sessions, the Seoul press carried practically no other news but the developments in Pyongyang. The U.N. Commission and its activities were ignored and all eyes were turned to Pyongyang where the greatest step forward had been taken to achieve real unity of the country. Despite the clear opposition in Korea and abroad to separate elections, the Americans went ahead with their plans as if no Pyongyang conference had taken place. (In the bogus Little Assembly which the Americans had manoeuvred into being at the U.N. to deprive the Soviet Union of a voice in deciding the Korean question, Chiang Kai-shek was the only one who strongly supported America in forcing separate elections in South Korea. Even Australia and Canada added their voices to that of India in vehemently opposing this measure to partition Korea permanently.)

The Rhee party machine was very active in the weeks preceding election day. Groups of the Security Corps visited every household and made sure that all voters had registered. On election day their job was to break the boycott which had been agreed on in Pyongyang, and force everybody to the polls. A couple of weeks before the elections, police chief Chang Tak-sang issued a police order that was posted up all over Seoul that no person could stand in the street for more than ten minutes. (This was to counteract the opposition street contact system for urging voters to boycott the elections.)

Rhee himself was standing for the East Gate district of Seoul. He had used his thugs to intimidate any potential opponents, but at the last moment, USAMGIK, on instructions from the U.S. Ambassador John Muccio, ordered an American-trained policeman, chief of the Investigation Bureau at USAMGIK, Choi Neung-chin to stand against Rhee. Choi obediently collected the necessary 200 signatures of sponsorship, but no sooner had he done so than he was attacked by Rhee thugs. He was given a severe beating and the

sponsorship signatures were stolen. Choi gave up at that point, glad to have escaped with his life. Rhee was elected unopposed and he knew perfectly well that the only chance he had to be elected was to stand unopposed. Even a hated police chief would have been elected ahead of Rhee. Any name at all put on the list would have overwhelmingly defeated Rhee so bitterly was he despised. Shortly after the elections, Choi Neung-chin was arrested and tortured to the point of death. Nothing could be done about it, because Rhee's capture of the strong-arm machinery was complete. USAMGIK had created something they could not destroy even had they wanted, without an open show of force. Rhee controlled all the Korean employees at USAMGIK, certainly all that held any responsible positions. These employees were terrified of what would happen to them after the Americans withdrew, with the double stigma of collaboration with the Japanese and with the Americans attached to them. Slavish support for Rhee was the only way out for them. They must sink or swim with Rhee and trust he could make good his promise to protect them. In given situations they would be more loyal to Rhee than to the Americans because they believed the Americans would leave sooner or later. And any that had wrong conceptions of where their loyalty should be, were soon beaten into shape by Rhee's strong-arm thugs.

According to reports from American correspondents who observed the elections, at least 500 people were killed on election day, some for refusing to go to the polls, while others lost their lives in riots at the polling booths. The percentage of those who actually voted on July 10, 1948, will probably never be known. On Chejoo island with a population of 350,000 and strong revolutionary traditions, nobody voted. Mr. Patterson, Canadian representative on the U.N. Commission (who later resigned in disgust and was not replaced by the Canadian government) called on Kim Dong-sok at the Civil Liberties Union a few days after the election to protest at the attitude of the Seoul press which had unanimously attacked the separate elections.

"According to the Korean press," Patterson said, "the whole population was against separate elections. If that is so how do they explain that almost 50% of eligible voters actually voted."

The following day USAMGIK issued a statement that the elections had taken place in a "free" atmosphere and that more than 90% had voted. But USAMGIK could not escape the fact that the

main political parties and organisations, even those led by Kim Ku and the State Department choice for president, Kim Kyu-sik, openly boycotted the elections. Two hundred deputies were elected and a further 100 places were “reserved” for future deputies from the North. During the elections those that took part had bitter experience of what it meant to oppose Rhee and his thugs. There were few among those elected who were prepared to oppose the nomination of Rhee for President. Rhee had himself elected President of the “Republic of Greater Korea” for four years with virtually dictatorial powers. He had the right to nominate the Prime Minister and Cabinet without reference to the Assembly.

Rhee could now employ the regular police to carry out openly and “legally” the arrests and torturing that his thugs had been doing unofficially.

In June another unification meeting between the same political and social organisations from North and South as had met in Pyongyang in April, was held at Haeju, just north of the 38th parallel. At this meeting it was decided to carry out nation-wide elections in August under the auspices of the political parties each side of the parallel. A regular election campaign was waged in the South despite a terrorist campaign by USAMGIK and Rhee police against those taking part. Election meetings took place, sometimes in the open, sometimes in secret, and despite the terrorism the elections were held. In the South 1,080 candidates were nominated and 1,002 actually stood for office. Voting was by secret ballot and was supervised by representatives of the political parties which attended the Haeju and Pyongyang conferences. Of the 8,681,746 eligible voters in the South, 6,732,407 or 77.2% actually voted. In the North there was a 99% poll. The South elected 360 deputies, the North 212 in strict proportion to population. The election took place on August 25 and the deputies from the South went to Pyongyang where on September 8, Kim Il-sung was unanimously elected as President of the Korean Democratic People’s Republic. The Cabinet elected by 572 deputies is virtually the same as that in office at the time of writing, except for some cases where Cabinet members have been killed in the war.

The authority of the Kim Il-sung government stems directly from the Supreme People’s Assembly elected by the people throughout the whole of Korea by secret ballot in elections in which

parties of every political hue could and did take part. Among the Cabinet members several were from South Korea.

One of the first acts of the Supreme People's Assembly was to send a request to both occupying powers informing them that the Democratic People's Republic was founded and requesting the occupying powers to withdraw their forces. The formal request was handed in at the respective headquarters in Seoul and Pyongyang. The Soviet commander was prompt in replying to greet the foundation of the K.D.P.R. and promising that Soviet troops would be withdrawn. The Americans refused. After several proposals by the Soviet representatives for simultaneous withdrawal of all forces had been rejected by the U.S.A., Soviet forces withdrew from Korea in December 1948.

In the meantime Rhee was consolidating his power and attempting to liquidate by force all who opposed him. By the beginning of 1949, a person could be arrested merely for affiliation with a trade union, the Writers League, Lawyers League, Musicians Union, or any of the mass organisations, all of which without exception supported unity and the government in the North. The following are a few cases of early victims to the Rhee government.

Kim Tai-jun, unchallenged as the foremost historian in Korea. He was a specialist in Korean history, literature and literary criticism, a lecturer at Seoul University and an outstanding figure in the Korean cultural world. He was arrested in 1949, court-martialled and shot without any reason being given. (Kim Dong-sok, who was arrested shortly afterwards and tortured by being submerged in a bath of water until he went through the agonies of drowning, later revived and the process repeated, told me later that the question constantly put him when he recovered consciousness, was: "Will you renounce your membership of the Writers League?" Eventually he was told, "If you don't give up the Writers League you'll be handed over to the military police and shot like Kim Tai-jun." This was the only clue as to why Kim Tai-jun was murdered. Kim Dong-sok was eventually released and escaped to the North.)

Yu Dong-jun. Arrested in 1948 because he was a prominent member of the Lawyers League. He was tortured at the Yung Deung-po, or South Seoul police station. Eventually petrol was poured over him and he was burned alive.

Kim Ku, mentioned earlier as the Korean elder statesman who had headed the Chungking provisional government. The Americans

had great hopes of making him one of their chief stooges, but Kim Ku was above all a patriot. He boycotted the Rhee election and took part in the Pyongyang and Haeju conferences. He was assassinated in the streets of Seoul in 1949 by a Lieutenant An Do-hai, of Rhee's army. No action was taken against the assassin.

In the early summer of 1949, Rhee drew up a blacklist of writers, dramatists, poets, artists and composers which, with the exception of one reactionary historical novelist, included every name of importance in the cultural field. The list was divided into three categories. Those in "A" group, which included the *avant-garde* of Korea's cultural renaissance, were to be arrested, their publications seized and confiscated. Only three of about 30 in the "A" category managed to go underground, the rest were arrested. Among those who escaped was the poet Sui Chang-sik, mentioned earlier. His books were seized from the bookshops, including 3,000 newly published copies of his translation of Hamlet. A number of those arrested died from torture, some were executed, others were liberated when the Korean People's Army entered Seoul. Those in "B" category were not arrested but were forbidden to write or take any part in cultural activity. Those "fortunate" enough to be in "C" category were allowed "conditional" activity as long as they submitted everything they wrote to "voluntary censorship." Rhee, in fact carried out the Japanese cultural suppression policy by other means.

The story of the English-language *Seoul Times* provides an example of the freedom of the press as understood by USAMGIK and Rhee. It was founded by a French-educated businessman, Min Won-sok who also owned the *Chosen Eilbo* (Korean Daily) and for a time was Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Rhee government. It was edited in 1949 by Sui Chang-sik until it was suppressed by Rhee's Minister of the Interior on the grounds that it had published articles critical of the Rhee government. (Sui was shortly afterwards blacklisted and went underground.) It was allowed to function again under a new and completely non-political editor, Li In-soo, a graduate of London University. Later the paper was completely suppressed and Li In-soo was executed.

Even the United Nations Commission was constrained to report in August 1949 that under Rhee's "National Peace Protection Act", 89,710 people were arrested in South Korea in the eight months prior to April 30, 1949.

But up to the period the U.N.C. covered, Rhee was only dabbling in suppression compared to what came after the campaign for unification gathered momentum.

Leaders of political parties and social organisations met again in Pyongyang on June 25, 1949, and organised the Fatherland Unification Democratic Front. They issued a statement requesting the unification of Korea by peaceful means and appealed to Korean people of all parties, north and south of the parallel to support them. "By peaceful means" was a necessary clause as by this time already, Rhee was making sabre-rattling speeches about unifying the country by force of arms.

A powerful movement to support the Unification Front was started in the South and Rhee unleashed the full force of his terrorist bands against those taking part. It is estimated that altogether 190,000 South Koreans were tortured to death or executed outright for taking part in the movement demanding political union. Out of the Rhee suppression campaigns grew armed resistance and the partisan movement, with still more suppressions. Meanwhile the country grew poorer and poorer. The administration was hopelessly corrupt. The rice was still shipped to Japan as under the Japanese administration, the workers ate less and less, the peasants could not afford to eat the food they grew. Spiralling inflation made it impossible for industrial or white-collar workers to live on their wages and salaries.

Even by June 2, 1949, things had reached such a pass economically that the South Korean National Assembly passed a resolution demanding the resignation of the Cabinet en bloc. Among the causes of dissatisfaction listed were corruption, inflation, inability to quell the growing partisan movements and the constant desertion of army personnel to the North. The government refused to resign. To divert public attention it increased the number of armed clashes along the parallel and intensified suppression below the parallel. Some figures are available which give a slight estimate of the scope of the anti-guerrilla operations. In April 1948 when Rhee toughs were forcing the populace to register for the forthcoming elections, the people of Chejoo island refused to have anything to do with them. They refused to register and made it equally clear that they would refuse to vote. When force was used against them they resisted. Regular troops were then sent to deal with them, but the first unit sent against them from across the water at Yosu (the 14th or

Yosu regiment) refused to shoot down their own people, refused even to go to Chejoo. They mutinied.

Eventually other units were sent to Chejoo and a large-scale massacre started. According to figures released by the headquarters of the R.O.K. (Republic of Korea) Army stationed at Chejoo, the following results were achieved. Of 57,000 houses on the island, 20,000 burned down. 33,000 persons were killed, 17,000 oxen, 22,000 pigs and 7,000 horses were destroyed by April 1949.

Because of the support the mutineering soldiers got from the local inhabitants, the cities of Yosu, Soonchun, Koorye and the villages surrounding them were burned down and thousands of people massacred on the mainland as well. According to the precise figures of the R.O.K. Army, 8,564 houses were burned down in the Yosu suppression campaign. Among documents captured in Seoul in June 1950, was a laconic report from an American C.I.C. officer on the execution of troops from the Yosu regiment. The report is headed, No. 14. Report of 971st C.I.C. Detachment, Taejon district of the U.S. Army and dated January, 1949. Sub-headed "Confidential", Subject. Execution of Military Prisoners, Taejon (1040-1090). Summary of Information.

"On 27 1000 January 1949, execution of military prisoners was to be held just outside Camp Taejon. Upon arrival at the scene a lack of preparation was noticed. At approximately 1030, 20 prisoners were blindfolded and led to the post to be tied. No medical officer was on the scene and only ten riflemen to fire on the 20 prisoners. The Adviser (American) to the 2nd Korean Army Brigade immediately stopped the executions and advised to have a medical officer present and to either get ten more riflemen or execute ten prisoners at a time. Ten prisoners were untied and led to the rear of the firing point. A medical officer and ten riflemen were summoned. At approximately 1130 final preparations were completed and the executions were started.

"The ten prisoners were then retied to the post and the riflemen were assigned a post to fire upon. Each fired the allotted rounds into the prisoners assigned. One clip of M.I. was used in each volley. Then the Kun Ki Dai officer in charge of the executions went down the line and fired from one to three rounds in the bodies that showed signs of life. In some cases he had to fire on them the second time, making three times in all. After each group was pronounced dead by the medical officer, who merely went part of the way down the line

and pointed to the dead and the live, the bodies were carried from the posts to the pit at the side of the execution scene. Firing was heard in the pit, evidently on those that still showed signs of life.

“Four groups were executed, the first totalling twenty, the second eighteen, the third eighteen and the fourth thirteen. Totalling sixty-nine in all. After the first group was executed at approximately 1130 the rest of the executions followed in order and at 1215, all were executed.

“All prisoners were from the 14th (Yosu) regiment from the Yosu-Sunchon area. They all appeared to be young and estimated overall average age of eighteen years of age. Prisoners were shoeless and were clad in underwear and some in fatigues. (In the middle of a bitter winter. The R.O.K. officer doubtless did not want good clothing ruined by bullets and blood, or shoes to be buried underground. – Author.)

“After the first group, which was led to the post from the back of the firing-point, the rest were trucked to the posts, then tied by a detail prearranged.

“One very young prisoner tied to the post was singing the Communist battle song, the last group as they were trucked to the posts sang a loyal Korean army song. Most all prisoners were pleading that they were innocent.”

“DISTRIBUTION”

G-2 U.S.A.F.I.K.....2

“File.....2”

They were just 69 of thousands of Korean youngsters butchered for having refused to shoot down their own countrymen. By the end of July 1949, according to data from official publications supported by records kept by political and social organisations, 478,000 people had been arrested of whom 154,000 were in prisons and another 93,000 executed or murdered. Nineteen members of the right-wing Assembly were amongst those arrested. In the first few months of 1949, 1,642 professors and high school teachers had been dismissed from their posts and many of them arrested, according to figures published in the *Seoul Oriental Daily* on March 16, 1949. In the first three months of 1949, out of 2,766 cases of juvenile crime in the main cities of the South, 1,800 cases were of alleged violations of the National Security Law or of Military Government ordinances. By September of the same year, 700,000 peasants had been driven

from their homes and farmlands on the pretext that somewhere, somehow, sometime, they had collaborated with the guerrillas and patriots working for the unification of the country. This was the handsome balance sheet of the first year of Syngman Rhee rule.

Two regular army divisions were constantly in action against the guerrillas throughout 1949. Kim Hyo-suk, who as Minister of the Interior was intimately connected with all the repressive campaigns, quotes from frequent instructions he received from Roberts, Ambassador Muccio and Rhee. It is true that he quotes from memory, but the explanations he gives fit in only too precisely with actual events and known data to be far wrong. He was constantly being urged to clean up the rear as a first essential to launching any large-scale invasion of the North. He recounts a conference held in Roberts' headquarters in October 1949 at which Roberts gave the following instructions.

“Villages in the mountainous districts within the guerrilla areas which can supply the partisans with clothes or provisions or can be robbed of them by the partisans, must be completely burned down. Even though there is no immediate danger, if the guerrillas could possibly gain a footing in the village, it must be evacuated so that the partisans can be isolated.” As a result, states Kim, “tens of thousands of houses were burned down and tens of thousands of families were ‘evacuated’ from the guerrilla areas... The figure amounted to 50,000 households in all and hundreds of thousands of inhabitants were driven out of their homes and turned into destitutes.” The former minister then relates an incident in which the entire population of a small village were machine-gunned and buried in a large pit, by a company of a R.O.K. Army division, on the suspicion that they were friendly to the guerrillas. In January 1950, according to Kim, at a gathering in the U.S. Embassy, Muccio looked at some snapshots of the massacre and said, “Judging from the humanitarian viewpoint, one might say this is wrong. But it is inevitable for the suppression of the guerrillas. One must bear in mind that such things can happen at any time if you want to achieve your aims.” Kim Hyo-suk estimated that during the period between August 15, 1945, and the outbreak of hostilities in June 1950, 250,000 persons had been massacred and 600,000 imprisoned. And as Minister of the Interior until the day war broke out, he should have known.

New elections were held in the South on May 30, 1950, but under the same old terrorist pattern. The Workers Party and other de-

mocratic parties had long been declared illegal. Candidates were beaten up to make them withdraw their candidature and if they persisted, they were arrested. The new election was also held under U.N. auspices with two minor changes in a second U.N. Commission. Canada had withdrawn and Rhee had pulled some effective strings in Washington to have Syria (which had proved troublesome in the original Commission) replaced by Turkey. Amongst those terrorised during the election campaign was Cho So-ang, leader of a right-wing Socialist Party and former vice-chairman of Kim Ku's party. Because 80 of his campaign followers were arrested with due publicity, the general public thought Cho must be a decent figure and so he polled the highest number of votes of any candidate. His opponent was a Dr. Cho Byung-ok, former USAMGIK chief of police. In Pusan a former member of the Chungking provisional government, Chang Ken-seng, was arrested in the middle of his election campaign. Voters took this as a sign of his integrity and awarded him the second highest number of votes.

The National Independence Party of which Kim Kyu-sik – whom the Americans at one time wanted to make president instead of Rhee – boycotted the elections. And with all the terrorism and suppression, with the entire machinery of the elections in his hands, Rhee was defeated. Even the western press had to admit that Rhee and his American policy suffered a severe defeat in the 1950 elections. Only 27 of Rhee's supporters in the previous Assembly were re-elected. As the progressive parties were banned and the middle-of-the-road parties were boycotting the elections, 128 of the 210 deputies elected were independents. Of the total Rhee could count on the support of only 45 (about 20%). As we will see later, this eventually led to Rhee's coup d'état in mid-1952. Rhee the traitor refused to resign despite his defeat. He appointed a well-known, dyed-in-the-wool pro-Japanese Choil Tong-ok as Premier and the Seoul Metropolitan Police Chief, Chang Tak-sang as Vice-Premier.

A short time after the elections – in June 1950 – the F.U.D.F. (Fatherland Unification Democratic Front) again made an appeal for peaceful unification of North and South. They offered to co-operate with all politicians in the South except eight who were named as national traitors. Among these were Syngman Rhee, Kim Sung-su, the leader of the pro-Japanese, capitalist-landlord, pro-American Democratic Party, Cho Byung-ok of the USAMGIK Korean police and South Korean representative at U.N., Chang-Myun Ambassador

to the U.S.A., Shin Sung-mo the then Defence Minister and three other former Japanese collaborators. A personal invitation was sent to 300 members of parliament and other prominent leaders inviting them to a unification congress. An announcement was made over Pyongyang radio that two representatives from the F.U.D.F. and one journalist would deliver the invitations at a specified date and time at Ryo Hun on the 38th parallel near Kaesong. The news of the invitation was suppressed in the Seoul press. The delegates from the North turned up at Ryo Hun at the time mentioned, but were met with a furious hail of machine gun and mortar fire. One of the delegates was wounded. They reported back to Pyongyang but were asked to continue to South Korea and personally deliver the invitations. The three were arrested and tortured. The invitations were never delivered and nothing further had been heard of the delegates.

Chapter 5

BACKGROUND TO WAR

When the Americans withdrew their armed forces from Korea at the end of June 1949, they did so reluctantly and incompletely. Only continued pressure of public opinion, and the fact that the Soviet Union had withdrawn its forces, making it difficult to justify the continued occupation, forced the Americans to pull out. But it was painful for the U.S.A. to have to relinquish this foothold in Asia at a time when the puppet Chiang Kai-shek was being reduced to a constantly shrinking perimeter on the Chinese mainland. Long before they pulled out however, the Americans had made plans for their come-back. The installation of Rhee, the behind-the-scenes support for Rhee's schemes, which were identical with the aims of American imperialism, and the 500 American military instructors with the R.O.K. Army, were all guarantees that the Asian foothold would be maintained in good shape to step back into at the appropriate moment.

Much of the material contained in the following two chapters should have no place in this book. The facts dealt with should have been well known to the world public shortly after the outbreak of the Korean civil war. That these facts were not known is due to the shameful suppression of this material by the U.N. authorities to whom it was submitted. The U.S.A. succeeded in blocking the presentation of this material either to the Security Council or to the General Assembly and the contents were kept from the general public. Why this material was suppressed by the Americans will readily be understood. It consists largely of documents captured when the K.P.A. entered Seoul, supplemented by some statements made by responsible officials of the Rhee administration and officers of the R.O.K. army at the time of the outbreak of war. Originals and photostats of these documents were sent to the U.N. Secretariat by air on September 28, 1950.

The general line of Rhee's foreign policy is summarised in a letter from his adviser on foreign affairs in the U.S.A., a blood-thirsty Protestant minister, Yoon Peong-koo. Although the ideas expressed stem from Yoon himself, it is clear from subsequent events that this was the master plan to which Rhee was adhering. The letter was sent in December 1948 and the original together with

many other highly revealing documents was found in the archives of the President's office when the K.P.A. entered Seoul.

"Touching on the international affairs and of combating the threat of Communism against Korea and China," wrote Yoon Peong-koo, "I take the liberty of repeating what I had written you about before and that is: the die is cast that East Asia, like any other immediately threatened spots in the world, has either to submit to Communist conquest without resistance or prepare to fight for survival, and that every true-hearted patriot in America, Korea, Japan, and China shall offer self, service and substance for the latter alternative. But to carry on the coming struggle to a victorious conclusion, the forces of defence such as the armies of America, Japan, China and Korea must be coordinated and led by a supreme Commander with triple objectives, namely: The Japanese push through North-eastward and pass Vladivostok; Korean and American armies, after liberating our Northern territory, march through Liatong peninsula and up to Harbin; and a revitalised Chinese Nationalist army to recover China's lost territory including Shantung Province; and after such a victorious conclusion, the Korean and American armies hold Manchuria until the cost of liberation be fully repaid by means of the developments of the natural resources of that part of East Asia by the combined capital and labour of Manchuria, Korea and America and that until democracy and peace be firmly established there.

"In the next reshaping of Far East, Japan should be made to be content with the preponderant influence to be acquired over Vladivostok and a part of Siberia but never again over Korea and Manchuria...

"No doubt you have a better plan than what I have said herein above concerning the future destiny of Asia but I repeat these viewpoints to the end that I, not you who are the supreme leader of thirty million Koreans, may become the target of enemy's attack and ridicule in case our plans happen to be leaked out or intercepted by the enemy." This was a good old-fashioned imperialist plan which may seem far-fetched and even unimportant as it only came from a seemingly half-crazed adviser, but in fact it fits all too closely to the pattern which developed.

The Americans later persuaded the R.O.K. Army that Manchuria was a natural goal. This program fitted into the American insistence on Japanese rearmament, of MacArthur racing to the Yalu

river breathing threats to set up security points on the Manchurian side of this border river, of inspired articles in the American press that the Yalu is not the historical boundary of Korea and Manchuria. It also explained the grandiose title of Republic of Greater Korea which Rhee had adopted as the title for South Korea. Yoon's ideas were not just the ramblings of a paranoiac Protestant pastor, but the fermentation of germs planted by American war-makers.

To carry out such grandiose plans or the South Korean share of such plans, Rhee needed arms and plenty of them. This was his main preoccupation in his relations with the United States. The question of military aid is a constantly recurring theme in his correspondence with his two ambassadors in the United States. On April 10, for instance, Rhee wrote to Cho Byung-ok, at that time his Ambassador Plenipotentiary and permanent observer at the U.N., as follows: "I thought," wrote Rhee, "that your radiogram inquiring as to the advisability of openly asking for military aid was very timely. However, I did not wish to proceed openly in the matter for fear it might spoil some confidential arrangements made by Mr. Muccio, who was reported to have secured 'something.' When he came to see me with Mr. Drumwright, I quietly asked him what had been accomplished and he said this: 'The military aid has been granted and the President has signed certain documents relating to it...' He further said that the publicity regarding a direct request for further military aid might hurt the plan... What you and I are trying to do is to convince the world that we are not as foolish as we have been represented to be. We must make it known that we can manage our own affairs as well as any other well organised nation can. It is in this respect that publicity work is most important. The Americans are beginning to learn more about us and their estimate of our strength and capability is rising higher every day. But unless we can be sure of having the support of some of the leading newspapers in the United States, it would be too risky to make an open demand for arms and ammunition. This is why I have thought it best to keep your mission confidential." Rhee then continues at considerable length to tell Cho Byung-ok what arguments he should develop to prove the great need of South Korea for arms, of how excellently South Korea had fought and was still fighting Communism, of how South Korea was the only nation in North-East Asia effectively to fight Communism. And then Rhee came to the crucial point as to why he really wanted arms.

“I think you should frankly discuss the situation in fullest confidence with high officials of both the United Nations and the United States. In a strictly confidential manner tell them what plans we have for the unification of North and South. As a matter of fact, we are ready for the unification now in every respect but one: namely, we lack arms and ammunition. A large proportion of the Korean Communist Army is ready to mutiny and help us chase out of the country such Communist hirelings as Kim Il-sung and others. And the civilian population in the North will join with them in cleaning up and keeping under control all the terroristic Communist elements. They are all ready to do it without our aid. They have asked us to give them the signal by radio or by other secret message, setting the time and date. In fact they are urging us to do it.

“However, we are urging them to wait for the simple reason that we do not have sufficient arms and ammunition for the next necessary step. Supposing we do clean up the North and settle everything quietly to our satisfaction? Who is there to keep the Chinese Eighth Route Army, the Yen-an group, and the Siberian forces from moving again? We have to be prepared with a sufficient military force so that we can proceed into the North to join with our loyal army there, and to move the Iron Curtain from the 38th parallel up to the Yalu River, and there to guard it against infiltration from without. For this operation we need two naval vessels of 8,000 tons each, with 18-inch guns³ for the defence of the Yalu and Tumen Rivers. We need fast running patrol boats to guard against Communist underground movements along our coasts. We need 200,000 soldiers trained and organised for defence along the northern border. We need planes for defence and anti-aircraft guns. And we need them now.

“Some Americans worry about the lack of technicians, but they do not know that we have ten or twelve aviators who were among the best in Japan, three of whom were accounted the best in the Orient. We have sea captains who can direct our merchant marine. For our army, we can organise a force of 200,000 men in a short time. We have several hundred thousand returned soldiers who were

³ Rhee’s military knowledge as reflected in asking for 18-inch guns on 8,000-ton craft does not seem to have kept pace with his political appetite. – Author

forced to join the conscript army during the war. They are, in fact, veteran soldiers. They were put into the front lines by the Japanese, and many of them were killed in the South Pacific Island and Manchurian operations. Most of the officers were trained in Japanese universities. People do not know much about them for they keep quiet for fear they may be branded as pro-Japanese. They are loyal citizens and are ready to give their lives for their country. If we get sufficient arms, we can prepare them in no time.

“This outline will show you why I wish you to keep the request confidential, and also suggests the line of approach you may find effective in your talks with United States and United Nations officials. Our need is great, and it will be disastrous for both Korea and the United States if it is not heeded. The mistake of withholding arms from Korea must not be made again, as it was made during the war.

“I shall expect your confidential reports on the reactions you receive from the high officials, and we shall try to help in all ways we can from here.” This was a cunning and clever line that Rhee was peddling at that time. There is no mention here that arms are needed to defend the South from attack by the North, no mention that the North is threatening the South, no mention even that Rhee needs arms to invade the North. To quieten the timid souls in the State Department who feared that if given arms Rhee might provoke trouble by launching an armed assault against the North, he states that the people and even Kim Il-sung’s army are all ready to revolt and invite Rhee’s forces to take over. A simple, painless procedure which would take place the moment Rhee fired a green signal into the air. The arms, naval vessels, planes and large army are not for civil war, but only to protect the frontiers of the Republic of Greater Korea, along the Yalu and Tumen rivers. Both Rhee and his American masters were frightened to come out into the open at this stage of the game. Not that they really believed the army in the North was ready to mutiny or the people prepared to revolt. But this fable was necessary to persuade any timid souls among the war-makers that the advance to the North would not create any unpleasant scandals.

When Rhee mailed this outline of the approach to be used in Washington and Lake Success, he probably had on his desk a report of a meeting which took place on April 2 between his two ambassadors and General Wedemeyer. Cho Byung-ok undoubtedly cabled a report of this meeting, but an air-mailed report from the second

Ambassador Chang Myun was sent from Washington on April 6. Chang reported as follows: "We presented to him (Wedemeyer) a strong appeal for military aid to Korea, illustrating it by a detailed analysis of the Korean military situation and needs of the Korean defence forces. General Wedemeyer now has the report under consideration. His immediate and specific advice in regard to the Air Force is that it is expensive in upkeep and not more than a minimum should be maintained. Bombers are likely to kill our fellow countrymen... The General's intelligence reports show that early estimates of the strength of the military force of North Korea were exaggerated both as to number and equipment and the prospects of an invasion from the North are slim at this time. General Wedemeyer's personal and confidential advice is that highly trained, trustworthy and competent young men be sent to North Korea to infiltrate among the Koreans there, sow distrust in the Communist cause and the People's Government and prepare the way for the Republic. Meanwhile the General will do his utmost for us and will consult with Secretary Acheson in our behalf..."

As to what was the specific purpose for the arms and the real meat of the American-Rhee plot, one had to be present at a conference in the rooms of Syngman Rhee's Minister of National Defence, Shin Sung-mo, at the end of April, 1949. It was attended by Roberts, the Japanese-trained Chief of Staff of the R.O.K. Army, Cha Pyeng-duk and Minister of the Interior Kim Hyo-suk who later described what took place.

"At that time Roberts said: 'Aerodromes are urgently needed for the suppression of the guerrillas and for the expedition against the North; and you must pay a great deal of attention to it. First of all, you must build aerodromes in Yungjoo and Wonjoo right away. This is most urgent. You must start building them even at the expense of other works.' That was but a step in the execution of their plan of the expedition against the North, which they had mapped out for July or August. And in accordance with Roberts' order, the Home Department (Minister of the Interior) of the Syngman Rhee government began building aerodromes in Yungjoo and Wonjoo."

The following month, according to Kim Hyo-suk, there was another meeting between Muccio, Shin Sung-mo and Kim at the Chosen Hotel, where Muccio, "a little stimulated by spirits" as Kim describes him, was a little more precise and a little more expansive. "The United States stands behind you," Muccio assured his puppets,

“just have confidence in us and carry out faithfully what we advise and instruct you. Might is what settles everything, above all the solution of the world’s problems. These can only be settled by American might. You must fully understand this situation as well as our plans and get ready as best you can to launch the assault over the 38th parallel as soon as possible.”

In June, Kim Hyo-suk was called in again to the U.S. Embassy where Muccio held another conference with Roberts, one of Roberts’ assistants, Beird, Shin Sung-mo and Khun Seung-yul, the Secretary of Justice in the Rhee Cabinet. Muccio is credited with saying: “At this moment, when we are going to carry out the north-bound expedition in July or August, it is of utmost importance that the state security law be enforced draconically and to arrest en masse forces opposed to the government and elements of the South Korean Workers Party, and completely frustrate their veiled activities, though, of course, other preparations are also necessary.” Kim Hyo-suk reports that he gave orders for a large-scale round-up of all left-wing elements in South Korea.

What was planned for July, 1949, was a full-dress rehearsal for what happened a year later. Even though an attack was launched over the parallel, it did not fit in with overall American strategy to get involved in a war at that time. The objectives as outlined by Kim Hyo-suk and confirmed by South Korean officers who actually took part in the action, were to launch an attack across the parallel from Kaesong and from the Ongjim peninsula west of Kaesong. The attack from Kaesong had as its first objective, Kumchon, twenty miles to the North. The attack based on Ongjim was to push forward to Haeju and if possible right through to Pyongyang. The plan of operations was drawn up by Roberts, Kim Sug-won and Transport Minister, Hu Jung.

The attack jumped off at dawn on July 25 as planned, but that is about all that did go according to plan. To the east and west of Kaesong and on Pine Tree Peak R.O.K. units started to move forward, but soon ran into withering fire from Constabulary Units of the K.P.A. The treacherous surprise attack carried the invaders a certain distance however by its own impetus before the Constabulary could bring up reserves and launch a strong counter-attack.

The *Seoul Free Press* on July 27, two days after the attack started, published the following item, under the heading “Occupation

tion of the Highest Peak of Sangak Mountain (Pine Tree Peak) – Kaesong is Now Secure Thanks to the Fight of National Army.”

“The commandant of the Kaesong garrison forces, Colonel Choi Kyung-rok, made the following statement to our special correspondent Rhee Hei-pao at Kaesong on July 26. As long as Hill XX is in enemy hands, the defence situation at Kaesong city remains half-paralysed. Now that our side has captured the above-mentioned height any enemy intention to invade Kaesong city will be blocked as the enemy’s activities for more than 30 kilometres north of the parallel can now be easily commanded. The importance of the above-mentioned height is therefore extremely great and it can be expected that the enemy side will attempt to restore their positions with desperate attacks. But we have left no stones unturned in taking adequate defence measures.” But this was about the full extent of the R.O.K. advance. In the face of very heavy counter-attacks and mass defections to the North by R.O.K. troops and junior officers, the “rehearsal” turned into a fiasco. The July-August expedition had to be abandoned before the end of July. It was put into effect again just 11 months later from the same two invasion points with results that the world now knows. Kim Hyo-suk relates that a few days after the fiasco he was called in to the U.S. Embassy. Muccio, Roberts and Beird were present. “After some words of greeting,” recounts Kim, “Roberts said in an angry tone: ‘Our attempted expedition against the North, so long mapped out, ended in a heavy loss by the conflict at Kaesong. Of course, incompetence of the National Defence army is mainly to answer for it, but the police are also responsible. If the police had been quicker in gathering intelligence and more accurate in getting hold of inside information, we would have had more material in planning the operation. But, it wasn’t so, and I regret it very much. As you can imagine yourself, the northern expedition will be carried out anyhow, and for that it is absolutely necessary to secure the rear. But the public peace is being more and more disturbed, and the guerrillas are lurking ever more ferociously; and for that the police force is mainly to answer. From now on, you must pay more attention to round-ups and imprisonment of the elements of the South Korean Workers Party and the military drilling of the police. As for the suppression of the guerrillas, I am drawing up a plan myself at present, of which I will let you know later on. Though the army is in charge of operations at the front, the police should not lack military training for the sup-

pression of the guerrillas in the rear and for the preservation of peace and order. I hope you will pay special attention to the military drill of the police.”

It can clearly be seen from this that the savage repressions which were intensified in South Korea in the summer of 1949 were directly linked with the preparations for the invasion of the North the following year. It can also be clearly seen that although American troops had withdrawn by this time, American war-makers were still in complete control. Kim Hyo-suk does not relate that at any time he was called in for consultation on an equal basis with Roberts or Muccio. He was called in with note-book in hand to take down orders which he willingly executed. Details of the attack on July 25 as of many other incidents provoked by Rhee's troops were publicised by the Democratic People's Republic in repeated statements in 1949 and the first half of 1950. Copies of these statements were forwarded to the U.N., but no action was ever taken. The severe defeat suffered in July did nothing to dampen Rhee's plans for the future. On September 30, 1949, in a letter to Dr. Robert Oliver, professor of the University of Pennsylvania, personal friend of Rhee and semi-official spokesman for the Rhee government in Washington, Rhee wrote as follows:

“I feel strongly that now is the most psychological moment when we should take an aggressive measure and join with our loyal Communist army in the North to clean up the rest of them in P'yongyang. We will drive some of Kim Il-sung's men to the mountain region and there we will gradually starve them out. Then our line of defence must be strengthened along the Tuman and Yalu Rivers. We will be in a 100 per cent better position. The natural boundary line along the river and the Paikdoo Mts. can be made almost impenetrable with sufficient number of planes and two or three fast running naval vessels standing at the mouths of the two rivers with fighting planes defending all the coast lines including Cheju Island. What Koreans of old did repeatedly during the last 2,000 years in defending their nation against great invasions of Emperor Tang, Emperor Soo, the Mongols and the Japs, I believe we are ready to repeat the successful defence of our nation against foreign invasions. All the Chinese, Japanese and Korean Communist army in Manchuria and Siberia may do all they want to but we will be able to fight them off. We want to do this regardless of what outside nations may do against us. I believe the Soviet Union will not be fool-

hardy enough to start invasions at the present time. Our people are clamouring for it. Our people in the North want us to let them do it now but we are doing everything we can to quiet them down and it is a mighty difficult task. I want you to express this situation very clearly and convincingly and show a copy to Ambassador Chang and Ambassador Chough. We will all quietly work together, you in Washington and in New York and our two Ambassadors and other friends, and we here in Seoul and Tokyo (Rhee undoubtedly means MacArthur here. – Author) toward one end; that they agree to our cleaning up and setting our house in order.

“Use the old phrase that Churchill used once, ‘Give us the tools and we will do the job.’ Convince the American statesmen and the general public and let them quietly agree that we go ahead and carry out our program and give us all the material backing we need. The longer we drag along the harder it will be.”

Rhee concludes: “Please put this whole story in a very convincing statement and quietly approach some influential people here and there and let us get their support. If you could get this story into President Truman’s ear I think it will have some desired effect.” This letter exposes the double-faced game the would-be dictator of Greater Korea was playing. The request for arms must not appear to be motivated by a desire to invade the North. They were to be used for defence only, but for defence of Greater Korea after the North has quietly been attached to the South, presumably by some “loyal Communist army” in the North seizing power and inviting Rhee and his band to walk in peacefully and take over. There must be no suspicions aroused among the general public in the U.S.A. or even among the “innocents” at the Pentagon and State Department that arms for Rhee would mean civil war, or forcible annexation of the North. Rhee does not even try and pretend that he needed arms to defend the South from attack by the North. Arms would only be for protection of the new frontiers along the Yalu and Tumen rivers. In some mysterious way the forces of Kim Il-sung, which for 15 years had survived and grown from strength to strength in the northern mountains fighting a vastly superior force than Rhee could ever muster against them, would be hiding and starving to death in the mountains. The planes Rhee needed would only be to defend the frontiers of the new State which was to be acquired merely by the blowing of trumpets, Rhee’s “loyal allies” in the North were begging to be allowed to deal with the Communists and to open the

gates for Rhee to come in. A solution by force of arms was the last thing Rhee was seeking – at least this must be the line of his propagandists abroad. But there was a completely different line for home consumption.

One day after Rhee's letter to Dr. Oliver, he made a statement to the press in South Korea which was published in the Seoul *Shinmun* on October 2, under the headlines, "KOREA IS COMPLETELY PREPARED – I HOPE TO WIPE OUT NORTH KOREA." The statement, which was made during the U.N. Assembly session at Lake Success, ran as follows: "I am doing my best to be patient. But I hope that the statesmen at Lake Success should take the following facts into consideration: (1) That we can restore the lost territories of North Korea and that our compatriots in North Korea hope that we will wipe out their regime. (2) That we are afraid the longer we leave matters, the more difficult such steps will become. The Republic of Korea government and its people are completely organised to fight Communism but how much longer should such patriotism and self-restraint be continued? People are tired. North Korean compatriots desire that we rout the Communist army and defend the natural borders of the Republic of Korea – the Yalu and Tumen rivers. This is what we should do and what we should have done a long time ago..."

To cap this, Rhee gave an interview to Joseph L. Johnston, Vice President of United Press a few days later, which was published in the Seoul *Shinmun* on October 8, under the banner-line: "POSSIBLE TO OCCUPY PYONGYANG IN THREE DAYS. UNIFICATION OF OUR COUNTRY AT HAND." The published interview was accompanied by an inset picture of Rhee.

"Syngman Rhee," the interview reports, "President of the Republic of South Korea, said that his government is able to occupy North Korea thereby bringing about the unification of the country, but that in doing so he had been warned that it may bring about a possible third World War. What he told me is as follows: 'North Koreans have requested that I should broadcast a message appealing to the loyal Koreans in the North to rise and overthrow the Communist regime and they are expecting that we will join them. I am firmly convinced that we can occupy Pyongyang within three days. To defend our country on the borders of Manchuria and Korea would be easier than defending it along the 38th parallel. Despite this fact, what are the reasons that make me refrain from action? It

is because the United Nations and United States have warned me to the effect that such an action might create another World War. This is the reason why we are still patient and we are awaiting the time when the problem of Communism will be resolved parallel with other world problems..." (Rhee then went on to speak of the increasing activities of guerrillas in South Korea and the necessity of having high-speed planes and patrol boats.)

There is nothing left unsaid in these statements for the Korean people to understand that military preparations had been completed for the invasion of North Korea. The best troops in the country were stationed at the 38th parallel in the autumn of 1949, awaiting the signal to invade. And the signal only had to be given by the United States. For reasons of their own, the U.S. military and political leaders were unwilling to give the order at that time and their reluctance was a source of considerable annoyance to Syngman Rhee as was also the reluctance to provide him with a fleet of "high-speed" planes. Rhee had to be content with building airfields for the eventual accommodation of American planes while at the same time concentrating on the task of suppressing the guerrillas as Roberts had ordered. Meanwhile his minions in the U.S. were doing their best to put across Rhee's ideas and requests for increased military aid.

That the U.S. was applying pressure against military action at that time is clear from the report of Ambassador Cho Byung-ok sent from Lake Success on October 12.

"It was with great care and interest," reports Cho, "that I read your letter to Dr. Oliver with regard to the question of unification, rather the disposal of the puppet regime in the North. The proposals you expounded therein are under the circumstances prevailing, the only logical and ultimate method of bringing about our desired unification. However, after taking into consideration all the factors involved I am inclined to the view that the time is not opportune as yet to carry out such a project. In the first place, I seriously question our preparedness, and the international opinion will not approve of such an action to be taken. It must be recalled that the Greek Government itself has been persuaded by the friendly powers from taking military steps against Albania."

Cho then goes on to speak of the "tragedy" of the situation in China where Canton had just fallen and he reports that there is talk of India, Britain and other countries recognising the government of Mao Tse-tung. "If such nonsensical international policies should

play a full sway,” Cho concludes gloomily, “the United Nations Commission on Korea will prove itself to be an embarrassing agency to our Government...”

A few weeks later Cho was able to report that he had taken steps to ensure that the second U.N. Commission would be even more co-operative than the first one. “...I am happy to report,” he wrote on November 3, “that as the result of strong representation made by our delegation, the United States delegation and the State Department, the President of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General of the Secretariat seemed to have given due attention to the need of strengthening the Commission. Syria is to be dropped and Turkey is nominated in lieu of that former troublesome member country. Secretary-General Lie has further assured me he had requested various member governments on the United Nations Commission on Korea to nominate their representatives from among persons of strong conviction and high experience and rank, with a view of having a system of permanent chairmanship that will insure steady and stabilised functioning of the Commission...”

He deals with the unfavourable reaction in the U.S. to one of Shin Sung-mo’s sabre-rattling statements published in the November 1 issue of the *New York Herald Tribune*. Cho explained he had no criticism of the plans but felt they should not have been openly publicised.

“I am of the firm conviction,” he continued, “that the unification of Korea can be brought about only through exercise of the sovereign power of our Government.... The cold war cannot go on indefinitely like this. All these world problems could not be possibly solved without a Third World War. Our plan of achieving unification must be mapped out in march with the developments of the world situation as a whole. In the meantime, our national preparedness in military power and economic strength is the most compelling task imposed upon our Government...”

Ambassador Cho was telling Rhee in the plainest language that World War III was just around the corner, that Rhee must wait and integrate his plans for the invasion of the North with American global strategy. His reports and those of his fellow ambassador reflected Washington’s line that Rhee must wait and move only when American grand strategy demanded that he move. There is no other possible interpretation of Cho’s reports. The Americans at this time were deliberately keeping a brake on Rhee and were denying him

the planes and heavy equipment with which he wanted to launch his invasion. Overt aggression by the South at that or any other time would have been an embarrassment to the U.S. State Department. The ground had to be prepared, the right moment selected, acceptable pretexts found for such an operation. But such considerations never seem to have been fully accepted by Rhee, which is probably the reason why the State Department unsuccessfully tried to drop him in 1948.

By every means possible, Rhee tried to tie things up so that the U.S. would be committed willy-nilly to his adventures at the moment of his choosing. And it seems that in this he was supported at least by MacArthur and a clique in Washington.

In mid-1949, Rhee was begging the Americans to accept a handful of naval bases to ensure that at least the U.S. Fleet would be on hand to protect him when he launched his invasion. Secret negotiations continued through June and July, 1949, for granting the Americans naval bases at Chinhae, Inchon, Pusan, Yosu and Mokho. In charge of the negotiations for Rhee was an American, Jay Jerome Williams, adviser to Rhee's Embassy in Washington and who treated direct with Admiral Louis Denfeld, U.S. Chief of Naval Operations. In a report of a discussion with Denfeld, which Williams sent to Rhee on June 17, he stated that he offered the bases to Denfeld in the following terms. "Here is our Asiatic beachhead, Admiral, offered to us by a man who has long shown his admiration and friendship for the American people and if we take advantage of this opportunity, it may save thousands and thousands of American lives."

As the U.S. Navy had not made up its mind after three weeks, Williams made another approach to Denfeld, lauding the advantages of naval bases in Korean waters and the splendid facilities of the former Japanese secret naval base at Chinhae and finally pointing out, "above all, its location on the land of a people who possess an almost child-like faith in American integrity..."

The American reply a week later was to send a fleet unit, including the cruiser Manchester and several destroyers under the command of Admiral T. H. Binford on an inspection cruise of potential Korean naval bases. Ambassador Cho in his November 3 report, quoted above, included in his expense account two amounts of 250 and 100 dollars respectively for trips to Indiana to see

Admiral Halsey and to Virginia and South Carolina to see Admiral Yarnell.

The year 1949 drew to a close with Rhee firmly determined that come what may, the invasion of the North would take place in 1950. In a New Year message to the Korean people, published in all South Korean papers on December 31, Rhee said: "In the New Year we shall all strive as one man to regain the lost territory. Up to now, in view of the international situation, we have pursued a peaceful policy corresponding to the peaceful policy of the United Nations and the United States. We must remember however that in the New Year, in accordance with the changed international situation, it is our duty to unify Southern and Northern Korea by our own strength."

There was not one person who read the South Korean press during the latter half of 1949 who could have had the slightest doubt that Rhee intended the armed invasion of the North at latest during the coming year. And whatever the official coolness to such a project might have been in Washington or Lake Success, there is no doubt that Rhee was being encouraged every step of the way by Washington's representatives in South Korea, both military and diplomatic in the persons of Roberts and Muccio.

Chapter 6

GATHERING CLOUDS

From the first days of the New Year it became clear that Truman had decided to back Rhee's plan and to use Korea as the starting point for a third World War. On January 11, 1950, Ambassador Chang Myun was able to report from Washington that he could give some "encouraging news" from a top-level confidential source in Washington. "I am informed," he wrote, "that the State Department and Pentagon are planning a firm stand with respect to United States oriental policy. In this anti-Communist plan; Korea will occupy an important position. I have every hope that we will get much more help, militarily speaking as a result. I have had word from a confidential source in the State Department that President Truman will sign very soon, authorisation that will grant permission for armament for Korean ships and planes..."

Kim Hyo-suk recounts that in mid-January he was called to the office of the Ministry of National Defence and had a conference with Shin Sung-mo and Roberts, where the latter said, "The expedition against the North is now an established plan and the time of its execution is not far ahead of us. The force, above all the combatant force, must be fully ready if you want to achieve your aim. That is why I emphasised the necessity of military training for the entire police force. But much to my regret under the pretext of being short of personnel, it has not been sufficiently carried out. Naturally the north-bound expedition will be started by us. But we must have, though it's a formality, a reasonable excuse for doing so. In this connection, reports to the Commission of the U.N. Headquarters will be of great importance to us. The U.N.C. reports will of course be favourable to America. But you, too, had better pay attention to such points and win the favour of the Commission."

In January, too, U.S. Secretary for Defence, Royall, together with Sebald, chief of the Political Section of MacArthur's headquarters, visited Seoul and according to Kim Hyo-suk, Sebald assured Rhee that when the expedition against the North was launched, American naval and air force units stationed in Japan would be sent immediately to support South Korea. "As far as naval and air forces are concerned, you have nothing to worry about," Sebald told Rhee. (Previously to this, in September, 1949, Major General Claire Chennault, air adviser to Chiang Kai-shek, had visited Rhee and had

advised establishing air bases and organising a South Korean Air Force for which he promised American support.)

An "Agreement for Joint Defence and Mutual Assistance" was signed between the U.S.A. and South Korea on January 26, 1950, under the terms of which South Korea was placed within the perimeter of the American "line of defence". Shortly after the agreement was signed, Rhee and his Chief of Staff, Cha Pyeng-duk (who held the highest rank attained by any Korean in the Japanese army) left for Tokyo for a conference with MacArthur.

According to the best information available on this conference, the actual date of the invasion was fixed at this time for the last week in June. Rhee agreed to place his armed forces under MacArthur's command as soon as hostilities started. MacArthur promised immediate tank, air and naval support.

January seems to have been the turning point in American policy favouring whole-hearted support for war in Korea. Doubtless policy-makers were influenced by the complete collapse of Chiang Kai-shek, by British recognition of People's China and growing support for China's admission to the U.N.; by the impending liberation of Formosa which MacArthur believed would take place in July, 1950. After the Joint Defence Agreement and Rhee's conferences with Royall, Sebald and MacArthur, there were no doubts left in his mind that at least the U.S. Defence Department would back him up this time with something more substantial than words.

In the *New York Times* of March 14, 1950, staff correspondent Sullivan reported that 13 members of the Rhee Assembly had been arrested and sentenced to from 18 months to 10 years' imprisonment for violations of the Security Act. Among the five charges levelled against them was that of opposing the invasion of North Korea by the R.O.K. Army. Of all the masses of evidence on the public record, proving Rhee's intention to invade the North, this is probably the most conclusive and must have been deliberately publicised by Rhee in his arrogant certainty of a quick victory. To make it quite clear that the invasion plan was an American one and to ensure that America got full credit for the great victory which was just around the corner, Sullivan reported after a tour of Korea in May that: "Of all foreign troops trained by American officers, the South Korean troops are the most Americanised. They have American-style uniforms, ride in American vehicles, carry American-made weapons. After intensive training which has gone on for several

years, they even march and in many respects behave like Americans, so much so that a visitor is startled into thinking that American forces are still in occupation... Five hundred American military advisers have desks throughout the Ministry of National Defence. They are also assigned to South Korean units down to regimental and sometimes battalion level.”

The time had come to start selling confidence in the Rhee military machine, to give public approval for the funds and aid granted behind its back, to show the fruits of an investment made without public consent and to prepare public opinion to swing its support behind a war region north of the 38th parallel have been launched without its approval. It was no accident that a top-flight *New York Times* correspondent from Hong Kong made a Korean tour in May or that Marguerite Higgins of the *New York Herald-Tribune* was switched to Korea from Europe at about the same time. On June 5 – three weeks before the invasion started – one finds the *Herald-Tribune* carrying a report of an interview granted Miss Higgins by Major-General Roberts. “In Korea,” Roberts stated, according to Miss Higgins, “the American taxpayer has an army which is a fine watchdog over investments placed in this country and a force that represents maximum results at a minimum cost.”

“General Roberts added,” quotes Miss Higgins, “that his Military Advisory Group is ‘a living demonstration of how an intelligent and intensive investment of five hundred combat-hardened, American officers and men can train 100,000 men who will do the shooting for you... I have at least thirteen to fourteen Americans with every division. They work with the Korean officers, they live there with them at the front – the 38th parallel – and stay with them in battles and in rest periods...’” This was the first admission by Roberts that there was already a “front” at the 38th parallel and that there had been “battles” in which American officers had taken part, and was doubtless put out to prepare public opinion for events to take place later in the month. As further evidence of Roberts’ participation in the invasion plans from beginning to end, Kim Hyo-suk reported on a conference of R.O.K. divisional commanders in October, 1949, at R.O.K. Army headquarters at which Roberts complained bitterly about the lack of discipline among R.O.K. units stationed along the parallel.

“It is true,” Roberts said, “that many attacks on the region north of the 38th parallel have been launched by my orders and there will

be many more in the days to come. But in many cases, units have attacked the North of their own accord and have spent a tremendous amount of ammunition with no results whatsoever except to suffer heavy losses. The U.S. Military Mission alone has the right to issue orders for attacks by the National Defence Army north of the 38th parallel. From now on any attacks shall be carried out only on the orders of the Military Mission.”

By June there were all the objective conditions both internally in Korea and in the international situation for some drastic American action. People’s China had been recognised by the Soviet Union, the People’s Democracies, Britain, India and several other Asian countries and by the so-called “neutral” powers. She was swiftly consolidating her power and the moment was rapidly approaching when Chiang Kai-shek would be chased from his last hideout on Chinese soil. It was only a matter of time before People’s China would replace the defunct Kuomintang regime on the Security Council. Truman, under pressure of public opinion and from his Allies, had been forced to announce that America would no longer send military aid to the remnant regime on Taiwan. Trygve Lie had just completed his “peace-making” tour and was on his way back from Moscow claiming that permanent world peace was just around the corner. In Korea, Rhee and American policy had suffered a stinging defeat in the May 30 elections. The initiative for peaceful unification from the North had the backing of the overwhelming majority of the Koreans north and south of the parallel.

The world picture in June, 1950, looked bad for the war-makers, except for those who were “in the know”. In Europe, due to the steadfast attitude of the Soviet Union, tension had eased. Tension in Germany had been relaxed because the provocative and unnecessary air-lift had been called off. The withdrawal of Clay as military-governor and Howley as commandant of Berlin, were signs that the U.S.A. had at least temporarily shelved its plans for war in Germany. In Eastern Europe the unmasking of the Rajk and Kostov plots had at least postponed any American plans for pushing Tito into a war in that area. Rhee and Korea were gifts from the war gods, which would have to have been invented by the American war-makers had they not existed in reality. Indeed, precisely that point was made by General Van Fleet, the butcher of the Greek and Korean people and Commander in Chief of the Eighth Army in Korea, in a press interview in Tokyo on January 19, 1952. As reported

by United Press in the New York Times on January 20, Van Fleet said that “the Korean war was a ‘blessing’ because it had awakened the free world and inspired it to organise strongly enough to ‘knock down’ the Communists and if necessary to wipe them out. ‘There had to be a Korea,’ said Van Fleet, ‘either here or somewhere else in the world. There had to be a Korea to put our defences in good shape’...”

There had to be a Korea; the only matter to be decided in June, 1950, was how to get the war started in a way attractive to public opinion.

On June 14, 1950, Ambassador Chang reported to Rhee the gratifying news that John Foster Dulles, special adviser to Truman on foreign affairs would soon be visiting Korea. Chang had just returned to the U.S.A. from Seoul.

“On the day of my arrival,” he wrote Rhee, “I arranged a small dinner party in honour of Mr. Dulles. It was necessary that we have the party that day, because Mr. Dulles is leaving Washington today, and Saturday (June 10) was the only possible opportunity he had to meet with us. We had Mr. and Mrs. Dulles, Mr. Dean Rusk (Mr. Rusk has succeeded Mr. Walton Butterworth as Director of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs), Mr. and Mrs. Niles Bond and Mr. and Mrs. Allison. Mr. Allison is in the Office of North-east Asian Affairs, and will go with Mr. Dulles on his tour of the Far East. I had ample opportunity for a full discussion with Mr. Dulles, and was asked many questions. This visit Mr. Dulles is about to make is most important in view of the fact that he has a strong voice in preparing decisions of the State Department concerning the Far East... I summed up the hopes of our people and our Government as to Mr. Dulles’ part as follows: (1) He should make a strong statement, assuring Koreans that the United States will stand behind Korea both in peace and in trouble, both economically and militarily. His statement should declare that Korea should be placed within the United States’ line of defence in the Pacific. (Mr. Dulles said that... not even the Philippines had any such agreement with the United States. But, he added, he was certain that the United States would not abandon Korea, and that he is even now preparing a statement to the effect that Korea would be backed by the United States. He said he would assure the Korean people that the United States would assist them.)

“(2) We want more planes and long-range guns in order to render our defences more effective.

“(3) Korea should participate in peace treaty negotiations with Japan, because we have fought the Japanese longer and more than any other country.” (The effrontery of this argument is unsurpassable. Any person who was even suspected of opposing the Japanese in South Korea was in gaol or on the police “wanted” list.)

“(4) Korea should take an active part in a Pacific Pact, and we would like to see the United States take an active part in the formation of such a pact.

“(5) We want to see that Formosa will be protected by the United States because of its invaluable strategic location.”

Ambassador Chang continued at some length to apprise Rhee of the significance of the Dulles’ visit and advised him to extend the utmost hospitality to Dulles and his wife.

On June 18, Rhee sent a message back to Ambassador Chang which was a mixture of triumphant optimism and testy admonition.

“I am very glad that you had a chance to entertain Mr. Dulles and his party before he left,” Rhee wrote. “By now you have no doubt a copy of his speech at the Assembly. He went to the S.D. (State Department) and told them what he wanted to say and they fully approved.” (In this speech, delivered the same day that Rhee wrote to Chang, Dulles, speaking to the South Korean Assembly at the very moment when the movement for peaceful unification was approaching its climax, said, “The eyes of the free world are upon you. Compromise with Communism would be to take the road leading to disaster.” He went on to tell the Assembly members of the “readiness of the United States to give all necessary moral and material support to South Korea which is fighting so valiantly against Communism”.)

Whatever might have been the feelings of the majority of the members of the Assembly towards peaceful unification, Dulles made it clear that he considered such a conception as treachery.

Rhee’s June 18 letter continues: “I had several conversations and an hour’s talk (with Dulles) today and he fully agreed that the South-east Asia pact does not mean anything... He agreed with all my policy and no doubt will do his best after his return...” In the preceding pages Rhee’s policy has been clearly enough outlined and documented, so there can be no doubt that the policy with which Dulles agreed was that of an armed invasion of North Korea under

the guise of unification. "There is one thing I want to tell you," Rhee continued. "When a party like this comes the next time you have to try to find out why some of the people are attached to it. Mr. McCardle (Carl McCardle, a journalist attached to the Dulles party. – Author) went along to other conferences and he is filing his report in an official way in the White House to give his impression about the things he observes as an unofficial guest. Mrs. (obviously a typographical error and should be Mr. – Author) Matthews was sent by the White House in particular to report to the President; and it is said that his report will count just as much as the report by Mr. Dulles, if not more. These are valuable information I should get through your office. Fortunately we were tipped of the purpose of his presence in the party..."

All of which reflects the era of gangster diplomacy proper to such criminal double-dealings, with Rhee fearful lest a breath of his secret dealings reach the wrong person, with Truman sending spies to watch his own "special ambassador" and submit their independent reports and with Rhee special agents tipping him off as to the real role being played by the figures taking part.

Two days after Dulles promised his support for the Rhee policy, and in effect gave the signal for the attack, he sent an autographed copy of his book, *War or Peace*, to Rhee with the following covering note:

"My dear President Rhee, I am happy to hand you herewith an inscribed copy of my recent book, *War or Peace*. I think it shows you that you and I have much the same ideas about the nature of the struggle in which we are engaged and you will see that in my book I frequently mention Korea. I attach great importance to the decisive role which your country can play in the great drama which is unfolding."

At the same time Dulles sent a letter to Rhee's Foreign Secretary, Lim Byung-chick, thanking him for a dinner party of the previous evening in which he concludes with the ominous words:

"Above all, I appreciated the opportunity of discussing with you and with President Rhee some of the hard problems that we face, problems that will require courageous and bold decisions."

"Courageous and bold decisions" meant only one thing to Dulles and Rhee. They were the decisions to launch what both believed would develop into a third World War. In the same sabre-rattling language Dulles had addressed Rhee units a few days earlier, on the

17th, when he visited troops poised along the 38th parallel. "No adversary," he said, "not even the strongest can oppose you. The time is not far off when you will be able to display your strength." The world press was plastered within a few days with pictures of Dulles in the front lines poring over military maps with high-ranking Rhee staff officers. They were the maps showing the projected invasion routes which were to put R.O.K. units into Pyongyang within three days and chase General Kim Il-sung and other North Korean leaders into the mountains.

There can be no reasonable doubt that the visit of Dulles was to give the signal for the attack to be launched and to assure Rhee on the highest level that the moment the attack started, American air and naval support would be forthcoming. With U.S. warships and planes, Rhee seems to have been quite confident that he would overrun North Korea within a few days. All the American and U.N. restrictions which had irritated him in the past were brushed aside when Dulles gave him the nod to push ahead with his plans with a cast-iron guarantee that far from hampering him as in the past the U.S. and the U.N. would actively support him from the moment the first shots were fired.

After Dulles returned from the 38th parallel, he had a final conference with Rhee and Shin Sung-mo at which, according to Kim Hyo-suk, Dulles actually gave the word to launch the attack immediately, stating:

"Start the invasion against the North accompanied by counter-propaganda to the effect that the North has invaded the South. If you can but hold out for two weeks, everything will go smoothly, for during this period the U.S.A., by accusing North Korea of attacking South Korea, will compel the United Nations to take action. And in the name of the United Nations, land, naval and air forces will be mobilised."

While Dulles was inspecting the final preparations at the 38th parallel, Secretary of War Louis Johnson and Chief of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Omar Bradley, arrived in Tokyo for a conference with MacArthur on June 18. Dulles himself went back to Tokyo from Korea and after a conference with MacArthur was reported by Associated Press to be in exuberant mood and predicted "positive action" by the United States to preserve peace in the Far East. In the mouth of that terrible old hypocrite Dulles the Korean

war ever since has been described as the United Nations action for “preserving peace” in the Far East.

As it later turned out, the Americans were better than their word in promising swift military support. Due to the catastrophic reverses suffered by the R.O.K. Army, the American Air Force went into action before any decision was made by the U.N. and the U.N. was in the war within two days – not two weeks as Dulles had promised – before even any factual report had been received from the U.N. Commission in Korea.

In the small hours of June 25, while Dulles was still in Tokyo, the Dulles-Rhee-MacArthur plan was put into operation. Rhee troops launched their attack across the 38th parallel.

A curious story in connection with how the news first reached Tokyo is related by John Gunther, MacArthur’s apologist and biographer in his book, *The Riddle of MacArthur* (page 165). Gunther was in Tokyo at the time, gathering material for his book. On the morning of June 25 he was on an excursion to Nikko with two important members of MacArthur’s staff. Just before lunch one of these staff officers was called to the telephone. “He came back,” writes Gunther, “and whispered ‘a big story has just broken. The South Koreans have attacked North Korea.’” Gunther in his typical leaning-over-backwards-to-be-fair attitude advises the reader not to attach too much importance to this as the officer might have had a garbled version of the affair. The story is of course perfect confirmation from an unusually reliable source – in the circumstances – of exactly what did happen.

Chapter 7

THE STORM BREAKS

The North Korean authorities were well informed as to the plans of the Rhee army. Until the last day of the assault, there were constant desertions of R.O.K. officers and troops across the parallel to the North. During the few days preceding the assault, troops had been pouring into Kaesong and other towns and villages close to the parallel.

A young K.P.A. anti-aircraft gunner, Yu Gyi-hon who was a middle-school student in Kaesong at the time the war started, told me that until the middle of June, one saw mainly police in Kaesong but from that time on, the town was packed with soldiers. For a week prior to the attack, officers came to Yu's school and lectured the students about an impending attack from the North. From the small hours of the morning of the 25th, scores of other Kaesong residents have told me they heard heavy artillery and machine-gun fire as the R.O.K. troops moved off to the assault. But by the afternoon, the R.O.K. troops were in a disorderly flight through the town, abandoning equipment as they fled, with K.P.A. troops hard on their heels.

Because of the wild boasting of Syngman Rhee, Shin Sung-ma and others and because of the continuous desertions from the ranks of the R.O.K. Army of troops who could describe R.O.K. troop movements and locations and officers who knew about plans, the K.P.A. had adequate time to prepare to repel the invaders and teach Rhee a sharp lesson. The K.P.A. headquarters had precise knowledge as to where the attack would be launched and approximately when.

An operations map published by the U.S. Army Map Service and captured in R.O.K. Army headquarters in Seoul disclosed the tactics for the first phase of the R.O.K. invasion. (The cataclysmic defeat of the Rhee troops and the rapid K.P.A. advance on Seoul, apparently surprised R.O.K. army headquarters so much that in the panic to flee Seoul, no-one bothered to destroy maps or documents.) Two armies were to take part in the initial assault. The First Army was responsible for the area from Koreangpo, approximately half way along the parallel westwards to the Yellow Sea, the Second Army from Koreangpo eastwards to the Sea of Japan.

The enlarged 3rd R.O.K. division of five regiments (instead of the normal three) plus mechanised divisions were held in reserve to be attached to whichever army needed assistance. Altogether the equivalent of about ten divisions were arrayed for the assault although only a small proportion of these succeeded in pushing their way across the parallel, due to the utter collapse of the spearhead units. In no case did the latter secure the objectives which were to protect the main advance.

Most of the details of the events immediately following the outbreak of hostilities have been publicised, but there were so many distortions, and suppression of facts that should have been public knowledge, that it is worth briefly summarising what took place. U.N. Military observers completed a tour of the parallel on June 25 and reported no unusual signs of activity that would suggest the K.P.A. was preparing to invade the South. The report of this tour was not despatched however, until June 29 and reached Lake Success on June 30.

The first news that an invasion had taken place was broadcast by Pyongyang radio. The first news from the South came in a communiqué signed by General MacArthur on June 25. This was, to say the least, surprising in view of the fact that South Korea was supposed to be a sovereign state. There was no U.N. Commission report that the North had invaded the South. The U.N. Commission neither at that time nor since carried out an investigation or reported its own findings as to who launched the assault. The alleged U.N.C. report that North Korea had committed aggression against the South which was the basis of the war measures rushed through the Security Council was merely the transmission by the U.N.C. in Korea of what Rhee told them had happened, without factual comment or confirmation. It seems that even this biased Commission, packed with “men of strong views” as it was, didn’t care to lend its name to the Rhee version of what it must have known was a fraud. The U.N.C. report on which was based United Nations aggression against Korea commenced with the words:

“The government of South Korea states...”

The only comment in this report – which the Americans presented to the Security Council as if it had the weight of the U.N.C. investigatory organ behind it – was in the final paragraph which drew the attention of the Secretary General to a serious situation developing which could endanger peace and security and concluded

with the words: "...It suggests that he consider the possibility of bringing the matter to the notice of the Security Council. The Commission will communicate more fully considered recommendations later."

So much for the U.N.C. report. The only other report was a deliberate distortion of a cable from Ambassador Muccio which was read to Trygve Lie in the small hours of the morning stating textually:

"The American Ambassador to the Republic of Korea has informed the Department of State that North Korean forces invaded the territory of the Republic of Korea at several points in the early morning hours of June 25." This was one of those historic pieces of deceit which the Americans have practised throughout the entire handling of the Korean question. Muccio's cable actually read:

"According to Korean reports which are partly confirmed by the Korean Military Advisory Group, the Field Adviser reports that North Korean forces invaded Republic of Korea territory at several points this morning."

This was presented to Lie as an on-the-spot report from the Military Advisory Group, whereas in fact once again the message was based on Rhee reports only partly confirmed – which might well mean that the Field Advisers had confirmed that fighting had broken out.

These are the reports on which the Security Council in the absence of the Soviet Union and with China represented by a puppet without a country, passed an illegal resolution designed to plunge the world into a new world war. Even before the first meeting of the Security Council on June 27, Washington had already announced that military aid, including air support, was being given South Korea. Several hours before the Council met, Truman announced he had ordered, "United States air and sea forces to give the Korean government troops cover and support," and that he had ordered the American 7th Fleet to "protect" Formosa and was sending military missions to the Philippines and French Indo-China. Truman took four separate military measures without consulting the Security Council, the Chinese, Philippines or French governments. Acting without even the flimsy and illegal sanction of the Security Council the United States government was doubly guilty in the strictest sense of the term of armed aggression against the people of Korea

and China and of intervention in the internal affairs of the Philippines and Vietnam.

There never has been any evidence produced to prove that the North attacked the South. There was a belated attempt to scrape up proof in May, 1951, but the palpable forgeries which the U.S.A. submitted to the U.N. could only be regarded as final proof that there was no evidence and the Americans were forced to fabricate demonstrably false documents. Apparently in order to cover up their embarrassment for the incriminating documents abandoned in Seoul, the Americans claimed to have captured two documents during their advance to the North which “proved” that an invasion of South Korea had been prepared weeks in advance.

The first document was “Order of the Second Section of the Supreme Headquarters of the North Korean Army,” the second was “Battle Order of the Commander of the Fourth Division of the North Korean Army.” The term “North Korean Army” was one used exclusively by the Americans to describe what was known from its foundation by only one name, “The Korean People’s Army”. No other term could possibly be used – as was pointed out at the time the Americans produced their counterfeits, by General Nam Il, Chief of Staff of the K.P.A. The second major blunder for the counterfeiters was that many place names mentioned in the documents were referred to by their Japanese names, whereas by a decree issued on March 24, 1947, the North Korean People’s Committee banned the use of Japanese names and strictly enforced the ban. No Japanese place name could possibly appear on military maps or military orders.

The rapid collapse of the R.O.K. Army was probably a source of great relief to the U.S. State Department and must have been foreseen by the top war-planners in the Pentagon. There is every reason to believe that Washington refused to supply Rhee with the tanks, planes and heavy artillery he demanded, not only to force him to wait until Washington was ready for war, but to ensure that his forces would be defeated. If Rhee had the equipment to make good his boast to occupy the North within three days, there would have been no excuse for America to intervene. For reasons of global policy, for presenting a plausible story to the U.N., it was necessary to have the Rhee forces in retreat with K.P.A. forces in South Korea as soon as possible. This is the only possible explanation for the complete silence for months before the clash of the massing of Northern

forces along the parallel. (The reason for them taking up these defensive positions is obvious but their presence could not possibly have been overlooked by American intelligence. Normally the American propaganda machine would have gone into top gear on such an occasion as the massing of forces in a People's Democracy. But with American staff officers sitting on the parallel, with American reconnaissance planes constantly flying over the frontier area, with patrols always probing across the frontier and a highly organised espionage network behind the lines, there was not one story released to the American public of military preparations north of the parallel. American strategy seems to have been to start the fight with the cold-blooded calculation that their puppets would be routed and so give the excuse for the American invasion.)

The Seoul press reported on June 25 and 26 that the K.P.A. had attacked across the parallel, but that the R.O.K. Army had valiantly resisted the initial assault, launched a counter-offensive and were continuing a glorious advance on Pyongyang. (The reports were probably based on R.O.K. Army releases prepared in advance.) On the afternoon of the 26th, while papers were being sold on the streets proclaiming glorious victories and advances, the thunder of artillery could plainly be heard in the capital. Syngman Rhee and his American wife, together with the country's gold reserves, fled by plane to Tokyo. An exodus of merchants, high government officials and wealthy capitalists began from the city by train, automobile, trucks and taxis. The city was dead except for R.O.K. troops and police in command of the streets and the wealthy fleeing the city. Pedestrians and loiterers were liable to be shot on sight. Schools were closed down, the people remained indoors.

The night of the 27th was pregnant with great events. There was a great storm with mighty claps of thunder alternating with the roar and thunder of artillery fire which neared the city every hour. Flashes of shell bursts on famous Mount Ariyan just north of the city mingled with brilliant lightning flashes. By midnight, sporadic bursts of machine-gun fire could be heard splitting the sudden silences between the roar of thunder and artillery.

In private homes all over Seoul, groups from the illegal Workers Party were meeting and making precise plans for the morning. Political workers from the K.P.A. had already penetrated the city that night with the news that morning would bring liberation. There would be police to be disarmed, gaol doors to be opened, uniformed

thugs to be dealt with, transport to be arranged, food to be distributed, a thousand and one tasks to be handled. Their organisation had been maintained despite serious gaps torn from the ranks by police suppression.

In the Sitamen (West Gate) gaol, every artillery shot and machine gun burst on the night of the 27th was the sublimest music for 6,500 political prisoners. Their hopes pulsed with the forward march of the artillery shells. On the night of June 25, the prison was blacked out. Next day prisoners heard aeroplanes and the sound of strafing. They thought at first this must be military manoeuvres but on the 27th they could hear approaching artillery and they knew by the panicky way in which the prison guards were marching up and down shouting, "There's nothing wrong! There's nothing wrong!" that something really serious was happening.

By midday on the 27th, news of the real situation leaked through to some of the political prisoners who quickly passed it on with signals and code words until the whole prison knew that the R.O.K. Army was in retreat. Jammed in their cells, the prisoners waited with almost unbearable suspense for liberation or the execution squads. By midnight there was no doubt in any of their minds that Seoul would soon be freed. At 3 a.m., cell doors started opening and names were called out. Prisoners were being led out with guns pressed to their bodies – the execution squads had started their work. Prisoners were taken to a nearby bend in the Han river and shot, their bodies flung into the water.

At 5 a.m., there was an enormous detonation as the Han river bridge was blown and after that there was quietness. The prisoners soon realised that their guards had fled; the execution squads had also fled leaving the prisoners locked in their cells.

In the home of Li Kyu-ok, a 21-year-old Korean girl who was later much photographed and publicised by American photographers and journalists when she turned up at the Kaesong ceasefire talks as Sergeant Paik of the Korean People's Army, there were earnest discussions about the future. Miss Li had been released from one of Seoul's gaols three weeks before. As an English typist for E.C.A. (Economic Co-operation Administration) she had been denounced by an American C.I.C. officer as a suspected member of the South Korean Workers Party in December, 1949. She was hustled off to a Seoul gaol and without any preliminary questioning taken down to a basement, stripped of her clothes and administered

a variety of the water torture, to make her betray her alleged comrades in the Workers Party. A towel was placed over her nose and mouth, her hands tied behind her back and a male torturer squatted astride her body pouring water from an enormous kettle into her mouth. From time to time the pouring stopped while she was asked questions. As she refused to answer the pouring continued until she lost consciousness. Following this she was thrown into a cell in which there were 22 other women. There was just room for them to squat on the floor without moving, in three rows of eight each except for one with seven – the last place was occupied by a toilet bucket. At night they could sleep on their sides, feet to feet in two rows, but with no room to move. Day and night for months on end, they remained virtually immobile. The only time they saw daylight was if one or another were taken out to be beaten. For the 23 women one half bucket of water daily was provided for drinking. It was forbidden to wash. But each day they saved one bowl of water which was used collectively by one group of eight and then poured into the toilet bucket, so the guards would not notice. Thus one group could “wash” each three days.

Li Kyu-ok, because there was no evidence against her, was sentenced only to six months’ interrogatory arrest and as the time grew near for her release, she decided to embroider a flower on her handkerchief and leave it with her less fortunate comrades for remembrance. With coloured threads from her dress and a needle which she had secreted, she was discovered by an inspector and dragged out of the cell for a beating. The women guards, mostly from 20 to 25 years, were almost exclusively from refugee landlord families from the North, and they performed their guard duties with sadistic savagery. In Li Kyu-ok’s case they were probably doubly infuriated by the calm, pure quality of her beauty. She was tied down and beaten across the back of the legs with a heavy leather thong, nailed to a wooden handle. She was flailed for about 50 strokes before she lost consciousness. After she had been revived with cold water dashed in her face, she was forced to stand upright in her cell, holding a chair with arms fully extended high above her head, for 30 minutes. Each time she faltered, she was beaten. On June 8, her six months were up. Her gaol space was needed for others and she was released on a “conditional” basis, a type of house arrest and liable to re-arrest at any moment if any “evidence” turned up against her. On the night of June 27, Li Kyu-ok, her mother, two sisters and

younger brother were huddled together in an air-raid shelter, listening to the approaching artillery, the thunder claps and pounding rain and wondering whether the morning would bring forth the Rhee police again or the liberating K.P.A. She was still very weak from her gaol experiences and could hobble about only with difficulty.

In a number of houses and police stations after mid-night Rhee police were tearing off their uniforms and hiding their badges; trying to get into civilian clothes and flee, or go underground. Members of the “Peace Maintenance Corps” also began diving for cover. They were mainly composed of the former Rhee thugs in uniform. They could expect little tenderness at the hands of Seoul citizens when the K.P.A. entered the city and they partly believed their own propaganda that the K.P.A. troops would rob, burn, hang and rape and put the whole city to the fire and sword.

On the surface Seoul was a dead city on the night of June 27 except for the cars and trucks of fleeing stragglers, but underneath the surface Seoul was simmering with activity. Hopes were kindled in the hearts of tens of thousands. Last minute touches were given to plans which would go into operation when dawn broke.

The thunder-storm died away. Dawn came, grey and cloudy; the thunder of the artillery had slackened and was giving way to the sharper sounds of machine gun and small arms fire. By the time most of the sleepless Seoul citizens had rubbed their weary eyes and furtively peered out of doors, the R.O.K. Army was in full retreat. Officers and men in trucks and jeeps whirled through the town and after them came half-naked, sweating and cursing troops on foot, throwing away weapons and scraps of equipment as they came, diving into houses for civilian clothes or to find a hiding place – a demoralised, broken army with no faith in their officers, their American advisers and American weapons and most important of all, no faith in their cause. Remnants of police, “Peace Maintenance Corps” and Rhee “Youth Groups” who still remained in the streets joined the flight to the South.

The Eastern Hills were just turning grey when the first K.P.A. tanks pounded their way into the city. One raced to the infamous Sitamen prison and without pausing in its stride, in a mighty symbolic liberating gesture crushed the iron prison gates into the ground and thundered across the courtyard to the cell doors.

“None of us could ever forget that moment,” 29-year-old Chu Yung-sun told me later. “After the sudden quiet, the whole earth

seemed to be quaking and roaring. We looked out to see the steel monster flying the flag of the Democratic People's Republic and the eager faces of our comrades from the North. They rushed to our cell doors. Some of them broke their guns trying to smash the locks that separated us. We pounded from the inside with our toilet bowls and they battered from the outside. Soon we were freed and in the arms of our comrades. We held a quick meeting and decided to put on a demonstration."

Weak and suffering as many of them were, they marched out in disciplined formation and paraded through Seoul. They were the first of Seoul's citizens to be in the streets that morning as they marched in orderly groups to their various organisational headquarters. There was no thought of returning to their homes, as might have been expected. Straight from prison and the death cells they wanted only to plunge straight into work again. The second tank rushed to the Capitol, the seat of Rhee's power and ran up the single-starred, red, white and blue flag of the Korean Democratic People's Republic on the parliament flagstaff. The first two tanks appeared at about 7 a.m. They were soon followed by others, thundering and roaring through the streets, tanks followed by tenders hauling artillery pieces, artillery by troops in trucks, trucks by cavalry and cavalry by marching troops.

Even in the first minutes of liberation there were emotional heart-warming scenes, as those who ventured on to the streets while firing was still going on clambered aboard tanks and trucks, embraced and wept with the K.P.A. boys. At the University Hospital and the East Gate police station, some R.O.K. troops and police put up a brief resistance, but they were soon dealt with and there was no real street fighting. By 10 a.m., the entire population except for a handful of reactionaries with guilty consciences, was out on the streets in a spontaneous demonstration of joy.

The whole day of the 28th was spent as a wonderful holiday with singing and dancing in the streets, banners and flags appearing as if by magic. There were no disorders. With the Workers Party giving the lead, Seoul's citizens quickly established organisation for carrying on the daily life of the city. Police stations were quickly and efficiently taken over. One great problem for that first day and several successive days was that the population was half-starving. Most people lived on their day-to-day purchases of rice and the 28th was the third day in succession that the shops were closed. And

when the grain shops were inspected it was found the stocks had mainly been removed or destroyed. Houses of reactionaries who had fled were raided, however, and enormous supplies of food and clothing were unearthed and distributed to those most in need by the K.P.A. Complete unity was established between the liberating troops and the population immediately.

For days after liberation, they marched arm-in-arm draped in flowers: with flags and slogan-inscribed banners gaily fluttering in the breeze, singing patriotic songs and volunteering in their thousands and tens of thousands. The K.P.A. authorities had nothing prepared to deal with such an immense rush of volunteers, many times greater than anything that had been expected, all clamouring for nothing more than arms and transport to the front. The theft and destruction of foodstuffs by the Rhee government and supporters made even the problem of feeding the vast flow of volunteers a difficult one for the K.P.A. in the first days of Seoul's liberation.

(Within the first six weeks of the outbreak of hostilities, 1,200,000 young men and women volunteered in the K.P.A., in the Volunteers Corps and in partisan detachments. Of these 400,000 came from the South.)

One thing that inspired the volunteers apart from the general desire to finish with Rhee and his clique once and for all, was the behaviour of the K.P.A. troops. They refused to accept any food or gifts; they washed their own socks and clothes; if they wanted anything they paid for it at market prices. The new police force also made a profound impression on Seoul citizens. Within the memory of the oldest resident, nobody could remember such a police force. Quiet, restrained, polite, plainly clad in white with red and green flags to control the traffic, helping old people with bundles, they were, to use a much-quoted expression, "just people, like the rest of us." Koreans under Rhee, under the Americans, under the Japanese and under their own feudal rulers, had always been accustomed to police who shouted at them, slapped, beat and kicked them, arrested, tortured and killed them, all for no apparent reason. This was real liberation.

After the first few days, government shops opened in place of the private monopolies where government grain, cloth and fuel were sold at fixed prices. This immediately brought foodstuffs on the open market down from their famine-price level.

One of the greatest treats for Seoul citizens was when the K.P.A. cultural group came to the city and gave performances nightly for three weeks. Choruses, drama and ballet which breathed the traditions, the hopes and the struggles of the Korean people were performed by some of the best talent in the country. South Korean dramatists, singers, musicians, artists and dancers, amongst them the finest in South Korea, demanded to join such cultural groups and really serve the people.

The tide of battle that bore on its crest the banners of liberation to Seoul, paused there a moment, then swept on to the South again. Young faces hardened, fists were clenched and bitter pledges of revenge were sworn as the liberating battalions pushed south across the blackened ruins of what were once peaceful villages, and listened to tales of a barbarism which surpassed even that of the Nazi butchers in World War II. But nothing could stop their avenging sweep to the South. With a great fanfare of propaganda the Americans announced they were sending heavy artillery to the front. Reactionaries all over the world thought that now the "red hordes" will be stopped. But it was captured and turned against them almost before their artillerymen had fired a round. They sent scores of Sherman tanks. This time the reactionaries were certain American tanks would rout the Soviet models and halt the advance. But the Shermans were knocked out in their scores by Soviet-made T.34's before the latter came within range of American guns. And American pilots complained that their bullets and rockets "bounced like ping-pong balls" when they hit the sturdy K.P.A. tanks. R.O.K. troops deserted and surrendered en masse. Whole units came over with their weapons and demanded to take part on the side of the liberators. There were other mass surrenders in which the R.O.K. troops were disarmed and set at liberty again.

What the R.O.K. Army lacked in fighting spirit it made up for in its savagery against unarmed civilians and particularly in massacring suspected guerrilla sympathisers and the political prisoners that crammed South Korea's gaols to overflowing.

A typical example was provided at Taejon, slightly more than 100 miles south of Seoul. Alan Winnington of the London *Daily Worker* visited Taejon a few days after what was left of the decimated American 24th Division, under Major General Dean had pulled out of town. All the way south from Suwon, Winnington kept hearing stories from refugees of an immense massacre further south.

Enquiries at small towns and villages brought news of 150 to 200 patriots murdered at each place, which was about the normal quota for any small town through which the R.O.K. and American troops had passed. At Taejon the rumour was stronger and a K.P.A. officer at Winnington's request sent out scouts to verify what had taken place and where. On July 30, a little over a month after the war started, Winnington and interpreters walked to a point on the Taejon-Yong-dong road, about seven miles south of Taejon and about a third of a mile south of the small village of Rangwul. There the peasants gathered round to tell the story of the Taejon massacre, a story which Winnington was able to verify when he visited the actual spot where the massacre took place and secured photographic evidence. At about the beginning of July, almost all the peasants in the area had been press-ganged into digging huge pits, ranging from 50 to 200 metres in length and about two metres wide and two deep. They worked under the direction of R.O.K. troops. On July 6, a number of trucks, some driven by Americans, others by R.O.K. soldiers arrived on the scene with people packed into them. Their hands were wired behind their backs, they were packed in layers, with straw matting between the layers. Those on top were forced to get down, those below, many of them only semi-conscious, were thrown out. With American officers in attendance, they were herded to the edge of the first pit, forced to kneel and the shooting commenced. At first, volleys were fired into each one, but after American officers intervened, a single shot was fired and the victim thrown into the pit, dead or alive. This was repeated on the two following days. As the pits were filled, the peasants were forced to cover them up and dig new ones. The corpses themselves almost filled the pits and only a thin layer of dirt could be thrown over them. It was quite clear that many of those shot were not dead when they were thrown in, because arms, legs and heads in some cases were sticking out of the ground indicating victims had struggled to get out after the trucks drove off.

The peasants were forced to dig six pits in all. On July 16, a number of jeeps drove up. R.O.K. and American officers got out and a few minutes later more trucks rolled up. This time they were packed even higher with prisoners. The peasants estimated there were about twice the number in each truck compared with the earlier massacre and they believe that on July 16-17, 4,000 people were executed, making 7,000 in all. This time again, only one shot was

fired into each victim but those who still struggled were stabbed with bayonets.

It was established later that the first batch of shootings comprised all the political prisoners of Taejon gaol and that after the gaol was emptied, prisoners from all the surrounding gaols were concentrated at Taejon for execution.

After the political prisoners were executed, relatives, mothers, wives and even children of the victims were rounded up and brought to what the peasants referred to as the "parents' grave" and a fresh butchery started. But there was not time to complete the work. Taejon fell on July 21, before there was time to round up more than a tiny proportion of the relatives. There was not even time to fill in the grave. Bodies lay just as they had been flung into the pit.

Winnington visited the pits and reported the massacre in the *Daily Worker* at the time. He also took pictures which showed a valley about a quarter of a mile long and a couple of hundred yards wide with the death pits spaced within its confines. Close-ups show hands, feet and heads still sticking out of the flimsy covering of earth, and massed bodies where the peasants had started to reopen the graves for identification. One of the peasants recounted that one of his friends, also forced to act as grave-digger saw his brother-in-law and made an involuntary sign of recognition. He was immediately seized, his arms bound with wire behind his back and unmercifully beaten with rifle butts, before he too was shot.

Later there would be many more such massacres and on a much larger scale, especially when the Americans invaded North Korea, but the massacre of 7,000 civilians in a town of 60,000 in the heart of South Korea was commentary enough on the support Rhee could count on from his own people. It was explanation in part, too, of why in less than one month, despite the American-trained, armed and led ten divisions of the R.O.K. army, despite American artillery, tanks, planes and warships, and despite two American divisions flung into the battle, the K.P.A. had under its control 90% of the territory of South Korea and 92% of the population. (By the time the K.P.A. was forced to withdraw, 95% of the territory of the whole of Korea and 97% of the population had been united and gave their overwhelming support to the Democratic People's Republic.) By September, 1950, more than 13,000,000 Koreans over the age of 16 years had signed their names to a petition demanding

the Security Council cease military hostilities and force the Americans to withdraw their forces from the country. But this petition was ignored as any and every demand or expressed wish of the Korean people had been ignored from the first day the Americans set foot in the country.

No matter what the Americans were able to salvage afterwards by weight of numbers, by enormous technical superiority, by ruthless annihilation of hundreds of thousands of the civilian population and finally by bacteriological warfare, American imperialist prestige can never live down the humiliating military and political defeat suffered by American arms and American policy in those first two months after the Rhee assault against the parallel.

Chapter 8

ENTER – THE CHINESE VOLUNTEERS

By the end of July, 1950, the remnants of the R.O.K. Army and the U.S. forces were compressed into a triangle roughly based on Pusan on the South coast, Masan on the west and Taegu to the north. In this area the battle was waged furiously throughout August and September with the concentrated mass of American artillery and tanks in the triangle firing from the outer perimeter supported by U.S. warships marauding up and down the coast pouring hundreds of tons of hot steel daily at supply routes, bridges and communication centres, and the U.S. Air Force doing its best to wipe out every town and village and cut the greatly extended supply lines to the south.

One of the most forward elements of the K.P.A. was the 82nd regiment which as the 38th Guard Unit stationed along the parallel had had four major engagements with the R.O.K. Army before the real fighting started.

At the end of July, the 82nd held Hill 700, north-east of Taegu. Throughout the whole of August and until September 27, they were under constant air and artillery attack with ground assaults launched against them daily, but they never lost an inch of ground. Shortage of supplies was a more dangerous enemy than American troops, shells or planes. Road convoys could only travel by night, and the drivers at that time had not yet mastered the technique of concealing their movements from the American Air Force. For days on end the fighters of the 82nd never ate at all except for some roots and edible grasses. Their ammunition ran out and there was even a scarcity of weapons, but they managed to capture enough American arms and ammunition to keep themselves supplied. Often when a little rice arrived at their positions, the troops ate with their left hands while they fired their weapons or hurled hand grenades with their right hands, to beat off an attack. At one period the Americans were also cut off and had to have supplies dropped by planes. The K.P.A. boys studied the technique of supply dropping and in one daring operation they stole the red ground strips used to indicate the supply drop point. They laid out the strips in the correct pattern and received a life-saving shower of American weapons and food.

Without the unchallenged air supremacy of the Americans at that period, the issue would quickly have been settled. Even with

U.S. divisions, artillery, tanks and warships, the whole of Korea would have been liberated within one month at a very low cost in lives; apart from the civilians massacred by the Rhee and American executioners. The reason for the lightning K.P.A. advance was that it had the support of the entire people. Men and women, the aged and children turned out to repair roads and bridges, to carry supplies and to take over an enormous part of the burdens with which armies must normally cope.

Behind the liberating troops, People's Committees sprang into being again and People's Militia, chosen by the villagers themselves. Liberation by the K.P.A. meant the people running their own lives, restoring their democratic organisations, building a new life full of hope for the future. During the three months of liberation, People's Committees were elected at village, district and county level in 13,654 villages, 1,186 districts and 108 counties from the nine provinces which had been liberated.

The same social reform laws already in operation in the North were applied equally in the South. Land reform was also carried out. 1,163,000 families of poor and landless peasants and agricultural labourers received land. Liberation by the K.P.A. meant the end of the yoke of feudalism under which the mass of the people had suffered so long. They quickly began to understand what the American definition of "liberation" meant. In the name of "liberation", their towns and villages were being destroyed by American high explosive and incendiary bombs; civilians killed and maimed in tens of thousands. As soon as a town or village was left to the north of the battleline by the retreating U.S. troops, it automatically became an enemy town or village, the people left to the north became enemies to be blasted and burned.

"Anything that's moving, stop it. Anything that's stopped, move it", were the standing instructions of MacArthur for his air force. "Any male person north of the battleline must be regarded as a legitimate target," MacArthur ordered. He was correct in considering by this time every person in Korea as an enemy of the American forces. When MacArthur issued his infamous order for his planes to machine-gun and bomb any person on the roads or in the fields north of the battleline (except, he said, women and children, but his pilots explained later they were unable to make such a fine distinction at 500 miles per hour) he tacitly admitted that America was at war with the entire Korean people. And he went on the record as

having issued the most barbarous military order ever issued in the so-called civilised world.

From the beginning of the war, the Soviet Union in conjunction with some other nations tried to bring about a peaceful settlement in Korea, although this has been conveniently forgotten since by western statesmen who created and tried to perpetuate the legend that the civil war was in reality “Soviet aggression”. A little over two weeks after the fighting started, Nehru asked Stalin on July 13 to use his “high authority and influence... to localise the conflict and assist a speedy, peaceful settlement through the elimination of the present impasse in the Security Council...” Nehru’s suggestion was for contact to be made between the governments of the Soviet Union, the U.S.A. and People’s China, with the help of other peaceable states either within the frame-work of the Security Council or outside it, in order to stop the fighting and find a final solution of the Korean problem. Nehru also hoped this would lead to People’s China taking her place in the Security Council and the Soviet Union returning to her seat.

Two days later, Stalin replied that he fully shared Nehru’s viewpoint “as regards the expediency of the peaceful settlement of the Korean question through the Security Council” and that he welcomed the “peaceable initiative” shown by Nehru. The next day Nehru cabled Stalin thanking him for his “prompt and encouraging reply” and said he was contacting other governments concerned. But his approach to the U.S.A. was coldly and flatly rejected. At this time there was no question of Chinese volunteers taking part in the fighting. But the reason given by Marshall for refusing to negotiate on the basis of the Nehru-Stalin proposal was that the U.S. refused to take part in any discussions which involved the appearance of People’s China at the United Nations. Thus the early practical attempts at a peaceful settlement of the fighting and a real solution to the Korean problem were deliberately sabotaged by the United States as were later proposals submitted by the Arab bloc.

One of the points which emerged from the Nehru-Stalin exchanges horrified the Americans and their puppet Rhee beyond measure. This was the proposal that after the fighting ended the Korean people in North and South should settle their own affairs. Stalin in his cable of August 17 agreed with Nehru that general elections should be held “in both North and South Korea to elect a single government for the whole peninsula.” U.S. delegate to the

United Nations, Warren Austin, immediately did a quick turnabout and said the only elections the U.S. wanted would be held “on the basis that the Republic of Korea (Rhee Government. – Author) jurisdiction would be extended over North Korea automatically.”

The U.S. State Department and Rhee knew only too well that free elections in 1950 would have produced the same results as the nation-wide elections in August, 1948 – an overwhelming victory for the progressive parties.

The Nehru-Stalin exchanges however failed – except in so far as they increased the prestige of both countries and demonstrated who was for war and who for peace in Korea. These highly practical attempts at a peaceful settlement and a real solution to the Korean problem were deliberately sabotaged by the United States as were later proposals submitted by the Arab bloc.

Meanwhile MacArthur was scraping together all the ships, planes and troops he could lay hands on for an amphibious landing at Inchon, which was carried out on September 16, after a merciless air and naval bombardment of the harbour city.

The Inchon landing was designed to cut Korea in two, to encircle and annihilate all K.P.A. units south of Seoul. With over-extended supply lines and virtually no air or naval support, the K.P.A. had no alternative but to withdraw in as good order as possible to the far north and regroup for a later counter-offensive.

The K.P.A. began its fighting withdrawal in the third week of September, marching and fighting, burying their dead, fighting and marching again. For days and nights on end, the troops neither ate nor slept. They discarded everything but their weapons and ammunition, were bombed and strafed incessantly, but their morale never faltered. Those that could go no further, or whose escape route was completely blocked, went to the mountains to organise partisan detachments in the enemy rear.

Shortly after the Inchon landing, MacArthur made it clear that he intended going far beyond the limits of the original task sanctioned by the Security Council. As the K.P.A. withdrew from south of the parallel, MacArthur announced his intention of pushing through into North Korea and carrying out with U.S. troops what Rhee had been unable to do alone. Premier Chou En-lai for the People’s Government of China announced on October 1, that China would not stand idly by while American forces invaded North Korea and approached the borders of China. China had bitter enough

experience of Korea being used as a stepping stone, first for the invasion of Manchuria and then of China proper. The Indian Ambassador conveyed a clear warning of China's attitude to his government and Nehru passed this warning to the British and American governments.

This did not prevent the U.S. government rushing through a vote at the General Assembly of the U.N. authorising on October 7, by 45 to five with eight abstentions, the American invasion of North Korea. The following day MacArthur's troops crossed the parallel. In deliberately lying reports, MacArthur chose to ignore his own intelligence service and the clear Chinese warning and soothed anxious hearts in Washington and elsewhere, by stating there was not the slightest reason to believe that China would intervene.

During October, the volunteer movement began to get under way in China. At first the volunteers came mainly from army units stationed closest to Korea, but very rapidly it turned into a vast mass movement that attracted the best sons and daughters of the new China from every part of the country and from every walk of life. On October 15, when MacArthur conferred with Truman on Wake Island, he told the President that there was not the slightest reason to believe that the Chinese would enter Korea, no matter how far north U.S. forces pushed. Ten days later the Chinese People's Volunteers crossed the Yalu in fairly large numbers.

On the diplomatic front, the entry of the Chinese volunteers created a new situation. MacArthur had already boasted that he would advance to the Yalu and would set up "defensive" positions on the Chinese side of the Yalu river. Inspired articles were appearing in the American press to the effect that the Yalu had not always been the frontier between Korea and China and that in days gone by large parts of Manchuria had been under Korean rule. American planes were already bombing Chinese towns and villages across the Yalu.

It was officially announced that Chinese Volunteers were in Korea at the end of October and on November 10, 1950, the ten political parties which constitute the coalition government in People's China issued a joint statement to the effect that they would support and encourage all those who joined the rapidly developing movement to volunteer for service in Korea. In mid-November the fighting quietened down. The Americans had over-extended their supply lines and had to pause for a new build-up.

A Chinese delegation headed by General Wu Hsu-chuen was to go to Lake Success to present the views of People's China, in a new effort to seek a peaceful solution. This was the moment chosen by MacArthur to carry out one of his most provocative and bellicose actions. He ordered another general offensive and made his notorious statement, "Tell the boys that when they reach the Yalu river, they are going home. I want to make good my statement that they are going to eat Christmas dinner at home."

This was a deliberate attempt to wreck chances for peace at the moment when there was a good chance that eleventh-hour negotiations could have produced a settlement. The "home-by-Christmas" offensive was timed precisely to achieve the maximum harm. In a profile on General Bradley, written in the *New Yorker*, March, 1951, by A. J. Liebling, Bradley is quoted as saying that the offensive and speech were originally timed for November 15. This was the date on which the Chinese delegation was originally scheduled to arrive at Lake Success. But the delegation was delayed and arrived on November 24 and the changed schedule was known to the Pentagon. MacArthur "postponed his offensive until the 24th so that news of it should greet the Chinese delegates on the hour of their arrival.

The results of MacArthur's action were swift and dramatic. The K.P.A. and the C.P.V.A. (Chinese People's Volunteer Army) launched a counter offensive, which threatened the entire forces under MacArthur's command with encirclement and annihilation. Within a few days the U.S. armies which had already reached the Chinese frontier were in full, panic-stricken retreat and they did not stop retreating until they had gone all the way back to the 38th parallel and further. Pyongyang was liberated on December 6, Kaesong on January 1, Seoul two days later. In desperation Truman announced that the atom bomb would be used but this roused such worldwide reaction and such a storm even in the House of Commons, that Truman soon backed clown with a correction that it would only be used after prior consultation.

The tide of battle ebbed and flowed back and forth across the 38th parallel from the time the R.O.K. troops launched the original assault until the time the cease-fire talks started in July, 1951. It is perhaps appropriate however to give some account of the types of men and women who took part in the volunteer units and a description of their methods of fighting.

Huang Wan-iung is chief of staff of a battalion which took part in the pursuit of the U.N. troops from North Korea and which had the particular task of cutting the escape route of the 5th regiment of the U.S. 1st Marine division. Huang has a lean mobile face, close-cropped hair and very expressive eyes which have a habit, however, of disappearing momentarily when his face wrinkles up in a smile. He was formerly a poor peasant from Shantung province, but became a middle peasant after land reform. He was a member of the peasants' militia during the war against the Japanese and fought many bitter engagements with them. He volunteered the moment he heard there was need to halt the Americans from advancing towards China's frontiers. When he marched into Korea at the end of October, 1950, he was a company commander and the rest of his men, marched for ten days on end, an average of 30 miles a day but sometimes 40 miles in a day carrying a 70-pound pack. Standard equipment for the troops were rifle, six hand grenades, three mortar shells, a bag of provisions, knapsack with bedding, overcoat with bedding, overcoat and 20 bullets.

On November 28, Huang's No. 2 company was ordered to Hill 1224 north of Shin Shin Li, near the Hwachon reservoir. Their mission was to cut the escape route of the Marines and at the same time to prevent reinforcements coming to their aid. In a brisk night march, through heavy snow, the company reached the hill before midnight. Shortly after midnight, with his overcoat turned inside out so that the white lining gave him camouflage protection in the snow, Huang wormed himself down the pine-clad slope and dug himself into the snow at the edge of the highway. American trucks without lights were slowly feeling their way down the road. Huang was only about five paces from them and so decided to bring his men down as close as possible to the road's edge. By 1 a.m. his men were all in place.

The snow deadened the sound of their movements, their greatcoats turned inside out were perfect protection against the snow. They approached so near the convoy that they could touch the wheels by stretching out their hands, but they were not allowed to fire until Huang gave the order. And he did not give the order until his men had swiftly spread out along the highway to encompass most of the convoy.

"Then I fired," said Huang, "everybody fired immediately and some threw grenades. Many American troops were killed without

firing a shot because they were lying on the bottom of the trucks and had zipped themselves into their sleeping bags and couldn't get at their weapons. Of course we didn't know that until later. Only a few of them fought back, but one fired a carbine and hit me in the hand, then he threw a hand grenade which landed on one of the American jeeps killing everyone inside. I fired back at the truck and killed seven. There was tremendous confusion among the Americans. Those who fired more often than not killed their own men. Altogether there were 18 trucks and they were all put out of action. Eighty were killed outright, many of the wounded froze to death. Killed and wounded petrified where they fell. The whole action lasted only 20 minutes and apart from my light hand wound, we have only one other wounded man."

After that, Huang ordered his unit back to the hill to construct defence works for the attack which was sure to come next morning. They did their best to build fox-holes, but the snow was a foot deep and there were seven inches of frozen earth under the snow. When dawn broke, there was a heavy mist. Planes could be heard circling overhead but could not be seen. More trucks started to advance along the road and ahead of the trucks a tank bull-dozed to the side of the road the remnants of the other trucks and the bodies lying in the snow. After the tank had cleared a path it continued on; the trucks started to follow, but Huang's men opened fire and knocked out the first seven. The rest backed up and tried to turn back. Survivors from the first trucks jumped out and tried to cling to the sides of the trucks which were turning back but were easily picked off with accurate rifle-fire.

Shortly after 7 a.m. the sun broke through and with it the planes. Altogether 40 planes bombed and strafed the position in relays for almost nine hours. Trucks came again in another attempt to break through but were turned back. Then a patrol of 14 men was sent, seven on each side of the road, crouching low and trying to spot the place from which the fire was coming. In the meantime planes were still strafing and bombing the hill positions. Huang and an assistant platoon leader moved down the hill during the bombing, jumping from crater to crater and waited with pistols and grenades for the 14 to get within range. It took the Marine patrol three hours to move the 50 metres and then they were all killed, one after another.

“A fourth attempt at a breakthrough was made,” said Huang, “with an officer crawling ahead with a pistol in his hand followed by four more troops, with the remnants of the battalion in the rear. I fired at the officer three times and missed. He dropped to the ground and the other four turned and ran but they passed within three paces of our men who had followed me down the hill by this time, and they killed them all, including the officer.

“The fifth attack came around 3 p.m. Our chaps had been digging trenches. The enemy had radio contact across our roadblock and five tanks came from the other side. They started firing from about 200 metres at our positions. More planes came over bombing and strafing and they laid a smoke-screen which came within two or three metres of us. This time the planes were dropping 500-pounders. This was really bad, but I had to lead the men down to the road away from the smoke-screen so we could keep our eyes on the enemy. Anyway it was the safest place. It was a tense business as once again we had to leap from crater to crater immediately after the bombs dropped.

“When we got down safely, we were all a bit shaken and I knew the boys were looking at me wondering what we should do next. The enemy was only about 50 metres away. I thought it would make an impression of calmness if I sat down and lit a cigarette. Then tanks opened up with such intense fire that they cut down a tree just behind us. Some of us used this for cover while we studied the situation. The remnants of the battalion had now split into three groups, one trying to edge its way along the middle of the road, and one each side in the ditches. They were led by a very timid officer with a pistol in his hand who kept urging the men forward and didn’t like to get more than a few feet ahead of the following man. Behind the soldiers were trucks hauling artillery pieces. We opened fire and when they discovered we were in their rear as well as ahead of them, they tried to retreat but were mown down. Then they tried to get their artillery back, but before they could turn their tenders around, we had knocked them out and the guns remained where they were. After that a few groups in threes and fours came up but none got through.”

From that engagement a few higher Marine officers were evacuated by helicopter, a few men escaped by side paths, but the majority were wiped out. Huang’s unit captured 16 howitzers intact. Most incredible of all in this action, which was repeated time and

time again during the American rout, was that despite the ceaseless air attack for over eight hours, only three of Huang's men were wounded. Steel nerves, calm leadership and agility in jumping into craters in the theory that a bomb never falls in the same place twice and craters are excellent fox-holes kept their casualties down.

As is the custom among the Chinese Volunteers – as in the regular Chinese People's Army – a meeting is held after the engagement at which the rank and file soldiers recommend their comrades or officers for decoration. The recommendations with a full report of the particular deeds are forwarded to the higher command after checking with the immediately superior officer. In this action Huang Wan-fung was chosen by his comrades and awarded the First-Class Combat Hero decoration.

Time and again the Americans woke in the morning to find K.P.A. or C.V.A. troops entrenched in commanding positions deep behind their lines, positions which had been in American hands the previous night. Korean and Chinese troops could always rely on the local population to be their ears and eyes, to act as an efficient intelligence network which invariably provided them with accurate information as to enemy strength and whereabouts. Individuals and units in the K.P.A. and C.V.A. competed for the honour of carrying out the most difficult and dangerous tasks; of being the vanguard squad of the vanguard platoon and company. Their immediate reaction on sighting the enemy in any form or number was not to act in self-preservation, but to attack and destroy the enemy. They were fighting for their country and people, fighting on their own soil or defending their own frontiers and they were as one in fighting the common enemy of imperialism under which both had suffered. They knew theirs was a noble cause. Individual soldiers cut off from their units constantly displayed astonishing ingenuity and initiative, not by passive attempts at survival but in aggressively carrying out the main task of destroying the invaders.

There was one group headed by a former hunter from Kweichow province, Tan Lao-san from the Miao minority group. In his youth Tan used to trap pheasants and animals in the mountains and forests of Kweichow. In Korea he took up hunting again but this time he hunted tanks instead of game and used mines instead of traps. Tan led his band prowling through the forests until he came to some likely-looking crossroads that looked as if plenty of tanks or trucks came past. He would lay his mines as carefully as he laid

traps in the old days, carrying away the dirt he had removed and covering the mine over with the same surface covering as the rest of the road. He planted his mines in such a pattern that on whichever side of the road a tank went, it must strike at least one; and if it backed up, or another tried to manoeuvre around the first one, there would be mines there too. He and his band would penetrate far behind the front lines for days on end. After they set their mines they hid to watch the results and if no tanks came by within a certain number of days, Tan with his frugal peasant upbringing would dig up his mines and plant them at some more profitable point.

One of the most amazing examples of individual initiative was the private war waged by a messenger boy, 20-year-old Chang Tung-mao, a merry-faced little chap with a jaunty, devil-may-care look about his eyes. It took considerable prodding to get his story out of him, because he held the firm belief that individual actions were not important enough to be reported. When I asked him to tell me how he became a Combat Hero, First Class, he said:

“Well, in the fighting here, I did something. When my comrades met together they decided to pay me the honour of naming me for a decoration.” And he wanted to leave it at that, but his comrades insisted and eventually, with them admiringly filling in some of the details, the whole incredible story came out.

Chang comes from Hunan province and his family was hard hit by the terrible famine of 1942, during which millions of people perished and the Kuomintang did not lift a finger to help them. (The only thing Chiang Kai-shek did was to order his troops to machine-gun starving peasants who tried to get through to the area controlled by the Eighth Route Army where relief was promised.) Chang’s father died of starvation and he and his mother, like millions of others, fled to another province, eating grass, bark and leaves – and even the earth itself – to stay their hunger pains. For two years, he and his mother lived by begging. Later he became a cigarette seller and eventually he worked in some primitive type of coal pit in Shensi province. He volunteered to go to Korea because he believed that once the Americans reached the Yalu, they would invade China and bring back the Kuomintang. As he was his mother’s sole support, when he joined the Volunteers, she was given 350 pounds of wheat, some other food and regular supplies of firewood and money. (The Chinese Volunteers in Korea are volunteers in the strictest sense of the term and none of them; even commanding gen-

erals, receive any pay, but their families are supported, wholly or partially as necessary by the local authorities.) He had just started off his career in the army as a messenger boy when he carried out his astonishing exploits.

“On the night of my adventure,” this smiling and blushing young hero continued after having filled in some details about his previous life, “our unit was ordered to break through to the deep rear and help encircle the enemy. The Americans were quite cunning. When the main part of our troops went through, they hid in the hills, but when the small unit I was with came through they opened fire. The unit leader and myself were the last two, because it was his task to remain in touch with the rear and my job as messenger to be with him. It was some time after midnight. When the firing started, our unit dashed into the woods at the side of the road and started to fire back. Suddenly I found I was quite alone. In the dark, I had got separated from my unit leader. I started walking down the road, when two Americans jumped on me. One grabbed me round the waist and took my rifle, the other tied a piece of wire round my legs. Then they dragged me down the road with the wire. They dragged me about 20 paces to where a truck was standing and they started talking. I still had a hand grenade in my pocket so I suddenly sat up and banged my grenade on the fingers of the one who was holding the wire. They both yelled and ran away. I ran too, but in the other direction with the wire still clinging to my legs.

“After I had run a short distance, I sat down to take off the wire and I heard voices. It was some of my comrades who had been wounded. They were looking for the unit leader. I started to dress their wounds, but the enemy heard our voices and about 30 started moving towards us. I got the four Tommy-guns from my friends and started firing at them. The clouds had cleared away and I could see them about 60 paces away. Ten fell down very quickly and the rest ran away. I was able to go back and finish dressing my comrades’ wounds and asked them to go back to the rear. Then I went back to get the weapons from the Americans I had killed, but there were ten more coming towards me. This time they didn’t know I was about, so I waited till they were only ten paces distant. I got six and the other four ran away among the trees. I went back to the wounded to escort them to the rear as it didn’t seem very safe for them with so many enemy soldiers moving about. We hadn’t gone very far before we saw 11 Americans coming out of a house. The

wounded stayed still and I went behind a tree. Again I let them come to within ten paces before I fired. Three fell and the rest ran. I escorted the wounded for a little while until they insisted it was safe for them to go on alone. My Tommy-guns were empty now so I went back to the dead Americans and took four carbines from them and started out for the battle field again. Before long, I met a comrade of mine, a squad-leader with a Tommy-gun. I asked him to give me cover while I pushed on ahead and he agreed.

“I saw a tent in front of me, so had a look inside. There didn’t seem to be anybody there, but feeling around I found there were blankets on the ground. I also found a canvas cover but just as I touched it, someone fired a pistol at me. Several shots were fired so I threw a grenade and it killed what must have been the sentry guarding the tent. I went to the canvas cover again, as I thought I felt it move the last time. I lifted it up and it was a dug-out with five Americans inside. One of them fired a pistol at me so I ran away. He kept firing and one bullet nicked my back. I stopped running and the firing stopped, so I went back and threw a grenade at the canvas cover. Nobody moved after that, but one hand was protruding from the dug-out still holding a pistol. I took the pistol away and put it in my pocket. When I went out of the tent this time, I found there was a big radio-transmission truck just near it so I guessed it was rather an important tent.” (Later it was established that this was the headquarters tent of the 38th regiment of the U.S. 2nd division.)

“I walked on and found a pill-box and through one of the slits I could see on the opposite side to me, an American was firing madly into the darkness. Two other Americans were squatting on the floor round a candle. I had thrown my last grenade and wondered at first what I could do. I groped my way round the pill-box and there was my greatest piece of luck that night. I found a great heap of American hand grenades.” (Hand grenades are often piled up at fixed defence points so that in case of a sudden surprise attack, troops can rush out and start throwing grenades at the enemy.)

“I filled my pockets and held as many as I could in my hands,” continued this astonishing messenger boy, who by this time was quite at ease in telling his story with flushed cheeks and bright eyes as he re-lived the most momentous night in his life.

“I had never used American grenades but I pulled out the pin and threw one into the pill-box. It went off alright and in such a small place everyone was killed outright. I made out that there were

five pill-boxes altogether and later it turned out they were there for the defence of the regimental command post. I went to the second one and again one American was firing away with a machine gun and several more were talking inside. It was a bit bigger than the first one, so I threw in two grenades. Nobody moved after they exploded. I went on to the other three and gave them all the same treatment, two grenades each. There was quite a lot of firing going on, but nobody came outside from any of the positions to see what was going on.

“I couldn’t do any more there as I had run out of hand grenades. I decided to go back and find my friend whom I had left about 100 yards away. I had gone about half the distance, walking along a ridge when I saw 40 or 50 Americans hastening along a small valley beneath me. I loaded the four carbines, laid three down and started firing at them, as quickly as I could pull the triggers. I emptied three carbines and I knocked down 20 of them. They seemed to have no idea where the fire was coming from, or which way to go. I could hear the wounded men, groaning in the dark. I shouted down, ‘Surrender. No kill. We are kind to prisoners. Stop don’t move.’” And he recited in English these phrases which most Volunteers have learned.

“Three Americans threw away their weapons and put up their hands. I told them to turn round as I didn’t want them to know I was alone. Then I went and searched them. One made a gesture with his head to let me know he had grenades in his pockets. So I took them and marched the three of them to my friend who was still where I had left him. The prisoners lay down while we had a discussion. I said to him, ‘Now look here. There only seems to be the two of us on this whole battlefield. Our comrades must be ahead of us, so we must carry on alone and do our work.’ He replied: ‘You may set your mind at rest as far as I am concerned. We will certainly carry on until the bitter end. I am a member of the Communist Party. Together we will do our duty.’

“I asked him to give me cover again while I continued my search. I had just started up the hill when I heard Chinese voices. Someone called, ‘We’ve got prisoners here’ and two more prisoners were brought down by some comrades. We handed them over to my friend and asked him to escort them with the other three to the rear. I gave him a pistol and carbine and told him I no longer needed cover.

“I continued searching the area and found a motor car and behind the car was a cave with people inside. Somebody called out in Chinese ‘Same side’. So I replied if he was on the same side why didn’t he come out. Then one of my friends came out and said there were two enemy soldiers inside. He was their prisoner and he had a bayonet wound. I told the enemy to come out, but they wouldn’t, so I went inside and pulled one out by his hair. He was an American and a South Korean followed him out. I asked my friend if he felt strong enough to walk and handle a gun and he said he could. So I gave him my Tommy-gun and asked him to escort the prisoners to the rear.

“They started off alright but later I learned that my friend was too weak to walk more than a short distance, so he made the American carry him pick-a-back and made the R.O.K. soldier walk ahead so he could keep his weapon pointed at the head of the American and the back of the R.O.K. soldier. In this way they marched into our camp at the rear.

“It was broad daylight by this time and I met up with two of our machine-gunners. We continued the search with myself walking on the top of the ridge and my companions on each side below. We saw three Americans and while my companion gave me cover, I walked down and captured them. It was so light now, that we thought we should go back and make a report. And this we did.”

This was the end of the saga of one night’s activity of a C.P.V.A. Combat Hero. Messenger boy Chang Hung-mao arrived back at rear headquarters having lost his unit chief and carried no messages, but carrying five carbines, five light machine guns, and two pistols, having personally captured eight prisoners and wiped out 50 or 60 soldiers including staff officers of the 38th regiment, 2nd U.S. division. Small wonder that his comrades did him the honour of recommending him for a decoration. It would be interesting to know what sort of report was filed to the U.S. divisional headquarters of the battle which raged round their regimental command post that night. Doubtless no mention was made of the astonishing fact that no American officer or soldier ventured from tent or pill-box to find out where the attack was coming from or what forces were involved. As usual, American troops proved themselves demoralised and useless without daylight, tanks and aeroplanes to protect them.

The Americans explained every defeat as due to “overwhelming hordes”, irresistible as the sea, but on innumerable occasions they suffered heavy defeats by tiny groups of men whose morale was high and who had boundless faith in their cause. It was painful for the Americans to have to admit defeat at all, doubly painful to admit they were defeated on equal terms and ten times as painful to admit they were defeated by inferior numbers of “Gooks” and “Chinks”, as they referred to Koreans and Chinese in their racial arrogance. When their planes were shot out of the air by superior pilots flying superior planes, they tried to soothe their wounded racial pride by putting out reports that the pilots flying the M.I.G. 15s were Soviet pilots. When their planes were shot down in increasing numbers by ground fire, they spread the story that manning the anti-aircraft guns, were Soviet or other “Caucasian” gunners. The bitterest pill of all that American militarists were forced to swallow was that despite all the enormous technical superiority of the most highly industrialised nation in the world plus the unquestionable “superiority” of any nation with white skins, at a time when American power, atom and dollar politics had mesmerised the entire western world and forced rival imperialist powers to pawn their independence and solicit favours, cap in hand, the ultimate expression of American power was defeated in the mountains and valleys of Korea by backward, primitive workers and peasants whose skins were not even white. By messenger boys and Miao hunters who were peasants a few months previously. But the myth of white skin supremacy had to be preserved and all sorts of legends about Soviet pilots, artillerymen and anti-aircraft gunners had to be invented in an effort to salvage some shred of respect for the white-skins. One disgusted western journalist commenting on the faked stories pouring out of Korea about Soviet specialists taking part in the fighting which he knew were false, said: “Apparently the alibi our generals are trying to put up for their defeat is that at least the Soviets were in it, and though their politics may be red, their skins are white.”

It would have been a good lesson to the American generals and western journalists had they been present at an interview with Wang Chan-chuin, the political officer attached to one of the best anti-aircraft battalions of the C.P.V.A. Many of their queries as to the high losses of planes from ground fire would have been answered. Wang is a big fellow, a former peasant from North China with a

lovely honest face and a mouth full of strong, glistening white teeth and like the messenger boy, had no wish to talk about himself.

“I represent my whole battalion,” he said. “Our battalion has no traditions whatsoever. Formerly we were all peasants. We knew how to handle hoes and sickles. Later when we joined the Volunteers, we learned to handle rifles and grenades. We never touched such things as anti-aircraft guns before, and we didn’t know such things existed. When we came to Korea, we saw what the enemy planes were doing to the Korean people. We passed by Sinuiju (entry point into Korea from China opposite Antung on the Chinese side with the Yalu river flowing in between. – Author) and then down through other cities to Kumhwa and Pyongyang in the so-called Iron Triangle. Towns and villages were only names on the map. We lost our way trying to find them. The Americans are just barbarians and their so-called superiority shows itself only in slaughtering Korean people and destroying property. We in our unit, asked our superiors to give us the task of destroying enemy planes.

“On April 13, 1951, we got the news we were all waiting for so anxiously – that we were to train as anti-aircraft gunners. We were very excited and said, ‘Now is the chance to teach the Americans a lesson and avenge the Korean people.’ Everybody in the unit helped build ack-ack positions where we could train and shoot at the enemy at the same time. And I can tell you that we really worked hard to improve our technique. We were all enraged at the way the enemy planes killed the Korean people and bombed their houses. We had discussions all the time about the speed of various types of planes, about why some of our shots missed and others hit, about what was the best position to fire at planes – when they were circling, diving and so on. We memorised all the silhouettes of planes, because if we knew which type it was, we knew its speed.

“After July 15, we got an order to defend a site where two bridges were being built. The original ones had been washed away by floods. About noon one day four F.80 jets came over, flying very low from the north-east to attack the Korean men and women on the bridge. We always had two guns on duty, with gunners constantly at their stations so we were ready for them. One fired six shots, the other eight. The tail of the first plane caught on fire. It kept on flying for about four or five miles and then plunged to the ground. The other three dared not press their attack but circled round and flew away. From that time on no planes made low attacks on the bridges

and they were finished under our protection. On August 18, we had a new assignment to guard a very important bridge. The day after we got there, four F.S51's flew in quite low to this target which they had often attacked before. It was just after breakfast. When the first plane came over, our second gun fired three shots which missed. The first gun fired seven shots and three shells hit the plane, one the propeller, one the cockpit and one the tail. It plummeted to the ground and was blown to bits by its own bombs. The second plane was also hit and went into a dive, but we did not see it crash. The other two didn't dare attack and flew off."

I asked how they plotted out the flight plan of the planes. Did they use radar?

Wang grinned happily and tapped his ears. "Our radar is right here in our ears," he said, "We can judge direction and height pretty well with our ears and when they drop flares, they give us our eyes back as well. Don't forget we are used to living with nature. Even our regular infantry men can pretty well judge the flight course of a plane at night."

When I asked Wang Chan-chuin how long they trained before getting into action, he smiled and said, "One day, almost all at the same time, our boys laid down sickles and picked up hand grenades and rifles. On another day we laid down rifles and grenades and started to handle anti-aircraft guns. We started to train on April 13, but we had to go into action two days later. Our theoretical training period was 20 days but in fact, we trained as we fought. The enemy would never believe that before we fired at their first planes – and brought one down on April 15 – our gunners had only fired 15 shells altogether."

The Americans were forced to pay grudging tribute to the accuracy of anti-aircraft fire in North Korea, especially after the cease-fire talks started. They will probably never believe these losses were caused by peasants with the eyes and ears of hunters, steeled by burning hatred for the barbarous devastation and slaughter which they witnessed all round them. The Americans could never credit that humble villagers could be so moved by the revolutionary passions, that they could master difficult techniques in such a short time and add to this mastery of technique an unflinching courage which more than countered American technical superiority. Thousands of American pilots and crewmen have learned to their cost that the "Gooks" and "Chinks" could match them and more than

match them in technical skills and leave them far behind in personal courage. Most of them however, have not survived to profit from these lessons. As a final question I asked Wang Chan-chuin what life was like at their positions, what the men did in their leisure time if they had any.

“Our life is really quite pleasant,” he answered. “We read books and newspapers and we plant trees and flowers. Our positions become quite gardens. We have to do this for camouflage, but it also provides us with beauty – and with vegetables. But most of all we discuss and think about how we can improve the accuracy of our fire. Of course we always have at least one gun on duty. We have an air raid warning system on the surrounding hills. As soon as our guards hear or see planes, they shout down warnings as to numbers and direction from which they are coming. We have never been caught off guard, but those who are off duty try and educate themselves. We learn to read and write better, discuss news from home and the progress of the peace-talks. But above all,” and he repeated this many, many times, “on duty or off duty, we are all fighting enemy planes, all the time and in our dreams as well.”

It was during the desperate battle for Surisan that tactics of anti-aircraft defence were developed from bitter necessity which proved the most effective and which were later adopted throughout Korea and greatly stepped up the daily averages of American losses. Full details of these tactics have not yet been revealed, but they went hand in hand with the highest degree of courage in deliberately provoking ground-to-air duels between gunners and planes. Part of the story can best be told by Kim Nyong-ku, an anti-aircraft gunner who took part in the defence of Surisan.

Kim was 19 years old and an agricultural labourer when the war broke out. He lived in South Korea and at first believed the Rhee propaganda and joined the R.O.K. Army. Mainly due to the brutal treatment and frequent beatings in the R.O.K. Army he deserted at the first chance and joined the K.P.A. within six weeks of the first shots being fired. Kim is a short, stocky young man with a face as brown and polished as a ripe chestnut.

“I received my first anti-aircraft assignment at Surisan,” Kim said, “and I must say that at that time I was very much afraid of enemy planes. I knew they had up to 12 machine guns and that even a Grumman (American Hellcat fighter used from aircraft carriers) had six. But I also knew that the Americans were our sworn enemies.

They were killing our brothers and comrades, and fellow citizens. The first time a plane attacked my gun, I ran and hid in a ditch. Actually my gun was out of order, but still I felt ashamed. I thought of Taejon where all my friends were massacred. I rushed back to my gun and tried to fix it. As I climbed out of my dug-out I could see a small boy coming out of a wrecked house, crying for his mother. I felt a strong feeling sweep over me that I must defend my people and my country. I must save children being robbed of their parents and save the children too. I felt I shared something with the child and I wanted to cry. But then I thought that instead of pitying ourselves we should pounce on the enemy and I was more than ever ashamed I had left my gun. Then I saw eight twin-engined bombers which had bombed the house from which the child came, circling for another attack. I knew from my theoretical training that the best chance to shoot down a plane is when it comes in for a dive. So I fired one signal shot. The first plane immediately winged over to my position. Perhaps he thought an agent had fired the shot, or perhaps he spotted the gun position. It was a B.26. I sighted very carefully, setting it exactly in my sights in the ring which provided for the speed of a B.26. I started to shoot first when it approached to about 500 yards. I fired 30 shots and saw five dark splashes appear just where the left wing met the fuselage. It started to burn and crashed. I knew then that our training had been good and we had weapons to save our country.

“Our unit is still in its infancy. We were only organised in mid-January, actually during the Surisan battle. This incident took place in early February and I have shot down a number of planes since then. We had been taught to shoot only when the planes came quite close to our positions, but after that experience, I had the idea that it would be better still to invite them to our positions. From our experience we worked out the following: the best chance to hit a plane is when it is diving straight at you. Then you can have a long, straight shot at it. The second best chance is to have them flying around trying to locate your gun position, because then the plane is tilted over and you have the widest dimension to shoot at. The third best chance is to have it flying directly over the gun position so you can move the gun back and forth and choose the best moment. Based on all these factors, we soon established which was the best type of terrain to set up our guns. Then we learned to set up fake tanks, trucks and other tempting targets near our positions, so the

enemy would be sure to attack us. After that, with the actual tactics of handling the guns, distributing our men and ammunition in the best way, we had really great successes. Our unit became so effective that sometimes we would fire only seven or eight shots and score hits with two or three of them. But,” he added in conclusion with the satisfied smile of a successful duellist, “the really interesting time always is when it is a two-way fight between the plane with its six to 12 machine guns and rockets and the anti-aircraft gun. One must be quite cool and no matter when the plane starts to fire or drop bombs, one should hold one’s fire until it comes to the range we know is best for scoring hits. Then there is a really excellent chance of bringing them down.”

By mid-1951, the Americans had committed in Korea as many troops as they had available and as many as could be deployed across such a narrow front. They had thrown in every available plane and were still approximately where they had started from when the R.O.K. troops launched their invasion across the 38th parallel, a little south of it in the West, a little north of it in the East. Their planes were being shot down at a greater rate than they could be replaced at that time. Twelve months’ assault by what was boasted to be the greatest air force in the world had failed to halt supplies for even one night from moving down the major single highway which connected the K.P.A. and C.V.A. front lines with the rear. Towns and villages were in ruins, bridges were knocked out daily, and wanton slaughter of civilians by the U.S. Air Force and the R.O.K. firing squads was on a scale unprecedented in any war, but the morale of the Korean and Chinese troops at the front grew higher every day. Short of the atom bomb – which the Americans knew could have no tactical effect in the mountains of Korea – the Americans had thrown in everything which their vast industrial might and technical skills were capable of producing, but they were incapable of achieving a decisive victory. Machines and technique had been brought to a standstill by the courage and morale of an entire people fighting a just war.

Vast fleets of warships and planes, massed tanks and artillery, highly mechanised, well-fed, well-clad divisions were shattered against the unbreakable wall of a people’s united front. Koreans, soldiers and civilians, and their Chinese brothers-in-arms, repaying a blood debt which extended back for two decades and with almost 500 million Chinese at home behind them, comprised a united, in-

divisible whole with front and rear as one. The rear extended back to the furthestmost village in China, through the Soviet Union to the lands of the People's Democracies and beyond the People's Democracies to progressive organisations and peace-loving individuals throughout the entire world. Infuriated and humiliated, the American war-makers had to admit they had started something they could not finish, even if they had not the political acumen to know they were up against forces they could not counter. The generals in the field fought bitterly against acknowledging the military realities of the situation, but in Washington it was clearly felt that something must be done.

Britain and other allies were also becoming increasingly nervous of the way things were developing. After America rejected out of hand the practical proposals made by the 12-nation Arab League, proposals which had the approval of the governments of India and the Soviet Union, and after having forced through the U.N. – against initially strong British objections – resolution branding China as an aggressor, the State Department was under strong pressure to produce a declaration of U.N. aims in Korea. Despite Truman's and MacArthur's objections, Allied pressure was so great that the State Department and Joint Chiefs of Staff managed to produce a first draft of U.N. aims in Korea by March 19. MacArthur was tipped off and true to form he immediately took counter-action before the draft could be presented to U.N. On March 24 he issued his insulting declaration that he was ready to meet “the commander-in-chief of the enemy forces in the field to discuss a truce.” The language was such that it was obvious MacArthur intended negotiating a surrender rather than a truce. To ensure in advance that the negotiations would be unsuccessful and to further his aim of extending the war to China, he included a final menacing sentence which no independent nation could accept – and least of all, strong, young People's China – “...a decision of the U.N. to depart from its tolerant effort to contain the war to the area of Korea through expansion of our military operations to his coastal areas and interior bases,” declared MacArthur in his typical arrogance, “would doom Red China to the risk of imminent military collapse.” Naturally this declaration was ignored, but it achieved at least one purpose in that the idea of publishing U.N. aims in Korea was buried and never resurrected.

The U.N. forces had to have further reverses in the field before American leaders were forced to bow to the inevitable and start negotiating for an armistice. In the meantime MacArthur was fired, but it is necessary in view of the legend that was afterwards created that MacArthur was sacked because he wanted to extend the war to China, to repeat that MacArthur was dismissed only because he was not able successfully to take the war to China. He was given every encouragement as long as he was successful in pushing towards China's frontiers and as long as he could block every move to limit the war. He was fired only because he failed and led American forces into some of their greatest military defeats. The excuse for his dismissal was his open interference on the Republican side in the 1950 Congressional elections when he sent a letter to the Republican leader in the House of Representatives, Joseph Martin agreeing with the latter's view on the need to retain Formosa as a base and appealing to Republican support for this view against Truman. The letter was released to the press on April 5 and five days later MacArthur was dismissed.

On June 2, Secretary of State Dean Acheson announced to a rather astonished world that a settlement of the Korean conflict along the 38th parallel would be acceptable and would be regarded as a victory for the United Nations. This statement was made by Acheson when giving testimony before Joint Committees of the U.S. Senate. On June 23, Malik made his famous broadcast suggesting that a settlement of the Korean conflict was possible, based on a withdrawal by forces of both sides from the 38th parallel. This was accepted as the basis for armistice negotiations in an exchange of notes between General Ridgway and Generals Kim Il-sung and Peng Teh-huai. It is worth noting for the record in view of what transpired that after Malik's broadcast, Acheson on June 26, told the U.S. Congress that "the line of the 38th parallel could be acceptable for a ceasefire from the military point of view."

Chapter 9

FIRST STEPS TO PEACE

An exchange of six letters between the commanders of both sides settled the preliminary details. It was agreed that cease-fire talks should start, that Kaesong should be the conference site and that liaison officers from both sides should meet on July 8. At this meeting a conference house was selected, concrete arrangements for safe conduct of delegates' convoys were agreed on and July 10 was set as the date for the first meeting of delegates.

The day before the delegations met for the first time at Kaesong, Syngman Rhee released a statement to the effect that he was against any armistice "on terms short of a unified non-Communist Korea," a statement that could hardly have been made at that delicate moment without American prior approval. It was quite early apparent that while Ridgway was going to talk a great deal about "freedom of the press" and of keeping the public well informed, in effect he wanted to hide the real facts from the public. It was apparent too, that although the military were faced with a dilemma as to what further military steps could be taken in Korea, they had no intention of abandoning this war which had paid off so richly in furthering American political and military intervention in the Far East, in setting the war machine at home in motion and harvesting rich profits for the weapon-makers.

On the day the conference was due to start, Ridgway announced that newspaper correspondents would not be allowed to go to Kaesong "until there is concrete evidence that the proposed conference is on the tracks and reasonable expectation that it is going to stay on the tracks..."

General Nam Il, Chief of Staff of the Korean People's Army and senior delegate of the Korean-Chinese delegation at the initial meeting on July 10, presented a three point workmanlike proposed agenda for a quick cease-fire. The three points provided for a cease-fire on land, sea and in the air, a withdrawal by both sides of ten kilometres from the 38th parallel and exchange of prisoners, and the withdrawal of all foreign troops within the shortest possible time.

Almost the first words of the senior American delegate, the elderly, waxen-faced Admiral Joy, were to the effect that there would be no let-up in hostilities until all the terms of an armistice were

agreed on and an approved armistice commission set up and ready to function.

Joy even produced a document which he asked General Nam Il to sign pledging that only military matters would be discussed. Nam Il naturally refused. At the first meeting also, Joy proposed that the exchange of prisoners of war should be the first item discussed. The significance of this extraordinary demand that a settlement of P.O.W. exchange should take precedence over discussions of the actual cease-fire, only became apparent many months later when the Americans used their ace card of detaining Korean-Chinese prisoners of war to postpone a settlement indefinitely and eventually break off the talks on this issue. Joy obviously counted on blocking the armistice on the first item.

At the close of the second meeting, Admiral Joy, reversing Ridgway's original stand, demanded that U.N. pressmen should immediately be allowed to attend the talks. Nam Il made it clear that he had no objections to the press attending the conference and suggested it be discussed at a subsequent meeting. On the same day, International News Service (I.N.S.) reported from Seoul, that General Ridgway had told reporters "he would do nothing to prejudice the outcome, by letting reporters in on the talks." At the same time, I.N.S. complained that there had been no news of the conference and although Moscow radio had broadcast the fact that Joy had turned down a proposal for an immediate cease-fire, no confirmation that such a proposal had even been made or that it had been turned down could be had from Joy's headquarters.

The following day, Joy without prior consultation with General Nam Il, started for Kaesong with 20 correspondents in his convoy. Korean guards, who on the request of Ridgway himself were required to ensure safe conduct and whose task was to enforce security, quite properly held that correspondents were "unauthorised personnel." Joy refused to continue, ordered the whole convoy back and cancelled the delegation meeting. The action was a prepared and deliberate provocation.

The Korean-Chinese delegates had tacitly accepted Ridgway's earlier stand that correspondents could come only after the "talks were on the tracks with reasonable expectation that they would stay there." They took that to mean when an agenda had been agreed. And no move had been made at that time to bring correspondents down from Pyongyang or Peking. The whole interlude was remark-

able in view of the American attitude towards the press which later developed.

It was a surprise to most people who followed the progress of the talks that the so-called U.N. delegation was composed exclusively of Americans with the addition of one former officer of the Japanese Army, Major-General Paik Sun-yup representing the R.O.K. government which was not a member of the U.N. It is known that the commander of British forces in Japan, Lieutenant-General Sir Horace Robertson wanted to be included in the delegation, or at least have a British delegate and that this was the wish of the British government. But despite what the American press agencies described as an “unprecedented morning visit” by General Robertson to General Ridgway at delegation headquarters on July 12, no British or representatives of any other nation were allowed to enter the conference at any time.

The only other non-American to get near American conference headquarters, General Robertson, had to content himself with making a statement on July 14 in which he said that he was convinced “that the Communists wanted to conclude the war,” after which he returned to Tokyo. This was the premise on which the British and others who had not the same interests as the Americans in war in the Far East, would have acted, had they been permitted to take their places as delegates at the conference. From the beginning, the Americans were determined to keep the talks an all-American show.

For six days after the resumption of the conference on July 15, although U.S. and Allied journalists came to Kaesong every day, they were still kept in the dark as to what was going on. The only real information about the talks was culled by the news agencies in Tokyo by monitoring Pyongyang or Peking radio. The main issue being discussed was the U.S. refusal to place the withdrawal of foreign troops on the agenda, but correspondents were not told a word of this. On July 21, General Nam Il asked for a recess until July 25 to consider the obdurate refusal of Joy to include withdrawal of foreign troops in the agenda. Only after considerable pressure by journalists in Tokyo quoting liberally from Peking and Pyongyang radio did the western world learn why the talks were held up. There was still no official news from the American side as to what had been originally proposed and what rejected.

After the agreement that 20 correspondents from each side could attend the Kaesong talks, I left Peking together with Alan

Winnington of the London *Daily Worker*, Chu Chi-ping of the Shanghai and Hong Kong *Ta Kung Pao* and a number of other Chinese journalists and photographers, for Kaesong. In Antung, the border town on the Yalu river, we had our first impression of how the Americans were conducting the cease-fire talks.

We had been in this Chinese city only a few hours when we had our first air-raid alarm. A few minutes later we heard planes and bombs falling a short distance away on the Chinese side of the river.

The city itself bore scars of recent American bombing attacks. Before we left a flight of eight American F.86's (Sabre-jets) flew over on their way to Mukden. Seven were shot down by alert Chinese pilots.

From the moment of our first entry into Korea, we could see and feel what the Korean people had suffered and were still suffering. On the far banks of the Yalu as we crossed at dusk in Soviet trucks, we could see piled up, burned-out wrecks of passenger trains and goods trucks.

Roadside villages which had existed within even a few miles of the Yalu were non-existent. There were shells of houses and mainly empty, black patches where houses had been. We saw wisps of smoke issue from underground holes where people were living, a faint flow of cooking fires, as our truck headed into the dusk on the road to Pyongyang.

The marvel to us all on that first night's trip was the number of bridges that still existed on the road which crossed and re-crossed dozens of streams and rivers and which defied the efforts of the world's greatest air force. Despite all the bombings and rocketings both roads and bridges were in good shape. If there were planes over-head there were plenty of warning shouts and our head-lights were switched off, but we never slackened speed.

Moving down the road to the South was a long column of horse-drawn rubber-tyred carts, hauling light artillery pieces, the drivers directing seven and eight horse teams without reins, but merely with flicks and snaps of their long whips. Horses, men, tenders and guns were draped with greenery and on one breathless occasion when planes started to circle, they wheeled off the road into the greenery and in an instant had become part of the landscape. Two propeller planes swooped back and forth but did not spot them. The moment the planes disappeared, whips were cracking and the

teams were again trotting down the dusty highway to Pyongyang and the front.

Our driver knew the habits of U.S. planes. He had travelled the Antung-Pyongyang road often before, so we left our village hideout while the sun was still high in the afternoon sky and reached Pyongyang in the early evening just after the dusk patrol had completed its sweep and before the night bombers had arrived. At the outskirts of the capital there was an introductory hamlet of almost intact houses, then other half destroyed and after that thin crust, desolation. A desolation which is the more complete because of the shells of once large and beautiful buildings rising out of the ashes. There was an alert, but one could not think it was meant for Pyongyang. Why waste bombs on this shelter of a few sticks and one sheet of corrugated iron where a black-eyed child sells matches and cigarettes, or a flimsy kennel where an old woman in white has a few peanut cakes and pieces of soap substitute? But though these two were separated by a quarter of a mile of ashes, it seemed they were military targets. After we asked our way and found we must return some miles along the road, there were flickering flashes and whip-like deafening crashes as bombs rained down. And next evening when we passed by, those two well-remembered stalls were part of the surrounding blackness.

We arrived in Pyongyang on the night of July 22 and the recess at Kaesong gave us two extra days. But they were empty days spent in and out of air-raid shelters, watching duels between anti-aircraft shells and planes overhead and ready to plunge into hillside shelters if planes started to dive. Brown patches which covered the surrounding slopes, twisted napalm canisters and the burned-out shell of what had been a substantial house not 50 yard from our temporary home, counselled caution – even in such a remote valley.

The real trip to Kaesong started the next night and we found the Americans had many tricks to try the nerves of the uninitiated. I think we all reminded ourselves that the Korean people had been experiencing this for a whole year; the truck drivers and most of the people in North Korea did not experience a moment's respite from the type of horror which seemed to us unbearable, even for an hour during our first few days in Korea.

The first dangerous gauntlet was just south of Pyongyang where there is a long stretch of a straight road, constantly watched by American planes and usually lit by brilliant parachute flares. We

had traversed perhaps half this stretch when the first warning came. Even above the sound of our truck which was now swaying along without lights at a dangerous speed, we could hear the menacing roar of a diving plane and a few seconds later the crashing splutter of its machine guns. Where the bullets hit we could not see, but the hammering of the guns soon stopped with neither our trucks nor any others harmed. A few moments later while we were still in the middle of the straight stretch, parachute flares started to drop, lighting up the road as brightly as if it were daylight. This seemed more alarming than the machine-gunning.

Such flares take an interminable time to fall and before the first had reached the ground, fresh ones were dropped. Huddling together in the back of the truck, expecting bombs and rockets to fall at any moment, we felt very naked in the glare of the dazzling white light. At that moment we had the highest appreciation for the nerves and courage of the Korean and Chinese drivers who nightly took the supplies down that long life-line to the front. It seemed to us that every metre of the journey from Pyongyang south was fraught with danger. Our driver now clapped on full speed with the road clearly lit up for miles ahead by flares and we breathed a sigh of relief when we swung out of the straight stretch into a winding mountain road again.

Only later did we learn that the morale of U.S. pilots was so low that they rarely dared to fly below the parachute flares because the anti-aircraft gunners used them as searchlights.

Sometimes we saw flames ahead and behind us, occasionally the trucks were held up while peasants and soldiers worked together to restore some bridge or fill in huge craters gouged out by a chance bomb hit. One had an impression of tremendous vitality pulsating throughout the land at night. When the engines of the convoy were stilled while some road repairs were made, one could hear a peasant at work in the fields urging a softly-plodding ox forward in night-ploughing, or the swish of sickles, and women's voices as they reaped the rice harvest, the thrusts and grunts of a team of youths "ploughing" with a rope-rigged spade. Convoys of ox-carts drew up alongside and awaited the signal to go further or plunged off into the fields following a track no trucks could use.

North of Pyongyang where the air attacks did not seem so intensive we noticed the peasants worked in the fields by day, themselves and animals heavily camouflaged with green leaves. South of the

capital it was impossible to work by day with every peasant, every child and every ox a "military target". Work had to be done at night and slit trenches in every field showed there were many interruptions at night too. They worked in the fields all night, but were ready to leave their work at a moment's notice if the call went out for help to repair bridges or roads. All we saw that first night were women, children and elderly men. Those of military age were taking a more direct part in the fight, at the front. On our way from Antung to Kaesong we did not see one truck hit and no more than 15 or 20 which looked as if they had been freshly damaged. Although admittedly most of our journey was made at night, even if one fiftieth of the American claims had been true, wrecked trucks should have formed an almost unbroken fence all the way. The night we travelled from Pyongyang to Kaesong, the U.S. Fifth Air Force claimed about 600 trucks destroyed. Later we learned that Ridgway's press officer, Brigadier-General Nuckols told American correspondents that the Air Force always divided pilots' claims of trucks destroyed by ten before releasing figures in their communiqués.

By daylight we had the first real impression of what the American air vandals had done to Korean villages. Not even the smallest hamlet had escaped their attention. Villages could be recognised only as level black patches ready for the plough. Here and there chimneys still brokenly poked up out of the ruins like grotesque plants growing in cinders. One wondered where the survivors, if there were any, lived. But when one looked more closely at the surrounding landscape, there were trails of smoke from early morning fires seeping through holes in the slopes. Whole villages, and as I saw later when I travelled the roads in daylight, whole towns had moved underground in primitive cave shelters, devoid of any comfort except protection. On the entire road from Antung to Kaesong, there was no hospital, school, church or any public building which had not been destroyed by the U.S. Air Force or U.N. demolition teams during their withdrawal.

The last few miles into Kaesong was littered with the wreckage of American tanks, several of them absurdly embedded in the mud of rice-fields with flourishing crops reaching up to their gun muzzles; gun tenders on their sides; trucks which seemed only lightly damaged but which had been thrust from the road by a panic-stricken army in retreat. Precisely at the point where the five mile neutral zone of Kaesong started, there was a British R.A.F. gun car-

rier on its back and our guard with evident relief assured us we had arrived at Kaesong. At first glance the city seemed completely destroyed. The centre was a shambles with a few apathetic-looking citizens sitting forlornly at improvised stalls and remnants of western-style schools, churches and hospitals poking out of the ruins of the more lightly built Korean structures. But Kaesong was a favourite summer resort of the Korean wealthy class and tucked away in innumerable folds of hills and valleys with which the city abounds, were isolated houses still intact. To one of these we were driven and within a few minutes were splashing in a crystal-clear waterfall dissolving the encrusted dust from our night journey from our bodies, and preparing to attend the resumed session where we would meet our opposite numbers from the American and Allied press.

After the first wild frenzy to photograph, record and televise the two “Caucasian Communists” or “White Commies” and to find out from where we had come and how, the American pressmen were not certain how to proceed with Winnington and myself. At first they firmly believed we would be followed around with armed guards or someone who would note down every word we said. They had completely swallowed their own “iron curtain” propaganda. Then as there were obviously no guards with us, attempts were made to draw us into conversation. It seemed to occasion great surprise that we were willing to discuss any subject either together or alone – in other words that we behaved and acted like normal human beings.

Among the American journalists were several with whom I had worked during my years as a war correspondent in the Pacific. Several also knew Chu Chi-ping of *Ta Kung Pao*, who served as a correspondent during World War II with the U.S. Pacific Fleet, for the same *Ta Kung Pao* – and as he was quick to explain, under the same editors in Hong Kong and Shanghai as today. It seemed to them unbelievable that we should now be on the “other side” and even more incredible that we were prepared to walk and talk together with Americans and answer any questions they cared to put. In fact as matters later developed, we all talked far too much for the liking of General Ridgway, and American journalists were to learn for themselves where the real “iron curtain” exists.

The conference house bore a few marks of battle but was intact and commodious enough to serve its purpose admirably. The American delegates flew up from Munsan by helicopter and were

driven in jeeps from the landing field to the conference site. The Korean and Chinese delegates lived in Kaesong. As they drove up on the first day of our arrival, one American correspondent pointed out with hurt indignation, that the Chinese delegates were driving in captured American jeeps. "They haven't even taken the unit markings off them," he added in an injured tone.

The delegates entered the conference room by separate entrances and sat opposite each other at a long, green, dais-covered table with the U.N. and Korean flags facing in the centre of the table. Groups of staff officers sat at small tables to the rear of the chief delegates. Speeches of course had to be made in Korean, Chinese and English, which made progress on the simplest measure seem slow.

American correspondents who had been following the talks from Munsan or Kaesong from the beginning were less informed about what was happening, even at that stage, than ourselves. They guessed, but we knew that the American objection to including the withdrawal of foreign troops as an agenda subject was holding up agreement. They had been given no real information and the only use they had been able to make of Joy's three-day suspension of the talks to get them to Kaesong, was to write descriptive pieces about the uniforms and cigarette holders worn and used by the various delegates.

General Nam Il made an important statement on the 25th, in which he again pointed out that the best guarantee of no further hostilities in Korea would be to withdraw foreign troops. But he added that in view of American hostility to including this proposal, and in order to achieve agreement he would agree to Joy's proposal to make this point the subject of another conference to be held after an armistice was reached. On the basis of this compromise proposal, an agenda was agreed and the final text approved by both sides the following day. It contained five points:

(1) Adoption of the agenda.

(2) Fixing a military demarcation line between both sides so as to establish a demilitarised zone as a basic condition for a cessation of hostilities in Korea.

(3) Concrete arrangements for the realisation of a cease-fire and armistice in Korea, including the composition, authority and functions of a supervising organisation for carrying out the terms of a cease-fire and armistice.

- (4) Arrangements relating to prisoners of war.
- (5) Recommendations to the governments concerned on both sides.

Discussions on the demarcation line were to start on the 27th. Meanwhile some rather ominous reports came from the American side and there were ominous sounds, too – even on the first night we spent in Kaesong.

Hoberecht of U.P. reported from Munsan on the 25th that on his way back to Kaesong he had seen “Allied tanks, troop-carrying vehicles and quarter-master supply units rumbling north along the historic Seoul-Kaesong ‘invasion highway’.” And on the same day, Associated Press (A.P.) from Seoul released the news that the U.S. Eighth Army commander in Korea had ordered half a million civilians to be evacuated from the area between the battleline and the Han river to the south of Kaesong. The reason given was that many of the villagers were guerrillas and their presence would interfere with Allied military operations.

The premise on which the talks were based was that both sides would withdraw their forces north and south of the 38th parallel. Reference to a settlement on this basis was made by both Acheson and Malik in their speeches which paved the way for the talks. American correspondents close to Ridgway have assured me that it was still American policy to press for a settlement based on the parallel, at the time of the first meeting between Nam Il and Joy. Then new instructions came – correspondents believe at the time Joy used the halting of U.N. pressmen as an excuse to suspend the talks. U.P. reported from Munsan on August 3: “Ridgway and his close advisers probably will admit that press coverage did not amount to a hill of beans to him or the allied cause. It was merely an issue...” In any case it was apparent from the first day’s discussion on the demarcation line that the Americans had no intention of an early settlement. Not only did they refuse to discuss on the basis of the 38th parallel, but they put forward demands which they knew could not lead to an armistice.

In the weeks that followed, the American delegates perpetrated one of a series of monstrous hoaxes which will reflect on the honour of American military leaders and State Department officials for many years to come. The only parallel in modern history for the methods of gangster diplomacy used by highly-placed American officers at Kaesong and later at Panmunjom, would have to be

searched for in the records of Nazi diplomats. The weapons of assassination, attempted murder, flagrant lies, distortions and a complete hoodwinking of public opinion – all directed at extending instead of halting the war – were employed by Ridgway and his delegates. On several occasions they could not have been employed without higher sanction from Washington.

The argument for a settlement on the 38th parallel was a good and logical one. It was in defence of the parallel that the leaders in both North and South Korea stated they took to arms. Therefore each could claim a victory if the war were halted at the parallel. The Americans claim they entered the war because the parallel had been crossed. Therefore their aims were accomplished when they reached the parallel again. The Chinese Volunteers only entered Korea after clear warning that action would be taken if the parallel were crossed in a northward direction. The North Korean forces had crossed the parallel and pushed to the extreme South. The Americans had crossed the parallel and pushed to the extreme North. At the time the cease-fire talks started, the Americans had troops north of the parallel to a point approximately halfway along its length and the Koreans and Chinese had forces south of it for the other half. The Americans held 4,630 square kilometres north of the parallel, the Koreans and Chinese 3,630 square kilometres to the South. Both sides would thus be giving up an approximately equal area by withdrawing to the parallel. Logically it was a reasonable solution. But logic had no place in American arguments.

Admiral Joy not only refused to discuss the 38th parallel as a basis for a demarcation line, but by creating the fable that the Americans wanted a demarcation line along the battleline, Joy actually demanded something totally different. He demanded a line far to the North of the battleline which would have forced the K.P.A. and the C.P.V.A. to withdraw from 13,000 square kilometres of bitterly defended territory, a withdrawal of from 25 to 40 miles from prepared highly strategic positions. And the basis for this demand was the cynical argument that the U.N. Air Force and Navy had freedom of the seas and skies to bomb and bombard at will. As the price for calling off these activities the Koreans must surrender a huge slice of territory north of the battleline. For months this demand was kept from the world public. The Americans were ashamed of it and they hid behind the lying story that they were asking for a line along the battle front. Ridgway lied, Joy lied and

press officer Brigadier-General Nuckols of the U.S. Air Force lied and lied again, covering the preposterous demands under smoke-screens of lies.

The incessant pounding of villages in the outskirts of Kaesong by American heavy warships and the increased tempo of terror raids on Korean towns and villages, were used in an attempt to impress the Korean and Chinese delegates with the force of the American arguments. It was typical of the thought processes of these hide-bound militarists that they believed such tactics could have an effect on life-long revolutionaries and patriots.

A savage terror attack was launched against Pyongyang on July 30, just as the argument on the demarcation line was getting under way, apparently with the idea that General Kim Il-sung would immediately panic at the sound of bombs falling and order the delegates to capitulate.

For the first week of the discussion, Nuckols daily told newsmen that General Nam Il refused to discuss the American proposal for a demarcation line along the battleline. On August 2, the first report – which was quickly denied by Nuckols – of what was going on was put out by Reuter, quoting “Communist newsmen”, as “charging the U.N. delegation with seeking a line north of the battleline contrary to the belief of Allied newsmen who have never officially been informed what Admiral Joy and other delegates have been demanding.” But even two weeks later, Ridgway was still guiltily hiding the real situation. At a press conference demanded by a bewildered press at Munsan on August 14, Ridgway, as quoted by all American agencies and broadcast by U.S.I.S. (U.S. Information Services, controlled by the State Department), stated, “The line we propose is the line now generally held by our forces. It is a military line, devoid of political implications and the general line along which our forces now stand facing the enemy to the North.” At the time Ridgway made this statement, Admiral Joy had not altered his demand by one square kilometre for a huge slice of North Korea.

To increase the confusion into which even objective reporters covering the talks were thrown, a release from the Civil Information and Education Section of Ridgway’s headquarters stated on August 4, that because of air and naval superiority the U.N. command was seeking a buffer zone somewhere between the battleline and the Yalu river. Nuckols promptly denied this and said the release was made without Ridgway’s knowledge. A sample of the confusion which re-

sulted from Ridgway constantly trying to conceal his aim to wreck the talks is seen in a Reuter despatch from Munsan on the 4th.

“Nuckols told correspondents to-day that any suggestion that the U.N. sought a line ‘somewhere between the present battle-front and the Yalu’ was pure speculation and ‘far off the beam’. Official quarters here to-night refused to comment on the apparent discrepancy between the two statements... The exact U.N. demands for a buffer zone have been shrouded in secrecy and the release seems to have been made as a result of persistent Communist broadcasts from Pyongyang and Peking which claimed the Allies were demanding a buffer zone ‘far to the north of the present battleline’. Ridgway’s head-quarters and the Civil Information and Education Section would have to stand on its releases. The mystery remained what line of demarcation are the allies seeking?”

The press hounds were getting too close to the trail and Ridgway badly needed a diversion. The opportunity was created that very day. During the luncheon recess at Kaesong, Admiral Joy saw about 80 Chinese troops carrying weapons heavier than permitted in the conference site area. Their weapons it is true were carried on their shoulders and they presented no hostile attitude, but it was a technical violation of the neutrality agreement. (Actually the troops had been called in to a conference on their forthcoming police duties and should have left their weapons at the perimeter of the neutral zone.) Admiral Joy mentioned the matter at the afternoon session and General Nam Il promised an immediate investigation. Admiral Joy later proposed a recess until the following morning at 10 a.m.

For Ridgway this was a heaven-sent opportunity. Ignoring the fact that on the previous day no less than 14 violations of the neutral zone by U.S. troops and planes had been brought to Joy’s attention, Ridgway called off the talks, demanded an immediate apology and guarantee of non-recurrence and started the propaganda machine moving with the most arrogant language at his command. This was an act of “insincerity” by the Koreans and Chinese “aimed at wrecking” the talks.

Ridgway’s demands to suspend the talks were broadcast over the radio early on the morning of the 5th. The same day a note was handed to the American liaison officers expressing regret for the incident and stating that action had been taken to ensure it would not be repeated. The following day Ridgway sent a letter to Gener-

als Kim Il-sung and Peng Teh-huai, describing in detail what the Koreans and Chinese had already admitted had taken place, and demanding a "satisfactory explanation". The two generals replied the same day in the terms which Ridgway demanded. Reuter commented that "the promptness of the Communist reply shows the Communists' real desire to gain a truce" and noted again that what the Allies were seeking at Kaesong "still remained a mystery." But the Kim-Peng reply came too late for Ridgway.

This was too good a chance to drag a red herring across the trail and put public opinion off the scent of the mysterious happenings at Kaesong. Ridgway sent another letter demanding further assurances and eventually, after the talks had been held up for five days, Joy returned to Kaesong on August 10. The talks and the propaganda were right back to where they were before the indiscreet headquarters release.

On the 10th and 11th the American agencies were still reporting that Admiral Joy was demanding a demarcation line strictly along the battleline and that Nam Il had refused to discuss the matter.

Eventually, as it was impossible to get the Americans to put their line on to a map, on August 12 General Nam Il walked into the conference room with a map on which he had plotted the current battleline and the American proposed demarcation line. He laid it down in front of Joy and asked bluntly, "Is this what you mean or not?" Joy said it was substantially correct and went again into the arguments of compensation for air and naval superiority. Nam Il reminded him coldly that the days were gone for ever when imperialist powers could sail in with a few gunboats and get whole kingdoms in Asia by such methods.

I think it is clear from subsequent events that Ridgway from the moment the idea of a settlement on the 38th parallel was rejected, had instructions to wreck the talks. He believed this could be done by presenting demands which he knew could never be accepted. They were demands which he knew could never be accepted. They were demands such as a victor power could impose on a defeated power, but could not form even the basis for discussion when each side had powerful, intact armies in the field. Ridgway thought the Koreans and Chinese would break off the talks while he could keep the real reason for the breakdown hidden from public knowledge.

By keeping the news hidden from his own correspondents, he forced them to turn more and more to Peking and Pyongyang radio,

and to the “red” correspondents for news. The Ridgway statement to the press on August 14 and quoted above created more confusion than ever, and the newsmen began one of their periodic revolts against Nuckols. They began to escape from his careful shepherding and passed on more and more of what they could cull from the correspondents accredited to the Korean-Chinese delegations. New devices had to be introduced to bring them to heel.

At this period, when the talks had reached a critical point, General Van Fleet, the Eighth Army commander who made himself notorious for his butchery of partisans during the Greek civil war, dropped in at the Munsan press headquarters and according to pooled agency despatches on the night of August 14th said, “Maybe the Eighth Army and the Air Force will have to break that deadlock. Our troops are irritated by the Communist arrogance at the Kaesong cease-fire talks. The Eighth Army is fit and prepared to continue full-scale warfare if necessary”. An A.P. correspondent commented gloomily next day that “generals don’t shoot off their mouths like that for nothing. And if they talk it means someone higher up’s told them to talk. Van Fleet’s never taken to dropping in on the press before.” And in fact, a few days later Van Fleet launched a full scale offensive on the central and eastern fronts.

The following day Joy proposed that the full conference should recess and the demarcation line should be handed to a sub-committee to solve and when this was accepted, Nuckols without prior consultation with the Korean-Chinese delegates immediately announced what U.P. reported as a “virtual news black-out.” Nuckols restricted the U.N. press corps to four representatives, including only one journalist, the rest radio and photographers. In this astonishing reversal of the much publicised Joy stand, Nuckols explained that an “unduly large number of newsmen could hamper the objectivity and freedom of the talks”. He added that there would be no official briefings in order that the sub-committee deliberations should be free from propaganda.

On the first day of the sub-committee meeting, the American delegates still stuck to their original stand and the public were given a hint of what was happening by a report from Tuckman of A.P. who quoted Communist newsmen as stating that “the red delegation might be willing to talk about a cease-fire line based squarely on the present battle front... ‘If the U.N. delegation abandons its stand’, the

correspondent said, 'I'll leave it to you to decide whether we could get together on a line somewhere north of the 38th'."

This was the first real hint the public had had that the U.N. stand was based on something other than the battleline. Tuckman's story was a slight rephrasing of an interview in which he had been told that if the Americans really wanted a line along the battle front why did they not start talking about the battleline instead of something 25 to 40 miles to the north of it? And why did they not probe and see what the Korean and Chinese delegates had in mind about the 38th parallel. They would not find them inflexible.

Actually at no time had a proposal based on the battle-line been rejected by General Nam Il. Such a line was never proposed throughout the whole conference by the Americans. It was proposed by the Korean-Chinese delegates some months later. The sub-committee sessions dragged on for just one week with the Americans sticking to their original positions and still with the original propaganda line that they were demanding a demarcation line along the battleline. The discussions continued until the events of the night of August 22 put a temporary halt to the discussions. And conveniently for the Americans they saved Joy and Ridgway from the complete exposure of the double-faced role which had been played inside and outside the conference house.

Chapter 10

GANGSTER DIPLOMACY

The patient stand taken by the Korean-Chinese delegation on the question of the demarcation line and their refusal to be stamped into breaking off the talks, forced the U.S. militarists to turn to other means. Public opinion in America and even official opinion in England and other countries with ill-spared troops in Korea began to show impatience at the way the talks were shaping and the U.S.-imposed secrecy in which they were shrouded. In England the conservative *Manchester Guardian* called for the Americans to put their cards on the table and at least publish a map showing exactly what they were demanding.

Van Fleet was trying to make good his boast at the Munsan press camp and was pushing ahead with what he termed a "limited objective" offensive. Incidents directed against Kaesong and delegation safe-conduct convoys began to grow in frequency and importance from the middle of August. The night of August 22 is one which will never be forgotten by any of those involved in the most serious of all incidents that occurred throughout the talks. But for the inexhaustible patience and calm of the Korean and Chinese delegates, it could have been a Sarajevo, touching off the third World War. During the afternoon, there had been a number of low-flying planes over the city.

At 10.15 that night I was the only one of the 15 journalists accredited to the North Korean Chinese delegation to be in bed. A plane with a more than usually menacing sound seemed to be circling over our roof and I crawled out from under the mosquito net just as someone yelled "Put out the lights!" I had just reached the verandah when there was a rippling series of white flashes and the ear splitting sound of bombs exploding nearby. "Bang goes neutrality and the talks" flashed through my mind as a Chinese bodyguard guided me into a ditch where we crouched as the plane made another circle and went into a dive again. When it seemed perilously close it opened up with its machine guns.

The plane pulled out of its dive, made one more leisurely circle, and by this time we all recognised it as a B.26 by its unhurried droning as it flew towards the South. Our first enquiries established that the bombs had fallen between the press house and the delegation headquarters, a few pieces of bomb fragments actually falling on

Nam Il's Jeep – but that nobody had been injured. Within 15 minutes of the attack an attempt was made to contact the American liaison officers by radio-telephone to demand an immediate investigation. Contact was finally established at 11 p.m. At first the senior liaison officer refused to come, stating that it was too late at night. Upon the insistence of Colonel Chang Chung-san however, Colonel Kinney agreed to come and investigate.

It was a slightly cloudy night and by the time Kinney and Murray drove up with interpreters, but no pressmen, a slight rain was falling. Kinney stepped out of his jeep, looked around challengingly and aggressively at the group of correspondents, and then strode across to the verandah where Colonel Chang was sitting. Chang motioned him to a chair. Kinney and Murray pushed their rain capes back over their caps, while Colonel Chang gave a brief outline of what had taken place. Kinney scowled and glowered about him, tapping his foot and showing every sign of impatience and disbelief as Colonel Chang completed his very restrained account, laying on the table the pieces of shrapnel which had fallen on General Nam Il's jeep and stating that it was his belief that the attack was a deliberate attempt to murder the Korean-Chinese delegation members.

Kinney then started to make a hostile, rapid-fire cross-examination. "Who saw the planes? Any eye-witnesses?" Colonel Chang waved his hand at the 30-40 delegation staff members and journalists and said, "Everyone here is an eye-witness."

Kinney sneered. "How many planes were there? How many bombs were dropped?" Colonel Chang replied, "That will become clear during the investigation." Kinney dictated to his shorthand writer. "No one knows how many planes there were or how many bombs were dropped."

From the conference house we went to see what had actually happened. Less than 100 yards from a house which had been placed at the disposal of Joy and his assistants during their daily sojourns to Kaesong, was a patch of burned grass, splashes of napalm on the road, a water-filled crater about two yards from the road with blobs of oil floating on the water, and in the middle of the road a napalm container with the metal crumpled into folds from its impact with the ground. Even at a cursory glance one could see that it had hit the rocky road siding, slid off at a tangent and exploded in a tiny stream on the opposite side of the road.

The casing had been flung back onto the road. There was a strong smell of burning rubber which came from black tar-like blobs scattered over a radius of five or ten yards.

Colonel Chang pointed to the casing: "What is that?"

Kinney with an over-emphasised incredulity: "Is that a bomb? That could be anything." He refused to go near the casing or the crater and stepped back when a Chinese photographer wanted to take a flash-light picture. "I've seen enough." He signalled to his interpreter and said, "Tell them. If this is the sort of thing they are going to show us, I'm getting very impatient, very impatient." Colonel Chang told him sharply that this was only the beginning of the investigation and that there was much more for Kinney to see.

We continued to the side of a valley about 200 yards from the delegation headquarters. Here there were a number of small craters. Alongside the first, half-buried in the sandy soil, was a small fin, corresponding to those from 100-pound anti-personnel or fragmentation bombs. Kinney refused to go near it and refused to touch it when it was handed him.

"That's neither a bomb nor any part of a bomb," he snarled. "How did it get here?" asked Colonel Chang, to which Kinney replied with a sneering insult, "You should know that better than I." In the same bullying, sneering tone he turned to the people standing around and asked, "Has anyone here ever seen the results of American bombing?" All the Koreans and many of the Chinese had had bitter experience of American bombing, but none deigned to reply.

Ten paces away from the first crater, another bomb had struck a piece of sheer rock and flaked it off to a depth of about two inches, with a badly twisted bomb fin lying near a small blast crater. Pieces of half-inch cube shrapnel could be felt in the sand around the crater and had left score marks in the rock. Kinney refused to inspect it. "It's nothing," he said and turning to Murray, added, "Let's get back, Jim. Let's get out of here." Murray, however, seemed not entirely to share Kinney's tough attitude, and murmured, "We better have a look." They both hung back however when photos were taken.

When asked to inspect a third crater, Kinney, who was deliberately hanging back out of the way of cameras, said, "No. I have seen all I want to see." Colonel Chang spoke up very sharply and said, "We demand that you continue this investigation. That is our right."

“You wh-a-a-a-t ?” shouted Kinney, with contemptuous overtones of racial arrogance in his voice, “Who gave you any rights? You have no right to demand anything.”

There were still three craters to investigate but Kinney refused to go further. Actually it was discovered in daylight that at least 13 bombs, all of the same anti-personnel type, had fallen within a very small area in this valley, but only six of them had been located in the dark that night. Kinney did not touch one piece of bomb or shrapnel, did not take a measurement, did not take or request to take a sample, did not ask to question even one eye-witness as to what they had seen or heard. As far as he was concerned at that moment, the investigation was completed and he felt free to go home. Colonel Chang, however, demanded that he should return to the conference house, and this was done.

On the verandah of the conference house, Colonel Chang pointed out that there was undoubted evidence of the attack and its deliberate nature. Reading from a prepared statement, he said, “We must point out the extreme gravity of this incident. Under instructions of our chief delegate, we hereby lodge first a most serious verbal protest with your side and inform you that to-morrow’s meeting is cancelled.” (The original Korean text said the meeting for August 23, but the interpreter said “to-morrow.” Technically, as it was already the small hours of the 23rd, it should have been “to-day’s meeting is cancelled.”)

Kinney asked, “What meeting?”, to which Colonel Chang replied, “All meetings,” meaning the liaison officers’ meeting as well as the scheduled sub-committee meeting. Kinney replied in a very haughty voice. “I will relay your ridiculous protest,” and signalling to Murray and the interpreters, clambered into his jeep and drove off.

It is an important point to note here, that in Kinney’s subsequent report he makes no mention of having asked at this stage to continue the investigations in daylight. It appears he was quite satisfied with what he had seen at this stage and was prepared to submit his report without having questioned or asked to question one eye-witness and without having taken or asked to take one piece of material evidence. It seems fairly evident that Kinney believed this time that the Air Force had succeeded in wrecking the talks and there was no need for even the pretence of an objective enquiry.

Both Winnington and myself had meanwhile written stories about the bombing, ending with the item that meetings for the following day had been cancelled. Then we heard that fresh evidence had been discovered and that liaison officers had sped after Kinney in jeeps, demanding that he return and continue the investigation. They caught him up before he reached Panmunjom, and, after a half-hour harangue, during which Kinney protested about the rain and the dark, he turned back. The Chinese and Korean cameraman had gone home, thinking the investigation was over, and this time Kinney felt freer to investigate without having his photo taken, showing incriminating evidence in the same picture. Two further napalm bombs had been found, one of which had not exploded properly. This time Kinney actually handled the casing and said: "Flush-rivetting – not our stuff."

Kinney looked at the unburned napalm and said he would return in daylight. He asked that no evidence be removed, but Colonel Chang said as it was raining and some of the evidence might be washed away, he would take some samples of napalm for chemical analysis and invited Kinney to do the same. Kinney replied, "Steel won't wash away and oil won't mix with water." Colonel Chang told him that although he considered the evidence conclusive, he had no objection to Kinney returning next morning with ten pressmen (the number Kinney himself suggested), and said Kinney should make contact by radio-telephone in the usual way to state what time his party would come.

My doubt as to whether or not Kinney would show up again was based on his reluctance to investigate one shred of evidence or question even one of Kaesong's 20,000 inhabitants. But next morning, Korean and Chinese liaison officers waited in vain for word that Kinney was coming back as promised with U.N. pressmen.

As there had been no word from Kinney by midday, it was decided to continue a daylight examination of evidence without him, although guards were stationed by each exhibit, to ensure that everything would be intact for whenever Kinney decided to return. After carrying out the daylight investigation, there could be no doubt in any reasonable person's mind that the attack was a deliberate attempt to murder the Korean-Chinese delegates, carried out by a skilful pilot who had carefully studied the area and knew the precise location of the delegation residence in relation to geographic features. He failed in his task by a split-second error in navigation.

Through questioning peasant and soldier eye-witnesses of the attack, it was possible to piece together the whole story, given a few measurements and hearings of the location of the bombs.

The plane had come from the south-west and dropped a napalm bomb near the U.N. rest house, continued in a circle and dropped another at the foot of Pine Tree Peak. One of these was 600 metres south-west of the delegation residence, the other 700 metres north-east. A line between these two burning markers passed exactly over the delegation residence. The other two were dropped nearly together a few hundred yards south-east of the residence, probably to mark some geographic feature to be negotiated in relation to the mountain peaks. The plane came in on its bombing run very accurately considering the cloudy night and dropped its bombs with only a shade of error. It was a highly skilful piece of night navigation, especially considering the hazards of Pine Tree Peak and several other razor-backed ridges that surround Kaesong. The pilot must have carefully studied the layout of the city and the exact location of the residence in daylight to have achieved such a near miss in such conditions. The frequent low-level flights over Kaesong in the days which preceded the incident took on a new significance for us as we pondered this murderous attack. One even began to remember the unnecessarily wide sweeps that the helicopters often took over the delegation residence when they came in to land the American delegates at Kaesong.

By the time we returned from the delegation, a reply of sorts had arrived from Ridgway's headquarters, in the form of a statement made by Ridgway's chief press officer, Brig.-General Frank Allen, and broadcast over the Armed Forces radio at 12 noon. Allen made three main points, each of which was a lie:

(1) The armistice talks were broken off. Colonel Chang had called off all talks "from this time."

(2) The whole incident was a frame-up and fabrication. No bombs had been dropped from a plane nor had any bombs exploded.

(3) Colonel Chang had refused permission for any further investigation.

Colonels Kinney and Murray, according to the statement, had not seen any bombs or parts of bombs. They had seen some shallow craters that could have been made by hand grenades, some pieces of U.N. command aircraft, the fin from a rocket.

“Colonel Chang could not say,” the report continued, “whether one or more aircraft were involved. He said he did not know how many bombs were dropped or passes made... Speaking from written notes, Colonel Chang stated there will be no further meeting. Colonel Kinney inquired if Colonel Chang meant sub-delegation as well as liaison meetings. Colonel Chang replied ‘all meetings are off from this time.’... Colonel Kinney requested Colonel Chang to continue the investigation in the morning in better light. Chang refused, saying the investigation was complete. Colonel Kinney requested that all evidence be left in place for examination in daylight since darkness prevented proper observation. Colonel Chang refused, saying the evidence had to be taken for analysis.” And so on with every word a distortion of what actually happened. Allen concluded his report by stating that no U.N. Command aircraft were in the Kaesong area at the time.

It is even brought out in Allen’s report that Kinney was at first returning to Munsan without any request for further investigation. His request, according to Kinney and Allen, came only after he had been brought back the second time. Also there was no mention of any attempt at questioning eye-witnesses.

News that the Koreans and Chinese had “broken off” the cease-fire talks flashed around the world in a few hours. The New York Stock Exchange shares in armament and heavy industries soared skywards. There was ill-concealed glee in the reactions of the militarists.

It is inconceivable that Ridgway’s headquarters could have reacted with such speed without having had previous knowledge of the plot. Also inconceivable that Ridgway would put out a statement of such import based on a liaison officer’s version of a verbal protest. Kinney could not possibly have returned to Munsan and prepared his report before 7 a.m. There could have been no opportunity for any real checks by Ridgway as to what his planes were doing the previous night. On subsequent air violations which Ridgway’s headquarters admitted, it usually took several days to check plane movements at any given time. Yet within an absolute maximum of five hours of receiving Kinney’s report and without even waiting to receive a formal written protest, Ridgway broadcast to the world that the Korean cease-fire talks were finished. He was able to produce a long detailed statement intended to cover every aspect of the

case. And within another 24 hours, Truman had “categorically” denied the Communist charge that the Allies had bombed Kaesong.

Generals and senators started sounding off as to the necessity of getting the war into full swing again immediately. Editorial writers, radio commentators and other pundits all over the U.S.A. editorialised and commented they knew all along the Communists did not want peace, and the only thing was to bring them to their knees in battle. From Washington, U.P. reported on the 23rd, while the napalm was still wet on the hills opposite the delegation house, and the cartridge cases still smelling of freshly-burned cordite that “Fighting in Korea is expected to whip up in full fury because of the Communist rupture of the peace negotiations and the big question on Thursday was whether it would be confined there. High American officials grimly reported that the Communist break-off at Kaesong forecasts resumption of major fighting. They are fearful of a wider spreading of the war...”

American militarists could not conceive that after this atrocity the Koreans and Chinese would try and continue the talks. They counted on an immediate resumption of fighting and were set to spread the war to the Chinese mainland. I am solemnly convinced that the two months which followed August 22, was the period in which the issue of an immediate third World War was decided. The Korean-Chinese delegates were fully conscious of the enormous responsibility resting on their shoulders during this period. They knew that the hopes and goodwill of every peace-loving person in the world were centred on them at that time. There would be no initiative on the Korean-Chinese side to break off the talks, but it remained to be seen what extra steps would be taken by the Americans.

Very serious charges had been made against the U.N. command of trying to murder the Korean and Chinese delegation. Would Ridgway have accepted a report of a verbal exchange between Kinney and Colonel Chang that there could be no further investigation, unless he were frightened of the results of such an investigation? Would he have allowed Chang to take such an important unilateral decision? There was radio-telephone contact every half-hour for 24 hours a day between the liaison officers of both sides. Would Ridgway not have ordered at least one more attempt to carry out the investigation, even a written request, if his conscience were really clear? But he made no attempt to clear the U.N. of this charge except by propaganda speeches. If the whole affair were really a frame-up with bits of aero-

planes, rocket fins and holes made by hand grenades, would Ridgway not have made every effort thoroughly to expose this to the whole world with scientific evidence by demanding, as he had every right, to continue with the investigation?

Whatever had happened, there had been a violation of the neutral zone. Even if Ridgway had believed Kinney's report that a violation had been carried out only by somebody throwing or planting hand grenades, it was Ridgway's duty to demand an investigation. In a subsequent letter, Ridgway charged that a Communist plane was involved in the incident, but he sent nobody to Kaesong to ask if a plane had been heard that night.

The protest sent by Generals Kim Il-sung and Peng Teh-huai to Ridgway on the 23rd and broadcast over the radio made no mention of breaking off the talks. On the contrary it said: "We hope that our armistice negotiations may proceed smoothly and reach a fair and reasonable agreement acceptable to both sides..." and the strong protest concluded by stating that a satisfactory reply from Ridgway was awaited. Ridgway had not waited for this to announce to the world that the talks were over. It was unprecedented that he should have made any statement before he had received a written communication from his opposite numbers.

The American attitude and the obvious eagerness of the militarists to bury the peace talks, lead to certain measures being taken by the delegation – and also by the civilians of Kaesong. On the morning of the 23rd, thousands of civilians started leaving town; those who remained dug air-raid shelters. It was felt that the night bombing was but the prelude to mass air-raids. The Kim-Peng protest meanwhile had given Ridgway pause to think. It is reasonable to assume he had not expected a move which still left the door to negotiations open. Seventeen hours after Ridgway had the text of the protest, the A.F.R.S. broadcast that "the U.N. High Command is trying to find an answer to the conflicting broadcast to make sure if the Reds mean to call off the talks permanently ... a G.H.Q. source said that no immediate reply will be made..."

A number of the more serious British papers, the *Manchester Guardian*, for instance, were quoted on the B.B.C. as stating that Ridgway's charge of a "frame-up" had been too hasty and Reuter was quick to back up from Tokyo that it now seemed the talks "were suspended" and not broken off. It seemed clear that the British Foreign Office was putting pressure on Washington to curb the

growing clamour among the American militarists for new adventures. Van Fleet in the meantime had assured the American press that his troops were all set for a general offensive.

Ridgway's reply on the 25th was couched in language as arrogant and insulting as was Kinney's behaviour on the night of the incident. He rejected the charges as "so utterly false, so preposterous and so obviously manufactured for your own questionable purposes as not to merit a reply... and rejected without qualification as malicious falsehoods totally without foundation in fact."

On August 25, a spokesman of the Korean-Chinese delegation in a statement broadcast over Peking radio reiterated that there was no objection to a re-investigation. A statement from General Nam Il the following day repeated this. And in the reply from Generals Kim Il-sung and Peng Teh-huai on August 27, they specifically demanded that the Americans return and carry out a proper investigation.

Ridgway rejected the chance to re-investigate on the grounds that six days had elapsed during which time the "Communists could have planted more credible evidence than their previous clumsy fabrications." And that closed the matter as far as the Americans were concerned. To an extent Ridgway and Kinney were successful. They persuaded a large number of people in the western world that the incident was a frame-up and that proper investigation had been blocked by the Communists. But on the larger issue they failed. There were few who could have believed for more than a day or two, that the Korean-Chinese delegates had framed the incident to wreck the talks. The biggest failure of Ridgway was that negotiations did start again, this time very tenuously between the liaison officers.

While the notes were being exchanged there were a number of very significant developments. Van Fleet launched his offensive to try and gain by military means what Joy had failed to gain at the conference table – namely 15,000 square kilometres of territory north of the battleline. American planes flew over Kaesong almost continuously day and night. There were almost daily ground incidents in the neutral zone involving American and R.O.K. troops in attacks on troops doing police duties. American planes made sweeps over the mainland of China at Tsingtao in Shantung province and other cities in Kiangsu and Chekiang coastal provinces.

All these were warlike acts which in other times and places would have wrecked any cease-fire talks in progress and led to an

extension of war. But the Korean and Chinese leaders persisted in keeping the flickering spark of hope alive, while yielding nothing in firmness and dignity in their methods of negotiating. The day following the August 22 incident, General Nam Il moved to a new residence north-east of Kaesong about three miles from the previous delegation headquarters. By the end of August my two colleagues and I were living with Colonel Chang and other liaison officers in a group of houses at the foot of Pine Tree Peak. In the small hours of the morning of the 29th, a low-flying plane had circled the city for some minutes and finally dropped a parachute flare directly over the conference house. A protest was made but Admiral Joy replied to the effect that the charge was false.

Shortly after midnight on August 31 we were awakened by the sound of a low-flying B.26 and a few minutes later our house shuddered from the last of two heavy explosions. As the plane then headed in our direction, we quickly dived into a shelter hollowed out of a road siding about 50 yards away, while the plane zoomed overhead and power-dived over the top of the liaison officers' house. The first two bombs had dropped within 500 yards of General Nam Il's new headquarters. From midnight until daylight, we spent most of the night in the shelter, with single planes overhead constantly.

Radio-telephone contact was made with the Americans at 5.45 a.m. They were urged to send officers for an investigation. The Americans promised to reply by 6.30, but sent an impudent message at that time that Colonel Kinney was not available. After three more radio contacts and much pressing, Kinney agreed to meet Korean-Chinese liaison officers at Panmunjom at 9 a.m. The actual investigation started two hours later. This time it was a daylight investigation and as it had been repeatedly broadcast over Peking radio that there was never any Korean-Chinese objection to journalists being present at investigations, Kinney was forced to bring a group of U.S. pressmen along with him. His arrogant attitude this time was slightly tempered with an attempt to appear reasonable in front of the press. But his slippery methods remained the same.

There were two huge craters in the middle of growing crops. Green leaves had been stripped off bean and millet stalks and pulverised within a radius of fifty yards of the craters. A film of dust covered crops within a radius of 100 yards. Pieces of jagged bomb splinters intended for the bodies of delegation members lay scat-

tered around. Kinney picked one of these up and in an attempt at bluster, showed it to the pressmen and said, "See that rust on it?" and turning to Colonel Chang, said, "You mean to tell me that with this rust on the metal, this explosion took place last night." Chang invited him to look at the film of dust over the crops and the pulverised green leaves and reminded him that earlier in the evening it had rained heavily. Kinney then had to admit that an explosion had taken place recently. His next line of argument was that this was not a bomb dropped from an aircraft but a "metal container filled with explosive and buried in the ground."

At one point he inadvertently exposed this argument. When walking away from the crater, after being informed he could take any fragments for investigation, he flung over his shoulder to one of his assistants, "Higgins, did you get that slab of nose-piece?" To which Higgins replied, "Yes, the sergeant has it." This showed that Kinney knew it was no "metal container" but a bomb with a fused nose-piece.

He was invited to question the entire population in the region, but after speaking to four peasants, he said, "That's enough. They're all telling the same story."

Although Kinney's line was that the explosions were caused by something buried in the ground, it was significant that he did not ask one peasant whether any strangers had been in the area recently digging holes in the ground – and it would have required enormous holes to bury what later were proved to be 500-pound bombs, two yards under the earth. Kinney refused to question a Chinese guard who had been on duty when the plane circled and dropped the bombs. While the investigation was in progress an American plane flew squarely over the heads of the investigating party, in another obvious violation. The investigation was adjourned for a couple of hours while Kinney considered the question and after lunch there was another meeting on the verandah of the conference house.

"It so happens," said Kinney – who, during the investigation, had done his best to prove that it was impossible, that the explosions could not have been caused by bombs dropped from a plane – "that we had an unidentified plane on our radar screen at the exact place and the exact time you say this attack occurred. The attack must therefore have been carried out by one of your own aircraft."

In denying responsibility, Kinney also claimed that as he had not been notified of the change of Nam Il's residence, it was impos-

sible that U.S. pilots could have known where Nam Il lived, much less carry out a bombing attack there. In fact, with constant aerial reconnaissance over Kaesong, with agents sent in daily and by the dropping of a parachute flare two nights previously, the Americans were quite well-informed of not only where Nam Il was living, but also of where the liaison officers were living.

Ridgway seemed to be saying in effect. "What do we have to do to make you break off these talks? We've insulted you. We've slapped you first on one cheek and then the other. We've violated air and ground neutral agreements almost daily. We've tried to wipe out your delegation. We've called you cheats, liars and fakers. We've launched a new offensive on the front and sent our planes over China. How can we make it clearer to you that we want you to break off the talks? Is there any provocation that you will accept as final?" Short of breaking through the K.P.A.-C.P.V.A. defence line and launching an all-out ground and air assault against Kaesong, there was nothing Ridgway could do which would make the Korean-Chinese delegates take the initiative in breaking the slender threads which still maintained contact between the two sides. If the Americans wanted to break off the talks, they would have to come right out into the open and accept the responsibility before world opinion. The Americans might interpret this attitude as one of weakness, but the delegates knew with good reason that the fighters in the front lines were already disabusing the Americans of any idea that the Korean-Chinese responsible stand for peace was motivated by weakness.

Chapter 11

FRONTLINE BATTLES FOR PEACE

The battles fought from the August 22 incident until the delegates were brought together at the conference table again after two months, were the decisive battles of the Korean war and the decisive battles for the immediate issue of peace or extended war in the Far East. They were battles for which the Korean-Chinese armies were singularly ill-prepared. The tactics of the Chinese Communists and of the comparatively newly-formed Korean People's Army, were those of movement, of daring advances and swift retreats, of trading space for time and at all costs avoiding positional warfare where the enemy could bring to bear his superior technical resources, superior artillery, air and naval power.

“When the enemy attacks, retreat; when the enemy tires, harass; when the enemy retreats, pursue.” These were the classical tactics of the Chinese Communists employed with brilliant success in over 20 years of warfare against the Japanese and Kuomintang, not to mention against the Americans in Korea. But once the cease-fire talks started, different tactics were needed. Due to the American type of bargaining, it was necessary to hold a line approximately as it was at the time the conference began. The military line had to become a political line. And this involved positional warfare from prepared positions.

This meant unbending frontal resistance to the massed firepower and mechanised might of what was boasted to be the best-equipped army in the world, supported by clouds of planes and the fleets of half-a-dozen nations. To support the front was the one slender life-line of a road, crisscrossed by rivers and streams with literally hundreds of vital bridges, against which was pitted what the western nations at least were led to believe was the world's finest air force. By its peculiar geographic shape, Korea more than almost any other country was at the mercy of attack from the sea. With an inordinately long coastline in proportion to its breadth, many of its important cities and roads were within range of naval gunfire. On the face of it, one would think Van Fleet had good reason to persuade his chiefs that if they would give him “one more try” he could drive to the Yalu, as he boasted a few days before the August 22 incident. But, as it happened, it turned out differently. After two months, during which American casualties were at a higher rate

than at any other period in the war, Van Fleet's armies were still holding approximately the same positions as at the beginning of the offensives.

The emphasis of the arguments on the first day from the Korean-Chinese side were quickly to arrange for a cease-fire, while the emphasis of the arguments of Admiral Joy were for a continuance of the hostilities as long as possible. This set the pattern for the entire period of the cease-fire negotiations. But from that day the K.P.A. and C.P.V.A. refrained from launching an offensive, in order to show their sincerity for peace. Anyone with a slight knowledge of military affairs knows that it is extremely difficult for an army to restrict itself to purely defensive warfare, just as it is difficult for a boxer to content himself with warding off his opponent's blows. The axiom of warfare – if one cannot get in first with an offensive – is to hold the enemy's offensive and watch the chance for a counter-offensive, as soon as the enemy begins to tire or leave an opening. But during this period the Korean-Chinese armies restricted themselves entirely to defensive warfare, although there were many times when they could have relieved a hard-pressed front by going over to the counter-offensive. It is not the purpose of this book to deal extensively with military affairs, but as the resistance of the front-line fighters to Van Fleet's much-publicised summer and autumn offensives played a decisive role in the reopening – and the results – of the cease-fire talks, some brief account of the fighting belongs to the overall picture of the battle for peace in Korea.

Immediately prior to the beginning of the talks, the Korean-Chinese troops had withdrawn extensively along the East coast, hoping to entice the Americans as deep as possible into a trap which would be sprung and which would cut them off by an encircling move. The Americans were seriously nibbling at the bait when the proposal for cease-fire talks was made. The line was immediately frozen and Korean-Chinese troops started to dig in on a line which ran from north of the 38th parallel in the East, bisecting the parallel roughly in the centre and continuing to the West coast, slightly south of the parallel.

“Digging in” is an understatement of the way the Korean-Chinese troops literally burrowed into the mountains, constructed two and three story dwellings underground, linked mountains and hills by under-ground tunnels and carved deep communication trenches linking flank with flank and front with rear. They raked the

insides out of mountains as you would rake ashes out of a furnace. Each hill, mountain or ridge was connected with its neighbours by deep, zigzagged inter-communication trenches, at least two yards below ground level and with yard high anti-blast walls. In emergency, troops could be switched from hilltop to hilltop with the enemy never knowing. Similar trenches extended well to the rear so that supplies could be brought up and withdrawals if necessary made in comparative safety. In the centre of mountains they scooped out lecture halls, reading and recreation rooms, comfortable living quarters with proper heating arrangements. Everything was deep underground with many yards of rock and earth between them and shells and bombs, atomic or otherwise. The entire front-line force, as the Americans mournfully admitted, turned into an army of tireless moles. Mountains seemed to be turned inside out, troops slept peacefully while shells and bombs rained overhead. Back of the front line positions, similar scooped out mountain ridges stretched all the way back to Pyongyang and further. It was against these positions that Van Fleet began hurling his troops in mid-August, 1951.

In a few unimportant places the line bent; but nowhere did it break. Van Fleet at no point achieved a break-through and even the few dents he made in the line were mostly straightened out within a few weeks. Van Fleet's troops found to their cost that the so-called "Gooks" and "Chinks" had mastered positional warfare. They had learned guerrilla and mobile warfare. They had learned to handle new weapons too, and by mid-October, the accuracy and weight of their artillery fire started a new spate of rumours about "Caucasian" and "Soviet" experts behind the guns. The real reason for Van Fleet's defeat – the overwhelmingly superior morale of the Korean-Chinese forces – was never mentioned in the western press. The overall casualty rate during the September-October fighting was between four and five to one, in favour of the K.P.A. and C.P.V.A. Van Fleet, in order to soften the blow of having lost more troops in these two months than in any other period of the Korean war, put out fantastic claims of losses inflicted on the Korean-Chinese forces, but it is clear that troops clambering up steep, rocky slopes to attack a superbly entrenched opponent for two months on end without registering any appreciable gains, must suffer vastly more casualties proportionately. Van Fleet tried partly to cover up his

losses by boosting his “missing in action” figures and subtracting them from his “killed in action” list.

There can be no doubt that the stubborn defence at the front during those two months, during which the Korean-Chinese delegates prevented the talks from breaking down completely, eventually forced the Americans to start negotiating again. Ridgway and Van Fleet had begged for their “one more chance” to show they could push to the Yalu and had failed miserably. Instead of dictating peace terms as they had hoped they would have to continue with armistice talks.

Before leaving the battle-front for the conference table again mention must be made of the army cultural workers who played an immeasurable part in keeping up the high morale of the troops in the front lines.

Volunteers for the cultural groups were recruited from students, young professional actors and actresses, academy graduates, writers and musicians. Most of them, as must be the case so soon after Liberation, were from middle and upper class families, otherwise they would not have been students and academy graduates. When the first group arrived in Korea, they split up: many of the men went to the front to live and even fight with the troops, others helped with supply and transport, some worked in P.O.W. camps. Before they could commence their cultural work they had to learn the life and needs of the troops. After five months, they gathered together at Army Corps head-quarters and organised themselves into balanced entertainment units. By this time they had first-hand knowledge of how the troops lived, what they did in their leisure time, what were their main cultural needs.

The slogan they adopted was “Everything for the Front-Line Troops,” and the latter were to be their chief audiences. Then they left for the front, dressed in the same volunteer uniforms as the rest of the troops. Their life was a hard one, and one for which their previous life had not prepared them. Their day began with rehearsals at 6 a.m. with probably a long march over the mountains to their first performance and often a second performance before they had their first meal for the day. Usually the main group performances were given in the forest – except in winter – with one hill separating them from the front. Often enough, the wood in which they were performing was strafed, but performances continued unless bullets actually started hitting the audience or players.

They carried their stage trappings and instruments on their backs. Their only personal belongings were a few toilet articles, rice-bowl and chop-sticks and their uniform. The girls were originally issued with warm quilts, but they gave them away and substituted with a piece of waterproof cloth instead. But what they lacked in experience of hardships and dangers they made up for in selfless enthusiasm.

One group of six girls who had been studying singing and dancing in Pyongyang, left the capital for their unit, marched 33 miles in 24 hours with all their gear and went straight on to the stage. They took their first meal since leaving Pyongyang only after they had finished their performance. Another group of 50 were scheduled to give three shows in one day to a division during the autumn offensive. They got up at 5.30 and gave their first show. The second show was in a nearby valley, but for the third one they had a 20-mile march with two mules loaned them on this occasion to help carry their gear. As they arrived a little behind schedule, they refused to eat, but set up their stage and went straight on with the performance. When the show was over they set out to walk back again and on the way held a self-critical discussion. Had they marched quicker after the second show, they complained, they would have arrived in time to give the whole third show in daylight. As it was, part of it had to be performed in the dark and only those troops sitting right in front could see. And they had no time to have a proper talk with the troops after the show. No chance to gather new materials. With this high level of self-critical attitude, the groups constantly sought to improve their activities.

Apart from the large group attached to the Army Corps there were also smaller groups at army and divisional level and those at divisional level were the ones that established the most intimate contact with the troops. Groups of ten or 12 would go right to the front lines, bringing with them only light instruments, pipes, flutes and the wooden clappers used by traditional Chinese storytellers, so the sound could not attract enemy fire. Soft performances would be given in the dugouts, a story-teller or singer would creep out even to the sentry and squatting behind him, softly sing or recite a poem. Such front-line performances were usually restricted to half-an-hour at any one place and then the performers would scuttle off along the communication trenches to the next position. A sentry often enough, would silently weep as he stood rigidly at attention listening to

some song or tale of heroism which could be a piece out of his own life.

When action was going on at the front-line, the cultural workers would give their performances just behind the front to troops just going into the line and to weary troops who had been in battle only a few minutes earlier. The writers gathered material from the troops on the spot and often within an hour the episode was produced on the stage in front of the men who took part in it. On many occasions when an unexpectedly sharp attack was launched, audience and actors rushed to repel the attack and the show was completed when the fighting was over.

Now and again the cultural groups gave performances to Korean villagers, and quite often the villagers crowded around at rehearsal time. A scene deeply embedded in my memory is of one morning when taking a pre-breakfast stroll in a little village in the outskirts of Kaesong, I chanced on a cultural group at rehearsal. The sound of an orchestra attracted me to a peasant house overlooking a peach orchard. Twenty or more entranced children with shining black eyes and parted lips were huddled together on the cottage verandah, watching a group of youths in the courtyard perform an intricate and stirring artillery dance. Real artillery was booming in the distance, American jets were screaming overhead. An eight-piece orchestra led by a beautiful round-faced girl violinist was playing, with flutes and fiddles, dancing feet and swaying arms all in perfect rhythm. Peasant women with babes strapped to their backs and bundles on their heads, bearded old men with pipes, their wrinkled faces glowing with pleasure, drank in every note and watched enraptured every gesture as the dancers in dramatic mime dragged their artillery piece into position, found their target, loaded their gun and with crashing cymbals fired round after round at the enemy, joining in a victory dance when their shots landed on the enemy target. The sounds of real warfare in the distance, the peaceful orchard with a few last leaves of autumn hanging to the branches and the rapture of the audience from the babes on their mothers' backs to the oldest white-beard, made an unforgettable impression. It turned out that this was a group from an army headquarters and was just giving the final touches to its program before setting out for the front, which was being pounded by American artillery, in one of the many attempts to encircle Kaesong.

To see the groups react to these performances is to appreciate the part these cultural groups played in inspiring the troops to hold the enemy at bay. One could appreciate also the extent to which the cultural workers had learned to present the simplest contemporary theme in a most attractive fashion and to present front-line events in the old classical form. Two examples of this which I saw, received thunderous applause and excited comments by the troops after the performance.

In the first, two old-style traditional story-tellers walked on to the stage in the long gowns and carrying the fans which, with the wooden clappers make up the stage props of the story-teller fraternity in China. One who looked rather worried complained to the other that he had not been able to attend the meeting in the city where the Volunteers just back from Korea were to make their reports. It was all due to his wife who had just given birth to a child that very day. The other said, that naturally, he too had been very excited about going to the meeting. But he too had had bad luck. He wanted to get up very early in the morning to be sure of getting a good seat. But his watch had stopped. The only way he could keep track of the time was to keep drinking tea. He filled up three thermos flasks and kept drinking. In this way he had to get up every half-hour to urinate. By counting the number of times, he could calculate when it was 3.30 a.m. Then he got up and went to the meeting. But the hall was already full. He stood near the door until a Combat Hero arrived.

“I had the idea of carrying him on my shoulder and so get in, but lots more had the same idea. I did manage to get hold of his foot, however, and carried it on my shoulder. So I got in. And look,” he showed the shoulder of his gown, “this stain is left by the foot of the Combat Hero. Now it is the most honoured part of my clothes. I tried to shake his hand, but I could only just touch the tip of his little finger, there were so many people fighting for his hand.” He continued on with a most vivid description of the meeting, how the Hero related events from the front and how the crowd responded. How people got up and donated money on the spot, while others made impassioned speeches. Even in the translation at the front, I had the feeling of being back at Peking at just such a meeting as the actor related. The lines that brought the “house” down was the final description of a Buddhist monk standing up and in the usual temple ritualistic mumbling rhythm, offering up a poem of

gratitude to the Volunteers. The attention of the audience was held for almost half-an-hour with homely dialogue which from the first actor was limited mostly to interjections of amazement and praise, but every word of which found an echo among the troops. The volunteers immediately got an accurate picture of themselves as heroes who would be honoured beyond measure when they returned to their homes. The whole thing was put across in the simplest style both in technique and language. But ideas were expressed there and implanted in the minds of the troops which would stir their emotions in many a night of sentry duty or day of hot battle. In light, humorous dialogue the troops felt the unity of front and rear and by the reactions the actor put into the mouths of the city folks they could sense the importance of their role at the front.

The second example was presented in the style of the classic Peking opera. A Chinese Volunteer with a horse laden with ammunition has to get to a place at a definite time where the ammunition is urgently needed. But he has lost his way and is desperate as to how to accomplish his task. The traditional symbols and techniques understood by the Chinese are used. A whip means a horse. When laid down it means the horse is tethered. The crossing of a bridge is indicated by certain high, stepping movements of the feet, climbing by lifting one foot higher than the other with hands held high above the head, and so on.

The unhappy soldier decides to tie up the horse and walk to the nearest Korean village for help. Emphasis is given to his affection for the horse. He feeds him, gives him a drink, washes and combs him down – all in well-understood mime – camouflages him and addresses him in a touching song before he leaves.

“We are old comrades, you and I. Here we are both in Korea. You have helped me in the past and we’ll help each other out of this situation...” He sets off for the village, and a Korean girl appears with a spade over her shoulder. She has been repairing a road and is now on her way home. She sees the horse, but a plane appears overhead. She unties the horse, leads him to a nearby wood and ties him up again. The very beautiful music, composed by a member of the group, suggests the deep forest and the plane buzzing overhead. The hero returns, still desperate, and even more so when he discovers his horse is gone. He hears a noise and prepares to shoot when the girl comes in again. There is a very typical and pleasing passage at this point showing that together with the few words of each other’s lan-

guage they have picked up, they can overcome other language deficiencies with gesture. She assures him the horse is safe and he explains where he wants to go – all in simple arias based on Chinese and Korean folk tunes. She tells him the route, but it is too long. He is depressed because he will arrive too late. The girl then explains a short cut, but it is over a steep mountain trail which the horse could not possibly climb. The girl indicates there is a still shorter way – by crossing a river. She directs him to the river where there is a boat, but no boatmen or oars. The problem is solved by putting the ammunition in the boat, tying the horse on behind and crossing the river with the hero using a pole and the girl her spade as an oar.

This entire operetta with a theme that belongs to the personal experience of many Chinese soldiers, was performed with two people and an orchestra – which could be substituted by one accordion player if necessary. Every song and gesture commanded breathless attention. One felt a sigh of relief through the audience as each difficulty was solved. From the hero's triumphant song at the end one had no doubt that the ammunition would reach its destination on time.

It does not require much imagination to picture the effect of such a performance on troops who an hour or two previously have been engaged in a life and death struggle with the enemy and who see that in the new world, the people's world, their activities are honoured so highly that they are presented in new art forms.

The troops feel they are an integral part of something which stirs writers and artists and that they are part of a society which honours them.

Through such performances and the eager discussions which follow them, they feel the great new unity of the Chinese people and the fraternal unity with the Korean people. Previously the most despised creatures in Chinese society, the troops defending their homeland and frontiers have suddenly been elevated to an honoured place in the new society. The cultural groups are the living symbol of that attitude. There was a constant interflow of ideas and emotions between troops and cultural workers, with each receiving inspiration from the other. And it was against this spirit that American overwhelming weight in machines, bombs and shells and the boasts of its Ridgways and Van Fleets, were bound to fail.

Chapter 12

TACTICS AND TRICKERY

While the great battles of the war were being fought out at the front and the no less decisive political battles were being fought by the Korean-Chinese delegates and liaison officers at Kaesong and Panmunjom, there were almost daily incidents in the Kaesong neutral area.

The reply Ridgway made to the protests at these continuous violations was as provocative as the incidents themselves. Every charge was rejected as “baseless and intentionally false...” and if they did occur, they were “initiated and perpetrated by your forces.” The Korean-Chinese delegates were charged with “constant deceit and invective.” Ridgway demanded that the conference site be moved away from Kaesong.

After the second bombing of General Nam Il’s headquarters, the delegation had shifted its residence, once more. At 1.35 a.m. on September 10, an American plane made an attack against this residence, spattering half a dozen houses with machine-gun bullets, a little over a hundred yards from the new headquarters. Our small press corps had also shifted again, this time into a house a few hundred yards from those attacked. We heard the plane circle and dive, the clatter of the machine guns and heard it pull out of its dive, circle again and head away to the South.

The first U.S. reaction to the latest violation came from A.P. in Tokyo after what must have been prior consultation with Ridgway’s headquarters. After referring to the demand for an investigation which was immediately made, A.P. reported: “It is unlikely that Nam Il would get a reply... the U.N. Command said Sunday, it was making no more replies to such protests...” And this line was consistently fed to the press throughout the day. After an investigation had been carried out – this time by Colonel Darrow of the U.S. Air Force – and the correspondents had been briefed on the results, Reuter reported from Tokyo that the Allied investigation “appeared to be little more than a formality. The Allied Command had little or no reason to suspect the latest Communist allegation had any more basis in fact than previous similar charges.”

Even the following night, A.P. reported from Tokyo that Ridgway was determined “not to tumble for any manufactured charges of air or ground violations. The Communists tried it for the eleventh

time yesterday by alleging that a U.N. plane strafed near the conference site early Monday morning. But U.N. Command liaison officers who investigated the incident refused to concede that an Allied aircraft was involved in the affair..."

Darrow had brought along U.N. pressman to the investigation and it seemed obvious by the way the investigation was carried out that once again it had been decided to deny the affair. Darrow and his staff of "experts" tried to prove the damage could have been caused by someone firing a machine gun from the roof of one of the nearby houses. He was invited to question the whole population of Kaesong, but gave up after the first three, including the occupants of the strafed houses, all gave evidence of hearing the plane and the shooting. (Because one woman had seen a flash and heard an explosion when a 50 calibre armour-piercing bullet exploded against her bedroom wall, one pressman reported that "the Communists produced two witnesses whose statements differed on whether it was strafing or bombing.")

While the Americans were making up their minds in what terms to deny the latest incident, Generals Kim Il-sung and Peng Teh-huai delivered a serious warning to Ridgway. The joint commanders let it clearly be known in the strongest note handed to Ridgway up till that time, that there was a limit to provocations and the limit had now been reached. Ridgway was warned that unless he took a serious and responsible attitude to the series of provocative incidents the U.N. forces would "definitely bear the full responsibility for all consequences resulting from the procrastination and obstruction of the negotiations and of breaking up the negotiations". This was a warning that went clear over Ridgway's head to Washington. The meaning was as direct and clear as the warning Chou En-lai had given on October 1, 1950. It was backed up by disastrous losses inflicted on the Americans during the first ten days of September. In language plain for diplomats and statesmen it said in effect: act in a responsible way or there will be an offensive and you will reap the whirlwind. It seemed to have had a sobering effect on Washington and on America's allies. Ridgway had over-reached himself this time.

The atmosphere in Kaesong on the night of September 10 was tense but calm. Each of us, who knew what was going on, knew that the tiny flame of home had died away to its faintest flicker. Ridgway had two alternatives. To back down or to fight. He had already

told his correspondents that further charges of violations would be ignored. The challenge had been thrown out to him to admit the charge or take the responsibility for breaking off the talks. His reply could well take the form an all-out assault against Kaesong, and in the early hours of the night it seemed this might well happen. Aircraft had been over the city all day in larger numbers than usual. As soon as darkness fell, B.26's were constantly circling. In our press house, for the first and only time throughout the talks, Winnington, Chu Chi-ping and myself, decided it was not worthwhile undressing as it looked like a night full of incidents.

We all felt that this was the night when peace or war was to be decided. If it were war, then we knew that everything possible had been done by the Korean-Chinese delegates to avoid it. They had discharged their duties to peace-loving people throughout the world under what seemed insuperable difficulties. If the breakdown came, they came out of it with honour. And we knew that if the breakdown did come, the war which resulted would not be to the Americans' liking. It would be different from anything they had experienced till then. Their air superiority had already been seriously challenged and if full-scale fighting flared up again, U.N. troops would feel what it meant to fight under ceaseless air attack. We knew that the Korean-Chinese troops in the frontline were anxious to go over to the offensive instead of contenting themselves with holding the enemy at bay. Time and again the chances for successful counter-attacks were presented, but orders were to defend and not to attack.

These were the things we discussed in our little Korean cottage as Ridgway's bombers zoomed and dived overhead and we waited for the first bombs to fall. At about 11 p.m. came the electrifying news that Ridgway had backed down, had admitted and apologised for the incident (catching the western press on the wrong foot, as they were reporting till within five minutes of Ridgway's announcement that he was rejecting the violation charges). This time the radar screen revealed that a U.N. aircraft had been over Kaesong at the time the attack took place. It has never yet been disclosed why it took almost two days for the radar to admit a violation when it was able to reject violations on August 22 and September 1 after a few hours. The fact that Ridgway admitted the violation and promised a serious attitude towards such matters in the future seemed to clear the way for a resumption of the talks. After a few exchanges of notes, Ridgway in a letter of September 17, which made no men-

tion of changing the conference site from Kaesong, proposed a meeting of liaison officers to discuss conditions under which the talks would be resumed. Generals Kim and Peng replied to Ridgway on the 19th, suggesting that talks at delegation level be resumed immediately and requesting that the liaison officers should meet immediately to set the time and date for the first meeting. Then followed a very peculiar period while Washington and Ridgway went through another series of peculiar gyrations while the group who wanted an immediate third World War fought it out with the group who felt it should be postponed for a few years.

Ridgway's basic difficulty was that he was caught out by the lies of his own propaganda machine. He had carefully built up the lie that it was the Communists who had broken off the talks, who had no sincerity to keep negotiations going. Now he was confronted with a short, clear invitation to restart the talks and knowledge of the Kim-Peng proposal could not be kept from the world public. Ridgway was caught on the horns of a dilemma of his own making.

Three days elapsed before Ridgway replied. It seems that in the interval Van Fleet – whose summer offensive in the meantime had ground to a standstill – had persuaded Ridgway and Washington, or Ridgway himself had persuaded Washington, that if the talks could be held off for another month or two, he could secure a military victory. He was ready to launch his “autumn offensive” on September 25. By the first American news agency reactions from Ridgway's headquarters to the Kim-Peng offer to get the talks started in Kaesong immediately, it was clear that this was the original official policy. The new Ridgway message however was the beginning of one more month of haggling and stalling until Van Fleet, at the cost of many thousands of casualties, had proved again his inability to achieve a break-through.

There began a long period of meetings between liaison officers during which Colonel Chang every day proposed fixing the time and date for the resumption of the delegates' meetings. Each day Kinney refused, demanding instead that “conditions” for the resumption of talks should first be set by the liaison officers. Each day Kinney accepted an invitation to meet and discuss “time and date of resumption of conference.” Each day he brought up the question of conditions. During this period, right through to the first delegates' meeting, American correspondents were kept in complete ignorance of what was going on as far as information from their side was con-

cerned. They depended on Winnington and myself even for news that there would be a meeting the following day. They were never told officially that Colonel Chang daily proposed an immediate meeting of the full delegates.

At the first meeting, Kinney demanded that Kaesong be abandoned as a conference site and advanced on behalf of Ridgway the following reasons: "The Kaesong neutral zone is but a few minutes removed from the most important military supply line in your area. Thousands of aircraft sorties are directed daily against this line of supply. The likelihood of an accidental occurrence involving Kaesong is obvious... It is plain that partisan groups responsible to neither command are active in the Kaesong area... Communist and Allied ground forces are in constant manoeuvre around the Kaesong neutral zone..."

These arguments were rejected on the obvious grounds that there was nothing wrong with Kaesong as a site, that as all the incidents had been caused by troops or planes under Ridgway's command, all he had to do was to order a cessation of such incidents and Kaesong could continue to be the conference site.

The new Ridgway proposal demonstrated either utter contempt for the cease-fire talks or the most astonishing confusion at U.N. headquarters. Ridgway proposed a site where all the disadvantages Kinney had listed for Kaesong were intensified. He suggested the desolate village of Songhyonni, about eight miles east of Kaesong, precisely the spot from which most of the ground violations had been launched; just one minute's flying time for a jet plane from Kaesong, even closer to the supply line and in an area where patrols of both sides constantly clashed. Such a proposal coming after Kinney's carefully tabulated and widely publicised objections to Kaesong, seemed like a macabre joke perpetrated to smother hopes of further talks. Cecil Brownlow of I.N.S. described Songhyonni as a "battered village of ravaged huts and barren faces. None of its nine or ten hovels had been left intact by the war that swept through and over the small village."

As Ridgway was adamant against returning to Kaesong, Generals Kim and Peng on October 7, proposed Panmunjom as a site where both sides would have equal rights, and again requested an immediate meeting of the full delegates. Ridgway accepted Panmunjom – which was part of the original Kaesong neutral zone – but refused to agree to a delegates' meeting until liaison officers had

met and agreed on “conditions.” This was eventually agreed and the first liaison officers’ meeting took place in a tent at Panmunjom on October 11 and subsequent days. As usual the U.N. newsmen were given no information as to what was happening.

On the afternoon of the 12th, while taking a customary walk near the western outskirts of Kaesong, I had to take shelter from a strafing attack by three straight-winged jet planes, which finished their dives not too far above my head and then roared off to the East, where I could see them diving and hear the hammering of their machine guns. It was broad daylight on a clear autumn afternoon. This time, they had strafed Panmunjom for the first time and actually strafed within the thousand yard security zone agreed the previous day. Could anyone possibly think this was a coincidence? It was the fourth air attack. The first three were against the constantly shifting delegation headquarters. The fourth was against the new conference site within 24 hours of its being selected. There could be no excuse on the grounds that the security area had only been agreed the previous day, because Panmunjom was included in the original Kaesong neutral area agreement which was still in force. It was another demonstration by the U.S. Air Force – at least – that no matter how small or where the neutral area was they could still hit it.

The American correspondents and officers who came to Kaesong that day received answers to a number of questions which seemed to have been worrying them. For-weeks past they had been trying to find out whether Chinese and Korean troops had been issued with winter gear. On October 13, they drove past Chinese military police guards clad in the finest winter gear that any Chinese troops had had within living or recorded memory. Uniforms at least as good as those which any army in the world possessed for sub-zero fighting. During the previous weeks, all troops at the front, Korean and Chinese, had been issued with beautiful, new quilted uniforms, padded caps with fur ear-flaps, fur-lined boots and padded mittens. Another question in the minds of many correspondents was whether the Air Force claims of trucks destroyed were correct and if it were true that no supplies were reaching the front. During September alone, the Air Force claimed 15,000 trucks destroyed, and yet, as the correspondents could see for themselves, Chinese and Korean troops were issued with winter clothing long before U.N. troops were. (And confirmation soon came from the front that

Kaesong was no exception. All Korean-Chinese troops were similarly equipped by the second week in October.

If their curiosity went a little deeper – their third question was: at what do pilots shoot and bomb if not at the supply lines. The answer to that was also given at Kaesong on October 13. The first strafing was at what were obviously long-abandoned dug-outs on hills remote from any action. The second one was against a group of children sitting on the roadside. There were no doubts in the minds of any of the correspondents that the attack had been made by F.80 jets. The Americans had the only straight-winged jet planes in Korea and the only planes which fired 50 calibre bullets which were found on the ground after the attack.

If the curiosity of the U.N. correspondents had gone a little further and enquired as to what was the real mission of the three planes, they could only have received one answer – “to destroy one armistice conference.”

But the pilots were unsuccessful. The talks were back on the tracks again and there was no intention from the Korean-Chinese side to be provoked into pushing them off the tracks – although most of the U.S. news agencies reported from Tokyo that it was expected at Ridgway’s headquarters, the incident would lead to a suspension of the liaison officers’ meetings. As it turned out, the latter were interrupted only long enough to carry out the investigation. They resumed on the 14th with Kinney demanding that the neutral zone around Kaesong be abandoned, so as to “reduce the possibility of incidents.” At 9 a.m., on the 15th, Ridgway sent a note to Generals Kim and Peng, admitting that U.N. planes had twice violated the Kaesong neutrality agreement on the 12th and were responsible for the killing of a 12-year-old boy. The admission stated that the investigation revealed “beyond reasonable doubt that these attacks were made by aircraft of the U.N. command in violation of standing instructions which specifically direct all units and pilots to avoid attack or overflight of the Kaesong area.”

Once again Ridgway and Kinney did not seem to have coordinated their stories. The day previously Kinney had been arguing in the conference tent that there was no agreement to prevent “overflight” of planes over Kaesong, that it was impossible to have such an agreement, that “overflight” in itself was not a hostile act. And within a few days Kinney had won. Ridgway went back on his words.

Less than 12 hours after his assurance of standing instructions to avoid overflight of Kaesong, Kaesong neutrality had been violated several times by U.S. planes, including a B.29, a B.26 and a flight of jet fighters during the daytime, and four B.26's at night.

In the conference tent, Kinney was doing his best to force Colonel Chang to agree to abolish the neutrality of Kaesong so that the Korean-Chinese delegation could "legally" be strafed and bombed at any time. Kinney's main argument was that this was the only effective way to avoid incidents. The Korean-Chinese delegation, according to Kinney's proposition, were to play a game of "tiggy-tiggy-touch-wood." If they could manage to get on to the road leading from Kaesong to Panmunjom they would be safe during the trip to Panmunjom and during the actual conference. But U.S. planes would be within their rights if they waited to pounce on them the moment they turned off the Panmunjom-Kaesong road to their headquarters and, of course, could bomb the headquarters itself. Colonel Chang argued for a rectangular neutral zone which would include Kaesong, Munsan and Panmunjom and the roads linking the three points. Kinney put out a completely false story that Colonel Chang wished to limit the neutral area around Munsan to 3,000 yards while maintaining five miles around Kaesong. There was not a grain of truth in this and U.S. correspondents were told so by Winnington and myself. Eventually they challenged Kinney and squeezed the truth out of him. During all this period, U.N. journalists were still getting most of the news from Winnington, Chu Chi-ping and myself and even when they did get news from their own sources the most responsible journalists hardly dared send it without checking with us as to its accuracy.

The news suppression policy caused something of a revolt among agency chiefs in Washington who objected to the monotonous leads to news stories from Munsan "according to Communist newsmen to-day..." The revolt reached such proportions that Ridgway called a special conference to try and quell it.

The U.N. commander promised a new deal for the press, and succeeded in temporarily keeping at least the Tokyo correspondents quiet. At the same time, one of his closest friends in the Tokyo correspondents' corps, Howard Randleman, Far Eastern Director of I.N.S., left for Panmunjom to work with press officer Brig.-General Nuckols, in breaking up the contacts between the other U.N. pressmen and Chu Chi-ping, Winnington and myself. This development

coincided with inspired reports which began to leak out of Tokyo that “responsible quarters” there felt that a cease-fire in Korea would be a bad thing.

Special correspondents and editors on world tours were briefed by high-ranking officers from Ridgway’s headquarters to the effect that a truce in Korea would only release “vast Communist hordes” for action else-where, particularly in Indo-China. Until mid-October, the propaganda had all been along the line that it was the Koreans and Chinese who were creating incidents and making false allegations in order to wreck the talks. The U.N. Command was portrayed as patently and earnestly always seeking for peace. When the Korean-Chinese delegates showed by their calm, steadfast attitude that they were the real champions for peace and had not allowed provocations, which Ridgway had been forced to admit, to interfere with the continuance of the talks, the line had to be changed. Ridgway had to come more out into the open and reveal that his headquarters was opposed to peace – of course only in the general interests of peace somewhere else, even if America had to fight the whole world to attain it!

Correspondents arriving from Tokyo all brought the same stories and one soon found their opinions being reflected in editorials in the U.S. press. “Would not peace in Korea be a danger to peace?” was the general line of humbug being peddled at Ridgway’s headquarters at this time.

At Panmunjom, Korean-Chinese efforts to bring about an early resumption of full delegate meetings continued. Colonel Chang’s suggestion for a five mile neutral area around Kaesong and Munsan and a mile and a half free-from-attack corridor each side of the road was eventually countered by Kinney with a proposal for a 3,000 yards free-from-attack area around Kaesong and Munsan and just the road itself free from attack. These were all stalling manoeuvres while Van Fleet desperately tried to make good his promises to make a decisive breakthrough and American and Allied forces were being mown down on myriad “Heartbreak” ridges.

On October 17, Ridgway issued a communiqué which flatly contradicted his note two days earlier to the effect that he had banned flights over Kaesong. In the communiqué he said any such agreement “would give the Reds an unwarranted military advantage.” He also proposed that the five miles neutral zone around Kaesong and Munsan be reduced to three miles. The following day

this was submitted as an official proposal by Kinney. Another significant commentary on the way the Americans had been handling news on the conference was given by A.F.P. (Agence France Presse) reporting the new Kinney proposal. "It was the first briefing given by Kinney," reported A.F.P., "since July 8, when he headed the team which established agreements for the initial armistice conference... Ostensibly Kinney was instructed to give a briefing on conference proceedings after U.N. newsmen complained that Red journalists received an earlier summary of events than did representatives of the free press."

Gradually the absurdity of Kinney's arguments was exposed by the U.N. correspondents as well as by Colonel Chang in the conference tent. It was pointed out that conference delegates could apparently be subject to bombs dropping within a few feet of the road's edge, or troops could be hurling hand grenades at each other across the road, but a violation would only occur if bombs, grenades or bullets actually fell on the road itself. The whole basis of Kinney's argument was that one must reduce to the minimum the area in which incidents could occur. Eventually he backed down and a final agreement was reached on the basis of a three mile neutral area surrounding Kaesong and Munsan and a two hundred yards free-from-attack corridor along each side of the roads connecting the two head-quarter towns with Panmunjom. The 1,000 yard neutral area around the Panmunjom conference site had of course been previously agreed to, so the liaison officers could meet without fear of incidents. The first full meeting of delegates was arranged for October 25.

General Nam Il and Admiral Joy faced each other across the conference table for the first time in 70 days. In a short 45 minutes' session, the senior delegates agreed to set up a joint security office to control the observance of the security arrangements at Panmunjom and to start the subcommittee delegates working again on the problem of fixing a demarcation line where they had left off two months and three days previously.

The preliminary round had been won by the champions of the peace camp, by the rock-like firmness of the Korean and Chinese troops at the front, and by the steel nerves and infinite patience of the delegates at Kaesong. Almost every inch of the front line had been fully tested by the heaviest assaults that Van Fleet could muster. Every trick of force, duplicity and wile had been used to break

down the firm stand for peace by the Korean-Chinese delegates. And they had all failed. Despite all that the forces whom Van Fleet and Kinney represented could hurl against the front and the delegates in the way of shells, bombs, insults and arguments, the peace line held firm and unbreakable. Neither at the front nor at delegation headquarters were there any illusions as to the difficulties ahead. A battle, and an important one at that, had been won. The enemy was forced back to the conference table. But it was known that there were many more battles ahead before an armistice could be secured – and still more before final peace in Korea was achieved as a first step towards genuine worldwide peace.

When the delegates stepped into the conference tent in the brilliant autumn sunshine of October 25, there was a feeling among many of us that the severest crisis was over. Nothing the Americans could do in the future could be as bad as in the past, even if only for the reason that they had failed in their main task. (At that time we had no inkling that in one more mad, desperate venture they would launch germ warfare.) The conference was on again and it would not easily be broken off. No matter how insincere Ridgway, Joy, Van Fleet and Kinney and the forces they represented might be about wanting an armistice, they would now have difficulty in avoiding one. In the previous two months they had learned something about “military realities” on the one hand, and on the other they would have to accept full responsibility in the eyes of their allies and world public opinion if they broke off the talks again.

The Korean-Chinese delegates took public opinion very much into account. They were warmed and inspired by the faith and hopes invested in them by hundreds of millions of the common people throughout the world. They were eager to inform the public of what was happening, to tell them what was the Korean-Chinese stand on important questions and why. They had a clear line and a clear conscience. There was nothing to hide. That was why there was an enlightened press policy of publishing everything that was said or done by both sides. Public opinion wanted peace in Korea and elsewhere. The Korean-Chinese delegates never deviated for one moment from this responsible fight for peace and they knew the truth of their attitude would eventually reach the outside world and be supported by the common people in all countries. Ridgway and his underlings had an exactly different policy. They had to talk peace, they had to pose as champions of peace, because their own

public demanded this, but in fact they plotted to continue and expand the war. It was natural that their press policy had to be shaped to cover up their plots to suppress information. And any scraps of information from the tent might betray their overall aims. The press policy was to suppress news, to keep the facts from the public, to distort and invent where possible, but at all costs to suppress. The first method of achieving this failed because the journalists got their news from “Red sources.”

A new policy was introduced from the first days of the resumption of the talks – to give distorted briefings and intimidate correspondents who “fraternised” with the “Reds.” This policy went into operation with the re-appearance of Nuckols on the scene supported for a time by Handleman. But it too, was bound to fail. Correspondents, especially from the news agencies, even in capitalist countries are expected to collect and report facts. How many of these facts eventually find their way to the public in pure form is another question. But editors and newspaper owners in capitalist countries want to know what is really happening – even if only to know how to handle their investments in various parts of the world. Ridgway’s continuous policy of suppression of facts and his clumsy methods of achieving this brought him into open conflict with the press on a number of occasions but especially in the negotiations on the fixing of a demarcation line – Item Two of the Agenda.

Chapter 13

THE DEMARCATION LINE

Within the first days of the resumption of the talks, the Americans took sharp measures against “fraternisation.” An M.P. lieutenant, who allowed himself to be photographed on the first day, smiling with Korean guards, was degraded and removed from the area. Drivers of U.S. staff officers’ and correspondents’ jeeps, who had previously often joined in discussions between correspondents of both sides, were warned they must not speak with “red” correspondents.

Journalists who had had normal working relations with Winington and myself were recalled to Tokyo – and some of them later let us know why. The “new deal” for the U.N. press had started. The iron curtain was rung down with a resounding clang on the road outside the conference tent where correspondents had been accustomed to foregather. It was not long, however, before the “new deal” proved to be a slightly worse and more discreditable version of the old deal. Instead of getting no news, the U.N. correspondents began to get palpably false news.

On the first day of the sub-committee meeting, the Americans proposed a demarcation line which, while more moderate than their demands of July and August, would still give them 1,000 square kilometres north of the battle-line, including Kaesong. The plan provided for withdrawals by both sides from positions roughly coinciding with the battle-line in order to form a four-kilometre-wide buffer zone. But the Koreans and Chinese would have to give up much more ground than the U.N. forces and would have to withdraw about four miles north of Kaesong. From the time this proposal was made, Kaesong became the main issue. The Americans tried to get it by hook or by crook, by bargaining and by fighting. The day following the American proposal, General Li Shan-cho proposed a shorter line, based more correctly on the battle-line and which would mean each side giving up the same amount of territory. This was rejected because it did not give Kaesong to the Americans.

While the arguments over the city were proceeding, Van Fleet launched another assault against Kaesong.

From October 25 until November 5, the Americans tried hard to get Kaesong by negotiation but at the same time they tried to sup-

press the news that Kaesong was the main stumbling block to progress in the talks. They knew that public opinion would not support them very long in trying to grab a city which was obviously in Korean-Chinese hands, which had previously been admitted to be in Korean-Chinese hands when the talks started and to which the Americans had neither legal nor moral claim. The propaganda machine with Nuckols at the gear levers went into action to deny that Kaesong was even a major item of the discussion. When the news finally penetrated that U.S. demands for Kaesong were holding up the talks, Nuckols tried to cover up by inventing the accusation that the Communists were demanding a “de facto cease-fire.”

The reason why the Americans fought so tenaciously for Kaesong was probably because it was the centre of the lucrative ginseng processing industry. (The famous ginseng root is exported all over the world in various forms and is supposed to be an aphrodisiac and sort of elixir for ageing people.) It was also the finest summer resort for Korean landlords and wealthy capitalists. It would naturally have been returned to South Korea had the Americans kept to the original basis for the cease-fire talks and accepted a settlement along the 38th parallel. They had rejected that and had to take the consequences.

The American case for Kaesong was spurious and contradictory. The first attempt to get the city was contained in their original proposal to straighten the battle-line by “adjustments” of territory. Kaesong was to be included in the “adjustment.” When this was rejected, they claimed Kaesong on the grounds that they were in possession of territory in the area at the time the talks started and could have occupied it any time they chose. Thus at a press conference on October 30, one of the sub-committee delegates, Rear-Admiral Burke, said: “As regards Kaesong, the Reds moved in as a result of our moving out...” This statement was made as a result of journalists pressing for confirmation of repeated statements by Winnington and myself to the U.S. press, that Kaesong was the main issue being discussed. On November 4, Nuckols, in response to similar pressure, while denying that Kaesong was an important issue said: “As far as Kaesong is concerned, General Hodes told the Communists that U.N. forces had withdrawn from the Kaesong area and halted military operations on the Western front to facilitate the opening of the talks. The U.N. had sent patrols through Kaesong

and subsequently withdrew them when Kaesong was selected as a cease-fire conference site...”

These statements are in direct contradiction to the admission by Ridgway’s headquarters on July 12 after four days of fighting between press and U.S. army censors that Kaesong was “firmly in Communist hands.” The next arguments Hodes and Burke used in the conference tent also implicitly contradicted their previous one. U.N. forces must be given possession of Kaesong and the ridges north of the city, because it was imperative to hold Kaesong in order to defend Seoul. But obviously if Kaesong was essential for the defence of Seoul in November 1951, it was just as important for the defence of Seoul in July 1950, when the Americans said they had just not bothered to occupy the city or the surrounding mountains. In fact, Kaesong and the ridges well to the south of the city had been firmly in Korean-Chinese hands since they captured it on January 1, 1951. If they did not heavily garrison the city, this was only in line with their policy of scrupulously trying to avoid giving the Americans any pretext to bomb towns and villages under their control.

While the argument over Kaesong continued and some news began to creep out about it, U.P. reported from Tokyo on October 31 that “concern was expressed at the U.N. armistice camp and here, that pressure for a truce by the American home front might force a decision which would be regretted later.” Colonel Kinney, whose nickname, “The Wrecker” had been accepted even by most of the American newsmen, tried to cover up the fact that the Americans were again steering the talks into dangerous waters by telling the press that the Korean-Chinese delegates would certainly back down on the Kaesong issue.

“I believe the Reds have had enough,” he told correspondents as reported by U.P. on November 2. “They are short of supplies to vanishing point. In my opinion they will give in even more in order to escape the consequences of another winter campaign...” And if Kinney were wrong? Then the war would start again in full strength as a result of Kinney’s – and doubtless Ridgway’s – miscalculations. They knew in fact that the Korean-Chinese troops were excellently supplied and better equipped physically and morally to stand another winter campaign, than the U.N. forces. But such statements were necessary to quieten the growing demands for peace in Amer-

ica, to “halt the pressure for a truce by the American home front,” as U.P. had expressed it.

The more Kaesong came to the fore in the conference tent, the greater efforts Nuckols made to keep it out of the news. Kaesong was a key issue and if the Americans really insisted in their patently unjustified claim, then there would be little use in continuing the talks, because it had been made quite clear that the only way they would get Kaesong would be to fight for it. But the Americans would prefer to pretend that the talks broke down because the “Reds” had refused a demarcation line along the battle-line. And that is why it was important for the peace camp to expose what was the real issue leading towards a breakdown. As the U.N. newsmen were getting no word as to what was going on in the conference tent, the press from our side made it clear to American journalists that Kaesong was a very serious issue, that they had been warned of this in the tent and that warnings had been disregarded before with disastrous consequences.

One of the rare statements made by a spokesman for the Korean-Chinese delegation was issued on November 2. It was intended to warn Washington and the world at large over the heads of the American delegates, of the dangerous situation into which the talks had been steered.

“Most of today’s discussion,” the spokesman said, “concerned the American claim to possession of Kaesong. American insistence on demanding Kaesong is the major disagreement holding up a speedy settlement on the cease-fire line. The American effort to grab Kaesong casts the gravest doubt on whether the U.S. delegates really desire agreement on point two of the agenda.”

The Americans were trying to do with Kaesong exactly what they had done in the early days of the talks when they had kept from the public the fact that they were demanding 13,000 square kilometres north of the battle-line. By suggesting that Kaesong was not important, that the Communists were so ill-equipped that they would make any concessions in order to avoid further warfare; the Americans were playing a perilous game. On November 3, after Nuckols had been presented with a copy of the delegation spokesman’s statement, Handleman reported that “Nuckols had warned against accepting the red newsmen’s versions” of various issues.

U.P. reported the same day that “Communist newsmen continued to insist on Saturday that Kaesong is the point now stalling ne-

gotiations in Panmunjom. Nuckols said that Communist reporters were playing a propaganda tune and that the red delegates were not playing up Kaesong that strongly. But Nuckols mentioned no other point which is postponing agreement.”

From that day on Kaesong was accepted as the main issue in the world press and once it was brought out into the open, the Americans soon dropped their demand and instead opened up with their biggest offensive against Kaesong until that time, to try and encircle the city. Previous to abandoning their claims at the conference table, they offered to exchange various pieces of worthless barren mountains in the East, then offered some islands which were in any case well to the North of the battle-line and from which they would have to withdraw anyway, and lastly offered a trick proposal to “demilitarise” the city. This latter was a pure piece of demagoguery and would have put U.S. forces to the North of the city and the city itself under American civil administration. All these demands in their various forms were rejected.

While the Americans were trying to grab Kaesong by a trade in territory, another amusing brush with Nuckols and the U.N. press occurred. The battle-line was an undulating line with a stretch where there were two rather narrow salients to the North and a broad depression between these salients in the South. The Korean-Chinese delegates offered to straighten out the cease-fire line by withdrawing their forces from the broad depression in exchange for an American withdrawal from the two salients. When this proposal was first made, Nuckols according to A.P. in a despatch from Munsan on October 30, said: “Under the red proposal the Allies would have to withdraw 2,152 square kilometres and the Reds 2,130 square kilometres.”

But two days later as the claims for Kaesong were stepped up, Nuckols spread the story, dutifully reported in the western press, that the Communists were offering nothing at all in exchange for Allied withdrawals. When Winnington and I challenged the pressmen on this point, they admitted they were puzzled and asked if we would go to their press tent and show them on a map exactly where the Korean-Chinese proposed line was drawn. We said we could not possibly draw a precise line on a military map without all the myriad place-names. However, we did our best. After we had left the tent, an enthusiastic and obviously perplexed correspondent brought us a tracing of the map with the American version of the battle-line

and their own proposed demarcation line, and asked if we would take it back to Kaesong and trace the Korean-Chinese proposed line on it from our own maps. We agreed. Nuckols was enraged when he heard of it. The correspondent who brought us the tracing was severely attacked by Nuckols and did not reappear at the conference for many weeks. Nuckols knew that another of his propaganda points was doomed to destruction. That evening, Randleman who had been one of the most vociferous in challenging us to come to the American tent, wrote a piece to the effect that Communist newsmen had “asked to come” to the U.N. press tent, had demanded a map and as the Communist delegates “had refused to pinpoint their version of the line of contact,” Allied newsmen were willing to let Communist newsmen take a tracing of the Allied map.

The reason for Nuckols’ rage was soon clear. The map hanging in the Allied press tent was a specially doctored one for the Allied press. Next day we stood with Allied pressmen and watched American shells falling on ridges well to the North of areas which Nuckols’ map showed to be in American hands. We had traced the actual contact line on their map with the Korean-Chinese proposed demarcation line traced from the same map which the delegates were using in the conference tent. It was clear that adequate compensation was being offered for the withdrawal from the salients – which the Americans themselves had proposed on the first day of the renewed conference. The correspondents could see that the Nuckols press map was a fake, produced for propaganda only. After this incident the Americans dropped the argument for Kaesong as compensation for battle line withdrawals and tried to trade it for islands.

In normal circumstances no officer could have survived blunders on such a massive scale as Nuckols perpetrated. But the Air Force and the still more powerful aircraft industries in the U.S.A. seemed determined to keep an Air Force officer in control of the news. A continuation of the war and an expanded Air Force by any means were far more important than blunders from which only the press and public opinion were casualties.

To prevent interminable haggling over adjustments, the Korean-Chinese delegates proposed on November 4, that the demarcation line should be fixed precisely along the battle-line. This was the first time such a proposal had been made, although the public in the western world were firmly convinced that this was the proposal the Americans had made over three months previously. Both sides, ac-

ording to the new suggestion, should withdraw their troops two kilometres from the exact battle-line forming a demilitarised zone four kilometres in width. This was promptly turned clown by General Hodes as “unacceptable.” The Americans must have adjustments, which without specifically stating so, meant they still wanted Kaesong.

Actually the Americans were aghast at the proposal. For three months their whole propaganda was based on a demarcation line along the battle-front, and now it was the Communists who were the first to propose it. Next morning, we were amazed to learn that the U.N. pressmen had not been told of the new development. After they were told, they rushed across to Nuckols where he stood outside the conference tent and accused him of withholding vital information. There was a surge of pressmen to our side of the road again to say that Nuckols had denied any new proposal had been made. We gave them the English text and they rushed back to Nuckols again, several of them livid with anger, because among those covering the talks was a hard core of experienced newsmen used at least to digging out facts. Nuckols read through the text and tried to retreat by describing it as a suggestion rather than a proposal. But it caught the headlines and Nuckols had difficulty in preventing a complete propaganda reverse. He had, however, an inexhaustible stock of lies ready to replace those that had been demolished, and barrels full of red herrings to draw across the trail of truth.

In order to cover up their confusion at having been confronted with what was allegedly their own plan, the Americans on the 5th made the amazing proposal to drop the whole question of the demarcation line and move on to other items of the agenda. What’s the good of fixing a demarcation line now, Hodes asked, when we still have other items to discuss? This was immediately rejected by General Li Shan-cho who pointed out this would be disobeying the instructions both sides had received from their senior delegates which was to fix a demarcation line. It was tantamount to destroying the agenda, which under Item Two called for the fixing of a demarcation line and the establishment of a demilitarised zone. Hodes was told in the clearest terms that a move to scrap the agenda would not be tolerated. If Item Two were discarded, then so was Item One, which was the adoption of the agenda. The negotiations would be back where they started on July 10.

In order to justify this new stalling manoeuvre, Nuckols next day produced the invention that the Korean-Chinese delegates were demanding an immediate “de facto cease-fire” and thus wrecking an “agreement” made between General Nam Il and Admiral Joy in the early days of the conference. In fact, there was neither such an “agreement,” nor any demand for a “de facto cease-fire.”

But at the same time a halt to offensive action on the part of the Korean-Chinese forces went into effect and remained in effect. Some days later General Nam Il questioned the sincerity of the Americans in wanting an armistice, following the B.29 terror raid on Pyongyang on July 30 and the greatly stepped-up air activity over the whole of North Korea. Joy asked the Korean general if he had not understood the U.S. position that hostilities would continue until an armistice was actually signed. General Nam Il replied coldly that he understood that was the American position. But acceptance of the fact that the Americans refused to agree to a cease-fire could hardly be described as “an agreement to continue hostilities.”

Admiral Joy in an unprecedented visit to the Munsan press camp on November 11, told correspondents (according to U.P.) “... The enemy wants all the advantages of a de facto ceasefire now” and according to I.N.S. “... but we shall continue to use every weapon in our command be it at the conference table or on the battlefield to achieve a complete military armistice at the earliest possible time...”

Nuckols followed up the same evening by assuring correspondents that the U.N. forces were in an “impregnable position” and must have complete freedom of military action to continue military pressure. “A de facto cease-fire will not be accepted,” he repeated, according to U.P. The American fear of peace had hung over the conference tent like a shadow from the beginning of the talks.

The Americans were always ready to talk about peace but always shrunk from taking the actual steps that would lead even to a cease-fire. On November 14, General Li San-cho made a speech at the conference tent which nailed the lie about the de facto cease fire and deflated the American boasts about the “inexorable military pressure” they intended applying. General Li prefaced his speech with a statement that he was prompted to speak in such terms because of the distortions in American communiqués and propaganda. He began by reminding the Americans that the second point of the agenda called for fixing a demarcation line.

“If this should create a de facto cease-fire,” he said, “then this was obviously the original intention of point two... If armistice negotiations are held, there can be no attempt to escape the effect of armistice negotiations. If an armistice is reached, the consequences of peace will have to be faced... As soon as this side made reasonable proposals for fixing the demarcation line, you started to boast about your military strength, fanatically trumpeting about exercising military pressure on the armistice negotiations. You stated your firm opposition to any possibility of an early cease-fire on the battlefield, although if you were as sincere for peace as this side, the military demarcation line once fixed need not be changed again. But our side has never made any unilateral request to your side for a de facto cease-fire. In fact this side’s proposal on November 10 allowed for the military demarcation line drawn up now, being changed in accordance with changes in the battle contact line at the time of signing the armistice.” General Li then went on to utter a solemn warning similar to that uttered in September by Generals Kim Il-sung and Peng Teh-huai and which by the results that followed, seems to have reached the ears of Washington and America’s allies.

“There are no legal restrictions whatsoever on your carrying out any military adventures after the military demarcation line is fixed,” he said, “but if your side fails to make due account of our strength and dreams of using the so-called military pressure to change the military demarcation line which has been fixed, I must point out that changes in the actual line of contact can have two directions. Our willingness to adjust the line later is no hindrance to fixing the line now.” He went on to reject any idea of changing the agenda and concluded by stating that adherence to the agenda was the only way to establish the responsibility of war or peace in Korea, the only way to establish which side was afraid of the inevitable effects of armistice negotiations and fearful of facing the advent of peace.

American propaganda had by this time got into such a tangle that U.N. command journalists had to try and convince western readers that Ridgway was championing the western world against infamous “red” demands for a cease-fire in Korea.

The general criticism of stalling at the talks and the shocking propaganda muddle forced Ridgway to make a popular gesture at the armistice talks.

On the 17th of September U.S. delegates agreed that a demarcation line should be fixed along the battle-line and if an armistice

agreement were signed within 30 days, the demarcation line should become permanent. If no agreement were signed within 30 days, then the sub-committee should take joint steps to fix a new line. The Korean-Chinese delegates, with months of experience of American stalling, said such a proposal would give the Americans the right to repudiate the whole principle of a demarcation line along the battle-line on the 31st day of reaching agreement on Item Two. They accepted the idea that the present line should be permanent if agreement were reached within 30 days, but insisted that the principle of the demarcation line along the battleline should be retained and that after 30 days changes made on the battle-front should be incorporated in the final demarcation line.

The Americans did not want this. They wanted to have changes made in case they should push to the North, but they on no account wanted to be forced into accepting changes in case they were made to the South. By rejecting this proposal, they showed that either the 30 days time limit was a trick or that they had no intention of accepting changes in the battle-line in case they occurred in a direction unfavourable to them.

On the 23rd the Americans finally accepted the Korean-Chinese amendments that regardless of when the armistice would be signed, the battle contact line at the time of signing would be the final demarcation line. Staff officers started work the same day to pin-point the battle contact line, and on the 27th, final agreement was reached, the demarcation line which would remain valid for 30 days was fixed and the full delegates put their signatures to an agreement on Item Two of the Agenda.

The Americans had resisted at every step of the way towards this agreement. They had not been able to conceal their wholly unjustified attempts to grab large areas north of the battle-line, reducing their demands from 13,000 square kilometres to 1,000, to Kaesong and half of Kaesong and finally having to settle for a line precisely along the battle-front. They had been prodded out of each of the positions they had taken up by the strength of the forces opposing them at the front, by the growing effectiveness of the Korean-Chinese air forces and by the calm, patient diplomacy of the Korean-Chinese negotiators at Kaesong and Panmunjom. In the end, after struggling every foot of the way, they were brought to the point where Admiral Joy had to sign for a line which was in fact

what he tried to fool the world into believing he was asking for four months previously.

Indeed when agreement was reached, Nuckols had the effrontery to tell correspondents that "today's agreement gives the United Nations exactly what it asked for at the beginning of the talks in July."

The record, including innumerable statements by Nuckols himself, proves how far from the truth was this assertion.

The technique used at Panmunjom was the technique used by the Americans at innumerable conferences. It was a technique used at Control Council meetings in Berlin, in meetings of the Foreign Ministers and their Deputies. When possible they try and distort facts, but when facts begin to find their way into the press, the technique is to bury the discussion under innumerable technicalities and kill public interest through sheer boredom. Once the searchlight of public interest is switched off, the particularly villainous pieces of trickery are perpetrated.

What infuriated the American negotiators at Panmunjom most was that they had to keep talking or take full responsibility for a breakdown. They had to negotiate as equals and could not at any given point, count on an automatic majority vote to solve a question on their terms. And as long as they talked, they had openly to expose themselves as either for or against agreement. Time and again they thought they had some point which they were sure the Korean-Chinese delegates would not accept and this would be publicised with a great blare of headlines. Usually what got into the headlines was not exactly what the Americans had proposed, but it was difficult for their delegates to back down when the Korean-Chinese delegates proposed precisely what did get into the headlines. So it was with the demarcation line along the battle-front. And so it was to be later on a number of other important questions.

The Americans had counted on complete suppression of the Korean-Chinese version of the talks, but their press policy towards their own correspondents forced the latter to rely more and more on the Korean-Chinese version.

There were innumerable quarrels between Nuckols and his pressmen because of this, and there is no doubt that Ridgway and the militarists began to realise that, they could not adequately put across policies without a press completely at the service of the military. It was impossible to have this in Korea and Tokyo where the

journalists represented many conflicting policies, interests and countries. Ridgway found it was no good having just one news agency on his side, because the press world is highly competitive. A report from A.P. for instance, that the Korean-Chinese delegates had proposed a demarcation line along the battle-line would bring I.N.S. a sharp message from their New York bureau if they had not reported the same fact. And not by any means all of the capitalist world as reflected even in the American press, was in favour of a continuance and extension of the war. The second strata of capitalists in the United States were feeling the squeeze because of the drive to war, the shortage of raw materials and credits to any but the biggest firms with fat war contracts.

At the period of the greatest crisis in the discussion of Item Two of the Agenda, Nuckols was kept very busy trying to plug the gaps in the propaganda barrel. But he failed and only succeeded in antagonising many American reporters, especially when he accused competent men in the conservative press, including Pulitzer Prize winners of “playing the enemy’s game” because they tried to and insisted on reporting facts. Nuckols’ final argument in every case when driven into a corner was to say, “Well, even if it is true, it is not in our interest to report it.” And “our interest” meant exclusively his interest in wrecking the talks.

The key to the attitude of Ridgway and his supporters in Tokyo, Korea and Washington, was strikingly summed up in a Reuter despatch from Tokyo on December 17, when there were only ten days left before the 30 days’ time limit on the demarcation line expired. In this despatch lies the explanation for much that happened between July 10 and December 17.

“...There are many here who believe that the methods adopted at Kaesong and Panmunjom,” wrote Sydney Brooks, “have reduced the prestige and integrity of the United Nations. The U.N. demanded Kaesong. The demand was dropped without explanation. The Command is criticised for putting up basic principles as the price of horse-trading and then throwing them away as part of a bargain with a sharp trader.

“In the Command’s defence is stated that lack of a clear-cut military victory makes this technique essential. This returns the critics to the point where they argue it was a mistake for the western world to enter negotiations while basic principles could not be defended and maintained. Many here regard each concession to

Communist stubbornness in argument as a defeat secondary only to the major defeat they feel implied in the fact that the might of the western world failed to secure a military decision against the Chinese peasantry... Despite the summer and autumn limited offensives of the Eighth Army and despite the constant and costly interdiction by air, the Communists have demonstrated they were all this time building up artillery, improving their defences and assembling air power..."

There in the dearest terms are the reasons for the incidents, the stalling and wrecking attempts, even if one leaves Washington policy out of the picture. Brooks is describing career militarists, infuriated by their defeat at the hands of Korean and Chinese peasantry, convinced as bourgeois militarists always are up till the eleventh hour before defeat, that one more effort would bring them victory, reluctantly forced to sit down on equal terms with yellow-skinned, Asian Communists, deeply convinced the whole question of negotiations was a blunder and inwardly determined there should never be a negotiated peace. It needs very little reading between the lines of the Reuter despatch for these facts to stand out stark and clear. They were confirmed also in the subsequent conduct of the negotiations.

Chapter 14

THE BATTLE OF DETAILS

Panmunjom lay under a deep mantle of snow when General Nam Il and Admiral Joy met on November 27 to put their signatures to the agreement on Item two of the Agenda. After the agreement and the demarcation line were approved, General Nam Il immediately submitted a brief workmanlike draft proposal for Item Three – “concrete arrangements for the realisation of a cease-fire and armistice in Korea including the composition, authority and functions of a supervisory organisation for carrying out the terms of a cease-fire and armistice.”

General Nam Il proposed a cease-fire by all regular and irregular ground, sea and air forces immediately after the signing of an armistice; the withdrawal of troops to their respective boundaries of the demilitarised zone within three days of the armistice signing; withdrawal of armed forces including naval forces and those stationed on islands from the rear of the other side to positions behind the respective boundaries of the demilitarised zone within five days. Forces from each side would be pledged not to enter or carry out hostile acts in the four-kilometre-wide demilitarised zone. In order to ensure that the terms of the armistice would be strictly observed, the proposal provided for each side nominating an equal number of delegates to form a “ceasefire commission” to share joint responsibility in carrying out and supervising the agreement. Nam Il asked that in order to speed up the work the principles as outlined should be agreed by the senior delegates and then should be passed over to staff officers to work out the concrete details. Admiral Joy immediately submitted a counter-proposal, the main point of which was centred around clauses that there should be no increase in military forces, supplies, equipment and facilities during the armistice period and that joint inspection teams should have full access to all parts of Korea to ensure that there should be no “military build-up.”

For the next months delegates met at various levels to try and reconcile the two proposals. Perhaps, to the naive, the American proposal looked innocuous enough at first glance. But in effect it was designed to cripple any reconstruction in North Korea during the armistice period while teams of intelligence agents could swarm over the whole country plotting lucrative industrial and communication targets for the U.S. Air Force to wipe out at any moment the

Americans liked to call off the armistice. The Korean-Chinese delegates had to continue to wage a battle at the conference table for the defence of North Korean sovereignty.

Within the first hour of the debate on Item Three, it was clear that Admiral Joy attached much more importance to inspection over the whole of Korea, than anything else connected with a cease-fire. A U.P. despatch from Tokyo on the 27th reported that Joy “hammered at the idea that joint observer teams must be set up with authority to range the length and breadth of Korea and check on any possible renaissance of aggressive power. He said: ‘...the most important feature is the authority to be invested in the supervisory organ’...” The main thing for the Americans was inspection, and “no military build-up” was to be the justification for inspection. For several days prior to the first meeting on Item Three, inspired stories were being written from Munsan and Tokyo that “the Reds will never agree to inspection behind their lines.” It was apparently hoped in the highest quarters that by making inspection the main issue, the talks were certain eventually to break down. Here again, the Americans fell into a pit of their own digging.

In the conference tent, General Nam Il went one better than Joy’s demand for no build-up of troops and no increase of war materials, by demanding a reduction of military potential in Korea. He proposed the more positive step of reduction of troops and weapons by first of all withdrawing all foreign forces with their weapons. For several days after this proposal was made, Nuckols informed the U.N. journalists and through them the western press, that the “Communists were against any limitation to the size of military forces in Korea and also against any concept of inspection.” In fact, the Korean-Chinese delegates at no time opposed inspection. They merely took the view that it was logical first to decide what was to be inspected and then how the inspection was to be carried out. The Americans rejected any discussion on limitation of military build-up by withdrawal of forces and their equipment. It was pointed out by General Nam Il that it would be much simpler to “reduce the chances of a resumption of hostilities” (the phrase used by the Americans to justify their “no build-up proposals”) by counting the number of troops leaving the country. He also hammered at the American demands that there should be no reconstruction of supplies and facilities. The Americans were bombing hospitals and peasant homes on the grounds that they sheltered Communists.

They attempted to destroy every factory, building, bridge, railway station, and even to burn the crops because they were “military facilities and supplies.” The Americans wanted North Korea to remain a graveyard of ruins for an indefinite period. Eventually Joy was forced to modify this demand to “no reconstruction of airfields and their associated facilities.” This demand was to become the main stumbling block to agreement on Item Three.

As the Americans refused to discuss a reduction of military forces and in order to meet squarely their demand for no military build-up, General Nam Il proposed an absolute freeze on man and weapons in Korea together with inspection by neutral nations to ensure that no troops or equipment were introduced into Korea during the armistice period. Nam Il naturally rejected the idea that during an armistice, while a state of war still existed, the belligerents should be able to visit each other’s rear areas. With American air and naval superiority this could only work to the military advantage of the one side. When this new proposal was put in, the Americans quickly began scrambling for safety and it became clear that no military build-up was the last thing they wanted. Admiral Joy hastily explained that by no build-up of men and weapons, he in fact meant the opposite. The U.N. Command could not possibly agree to a freeze of men and weapons. They must be free to bring in fresh troops to replace the war-weary ones. They must be permitted to replace out-worn and outmoded equipment. These demands were then formulated in an American proposal or requirement for “rotation of troops and replenishment of military equipment and supplies” during the armistice. And at first the American negotiators arrogantly claimed that what they introduced in the way of troops and weapons was entirely their own affair and not subject to any limitation. U.P. in a despatch from Tokyo on December 16 quoted Nuckols as briefing the U.N. press that “rotation and replenishment during the armistice is not a negotiating point. We shall continue to rotate and replenish at our own discretion.”

Nuckols’ propoganda line had to make one of its frequent 180-degrees turns again. The line that the Communists were opposed to any limitations on military build-up was switched overnight to the line that “the Reds have made it clear that their armistice plans would permit the U.N. army only the right to strangle itself by depriving the Allied forces of replacements, new weapons and ammunition even for training,” as reported by U.P. after a Nuckols’ brief-

ing at this time. Nuckols omitted to mention of course, that these provisions would apply equally to both sides.

As for the Korean-Chinese demand for adequate inspection by neutral nations, it was so breathtaking that the Americans took ten days to recover and to react to the suggestion – ten precious days of the 30 that were ticking away to December 27 when the agreement on the demarcation line expired.

The pattern of the U.S. demands was quite clear by mid-December. They wished to use the armistice period to replace all their troops, refurbish their weapons, build up their supplies, overhaul their lag in aircraft production at home and place themselves in the best possible position for a fresh assault. At the same time, they demanded a halt to airfield repair and construction in North Korea and demanded unlimited facilities to inspect the entire area of North Korea including aerial reconnaissance up to the frontier with China and the U.S.S.R. At a moment of their own choosing, they could resume the war with a complete intelligence picture of secret installations, underground factories, road and rail communication networks and the technique of bridge repair. And, if their demands were met, North Korean air defence facilities would be effectively paralysed.

Every proposal and every modification of a proposal submitted by them at delegate, subcommittee or staff officer meetings was integrated into this pattern.

Two conceptions emerged in the early days of the discussion on Item Three. Admiral Joy at the third meeting spoke of the American desire for a “lasting armistice” and by the character of his elaborations it was evident that this meant either no armistice at all, or one lasting as long or as briefly as was necessary to achieve American aims and get the whole of Korea under American control. The Korean-Chinese concept was a speedily-achievable short armistice, followed by a political conference for a lasting peace in Korea. The pattern the negotiations followed was that the Americans continually placed new obstacles in the way of progress, the Korean Chinese delegates patiently finding ways and means to remove these obstacles and steer unwilling American feet along a path which step by step inexorably led to an armistice and lasting peace.

By mid-December they had agreed to American demands for rotation of troops providing this could be controlled rigidly by neutral inspection teams, nominated by both sides. Neutral teams would

be stationed at ports of entry on both sides of the demarcation line and would control the numbers of troops leaving and entering the country. They would also be empowered to travel anywhere necessary to investigate alleged violations of the armistice agreement.

This pushed the Americans into a corner in which it was difficult for them to manoeuvre. Their main demands had been no military build-up (modified by rotation) and inspection. They had made loud appeals to public opinion on these points – just as they had done formerly about a demarcation line along the battle-line. And within little more than two weeks of discussion on Item Three, they had been given all their demands (except replenishment of weapons, which was granted shortly afterwards). The prospect of an armistice began to throw its shadow in certain quarters where it was regarded as a fearsome menace. Stocks and shares took a plunge on the New York stock exchange.

The Americans shifted the main weight of their attack to their demand for a ban on airfield reconstruction, although they were told again and again that such a demand was an interference with the sovereign rights of the Korean people and would never be accepted.

American arguments for demanding a ban on airfield reconstruction were based on the old myth of U.S. military superiority – the boasted ability of their planes and warships to roam and cross the skies and seas of North Korea at will. And in the sub-committee to which Item Three had been handed by mid-December, five of the seven officers on the U.S. side were from the Air Force, one from the navy and one from the Army. Chief of press and chief of liaison were both Air Force officers, Nuckols and Kinney respectively.

The Korean-Chinese proposal clearly stipulated that no reinforcements of combat aircraft or other weapons should be introduced into Korea during an armistice and this in itself was sufficient guarantee that no military build-up could take place if both sides respected such an agreement. Air Force General Turner insolently hinted that there were serious doubts if Communists would keep to such agreements. Hsieh Fang replied with cold dignity and the calm which reflected the great strength of the Korean-Chinese military position along the front. "...I call your attention to the fact that these statements of yours contain a threat to overthrow the basis of the negotiations. I would like to ask you if all the pledges made by our agreement were worthless, why should you have come to negotiate? And what would be the use of an agreement when reached through

negotiations? If you intend to continue the negotiations I advise you not to make any more such statements, which in any case are untenable as arguments in defence of your demands for interference in our internal affairs.” Turner, as the American delegates did in every case when they were hit square across the face, backed away from the argument.

December 27, the date by which agreement was to be reached if the current battle-line was to remain the demarcation line, passed with no sign of an agreement. Ten precious days had been wasted while the Americans pondered over the question of inspection by neutral teams, another seven days before they reacted to the Korean-Chinese acceptance of rotation of troops. They gave no signs at any time that they were interested in speeding up the proceedings. On the contrary, they kept introducing new obstacles which they knew would eventually have to be removed if agreement was to be reached. The 30-day time limit was a piece of propaganda trickery to quieten an inflamed public opinion.

With the General Assembly of the U.N. due to convene in Paris on January 2, 1952, six days outside the December 27 deadline, the Americans had no intention of even demonstrating the possibility of an agreement. The State Department had already announced that it would seek severer measures against China, the lobbyists were at work seeking support for a naval blockade. It was publicly announced that Warren Austin would demand more positive help in men and weapons from other U.N. members at the Paris Assembly. Even Trygve Lie had stated that an agreement at Panmunjom would have a big effect on the U.N. session. And agreement would not achieve the type of effect that the Americans wanted.

Long before the 30-day time limit expired the Korean-Chinese delegates had taken all the steps necessary for a settlement on Item Three – the steps which eventually were the basis for agreement. The main American demands for no military build-up with rotation of troops and strict supervision were met and other basic points had been mutually agreed in the first days of the discussion. The Americans understood quite clearly the Korean-Chinese stand on no interference in Korean internal affairs. But America still needed time to put across her global policies at the U.N. Above all she needed time to try out germ warfare in a last desperate gamble for victory in Korea.

As December 27 approached the Americans kept up a barrage of warnings about new military pressure which would be applied to “force acceptance” of their armistice terms.

As the weeks ground by they were forced to shed some of their terms under pressure from within and outside the conference tent. They dropped the demand for aerial observation; agreed that inspection should be carried out by neutral teams confined to inspecting ports of entry for rotation of troops and replenishment of weapons or places where violations of the armistice agreement were reported to the armistice commission. After weeks of haggling they agreed to withdraw from islands off the coast of North Korea, north of the demarcation line. Their original demand for 12 ports of entry and a rotation of 75,000 troops per month was whittled down to five ports and 35,000 troops per month. When it came to settling concrete details of inspection, the Americans again did a backwards somersault. Inspection must not be too thorough. The inspection teams should not be permitted to do the work of intelligence agents, they argued.

Inspection teams must not be allowed to look at weapons of “secret design.” It was pointed out by Colonel Chang that the provisions applied equally to both sides. He said that if there was going to be inspection, it must be thorough. An improved type of jet plane brought in to replace an outmoded one, an improved bomb sight would be a build-up of military potential, would increase the chances of a resumption of hostilities. If one side was going to bring in faster planes, the other side would want to match it. Inspection must be thorough and complete. Again the Americans recoiled with horror from such a concept.

In the conference tent at Panmunjom one had an illustration of the hollow humbug of the American demands at the U.N. for inspection of atom bomb plants. Such demands are made because the Americans are certain they are unacceptable. But they are wonderful for the newspaper headlines. When the bluff is called, it is clear that inspection is the last thing they intend to permit. There were similar experiences on every major issue raised by the Americans at the Korean cease-fire talks. Once the Americans had screamed their heads off about their minimum demands and had worked up public opinion to believe in the essential justice of these demands, they were dumbfounded when they were offered in cold black and white the precise principles they demanded. They were forced out into the open to reveal that they really wanted – in most cases – was the pre-

cise opposite of their loudly publicised demands. So it was with the demarcation line, no military build-up and inspection.

Every tactic of twisted logic, of threats and bluster was used by the American generals to force their demands through. Turner even complained that it was unjust that an armistice should rob the U.S. Air Force of the right which they held until the signing of a cease-fire, to interfere in North Korea's internal affairs by their bombing and strafing attacks. But every argument and threat was steadfastly resisted.

The Americans now changed their tactics and tried a more subtle piece of trickery in mid-January. Feelers were put out, first of all by correspondents on the road, then by Nuckols at his briefings and eventually by vague hints in the conference tent, that the Americans would be satisfied with a verbal promise not to reconstruct airfields and would not be very concerned whether the promise was kept or not. This, as the correspondents pointed out, would give the Koreans-Chinese what they wanted and provide a face-saving way out for the Americans. There was not a chance, however, that any such crooked proposal would be accepted, in no matter what form it was presented.

However lightly the Americans regarded their pledged word, for the Koreans and Chinese, a spoken or written agreement was equally binding. It was not likely either, that they would wittingly leave loopholes in the armistice agreement which would allow the Americans to claim violations as soon as they were ready to resume and extend the war. The hints were left unanswered. The Americans temporarily gave up the fruitless debate on airfields by the end of January and agreed to pass over to staff officers the drafting of details of points already agreed. For the first two weeks the drafting committee went ahead without running into major obstacles. Public attention was switched in the meantime to Item Four regarding prisoners of war and Item Five which brought General Nam Il and Admiral Joy back to Panmunjom again on February 6.

On February 16, Colonel Chang exploded what the Americans regarded as a political atom bomb in the staff officers' meeting on Item Three when it came to the point of nominating the neutral nations for the Supervisory Commission. In the draft agreement drawn up by the Americans, they defined a mutually acceptable neutral nation as "one whose combatant forces have not participated in hostilities in Korea." The draft then contained blank spaces for the

three nominees of the U.N. side and three from the Korean-Chinese side. Colonel Chang proposed the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia and Poland; Colonel Darrow for the Americans immediately accepted Czechoslovakia and Poland and as promptly rejected the Soviet Union, without stating why.

There were a number of excellent reasons why the U.S.S.R. was proposed as a neutral power. The first and most obvious one was that the Soviet Union had been scrupulously neutral from the beginning of the Korean conflict and had consistently striven to bring about a peaceful settlement. Secondly it was an excellent opportunity to prove to the world the hollowness of American propaganda that the Korean conflict was "Soviet aggression." America had upset the economies of most countries in the capitalist world by forcing a "guns instead of butter" policy, had turned peacetime economies into war economies; had started the re-militarisation of Japan and Western Germany and established bases in other people's countries half way round the globe – all on the basis of U.S. propaganda claims that the Soviet Union was involved in aggression in Korea.

Now the matter would be brought out into the open and it was up to U.S. delegates at Panmunjom or the U.S. State Department to produce some evidence a little more substantial than American pilots' reports that they thought they had heard Russian spoken from planes in the North Korean skies. Thirdly, just at this time, America was boasting about plans to blockade China, to bomb and bombard her coastal and industrial cities in case the talks broke down or an armistice agreement was violated. Mr Churchill had let it be known that his government would support such nineteenth century imperialist tactics. It was high time to let the world know that China and the Soviet Union were joined together in a defensive military alliance and it would be a good thing for representatives of the Soviet Union to be on hand to expose any alleged violations the Americans might claim as an excuse for renewed hostilities.

The western world and particularly the western press at Panmunjom waited with bated breath for the American evidence as to the participation of the Soviet Union in the Korean war which disqualified her as a neutral nation. The press at first tried to make out a case about some Soviet weapons being used in Korea, but when it was pointed out that American arms were being used in Viet-Nam, Burma, in the Middle East and Latin America, wherever fighting

was going on or coups d'état being carried out and that the sale of arms had never been held to constitute a breach of neutrality, this line was dropped. The invention of Russian-speaking voices heard from planes was also dropped. There was no repetition of the Van Fleet charges of "Caucasians – probably Russians" directing artillery fire at the front.

On the 22nd, the long-awaited official reason for the rejection was given. "The Soviet Union," Colonel Darrow solemnly proclaimed in the conference tent, "is in too close geographic proximity to Korea and has a past record of participation in the Korean question." For the western press this was a sad anti-climax. The correspondents had believed till the last that the U.N. had patiently been collecting some dramatic evidence to prove participation by the Soviet Union in the war. But this ludicrous reason was the only one they or anybody else ever got, for the American objection to the Soviet Union as a neutral nation. It was the clearest and most striking confirmation to the whole world that the Soviet Union had indeed been scrupulously neutral and that the enormous upset the Americans had created in the world over so-called Soviet aggression in Korea rested on an empty bubble which burst at the first prick of truth. America herself stood branded as the true aggressor and instigator of aggression in Korea.

For six weeks after the Soviet Union was nominated, the staff officers continued their work of drafting the agreed details, with periodic debates on the issue of the U.S.S.R. The Americans knew they had no moral or legal right to object to the nomination, but as their own pressmen freely admitted, the "loss of face" for America in openly admitting for the public record that the Soviet Union was neutral, was more than could be borne. Colonel Darrow in a panic-stricken attempt to solve the American dilemma suggested that only two neutrals from each side be nominated. The Americans would drop Norway, leaving Sweden and Switzerland, the Korean-Chinese should drop the Soviet. But this was rejected.

By the beginning of April, the drafting of the major portion of the agreement on Item Three had been completed. All the maze of tangled and controversial issues had been shaken down to two main points – the Soviet Union and repair and construction of airfields. As the latter point could not be discussed at a staff officers' level, on April 3 the unresolved issues were taken up again at sub-committee level. At the second sub-committee meeting, General

Hsieh Fang made it clear that a compromise could be made but it was up to the Americans to take the first step and drop their demand to interfere in North Korea's internal affairs by demanding a halt to the building of airfields. For another three weeks the Americans pretended not to be interested in any such compromise solution, but on April 28 at a plenary session they made their famous "package deal" offer which in effect involved trading a compromise on the airfields-Soviet Union issue for acceptance of the American demands to retain large numbers of Korean and Chinese prisoners of war. A counter-proposal was made by General Nam Il to accept the compromise on Item Three on condition that all prisoners of war should be repatriated.

Eventually it was left to the staff officers in the actual drafting of the armistice agreement to settle the matter without any formal agreement by omitting mention of restrictions on airfields or the Soviet Union as one of the neutral nations.

This still left the question of prisoners of war to be settled before the firing could be stopped.

Chapter 15

PRISONERS OF WAR

Discussions of Item Four of the Agenda, “arrangements relating to prisoners of war” began on December 11, at sub-committee level. General Li Shan-ho who headed the Korean-Chinese sub-delegation immediately proposed that both sides accept the principle of the release and repatriation of all prisoners of war as soon as an armistice was signed. This was turned down by Admiral Libby, who headed the American team, on the grounds that he had no intention of “buying a pig in a poke.” This attitude was maintained by the Americans throughout the discussions on Item Four.

In contrast to the clear-cut proposal of General Li, Libby offered a vague formula that the exchange of prisoners should be “on a fair and equitable basis” and that any discussions must be preceded by visits to the P.O.W. camps by the International Red Cross and by a full exchange of data on prisoners held by both sides.

For one whole week Libby refused to discuss Item Four until there had been a full exchange of information as to numbers, names, ranks and units of all prisoners held by both sides, together with the exact location of the P.O.W. camps. After vigorous objections by General Li to any group of so-called neutrals wandering about behind the lines while war was still going on, the Americans dropped their demands for I.R.C. visits as a prerequisite to discussions. On the afternoon of December 18, information on P.O.W.s was exchanged. The Americans were handed a list of 11,559 names, including over 3,000 Americans with precise details as to rank, serial numbers, units and location of camps. American names were in English and South Korean in Korean characters. In exchange, Libby perpetrated a scandalous hoax by handing over a list of 132,000 names of what purported to be North Korean and Chinese P.O.W.s, but which were in fact a meaningless jumble of English letters, arbitrary latinisation of Korean and Chinese names. There was no other identifying information, neither numbers, ranks nor units – nothing by which even an elementary check could be made. Libby knew as well as anybody else who had served in the Far East that Korean, and especially Chinese names are meaningless if put into English characters. The simple Chinese name of “Wang” is capable of a hundred variants, each of which can only be expressed by its own particular ideograph.

In reply to General Li's indignant protest, Libby coolly replied that it would take another week to provide the names of the Korean-Chinese prisoners in their original language but would take "much longer" to provide identification of ranks and units.

After promising to provide additional information on December 5, Libby then demanded a three days' adjournment to check the American names. Any chances for agreement by the 27th on Item Four were wrecked by this deliberate hoax. The Americans themselves had refused to negotiate until full data had been exchanged and the earliest they could provide even partial data was two days before the deadline.

The reason for the large discrepancy in the numbers of prisoners held by each side was due mainly to the type of war being fought and the revolutionary policy towards prisoners adopted by the K.P.A. and C.P.V. From the Korean-Chinese viewpoint this was a people's war fought against U.S. imperialism. The Koreans were defending their country against U.S. armed aggression. Koreans fighting with the R.O.K. forces had been impressed into the army with little choice but to obey orders. They were usually given a few weeks of educational lectures as to what the war was about and were then set free to do as they liked.

When they were captured they were not regarded as enemies, except for a handful of collaborators, but as liberated comrades.

The majority of R.O.K. prisoners were captured by the K.P.A. during its first rapid advance to the South and many thousands of them were released in South Korea before the K.P.A. withdrawal to the North.

Some of the captured R.O.K. troops asked for nothing better than to be sent into the front lines against the Americans. Some remained in the South and joined partisan units. Some were doubtless impressed into the R.O.K. Army again. Others asked for sanctuary and jobs in the North. Any able-bodied male, foot-loose in the South was certain to be press-ganged into the Rhee forces.

The authorities in the North started off from the viewpoint that the vast majority of the people were on their side and this had been abundantly proven during the advance to the South. Why then, should they detain captured R.O.K. troops in camps? Those who were captured in the North and wanted to return to homes in the South were escorted to the front-lines and when the chance offered, they were set safely on the path homewards – or even back to their

own fighting units if they preferred. The example of good treatment received would soon spread through their units. Because it was a people's war and the R.O.K. rank-and-file were of the people, the K.P.A. and C.P.V. had nothing to fear and everything to gain from their revolutionary-humanitarian policy towards P.O.W.s.

The policy on the U.N. side had to be different. They knew well that to release captured K.P.A. soldiers would be to swell the ranks of the partisans in the South. To return them to their own lines would be to swell the K.P.A.-C.P.V. fighting strength. There were not two K.P.A. or C.P.V. soldiers in a hundred that would voluntarily fight on the side of the U.N. Command. So it was necessary to herd them into camps behind barbed wire, surrounded by machine-gun towers on Kojé island. Every R.O.K. soldier captured by the North was regarded as a potential ally in the war against U.S. aggression. Every North Korean or Chinese soldier captured by the Americans was regarded as a dangerous, fanatical foe to be detained behind barbed wire.

Another point that requires comment was the relatively low number of U.S. prisoners in proportion to the total figures of American "missing," compared to that of other nations involved. The British had slightly more than 1,000 listed as missing of whom more than 900 turned up as prisoners. The Americans had over 10,000 listed as missing and only 3,000 were in the prisoner lists.

In the first place, according to front line reports the Americans were negligent in recovering their dead, especially in their big retreats where bodies were piled up by the hundreds. Second, they were either careless in keeping their records or they deliberately transferred names of those known to be dead into the "missing" category. An example will illustrate this point. At one of the sub-committee meetings Admiral Libby handed in a list of 1,035 Americans of whom he claimed there was definite evidence they were prisoners but were not accounted for in the lists handed in at Panmunjom. Later he had to admit this was a mistake. According to a U.S.I.S. despatch from Munsan on December 29, "the U.N. Command announced that 450 of these U.N. men are dead and 585 were captured and reached the Communist rear areas safely." In other words, about 50% of a very large group claimed as missing were proved at the first enquiry to be dead.

When the sub-committee on Item Four reconvened on December 21, General Li Shan-cho asked Libby to account for the fact that

the list of names handed in on December 18 showed a discrepancy of 44,259 as compared with the list submitted earlier by the Americans through the International Red Cross. General Li handed over the list as tabulated by the I.R.C. and pointed out that 34,786 of the names were of persons known to have been regular personnel of the K.P.A. General Li pressed for a satisfactory answer as to how the original list had suddenly lost more than a quarter of its names. Libby flew into an incoherent rage and spluttered that he “was tired of criticism of the American list” and tried to counter with a demand for information about the 1,035 alleged missing, referred to above. Later Libby explained that the 44,000 had been reclassified with the help and permission of the I.R.C., as South Korean civilians who had been captured and incorrectly listed as P.O.W.s. Libby also demanded that any former R.O.K. troops serving with the K.P.A. should immediately be withdrawn and put into prisoner of war camps. Libby said that the 44,000 had been released and returned to civilian life but after a few days corrected this and said that they were interned at Koje island awaiting “screening” in which the I.R.C. was assisting.

On December 25, instead of submitting the list of Korean-Chinese prisoners in their original names as promised, Libby submitted a list of the English names turned back into an arbitrary Korean or Chinese version but which still had no relation to the original names and were without any other identifiable clue. It was obvious that Libby’s staff was juggling with words and dictionary translations at Munsan instead of registering the prisoners in their correct names at Koje. After further angry protests from General Li Shancho, Libby promised to supply the real names in their original Korean and Chinese characters by January 4.

Three weeks after the Korean-Chinese proposal submitted on December 11, the Americans came out into the open with a counter-proposal which aimed at turning the conference tent into a slave market or cattle fair. Libby’s complicated plan provided for (a) a head-for-head exchange of war prisoners; (b) South Korean civilians who fled to the North to be handed over in exchange for further prisoners in American hands in excess of those held in the North; (c) repatriation of further prisoners in American hands only if the I.R.C. was convinced they insisted on being repatriated; (d) excess prisoners returned would be on parole not to take further part in hostilities in Korea, and (e) Korean and Chinese military command-

ers would be responsible if the parole was broken. It only remained for the Americans to demand that scales be set up at the prisoner exchange points to negotiate on a weight-for-weight of human flesh basis to complete the perfidy of this Shylock proposal.

Ridgway and Libby conveniently overlooked the fact that Panmunjom was not a Hague or Geneva conference at which to write new principles for prisoners of war exchange. The Libby proposal was in direct contravention to article 118 of the Geneva Convention, drafted by the Americans themselves in 1949 and which provides for “the release and repatriation of all prisoners of war” following an armistice and forbade any conditions being attached to their release. An astonishing sidelight when this point was raised was that Libby had no knowledge of the 1949 Geneva convention in which there was not a line nor any hint of the principle of “voluntary repatriation.” This Libby-invented formula became the chief stumbling block on Item Four in the months which followed. The new “principles” provided for prisoners of war being used as hostages to force the surrender of political exiles; it provided every incentive for each side to bring pressure to bear on prisoners to force them to refuse to be repatriated and was based on the most vulgar commercialism in trading in human bodies on a one-for-one head-for-head basis.

The Korean-Chinese standpoint was that a military armistice had nothing to do with mixing up problems of civilian refugees with the release and repatriation of P.O.W.s. There was not a line, word or comma in the agenda that suggested that civilian refugee problems should be discussed. But if the Americans felt it necessary to deal with this, General Li proposed that as soon as an armistice was signed, civilian refugees should be given assistance by both sides to proceed to their homes north and south of the demarcation line as they desired. Adequate arrangements should be made to publicise the fact in every town and village that displaced persons would be given government assistance to return to their homes. For a long time Libby insisted that only the I.R.C. should decide on the basis of individual interviews with the several million refugees, which should return to their homes. (The Americans were able to invent an astonishing number of pretexts for trying to send I.R.C. groups prying into all corners of Korea and setting up organisations which would take years to function.) After weeks of argument Libby abandoned the plan to use P.O.W.s as hostages for civilians and General Li’s simple plan to allow civilians to go where they chose

was adopted. But on the question of P.O.W.s, the Americans were adamant for what they called “voluntary repatriation” – the phrase coined to cover up the American intention to retain forcibly scores of thousands of Korean and Chinese prisoners and hand them over to the regimes of Syngman Rhee and Chiang Kai-shek.

Ominous reports began to trickle through from Koje island as to what American-style “voluntary repatriation” meant and the methods being used to “persuade” prisoners to refuse to be repatriated. It became known that 104 Kuomintang “instructors” had been imported into the camp from Taiwan and little imagination was needed to know what sort of “instruction” these blood-hounds were administering.

Libby did his best to quieten the persistent rumours of ill-treatment. On January 12 he told General Li that the prisoners at Koje “were being taught the fundamental concepts of democracy... the basic principles of democratic life – freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want, freedom from disease and freedom from fear. There is nothing that remotely resembles coercion or intimidation.” he said. On the following day, the Rhee government announced that 5,231 North Koreans in Allied P.O.W. camps had sent a petition to the National Assembly saying they refused to be included in any exchange agreement. They said they would rather “be interned for ten or more years than be returned to the North Korean authorities.”

Shortly after this Cardinal Spellman made a tour of South Korea and visited the P.O.W. camps. According to a U.S.I.S. broadcast on January 28, Cardinal Spellman found that “of 150,000 prisoners, 71% do not want to be returned to Communist rule. He described a group of 300 Chinese who had tattooed themselves with the words ‘I am an anti-Communist’ in the Chinese, Korean and English alphabets. ‘The anti-Communist-tattooed Chinese,’ Spellman said, ‘want to be placed in the front line of U.N. forces so they can demonstrate actively their opposition to Communist rule in their own country...’” Cardinal Spellman was particularly struck “with the good care being given the P.O.W.s held by the U.N.” Two days later, Reuter reported from Koje in a despatch marked “delayed by censors” that military police guards said that “a system of segregation helped keep Communist and non-Communists from each others’ throats... Lt.-Col. Wilbur Raven said that at least 500 Chinese had tattooed their arms with anti-Communist slogans, some both in

English and Chinese. Officials admitted there had been a number of brutal fights among prisoners of different political beliefs..." All this suggested highly improper goings-on at Koje and striking confirmation of this was soon to be forthcoming.

Tattooing is a despised custom in China and used in the old days exclusively as a means of branding criminals. It was revived by the Kuomintang to brand prisoners of war in China so they could not escape. More recently they had tattooed the entire garrisons of islands held by the Kuomintang off the South-East coast of China, with anti-Communist slogans similar to those used at Koje in the hope of preventing them from deserting to People's China. Admiral Libby made several statements to the effect that the prisoners were tattooing themselves – a physical impossibility for the type of deep-skin tattooing done at Koje. Then he pretended the Chinese and Koreans tattooed each other voluntarily. But even before the full story of Koje could be made public, there was photographic evidence in the hands of the Korean-Chinese delegation supplemented by eyewitness accounts which proved that prisoners were forcibly tattooed and not only by Kuomintang agents but Americans also took part.

On February 18, the scandalous brutalities at Koje erupted in such a violent fashion that the Americans could not entirely suppress news of what was happening there. On the pretext of quelling a riot, troops of the U.S. "Wolfhound" regiment, using machine guns and hand grenades, killed and wounded 211 Korean P.O.W.s. The American version of the massacre as pieced together from an official army enquiry and correspondents' reports show the prisoners of one compound were being individually "screened" at 3 a.m. on the 18th when the entire 6,000 occupants of the compound began demonstrating, shouting demands to return to North Korea and "Long Live Kim Il-sung." American security guards were allegedly attacked when they tried "to restore order" by the unarmed prisoners. Elements of the "Wolfhound" regiment then surrounded the compound with tanks and commenced the massacre. In the ensuing fracas one U.S. officer was killed.

The 6,000 were part of the 44,000 who Libby claimed were South Korean civilians picked up by mistake as P.O.W.s, but later reclassified with the help of the I.R.C. They were supposed to be violently opposed to returning to the North. The Americans, with the knowledge of I.R.C. representatives who were on the spot when the massacre took place, suppressed news of the shooting for four

days until a plausible story could be fed to the world press. The American delegates at Panmunjom rejected a Korean-Chinese protest at the outrage by impudently asserting it was none of their business. It was a matter of South Korean “internal affairs.” After the massacre a number of Chinese and Korean officers were removed from their compounds and were not seen again. What happened to them and what sort of “interrogations” were taking place at 3 a.m. will have to await disclosure until the full story of Koje island is gathered from the inmates.⁴

The February 18 massacre at Koje was not the first there had been nor was it the last. On March 14 American delegates at Panmunjom reported that another 12 prisoners had been shot dead and 26 wounded at Koje. According to the official account “unruly prisoners attacked co-operative prisoners in a prison compound” – but there were no casualties reported amongst the “cooperative” ones. Press reports denied the official account and stated that a small party of heavily guarded prisoners who had been forced to carry Rhee and Kuomintang banners were being marched outside the compound where the “unruly” ones were kept behind barbed wire when the latter hurled “insults and stones” at them. The R.O.K. guards then fired their machine guns through the barbed wire and the fresh massacre started. This time the Americans had to admit that those killed and wounded were regular members of the K.P.A. But this did not prevent them from repeating their daily pleas for a “humanitarian” approach to the question of “voluntary repatriation” of prisoners, which they seemed intent on forcing on every prisoner even if they had to wipe them out to the last man.

While the atrocities were being perpetrated on Koje, Ridgway’s propagandists were busy trying to cover up by spreading stories of ill-treatment of American prisoners in the North and casting doubt as to whether more than a fraction of those listed were in fact alive. The refusal of the Korean-Chinese delegates to allow the I.R.C. teams to wander through the country was taken as final proof of “inhuman” conditions. Winnington and myself were approached by an A.P. correspondent and asked if we would help to send camera equipment to one of their photographers, Frank Noel, who was him-

⁴ See the sensational book by Wilfred Burchett and Alan Winnington on the Koje atrocities, *Koje Unscreened*. – Publisher.

self a prisoner of war, and let him send photographic evidence of conditions. This was quickly arranged, and a few days later American papers carried front-page pictures of fat, smiling P.O.W.s and pictures of Noel, fatter than he had ever been, photographing fellow prisoners. Even the U.S. Army paper, *Stars and Stripes*, carried page after page of pictures including a double-page spread of photos taken by a Chinese photographer of General Dean, sleek and trim in a double-breasted suit supplied by his captors, playing chess with his guards, doing physical exercises and walking in the forest. This was too much for Ridgway whose propaganda line about ill-treatment of prisoners was quickly torn to tatters. His public information officer, Colonel Welch, circulated a memorandum among U.N. correspondents to the effect that it had come to the attention of general headquarters that certain Allied correspondents were “abusing their news coverage facilities for the purpose of fraternisation and were consorting and trafficking with the enemy.” The memorandum mentioned such cases as the smuggling of cameras to P.O.W.’ camps and stated that the U.N. Command “viewed with growing apprehension the practices of some reporters of excessive social consorting including the drinking of alcoholic beverages with Communist journalists.” Correspondents were warned that such practices must cease and in future they must comport themselves in such a way as “not to endanger military security.”

This was the high point of many efforts made by Ridgway to stop contact between the press of both sides. He had to cover up the real reason – which was to suppress truth and facts – by hitting where he hoped it would harm the correspondents most in the minds of their employers and the public and imply that they came to Panmunjom to be plied with alcohol by Communist correspondents in exchange for military secrets. But this time Ridgway stuck his head into a hornets’ nest from which he was glad quickly to withdraw it.

Every daily paper had carried the story of Dean’s capture, photos of him in captivity – reported and photographed by Communist correspondents. They had run pictures for days on end of well-fed American P.O.W.s taken by a well-known photographer of the world’s largest news agency, through facilities provided by the Communists at Panmunjom. The P.O.W. pictures, following on the charge that the Korean-Chinese delegates had faked the lists, were the first tangible evidence for thousands of families that their soldier

relatives were really alive and well. The order went out to correspondents in the field to defy Ridgway's warning.

"Why would the Army make such wild charges?" asked A.P. staff correspondent Barnard in an article on February 10, and gave the answer himself. "The Army doesn't like the newsworthy information and pictures the Communists give out... All correspondents know exactly what kind of guys the Communist correspondents are. They are tough babies from the word go and Communism is the only creed they know. But many's the time they have given hot news stories on what is happening in the armistice tents to Allied correspondents, and the stories have turned out to be correct. A few months ago the U.N.C. announced there would be no further briefings while sub-delegate armistice sessions were in progress. But the Communist journalists got briefings and they in turn 'briefed' the Allied newsmen. For days that was the only armistice news the newspapers of the free world got.

"The Army doesn't like it because pictures of Allied prisoners in North Korean camps always show the prisoners looking well-fed and comfortable. No adult American would expect a picture from Communist territory to show anything else... But the recognisable faces of the U.N. boys, published in the newspapers must have meant a great deal to the folk back home. Communist propaganda? Sure, that's what the Reds intended the photos for... Nobody does any bargaining with the Red newspapermen. Pictures and stories from those boys are absolutely free."

Even the arch-reactionary *Time* magazine of February 18 pointed out the fact that it was Ridgway's policy of news suppression that fostered the growth of "consorting." "Since the Korean truce talks got under way last summer," *Times'* Tokyo bureau chief, Dwight Martin reported, "U.N. newsmen have been faced with a dilemma. They have found that Communist newsmen whom they see every day at Panmunjom are often a better news-source than the sparse briefings by U.N.'s own information officers. From such men as Alan Winnington of the London *Daily Worker* and Wilfred Burchett of Paris's pro-Communist *Ce Soir*, U.N. correspondents have extracted red reactions to U.N. proposals even before the U.N. negotiators announced that the proposals had been made. And high-ranking U.N. officers have frequently asked correspondents what the red reaction seemed to be. Many U.N. newsmen disliked fraternising with red correspondents but feared they would be beaten on

stories if they didn't..." Martin went on to recall various news "scoops" which the American press had received from Communist newsmen.

On this occasion Ridgway and Nuckols suffered their most shattering propaganda defeat. Apart from *Stars and Stripes* (which quickly did a back somersault) no newspaper or news agency came to their defence. At Panmunjom fraternisation continued. In Tokyo, agency chiefs demanded a show-down with Ridgway and got the order rescinded. Photos of happy, well-fed prisoners began to flow through Panmunjom as usual and U.N. newsmen continued to correct their Nuckols' briefings with what they could glean from the Communist correspondents.

To emphasise their disapproval of Ridgway's blast against fraternisation and its results, the American Overseas Press Club awarded its 1951-1952 award for the best photographic work of the year to Frank Noel – for his work in the P.O.W. camps.

In the conference tent the talks dragged on endlessly with the Americans employing every device to avoid taking even one step forward. It was not until January 28 – instead of January 4 as promised – that the list of Korean and Chinese prisoners in their original names was handed over. This was 41 days after the Americans had received a meticulous accounting for U.N. prisoners. There were many discrepancies in the January 28 list handed in by Libby and the names of the 44,000 supposedly reclassified were still missing. Libby promised to supply detailed information about the latter and kept on giving dates by which this would be available, but weeks went past and the dates were not kept.

Towards the third week in February, Libby promised that the data on the 44,000 was almost completed and would be handed over "in a few days." On February 24, the Armed Forces Radio broadcast from both Munsan and Tokyo said that "the U.N. command to-day handed the Communists a complete accounting of the 44,000 reclassified Korean war prisoners." All American news agencies carried similar stories, but in fact this was a plain lie. No information was handed in on February 24 or any other time about the 44,000. Instead on February 29, the Americans announced they would provide no such information until the Korean-Chinese delegates provided precise details of 53,000 R.O.K. prisoners allegedly in Korean-Chinese hands. This was a purely mythical figure, invented as an excuse to give no accounting for the 44,000 whom the Ameri-

cans were determined to retain at all costs. Admiral Libby was not able to provide the name or any information about even one person of this alleged 53,000. He later explained the figure had been obtained by adding together the total number of prisoners claimed as captured by the K.P.A.-C.P.V. since the war broke out, disregarding the evidence of which the Americans had plenty that R.O.K. troops were in almost every case released shortly after capture. Full details of the 7,000 detained in camps were handed Libby on December 18. For the 44,000 K.P.A. men, the Americans had been given a complete list of names, ranks and units: for the phantom army of 53,000 Admiral Libby could not provide one name or clue, but for several more weeks the talks were held up while they tried to bargain for 44,000 against a non-existent 53,000.

On March 2 American delegates stalked into both tents and read identical statements that “our side has serious doubts as to whether it is worthwhile to continue with our attempts to reach further agreement.” The ostensible reason for this outburst was that the Korean-Chinese delegates had “violated” agreements by nominating the U.S.S.R. in Item Three and by not providing information on the non-existent 53,000 in Item Four. They were sharply asked if this meant they were not longer interested in continuing the negotiations and if so to say it more specifically. In both tents they quickly denied there was any intention of breaking off the talks.

During this period the arguments on “voluntary repatriation” as opposed to “release and repatriation of all prisoners” went on unabated. The Americans made loud appeals to the “conscience of the world,” that it would be intolerable to American humanitarian principles to hand converted anti-Communists over to the Korean-Chinese authorities where they would face “certain death at the hands of execution squads.” There were some obvious points which exposed this argument as the basest hypocrisy.

With every means at the disposal of their hired torturers, the Americans were trying to force thousands and tens of thousands of Korean and Chinese patriots to betray their motherlands and their leaders and ensure as the Americans hoped that they would be regarded as traitors if they returned. Their professed tenderness for the future of these prisoners took on a very different aspect when they massacred in cold blood scores of prisoners who demonstrated their fervent desire to return home. If they found any Korean or Chinese prisoners really willing to turn traitor, the Americans had no com-

punction in training them as secret agents and parachuting them into North Korea so that they really ran the risk of facing firing squads. While the Americans prated about humanitarianism in the conference tent at Panmunjom they were carrying out a diabolical plan at the front, designed as they fondly hoped, to deliver thousands of Korean and Chinese prisoners to “execution squads” by blackmail.

As the discussions were hopelessly deadlocked on the 44,000-53,000 issue and neither side would abandon its stand on principle, General Li Shan-cho proposed on March 5 that both sides should start working out concrete arrangements for the release and repatriation of prisoners on the basis of data already exchanged – that is, on the basis of the 11,000 held in the North and the 132,000 held in the South. For 16 days this proposal was not disclosed to the U.N. press, except through Communist newsmen at Panmunjom. This was the move which first broke the deadlock on Item Four and could have paved the way for its solution, had the Americans really been interested in a settlement.

One further piece of Nuckols’ trickery had to be carried out before the Americans would settle down to discuss the concrete arrangements for the release of prisoners. On March 20, Winnington and myself were approached by some of the U.N. pressmen with feelers as to how we would react if there were a temporary news blackout on Item Four. There were strong hints that the shootings on Koje island had made the U.N. position on “voluntary repatriation” untenable but that their delegates must have a face-saving way out. They must be allowed to drop the issue without too much publicity – especially in an election year. Our reaction was that the last time a news blackout had been tried it was used by Nuckols to carry out some particularly dirty work and we would not be willing to have that happen again. On the other hand we would do nothing to prejudice the progress of the talks. If the Americans wanted a quiet, face-saving way out, we would not disturb them. That same evening Nuckols announced that the U.N. Command “was willing to consider a news blackout if it meant speeding an agreement... Allied newsmen had brought up the news blackout question after persistent hints by Communist correspondents at Panmunjom that such a course might speed up the talks...”

A few days later, the Americans formally proposed secret or “executive” sessions on Item Four. This was agreed by the Korean-Chinese staff officers and a news blackout went into effect. For the

first few days of the executive sessions, although secrecy was scrupulously maintained by the press on the Korean-Chinese side, it was violated by Nuckols. Only after a warning in the conference tent that the news blackout would be dropped in the event of further violations by Nuckols, did the sessions become really secret.

What transpired in these secret sessions reached the highlight of American perfidy during the talks. By slippery double-dealing, American staff officers deliberately laid the foundation to prolong indefinitely the talks or even wreck them completely. A few quotations from the minutes of the secret sessions will serve to document these charges. The secret sessions commenced on March 25. It was quickly made clear to the Americans that the Korean-Chinese side would not insist on the repatriation of members of the Korean People's Army whose homes were in South Korea and who wished to return to their homes. Equally they would not insist on the repatriation of the 37,000 who the Americans originally classified as P.O.W.s but later re-classified as South Korean civilians mistakenly captured during the heat of battle. A big forward step was thus taken to break the deadlock. They then proposed acceptance of the principle of full repatriation, including in it the round figures of prisoners to be actually exchanged – that is, 11,000 on the one hand and 132,000 on the other. Hickman for the Americans, demurred and said the figures “may not be exact after certain adjustments had been made.” Pressed to define what adjustments he had in mind, Hickman replied at the March 25 session. “The only element I can think of is persons taken in custody since the effective date of the previous lists submitted by both sides. One other possibility would be wherein there were duplications discovered subsequent to the submission of our December 18 list. To explain that a bit further, we have had instances of P.O.W.s whom we have captured from your side who at one time gave one name and later on gave a different name, so that such individuals were processed two times. By process I mean the preparation of the required notifications form which our side formed to send to Geneva...”

The only alteration in the P.O.W. lists according to this statement was the addition of those captured since December 18, 1951, and the deletion of certain names which had been duplicated. Hickman concluded this statement by saying, “Obviously final agreement to this concept would be contingent upon the acceptability of the revised lists to both sides.” In a supplementary statement made

on the same day, Hickman was even more explicit as to what he had in mind. "We seek to ensure the return to our side of all the captured persons of our side and to ensure the return to you of all captured personnel held by us except these released because they originally resided in the area of our side. In this latter connection the figure 132,474 set forth in your principle of the 21st March does not fully reflect all pertinent factors. This figure included approximately 16,000 persons who are residents of the area of our side. Therefore it should be reduced by this number... Once the numerical adjustments are agreed to, it would be desirable to revise the lists of P.O.W.s previously submitted to reflect such adjustments, as well as deaths, escapes and so forth. On the basis of these revised lists there should be no trouble in agreeing upon a principle of repatriating all P.O.W.s in the custody of each side at the time the Armistice agreement is signed. Is not this concept of revised lists essentially the idea your side had in mind in the last sentence of your March 21 proposal?"

Discussions continued for several days mainly because the Korean-Chinese side did not want to accept the figure of 16,000 as the number of K.P.A. men whose homes were in the South. They wished to include in the principle the figure of 132,000 with the proviso that all those who had their homes in the South need not be repatriated. This figure as the Americans repeatedly stated could not be accurately determined as there had been no check made. On April 1, however, Hickman repeated that the figure was around 16,000. "We indicated at the beginning of our executive sessions," he stated, "that we considered that 132,000 failed to take into consideration all pertinent factors and therefore would be likely to be too high for an exact figure. We indicated that possibly 116,000 would more nearly indicate the magnitude of the exchange, but we could not say this number would reflect all considerations." The inference was clear – by stating 132,000 "was likely to be too high" that the final figure would be between 116,000 and 132,000. Hickman then cunningly suggested that no figures at all be included in the agreed principle, but that the lists be checked to arrive at exact figures. He then suggested that both sides should check their lists on the basis of deaths, escapes, newly captured personnel and duplication and that the sessions recess until the new lists were prepared. He proposed a draft principle which provided that both sides "shall release and repatriate all prisoners of war held in custody at the time

the Armistice is signed and becomes effective. The release and repatriation of such persons shall be effected on the basis of lists which shall be checked by, and be mutually acceptable to both sides prior to the signing of the Armistice Agreement.”

Hickman then added two understandings to this proposal providing firstly that P.O.W.s and civilian internees need not be repatriated if they wished to remain in the area of their original residence, and secondly, that all P.O.W.s should be repatriated except those who could not be repatriated “without the application of force.” The draft principle and the first understanding were accepted by the Korean-Chinese side, the second understanding was rejected in toto at the April 1 session. Both sides on April 4 agreed to a recess while the lists were checked.

It is important to note that in the entire records of these secret sessions, there was no mention of “screening” prisoners to see if they wanted to return or not. All that was contemplated was purely office-work of checking records, establishing residential qualifications and amending the lists on the basis of changes since the original lists were exchanged on December 18.

On April 18, the Americans announced they were ready with their lists and the following day the staff officers met. The Korean-Chinese produced the figure of 12,000 P.O.W.s to be exchanged, an increase of about 1,000. In return Hickman produced the figure of 70,000 of which only 63,000 were from the 132,000, the other 7,000 were taken from the 37,000 civilian internees. Hickman’s explanation for this scandalous piece of duplicity was that the remaining 70,000 Korean and Chinese P.O.W.s including 15,000 of the 20,000 Chinese would forcibly resist returning home. He pretended that during the two weeks recess, teams had questioned every prisoner individually if he would forcibly resist repatriation. This deliberate truce-wrecking device kept the talks deadlocked for six months until the Americans broke them off on October 8, 1952. During these six months they attempted by the torture and massacre of thousands of P.O.W.s to justify their figures.

On April 25, the Korean-Chinese side, after giving Hickman 24 hours’ warning, and despite American reluctance to bring the talks out into the open, ended the secret sessions and exposed the whole story to the world. The disclosure of what had taken place was an acute embarrassment to the Americans and threw them into a panic from Munsan to Washington. Hickman first demanded an indefinite

recess. On the 26th, Admiral Joy requested a plenary session for the following day and this was agreed. On the 27th staff officers and correspondents were at Panmunjom and an hour before the meeting was due to start, Joy cancelled it. The plenary session took place the following day at which Joy proposed the famous “package deal” to withdraw the U.S. demand for restrictions on airfield construction in exchange for withdrawal of the nomination of the Soviet Union as a neutral power, providing the Korean-Chinese side accepted the figure of only 70,000 P.O.W.s to be repatriated. Obviously this was a solution which could never be accepted with honour by a sovereign nation. The American aim of total deadlock was achieved.

Chapter 16

THE AGONY OF KOJE

On May 9, 1952, while the Americans were mouthing their humanitarian motives for retaining over 62,000 Korean and Chinese prisoners-of-war, General Mark Clark, who had replaced Ridgway in Tokyo, announced that the U.S. Commandant of Prison Camps, Brigadier-General Frank Dodd, had been taken into custody by prisoners of war on Kojé Island, two days previously.

The next news came from Dodd himself after he was released on May 10. He stated that he had been treated in "a courteous, respectful and dignified manner." Ridgway had ordered Van Fleet to use what measures he thought fit to secure Dodd's release. Van Fleet consigned the task to Brigadier-General Charles Colson, named as Dodd's replacement after the latter's capture. Van Fleet visited Kojé while the negotiations for Dodd's release were under way, and said he fully supported the measures being taken by Colson.

Two days after Dodd's release news trickled through to the outside world as to what had happened, although Dodd and Colson were at first rigorously excluded from contact with the press. The Korean P.O.W.s had presented a series of demands to Dodd, some of which Colson had promised would be fulfilled if Dodd were released unharmed. The prisoners' demands and the concessions agreed to in writing by Colson suggested a grisly picture of what was going on on Kojé. The demands were :

(1) Immediate ceasing barbarous behaviour, insults, tortures, forcible protest with blood writing threatening, confining, mass murdering, gun and machine-gun shooting, using poison gas, germ weapons experiments by your command. You should guarantee P.O.W.s' human rights and individual life with the base on international law.

(2) Immediate stopping the so-called illegal and unreasonable voluntary repatriation of North Korean People's Army and Chinese People's Volunteers P.O.W.s.

(3) Immediate ceasing the forcible investigation (screening) with thousands of war prisoners of the N.K.P.A. and C.P.V. being rearmed and harried into slavery, permanently and illegally.

(4) Immediate recognition of the war prisoners' representative group consisting of N.K.P.A. and C.P.V. and close co-operation to

it by your command. This representative group will turn in Brig.-Gen. Dodd on your hand after we receive the satisfactory written declaration to resolve the above items by your Command. We will await for your warm and sincere answer. Prisoner Of War representatives of the N.K.P.A. and C.P.V.

The roughness of the English phraseology – and there could have been few English scholars among the P.O.W.s – could not conceal the monstrous situation which must have existed in the camps and which prompted the prisoners to take such drastic measures. The reaction of Dodd and the reply of Colson confirmed this. Dodd, according to a Reuter report of May 12, said that he talked things over with the P.O.W. representatives on May 8 and 9 and *then had assisted the Communists in preparation of their demands.* (This also spiked the U.N. Command story issued later, that the demands had been drafted by the Korean-Chinese delegation and smuggled into the camp. The delegation personnel could have mustered up better English phraseology, as American delegates knew to their cost.)

Colson in his written reply to the P.O.W. representatives promised an end to “forcible screening and rearming of prisoners.” He admitted that there had been many instances of bloodshed in which “many prisoners of war have been killed and wounded by U.N. forces” and gave an assurance that this would stop and that prisoners could “expect humane treatment in the future” and that he, as camp commandant would hold himself responsible for any further violence and bloodshed. He agreed that the P.O.W.s could set up their own organisation to deal with the camp authorities, but said the question of voluntary repatriation was one outside his authority as this was under discussion at Panmunjom.

The disclosures of these concessions, the admissions that prisoners were still being forcibly screened, that they had been rearmed and drafted into the armed forces produced a world-wide sensation. It confirmed to the hilt the charges of atrocities made from time to time by the Korean-Chinese delegates at Panmunjom. The situation disclosed by these exchanges was one that Washington had to try and cover up. Dodd and Colson were both removed from their posts and degraded to the rank of colonels. General Mark Clark – to his own shame and American dishonour – repudiated the agreement which Colson as camp commandant had made, and blood continued to flow at Kojedo.

The full story of what preceded the detention of Dodd can only be told when the P.O.W.s themselves are free to relate all that happened on this ghastly death island. But a great deal of information is available from P.O.W.s who were impressed by the Americans as secret agents, were air-dropped behind the North Korean lines, and either gave themselves up or were captured. I have interviewed a number of these agents. They were captured by the Americans at different times, allotted to different units in the P.O.W. compounds, were parachuted into North Korea at different dates and interviewed by myself and others at such times and places which precluded any collusion between them in telling their stories. The fragments which each provided fit perfectly into the mosaic which one could picture from other sources, including western press agencies and the bloody scenes which preceded and followed the detention and release of Dodd.

The story of Chang Wen-yung is a typical one – except for its dramatic ending and confirmation from American sources of at least one part of his story. Chang Wen-yung was a former Kuomintang non-commissioned officer from Szechuan province. When the call went out for Volunteers for Korea, he, like thousands of other former rank-and-file members of the Kuomintang, volunteered. The overwhelming majority did so to serve their country, but a handful were probably infiltrated as conscious secret agents for the Kuomintang and Americans. Chang became a radio operator at a divisional headquarters, and during the bitterly fought 5th campaign he was wounded and captured on the western front. He was interrogated immediately as to the location and strength of his unit, its equipment and other routine military matters. At first, he said, he refused to talk, but after a clubbing with rifle butts he told enough to satisfy his interrogators. He was then sent to a railway siding near Seoul and from there herded into a closed, steel truck with other C.P.V. and K.P.A. prisoners – including some women – and sent to Pusan.

At Pusan there were two compounds. No. 11, to which Chang and all newly arrived prisoners were sent, and No. 12 for Koreans, Chinese and women prisoners. After prisoners were registered, mainly for the purpose of finding out whether they were members of the Communist Party, the Youth League or former Kuomintang members, their belongings were confiscated and they were issued with uniforms each of which bore a number. Henceforth they were known by their numbers only. They were herded into tents, sur-

rounded by barbed wire and heavily guarded. They were forbidden to talk to other prisoners in the tent and could leave the tents only if the guard agreed they could go to the latrine – or they were taken away for questioning. Compound 11 was entirely under American control, with none but American staff. Food was a bowl of rice, maize or kaoliang thrice daily with a watery vegetable soup once daily.

There were two organisations represented at the camp. The C.I.C. (notorious Counter-Intelligence Corps modelled on Hitler's Gestapo), and G2, or military intelligence. All prisoners were questioned by both organisations. G2, according to Chang, was staffed only by Americans with some Chinese and Korean interpreters. Questions were all related to the prisoner's knowledge of China. Chang Wen-yung was expected to name leading Communists and government cadres in his own district, describe and sketch any military installations he knew of, such as airfields or barracks as well as railway stations, bridges and tunnels and answer other questions related to military intelligence. Chang freely admitted that he gave quite a lot of information, as he did not want to be beaten up as other prisoners were, in front of his eyes. C.I.C. was staffed mainly with Rhee and Kuomintang agents with a few Americans at the top, according to Chang. Their questions were directed at finding out the political backgrounds of the prisoners, particularly with a view to locating former Kuomintang members and evaluating them according to length of membership and status in the party. On this basis, the former Kuomintang members were allotted correspondingly responsible positions in the main compounds on Kojé. Chang did not know very much about the neighbouring Compound 12 except that the prisoners worked very hard, loading and unloading military equipment at the Pusan wharves – in flagrant violation of the Geneva Convention which forbids such work.

After two weeks in Compound 11, Chang and the rest of the prisoners were sent to Kojé where the Chinese were distributed between Compounds 72 and 86. Chang was allotted to Battalion 4, Compound 72. Each of the compounds was surrounded by two rows of high, barbed wire entanglements. Beyond the entanglements were frequently spaced pill-boxes with mounted 169 machine guns pointing towards the compounds. Armoured cars patrolled outside the compounds, guards with dogs patrolled between the rows of barbed wire. At night from time to time giant searchlights swept the

compounds, and to approach the barbed wire at any time meant grave risks of being shot. Prisoners were huddled 50 or 60 at a time into tents, from which they were allowed out only with the guards' permission to visit the latrines. Talking among prisoners meant the risk of being taken out and flogged at any time for "suspected resistance." Chang revealed very little of what he did at Compound 72, but probably as a former Kuomintang member, he was given a responsible post.

On December 13, 1951, Chang and four other P.O.W.s were ordered by the Kuomintang chief of the compound – Wang Suen-tsin – to appear with their baggage at compound headquarters. No reason was given. They were not permitted to say goodbye to their comrades. An American officer awaited them at headquarters and after warning them not to talk to each other, he took them by car to the wharves and thence by boat to Pusan. At Pusan they boarded a transport plane. It was only two days after they disembarked from the plane that they learned they were in a training-school for American secret agents, in Tokyo. According to Chang, they were warned they would be killed if they refused the training or if they tried to escape. After two months' training, they were registered by a Japanese-American instructor as "intelligence personnel" of the United Nations forces. They were taken back to Korea and on February 19, at about 3 a.m., Chang Wen-yung and five other P.O.W.s, were put aboard a C46 transport plane to be dropped behind the lines in Kok-san county, North Korea. They were warned if they did not report back to the South within a specified time, they would be denounced over the radio as prisoners who had voluntarily entered the American intelligence service, their past records would be revealed, so the Communists would be sure to kill them. They were clad in the uniforms of the Chinese People's Volunteers. The next part of the story belongs to Jump-master Sergeant David T. Harrison, of the U.S. Air Force.

Harrison said he had taken part in 14 agent-dropping missions over North Korea. In every case, he said, the agents seemed reluctant. In the case of his flight on February 19, the six agents were brought to the plane in a truck with a guard with a pistol in his hand. There had been cases of agents jumping from the trucks and escaping, Harrison said. His job was to line the agents up as they approached the dropping area, attach the parachute ripcords to a line inside the plane and ensure that they jumped at the right moment.

The agents were carrying rifles, grenades, and long cloth bags filled with rice. They were to have carried pigeons, Harrison said, and he had provided rubber bags for them, but they had not arrived at take-off time. The first four agents were dropped on schedule. "I notice one of the last two was real short," Harrison said, "so I intended to send him first so the bigger one could push him out if he hesitated to jump. But he made such a fuss that I let the big one jump first. Then the second one jumped too, but as he went out the door, he threw a hand grenade back into the plane."

The small agent was none other than Chang Wen-yung. The grenade exploded, wrecked the rudder control of the plane, and shortly afterwards it crashed. Harrison and some other crew members parachuted to safety. Harrison's story after that was similar to many others. He hid for 24 hours and then went to a Korean house and asked for food and a guide. He was given food and while he was resting, one of the Koreans slipped away and brought a detachment of Volunteers to take him into custody. Chang Wen-yung also landed safely and went to the nearest Volunteer unit and gave himself up, telling of how he had wrecked a plane with his grenade. Chang said he had been sickened to death by Kuomintang and American methods and planned to take his revenge at the first chance.

The final touch to the Chang Wen-yung story was when General Nam Il handed General Harrison a list of Chinese prisoners whose names had disappeared from the December 18 lists. Nam Il asked for an accounting of what had happened. Harrison later gave a list of part of the names as having "escaped." Included in the names of "escapees" was that of Chang Wen-yung and four other agents who had been parachuted into North Korea and gave themselves up to the Volunteers. Harrison was stonily silent for months on this question. Each time Nam Il pressed for an explanation, Harrison refused to answer. Compound 72 was divided into six battalions of which one was composed of officers. The compound was controlled by an American and two Kuomintang officers, battalions also, but companies, platoons and squads were commanded by former Kuomintang "trusties" appointed by C.I.C. At first, there was no attempt to divide the prisoners into pro and anti-Communist categories. Instead the Kuomintang agents organised various feudal type "brotherhoods" on the pattern of former Chinese secret societies. Within these "brotherhoods" Kuomintang agents worked to

find out the most militant Communists, Communists who had not declared themselves as such and officers who had hidden their status to stay with their troops. The militants were then transferred to the notorious Compound 71, of which more later, where the “die-hard Communists” from Korean and Chinese compounds were confined.

Up till the time the cease-fire talks started in July, 1951, political work on Koje was done by the American C.I.C. with the aid of a few Kuomintang agents and former Kuomintang members turned traitor. The position quickly changed once the talks started.

By August over 100 Kuomintang “instructors” had arrived from Taiwan and they started carrying out a step-by-step campaign to force Chinese prisoners to go to Taiwan. Their first step was to set up a Kuomintang headquarters on Koje with a branch in each compound. Former K.M.T. party members had to register and they were then registered with the K.M.T. Embassy in Pusan. They also helped the C.I.C. to set-up a training school for secret agents. The next step was to force all compound inmates to join the “Oppose Communism, Resist Russia” organisation. The K.M.T. official in charge at Compound 72 was Chang Hsing-tang, a former Chiang Kai-shek magistrate assisted by other officials from Chiang’s Ministries of Defence and Air.

Refusal to join the “Oppose Communism” organisation required considerable heroism. Continued resistance meant being transferred to Compound 71. What exactly happened in 71 is not yet known as no prisoner ever returned from there to other compounds. But because of the cries and shootings that were heard from there, the back-breaking work the prisoners were daily engaged in, their hollow cheeks, and often bruised and bleeding faces, it became known among the prisoners as the torture compound. To be cast into 71 was regarded as the worst fate that could befall a prisoner.

At first membership of the “Oppose Communism” organisation was also secret. Members were impressed into it on the understanding that their names would never be revealed but membership entitled one to extra privileges. At first only former Kuomintang members joined. By September tremendous pressure was being put on all compound inmates to join. It became an open organisation and the names of those already enrolled were announced. The slogans used to impress members reflect the conditions in the camp. “Join the Oppose Communism; Resist Russia Organisation for Better Food,”

“End Beating by Joining, etc...” Even in the days when it was still a secret society a refusal to accept an invitation to join meant being sent to C.I.C. headquarters for cross-examination. And one captured air-dropped agent, Wang Chi, who acted as secretary to the K.M.T. organisation in Battalion 4, Compound 72, testified that by November, 1951, 900 prisoners from 4 Battalion were sent for cross-examination and only 500 returned. He believed that at least 300 of the others were secretly put to death and the remainder transferred to 71. When the maximum number had been enrolled into the Oppose Communism, Resist Russia organisation, the stage was set for the next step – mass tattooing of anti-Communist slogans.

At first the Kuomintang “instructors” from Taiwan showed their own tattoo marks. (All Kuomintang troops on Taiwan are tattooed with anti-Communist slogans, a device introduced by Chiang Kai-shek during the Civil War to try and prevent his troops deserting to the People’s Liberation Army.) Then the handful of former Kuomintang members who had turned traitor allowed themselves to be tattooed. The rest steadfastly refused. By the end of October, as the talks got under way again, the Kuomintang headquarters issued instructions that prisoners, in all compounds should be tattooed as quickly as possible. Time-limits were set by which every P.O.W. was to be tattooed in English and Chinese. Whole battalions were called out at midnight or the small hours of the morning. Those who refused were beaten unconscious and tattooed while they lay on the ground. Others gave in at the sight of their comrades being beaten. Especially stubborn cases were thrown into Compound 71.

Every imaginable pressure was brought to bear to push through the tattooing. In some cases, those who had been tattooed were formed into a special company. Those who refused were then threatened with being transferred to the tattooed company where they would be killed if they were the only ones not similarly marked. If a person steadfastly refused then of course he would be branded as a “die-hard Communist” and life would not be worth living.

After the maximum number had been tattooed the campaign was carried a step further by the organisation of blood petitions, professing their willingness to fight against Communism.

When the tattooing and blood petition campaigns were completed the Kuomintang “instructors” came out into the open and taunted the P.O.W.s with the fact that now they could never go

home. An intensive campaign was started in the political classes, urging the prisoners to demand to return to Taiwan. Posters were put up all over the camps telling the prisoners that to return to the mainland with anti-Communist tattoo marks and after having signed the petitions which had been handed in to the delegates at Panmunjom together with the names of those who had signed meant certain death. One poster portrayed a prisoner displaying his tattooed arm with the question, "What should I do now?" and the answer, "Your only hope is in Taiwan." Leaflets were distributed to the prisoners harping on the same theme. Wherever they looked, wherever they went, they were compelled to see and hear demands that they renounce their motherland and go to Taiwan.

After the hopeless nature of their plight was allowed to sink in for a few weeks, the final step of forced screening was started. This coincided with the beginning of the discussions on the P.O.W. issue at Panmunjom. In late November, in Compound 86, for example, two tables were set up, each attended by Kuomintang officials from Taiwan, surrounded by guards with wooden clubs. Each prisoner was brought individually to the table and asked: "Do you wish to return to the mainland or go to Taiwan?" If the prisoner said he preferred to go to the mainland, he was asked, while the guards twirled their clubs, "Why do you want to go to the mainland? Are you still loyal to the Communists?" If he still insisted, he was handed over to the guards, put in a special battalion where all the members were on a starvation diet, forced to perform the most backbreaking work, and mercilessly beaten up at every pretext. They would be constantly called in for questioning as to whether they had not changed their minds.

This screening process carried out in November and December, and testified to by every secret agent, proves once again that Joy, Libby and Hickman were arrant liars. They repeatedly stated in the conference tent that the only "screening" of prisoners took place during the secret staff officers' sessions in April, 1952.

The only choice given these prisoners under the clubs and bayonets of American and Kuomintang guards was to agree to go to Taiwan or to announce that they were "die-hard" Communists and be condemned to a life of torture.

There is a gap in the picture of Kojé island between December and the detention of Camp Commandant Dodd, because most of the Chinese agents were removed from Kojé during November and De-

ember, and taken to the espionage-training centres in Taegu or Tokyo. But we do know from figures announced by the Americans themselves that during that period they killed 120 and wounded 219 prisoners for resisting the indignities of “screening.” The dry figures and accounts of these massacres confirm to the hilt the accounts given by the secret agents cited above – and which tell only a fraction of the story –as they deal only with conditions in the Chinese compounds. We know that conditions were at least as bad and probably worse in the Korean compounds. A tiny corner of the veil of secrecy has been lifted here also by air-dropped Chinese agents.

In Compound 61 several agents reported that K.P.A. prisoners held a demonstration in January, 1952, displaying banners demanding repatriation and singing the Kim Il-sung song. U.S. and puppet troops surrounded the compound with armoured cars and Chinese prisoners heard machine-gun fire for half an hour mingled with fragments of songs and cries of wounded. Later a work detail was sent in from Compound 72 and buried 170 prisoners. The number of wounded could not be estimated as they were removed when the work detail arrived. Ten Ching-min, P.O.W. No. 70999 – one who Harrison reported had “escaped” and who was parachuted into North Korea – testified that he was transferred to Pusan for interrogation in August, 1951. The compound where he was kept was separated by barbed wire from a Korean compound. On August 15, prisoners started to celebrate Korean Liberation Day with songs and folk dances. U.S. and Rhee troops rushed to the spot and opened fire without warning. The men prisoners tried to shield the women with their bodies and all prisoners kept singing till the firing ceased. According to Ten Ching-min seven men and 11 women were killed and over 40 wounded.

(A grimly humorous episode occurred as a result of Ten Ching-min’s revelation of this incident. It so happened the story was released over Peking radio in August, 1952. Correspondents in Tokyo who monitored the story rushed to Headquarters and asked for details of the shooting on August 15. A headquarters spokesman thumbed through the files and said, “We had no shootings on the 15th. We had one on the 14th, one on the 11th...” and started to give details of incidents not revealed till that time. The Peking story, of course, was referring to a shooting in August, 1951, and the press unwittingly prised out of Tokyo stories of incidents in August, 1952, which otherwise would have remained hidden in the files.)

This is a brief and incomplete sketch of the conditions in the camps which led to the desperate act of capturing the Camp Commandant Dodd. It is the explanation for Dodd's action in helping the prisoners formulate their demands and for Colson's compliance with those demands. Dodd and Colson knew only too well what was going on – and it seems possible they were even a little ashamed of it. Small wonder that Colson set his signature to the admission that “many prisoners of war have been killed and wounded by U.N. forces.”

Against this background the Dodd-Colson incident assumes its proper perspective as a heroic action by prisoners of war, bereft of any other means of making their pitiful plight known to the outside world. And the tragic farce of American claims that 50% of Korean and Chinese prisoners did not want to return home is also seen in its right perspective. A part of the ferocious reprisals carried out against the P.O.W.s for the Dodd-Colson incident has already been published. But it is worthwhile refreshing the reader's memory about what was published at the time as well as adding details which have never been published in the western press. Dodd and Colson were replaced by Brigadier-General “Bull” Boatner. When he was appointed Commander of Koje, Boatner boasted that he would use “maximum force” to bring the prisoners “into line.”

During the early stages of his preparations for the massacre, correspondents were kept away from Koje island. A few who did get ashore there – like Zalberg of Reuters – were immediately escorted off the island until the “Bull” had cleared the decks for action. The correspondents reported that the regime seemed “unnecessarily harsh.”

Part of what happened during those weeks of secrecy was related in a letter signed by 6,223 Korean prisoners-of-war which was smuggled out of Koje on May 23 and passed on by partisans to Pyongyang. It was published by the Korean Central News Agency and broadcast over Pyongyang radio on June 8-two days before the main publicised massacre took place. Readers may think that this account is from biased sources – but do not the facts tally with the story presented later by sources equally biased in the opposite direction? Some extracts from this document – as tragic and authentic as any of the documents smuggled out of the Hitler extermination camps – are as follows:

“Dear Comrades-in-arms and brothers,

“...Since the American prisoner of war Camp Commandant Boatner, executioner and hangman came to Kojé island, we are facing unprecedented danger of our lives... Death is coming nearer to us every moment.” (Prophetic words.) “Not a day, not a night but the sacrifice of some of our comrades occurs. The American guards, armed to the teeth, are repeatedly committing acts of violence and barbarity against our comrades. They drag them out and kill them either in public or secret with machine guns or carbines. They drive our comrades by the thousand into gas chambers and torture chambers. Many patriots are loaded into iron-barred cages or police cars and taken to the seashore where they are shot and their corpses cast into the sea...” Here are some instances: “On May 19 in P.O.W. Compound No. 66, the American devils resorted to the lowest trickery. They falsely announced that those P.O.W.s willing to return to North Korea should assemble before their own barracks by 7 p.m. ready to embark. Without exception all were willing to go home. While we were getting into line, shouting ‘Our Beloved Fatherland are you well,’ American troops opened fire with machine guns and using flamethrowers and even tanks, killed 127 of our comrades and wounded many more.

“On two successive days, May 20 and 21, in all divisions of the P.O.W. compounds, more than 1,000 of our comrades were summoned to the officer of the American military police and the P.O.W. Camp Commandant to be subjected to the so-called ‘voluntary repatriation’ questionings. 420 of our comrades have not returned till now, while more than 100 returned bleeding all over with fractured arms and dagger wounds in their breasts, with their backs, wrists and breasts branded with disgraceful characters. The 420 who have not returned may have been shot or sent to sea...

“On May 22 and 23 the American military police committed bloody slaughter in Compounds 62 and 23. Those killed in the slaughter were those who refused to go to the permanent pillboxes, the log and earth pillboxes and the ‘watch-towers.’ Eighty-eight comrades were killed and 39 were wounded with machine gun fire and hand grenades.

“On May 23 two American executioners in P.O.W. Compound 76 decapitated four patriots and exhibited their heads in public by hanging them on tree branches in order to intimidate the ‘disobedient’ ones. Just now, American torturers in Compound 16 made 18 of our comrades blind by applying electric current to them. At pre-

sent as we write this letter, May 24 is still to come. But we know that new forms of maltreatment, torture and persecution are awaiting us...

“The American murderers have exhausted every means of torture and violence. They have branded insulting words on the bodies of our comrades. They have beaten us with iron rods and leather whips. They have kicked us and set their dogs on us. In steam chambers they have suffocated our comrades to death. They have chopped off their heads and quartered them... Koje island is a living hell. It is no longer sea-water that washes the shores of this island but our tears and blood. We breathe no fresh air as the pungent stench of blood fills our nostrils in every corner of this island...

“The blood-stained chains of the American devils will never instil fear into us or make us submit. Our cause is righteous and we will fight to the end for human rights in general and the right to return to our homeland in particular. We will not hesitate to give our lives to this great and sacred cause...”

This is a noble document signed in blood from the prisoners' own veins. It bears the imprint of truth in every tragic line. That the firm resolve stated in the final paragraph was no vainglorious, empty boast was proven in the months that followed when the Americans themselves, by their announced deeds, stamped again with the mark of truth every one of the charges made by these prisoners. And the latter did not know the whole truth of the massacres even up to May 24, because they were isolated on Koje island. On May 20 it was officially announced that one prisoner had been killed and 85 wounded in a hospital compound at Pusan on the mainland. The first official account said the trouble was caused by a “fanatical handful of prisoners resisting proper medical treatment.” Following on this story that only a “tiny minority” of prisoners in a compound of 1,600 had caused the trouble, there was the usual mass of contradictory stories, as Clark's headquarters tried to cover up their embarrassment at having a shooting incident in a so-called “anti-Communist” compound. An Eighth Army statement quoted by Reuter on the 20th said: “...these agitators are part of a group of non-patients who ordinarily work as attendants at the hospital...” This was in complete contradiction to the first story which said they were patients “resisting medical treatment.” The Eighth Army statement continued: “...all prisoners in the compound were told to move into an open area to avoid possible injuries in any distur-

bances that might be created. Only three obeyed. The U.N. guard detail composed of combat-wise American infantrymen then moved in to enforce order..." A "tiny minority" now turned out to be 1,597 out of 1,600 prisoners – all previously announced as "anti-Communists." There were even more revealing details to follow.

The real story came in a Reuter despatch from Pusan two days later. "The camp authorities cut off prisoners' food supplies a week before the rioting at the big Pusan hospital two days ago, it was revealed during Van Fleet's visit here to-day. Officials said the prisoners had resisted *screening on the question of repatriation* and later opposed segregation of trouble-makers. On May 12, food was stopped and the prisoners were told they would eat when they obeyed orders..." Later it was announced that truck-loads of prisoners from the hospital compound were removed to Koje.

The prisoners who signed the letter on Koje on May 23 had every reason to express their forebodings as to future developments: "May 24th is still to come..."

Precisely on May 24, A.F.P. correspondent Charles June, after referring to the serenity of the island in the early morning, broken only by the singing of the prisoners, continued his despatch: "... slumberous guards high above hill-side ridges slowly began clicking their weapons in machine-gun tower emplacements and in flame-throwing tanks. Against this calmness of nature was contrasted the growing tension which filled this isolated island with a reign of terror... American garrison troops were busily engaged in strengthening barbed wire surrounding the compounds. In particular places they were stringing a third wall of wire on steel stanchions. Other troops were reinforcing protective metal sheets of night towers. Each house had more than two "heavy machine guns pointing constantly into the compounds..."

Throughout the last week in May and the first days of June, western news agencies reported almost daily killing and wounding of prisoners, while American reinforcements and troops from five other nations were transferred to the island for Boatner's "show-down".

Boatner had announced that he was going to split the prisoners up into smaller compounds in order forcibly to continue screening. This statement again caused embarrassment in Washington. It had been repeatedly stated in the conference tent and to the press that screening had been completed in April, when the figure of 70,000

prisoners wanting to go home had been reached. Correspondents demanded an explanation. Then came the astonishing revelation that at least 45,000 prisoners on Koje island had never even been put through the American farce of “screening.” They had objected so strongly to this indignity and had so unanimously demanded their full rights to repatriation that the Americans had not dared to proceed any further. Their figure of 70,000 was thus shown to be a complete fabrication without any basis even in the spurious methods used by the Americans in “screening.”

While this was announced American delegates at Panmunjom were daily repeating that only 70,000 prisoners wanted to go home and correspondents on Koje were writing that 80,000 “fanatical die-hard Communists” on Koje island were defying the authorities – a discrepancy of 10,000 on that one island which the western press conveniently overlooked.

Boatner ordered his troops to attack early in the morning of June 10, personally directing operations from a hill overlooking Compound 76. This was the sort of warfare that the demoralised, brutalised American troops and their depraved commanders could glory in. Machine guns, grenades, flame-throwers and flame-throwing tanks against prisoners armed at best with tent-poles and mainly with their fists. This was more to the troops’ liking than storming bunkers in North Korea’s endless “Heartbreak Ridges.” A Reuter eye-witness account gives some impression of the slaughter. “... North Korean prisoners answered with complete silence an ultimatum from Camp Commandant Boatner to transfer quickly to smaller compounds nearby. Tanks using flame-throwers then tore gaps in the barbed wire fence and troops hurled a barrage of tear gas and concussion grenades in an attempt to force prisoners out of buildings and slit trenches into the open. Reports reaching “Boatner’s headquarters on a nearby hill said the prisoners were holding out with improvised weapons. The troops advanced with flashing bayonets... Black smoke obscured the action as the prisoners fired their own buildings...” (One wonders how Reuter was able to determine whether the prisoners or American flame-throwers set fire to the buildings.) “As the roar and flash of concussion grenades continued, crowds of prisoners began racing forward with hands clasped behind their heads. Prisoners stumbling and gasping from tear gas were herded into groups of 150 in new cages, stripped of clothing and given new issues. Six thousand troops guarded all is-

land roads in the area, or were stationed around and inside the embattled compound...” (Boatner had concentrated over a division of troops altogether on Kojé.) A.P. reported in part “.... The paratroops had bullets in the rifle magazines but none in their chambers. Not a shot was fired. They charged with their bayonets and ripped the Reds to pieces as the Communists hid in trenches surrounding the wooden buildings. The prisoners locked themselves in wooden buildings. The paratroopers cut holes in the buildings with axes and tossed in tear gas and concussion grenades...” Official statements at first said that concussion grenades were not lethal weapons, but this was quickly shown to be a lie when A.P. reported that the only American soldier killed in the operation was killed because he had not thrown his concussion grenade far enough. After the slaughter was over it was officially announced that 24 prisoners were killed and 85 wounded. The actual figures as reported by the press agencies later gave the shocking total of 41 killed and 279 wounded.

A few days after the massacre the British Minister for Defence Viscount Alexander visited Kojé island. Reuter reported on June 16 that “Alexander asked to be shown the compounds where the deaths took place and wanted full details. General ‘Bull’ Boatner roaring with laughter stood on top of Communist trenches in the wrecked compound, describing the operation. Alexander grinned as Boatner said ‘It was a wonderful show. A wonderful operation.’ As Alexander stood and listened to Boatner, there was a continual chant in the background of nearby Communist prisoners defiantly singing songs...” It would appear that the Reuter correspondent was slightly disgusted by the Boatner-Alexander performance.

Alexander might have been impressed by the operation but public opinion in Britain and elsewhere in the western world was shocked by the ferocious display and the brutal gloating over the massacre of unarmed prisoners, innocent of everything but demanding their rights to be treated as human beings. Churchill had to face an angry barrage of questions in the House of Commons. Truman tried to get rid of some of the blood from his hands by inviting Sweden, Switzerland, India, Indonesia and Pakistan to send teams of military observers to Kojé to testify as to the innocence and humanitarianism of American behaviour. But white-washing such an obvious series of atrocities was too much even for these nations, normally friendly towards America. One by one, with the exception

of Pakistan, they coldly refused and administered one of the most stinging rebuffs Truman had ever suffered in his career as President.

Screenings started again on Kojé island. Somehow the Americans had to try and justify their previous figures. For the first and only time the screening was conducted with an enquiring and partly suspicious press on hand. After having screened for nearly a month about “80,000 fanatical diehard Communists” on Kojé, and using more than a full division of troops to enforce “screening” it would be difficult to fool the public that the majority of them were refusing repatriation.

At first agency reports stated that at least 50% of the prisoners were refusing to be repatriated, but the final figure announced was 78,000 from the 80,000 still demanding to be returned to North Korea. This was a magnificent proportion considering the brutal threats and tortures and the knowledge of the fate in store for them for still insisting on the rights. And this 78,000 did not include any Chinese.

This figure forced the Americans to do some more juggling with figures. On July 25 at Panmunjom, they produced a new figure of 83,000 demanding repatriation instead of the original 70,000. This was the minimum figure they could produce in view of the fact that 78,000 from Kojé had been reported by the press as demanding to be returned and American delegates had already given the figure of 5,000 Chinese wanting to return. But even this piece of adding-machine jugglery was incorrect. They had overlooked the fact that included in the original figure of 70,000 were 7,000 civilian internees – or so classified by the Americans. The minimum figure produced should therefore have been 90,000 made up of 78,000 K.P.A., 5,000 C.P.V. and 7,000 civilians. The figure after the Kojé “screening” showed 20,000 more K.P.A. prisoners wanting to go home than Hickman at first reported. This was asking the world to believe that in cases where the Americans screened, about 100% of the prisoners refused to go home and where they had been unable to screen – prior to June 1 – about 100% did want to go home!

There were only two actual cases to go by to judge the actual numbers of prisoners – who despite everything to which they had been subjected – were still demanding their rights to repatriation. The only “screening” carried out with the searchlight of publicity on it after the Kojé massacres produced a figure of slightly more than 2% of prisoners not wanting to be repatriated. The only other case we know of is that of the 1,600 prisoners classified by the Americans as

“anti- Communists” who would rather commit suicide than return home, 1,597 of them refused to have anything to do with “screening”. We do not even know what were the desires of the other three “obedient” ones. These are only two cases which received publicity. We do know that correspondents were rigidly prohibited from visiting any of the mainland camps where supposedly “anti-Communist” prisoners were held and the only reason the case of the Pusan hospital shooting was reported is that Pusan – because of the events on Koje – at that time was a large headquarters for correspondents and it was impossible to keep the incident quiet. The first report came from the press and not from an official announcement.

Of the figure of 2% who decided against repatriation on Koje we do not know what proportion were K.P.A. prisoners of South Korean origin who were entitled in any case to return to their homes. Even accepting an overall figure of 2% it is amazingly small considering the conditions on Koje with every prisoner demanding repatriation classified as a “die-hard Communist” and treated as such with all the known ferocity of the Kuomintang, Rhee and American guards.

The killings and woundings took place throughout the months which followed these forcible screenings. They took place on Koje as well as in the so-called “anti-Communist” compounds on the mainland. The announced figure of killed and wounded from February 18 until August was 919. By the end of October the total of casualties officially announced was 1,600, an average of six killed and wounded every day for over eight months. But from completely authenticated reports it is known that the actual figure is *many thousands* higher than announced by the American authorities!

While bloody scenes were being enacted daily in the camps on Koje and the mainland, I made a tour of camps in which United Nations prisoners were held in North Korea. The first camp I visited was Camp No. 1, where the majority of the British prisoners are held – most of a battalion of Gloucesters – together with about 1,000 Americans. They had just completed a three days’ sports meet, climaxed by a Grand Finale and prize-presenting ceremony on May 1. Their sports meet was a “Little Olympia” and included every type of track and field event – with the exception of pole-vaulting, which might have caused injuries – as well as basketball, volleyball and football. The meet started with an Olympic parade of athletes headed by a relay-runner with the traditional flaming torch.

An announcer with field telephone on the sports-ground broadcast results and times of the events – and it was typical of the fitness of the prisoners that many of the times were well up to international standards. Athletes were massaged as soon as they completed events, and Chinese Red Cross personnel attended to any sprains or abrasions. The events were photographed by an old-hand Olympic photographer, Frank Noel, who told me that, outside Olympic meets, he had never attended a better organised sports meeting. Participants were provided with athletic shorts and singlets with different coloured jerseys for the football teams. At the conclusion, prizes of cigarettes, soaps, socks and other gifts presented by the Chinese Volunteers, were awarded and the company with the highest number of points was presented with a huge, imitation gold Olympic cup, made of wood.

During a period of many weeks I visited every camp in which United Nations prisoners were held. One can only describe the atmosphere as that of holiday resorts. The first day I visited Camp No. 5 where American, British and all the “minority” prisoners are held, including Turks, Puerto Ricans, French and others from a dozen nations, music was being broadcast through the loudspeakers. I passed a group of shining Negroes playing basketball, Turks wrestling in a sand-pit, British troops exercising on the horizontal bars, Americans lounging about reading, some playing volleyball, a group of Puerto Ricans cleaning a troughful of fish which they had caught themselves earlier in the day. Further along where the camp dipped down on to the shore of a calm lake formed by the damming of the Yalu, the bulk of the prisoners were stretched out 180 sun-bathing on the rocks, swimming in the crystal clear water or tending their fishing lines. From a height overlooking the camp, with a dozen teams engaged in various sports and ball games, the camp resembled nothing but a summer camp for youth. The almost universal expression of opinion I heard from P.O.W.s of every nationality was, “We are not treated as enemies. We are treated as guests.” The overwhelming majority of them were fit, fat and brown – exactly as portrayed in the Frank Noel photographs.

Food conditions were excellent. Apart from fish – which they caught themselves where the camps were on the river or lakeside and for which they were given money to purchase otherwise – and eggs, prisoners received three ounces of meat daily in summer, six in winter – but prisoners assured me the ration was often exceeded,

and in Camp 5, they told me the winter ration was nearer 12 ounces a day.

Special religious and racial needs were scrupulously taken into account. The Turks as Moslems had their separate kitchen and were issued with beef or chicken when the others had pork. Catholics had fish on Fridays. The Volunteers helped prisoners build chapels where Sunday services were regularly held by those who wished to attend. National holidays such as American Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, New Year's Day, and the Muslim Ramadhan were celebrated usually with three days of special food – and at times wine and beer – and the same applied to Chinese holidays.

Personal belongings were not confiscated. Prisoners were issued with a brand new uniform each summer and winter, and allowed to keep their previous issues, warm quilted uniforms and padded boots for winter – as well as an eiderdown quilt, thin cotton uniforms for summer, with canvas shoes. Prisoners were free to wear their own uniforms or the camp issue, as they pleased. They received regular rations of soap, tooth-paste, brushes and towels: as well as a weekly sugar ration and as much tobacco as kept even heavy smokers well supplied. Sheets of tissue paper were provided for cigarette smokers – and in some camps pipes for those that preferred them. I never saw a single strand of barbed wire at any camp, nor one machine-gun post. Sentries were posted in inconspicuous positions and I did not hear of any cases of a sentry firing his rifle – even in the rare escape attempts. Prisoners were not slow in raising any real or fancied complaints with me, and I would certainly have been informed if there had been any shootings. Prisoners did go out of their way to tell me of the enormous patience of the guards – at times in the face of serious provocations.

The only work prisoners did was for their daily needs and even in these tasks the camp guards usually lent a hand. They were expected to keep their quarters clean, unload ration trucks, haul their own wood and water for heating, cooking and washing. They laid down their own volley and basketball courts, carried out periodic sanitation campaigns. In Camp 1 where prisoners had to walk to nearby hills to cut wood, work details fell about once weekly for each prisoner – but the outings were keenly enjoyed. At Camp 5 where the wood came from China by water to the very shore of the camp, work details fell even less frequently. When it comes to presenting the picture in the western press however, or by Acheson at

the United Nations, the treatment of United Nations prisoners becomes “atrocities” while the treatment of Korean and Chinese prisoners on Koje is “the highest expression of humanitarianism.” Words have ceased to lose their meaning when facts which are available to the whole world for judgment can be so monstrously distorted, when white can be termed black, night termed day, and wholesale massacres of unarmed prisoners termed humanitarianism.

One of the outstanding expressions of this American militarist conception of “humanitarianism” occurred on October 1, the anniversary of the founding of the Chinese People’s Republic, when American troops opened fire on singing and dancing Chinese, killing and wounding 165, of whom 55 were killed. Once again the American Command fell into a mass of contradictions in trying to explain away this atrocity. American and British news agencies sent urgent queries to their correspondents asking who had given the order to fire, why only American troops were involved, what were the actual facts?

One of the first reports was from United Press correspondent, Wendell Merick, in a despatch from Cheju island, where the massacre took place. His version. “American soldiers rushed into the compound to quell a demonstration celebrating the third anniversary of the Communist regime in China. Two Americans were slightly injured. A prison command spokesman said most of the dead were killed by rifles and carbines but that many died of bayonet wounds.”

The story of the shooting down of peaceful demonstrators did not seem to be in line with the current spate of oratory about “humanitarianism,” so the story was quickly changed to one that the Chinese had planned a “mass break-out” which only energetic action by U.S. troops had prevented. The Reuter account stressed the defensive role of the Chinese prisoners. “The camp, built on a narrow plain between mountains and the sea appeared to have been specially prepared by the Communists for such an attack. In the compound where the fighting took place, the Chinese had been constructing winter quarters to take the place of the huts where they have to live. The wall had only been built up to the waist, and was in an excellent position for the communist defenders to make fortifications during the attack...” Reuter admits the prisoners were expecting such an attack. Can anyone be expected to believe that prisoners planning a mass break-out would first of all go to the trouble of wiring themselves in, digging protective ditches, and building

protective walls. “They had to be flushed out from behind walls and out of buildings and trenches” said the U.P. report.

During October, the Americans announced 490 prisoners killed and wounded – mainly for “demonstrating.”

At the time this is being written, the agony of Kojedo and other camps continues. Scarcely a day passes without more Korean and Chinese martyrs falling victims to American bullets and bayonets. In their crimes against military prisoners, considering the numbers involved, the Americans have far exceeded the atrocities carried out by the Nazis. Scores of Nazi officials were justly executed for crimes which have daily been committed in Korea on the orders of Generals MacArthur, Ridgway and Mark Clark, sanctioned and condoned by Acheson and Truman. These atrocities have all been committed in the name of “humanitarianism” under the flag of the United Nations with the avowed aim of enforcing “voluntary repatriation.”

Germany had an ancient civilisation, a tradition of humanism; its poets, philosophers, musicians played a dominant role in world civilisation for centuries. The German people were known as a cultivated, civilised and kindly race. If Nazi monsters could spring from such an environment, how much easier it is for militarist, fascist monsters to spring from the American environment with its tradition of violence, of judicial murders, of gang warfare, race riots and lynching parties, with its emphasis on brutality in literature, the films, strip cartoons and television. Atrocities committed by American troops in Korea and organised atrocities ordered by high-ranking American officers on Kojedo cannot be separated from the modern American environment which is a perfect breeding-ground for violence.

Chapter 17

THE MICROBE WAR

When the Korean Foreign Minister announced in February 1952 that the Americans were dropping plague and cholera-infected insects from the air in North Korea, my mind went back to a press conference in Chungking in the autumn of 1941. The Kuomintang spokesman was Dr. Tsiang Ting-fu of the Chinese Foreign Office. He charged that Japanese planes had dropped sacks of old rags containing plague – infected fleas in Changteh, Kiangsi province. Competent experts (including bacteriologists who later fought against U.S. germ warfare in Korea) had made careful investigations, so Dr. Tsiang assured us, and confirmed that the bundles of rags had been dropped by Japanese planes, that they contained plague-infected fleas, and that a plague epidemic had broken out. Most pressmen filed stories at the time on the basis of Tsiang Ting-fu's statement. We knew also that confidential reports on the subject had been circulated by the Kuomintang government to ten western embassies in Peking.

Confirmation of Dr. Tsiang's charges came later when the Soviet government placed on trial, at Khabarovsk, in December 1949, the chief of the Japanese Kwantung Army and leading Japanese germ warfare experts. The accused described how germ warfare was waged against China and the huge-scale preparations for germ warfare against the Soviet Union. They gave details of the actual case at Changteh referred to by Dr. Tsiang.

The chief Japanese germ warfare expert, General Shiro Ishii, was not available for trial at Khabarovsk. He was being sheltered by General MacArthur in Tokyo. MacArthur refused Soviet requests for his extradition and took it upon himself to deny that the Japanese had ever used germ warfare or contemplated using it. It was impossible not to connect up this chain of events as soon as the charges were made that U.S. forces were dropping germ-infected insects on North Korea, the more so as Reuter had reported that General Shiro Ishii had arrived in South Korea at the end of December 1951.

A little more research provided some more interesting links. The American Embassy had received a report on Japanese germ warfare methods in the autumn of 1941. Within a few months germ warfare research had started in the United States. Confirmation of

this was contained in the report submitted to the U.S. Secretary of War, Patterson, on 4 January 1946 by George Merck, former Chairman of the Biological Warfare Committee of the U.S. Army Chemical Warfare Service. The report was made public at the time, but quickly withdrawn as its horrifying revelations were too much for the public stomach. But for those interested a summary of the report and other details of American and British bacterial warfare preparations was published in Keesing's Contemporary Archives for 2-9 February 1946.

"Mr. Merck's report," cites Keesing's, "stated that systematic study of germ warfare started in the U.S.A. towards the end of 1941."

There was any amount of evidence from American sources that intensive research was continuing right up till the moment the Korean Foreign Minister made his accusations. Typical of these was the remark made by Brig.-Gen. William Creasey, Chief of the Research and Development Branch of the U.S. Army Chemical Warfare Service. He was reported in the U.S. press as saying as late as 25 January 1952, that "germs, gas and radioactive materials" might prove to be the "cheapest weapons" for conquering an enemy, and he added gleefully "without destruction of his economy" – heart-warming words for the Wall Street camp-followers. There was also Mr. Truman's curious remark at the end of August 1951, just after the American Air Force had bombed Kaesong and broken off the talks – just before Dulles was whipping the Allies into shape to sign the Japanese Peace Treaty.

"We have fantastic weapons" reported Mr. Truman, "and ready for use now." To what was Mr. Truman referring? Certainly not the atom bomb.

With all these facts there was evidence enough for any journalist to start delving a little further. We were four foreign correspondents in Kaesong. Alan Winnington of the London *Daily Worker*, Tibor Merai of *Szabad Nep* (Budapest), Lucian Pracki of *Zolnierz Wolnosci* (Warsaw), and myself. As journalists we felt we had to be convinced by our own eyes and ears and not by second hand reports. For several months, we took it in turns to leave Kaesong and carry out independent investigations. We were only laymen, but at least experienced reporters used to interviewing people and evaluating their evidence.

We soon realised the difficulty of the work. Reports came in of raids, but by the time we got to the spot, there was nothing to be found except strips of burned earth. Insects could not be held until journalists and photographers arrived. They had to be dealt with swiftly, while they were still dazed from their sudden descent. And the methods being used were designed to leave no trace of material evidence.

One of the first cases which Winnington and I investigated was one in which Chinese Volunteers had seen three F.51-type planes dropping insects at a point about 30 miles east of Kaesong and 10 miles north of the battle-line. "They circled low," said our C.P.V. informant, "and it looked as if brownish smoke was coming from their tails. After they had gone, we found clusters of flies and fleas on the snow-covered hillsides. In one place there were over 1,000 fleas in a square metre of snow." We questioned Chen Chih-ping, head of the local insect-reconnaissance unit, and he confirmed the account and said that tests at battalion headquarters showed that the fleas were infected with bubonic plague. We interviewed other volunteers and Ku Tse-san, an old Korean peasant, and the stories were all roughly the same. Ku said he had lived in the area for 63 years and had never seen fleas in the open before, and that flies never appeared until the end of March (it was then February 12). "How could there be flies and fleas while there is still snow on the ground?" he asked.

The nearest that Winnington and I came to being on the spot of a germ attack during the first few weeks was at the little village of Chuk Dong, only six miles south-west of Kaesong. In this case, as it was close to Kaesong and the incident was fairly promptly reported, we were on the spot within 24 hours. All there was to see, however, was a long strip of ground on which straw had been burned, round clumps of straw on the fields adjacent to the strip with pin-head size remains of insects on the edge of the ashes. Again, we had to rely on eyewitnesses, but we were able to question Chinese Volunteers and Korean schoolchildren independently. Because of language difficulties (there is no relation between the Korean and Chinese languages) the Volunteers had not been able to speak to the children.

Chuk Dong is a village of two tiny hamlets, separated by a hump-backed hill. At about 11 a.m. on March 9, a group of Volunteers had seen a plane flying so low they thought it must have been hit by anti-aircraft fire. It disappeared behind the hump-backed hill.

A patrol was sent to the other hamlet and found along a strip of land about 200 yards long and 20 wide, in a direction corresponding to the flight of the plane, hundreds of clumps of flies and mosquitoes, swirling around on the ground in such a density that “if you put your foot down,” as the patrol leader expressed it, “you would kill a hundred.” A patrol had been along the same path at 8.30 a.m., and there were no insects there then. Sentries were posted and the rest returned to report to Company headquarters. Within 80 minutes of the insects being discovered, Volunteers were on the spot with petrol. By the time they arrived the mosquitoes were hovering about a yard above ground but the flies were still swirling around. Samples were taken and then the Volunteers – helped by the children – gathered straw and laid it over the entire area, including on some insect clusters which had fallen off the main strip. They poured petrol over the straw and set the lot alight.

When we asked if anybody had seen a container drop, the Volunteers said they had not, and they could not speak with the children or peasants who would be the only ones to know. Through an interpreter we spoke to the peasants and children. They had all seen the plane, but immediately dived into the air-raid shelters and did not come out until the sound of the plane had faded away. Later they had seen the Volunteers gathering straw and went over to see what was happening. Then they too saw the insects – and they described them just as the Volunteers had done. They then helped spreading out straw. One child took us over to where a swarm of mosquitoes had flown off and settled on the warm, white wall of a cottage. The children had twisted some straw up into torches and jabbed them into the mosquitoes. We could see the smoke marks on the wall and the stubs of the improvised torches. There were patches of snow on the ground and a stream nearby was frozen over – most unusual climatic conditions for mosquitoes.

Merai and Pracki came back from the rear with similar stories. They had not had the “good fortune” of being in a germ raid, but were on the scene shortly after numerous raids.

It is necessary to stress that bubonic plague has never been known in the recorded history of Korea. The only case of a cholera epidemic for 60 years was in 1946 and directly traceable to the fact that an American vessel had dumped ashore at Pusan the bodies of two men who had died of the disease. The epidemic which followed did not spread to North Korea. Cholera and plague follow definite

patterns. Plague is carried by rats and humans and naturally spreads along communication routes. Cholera usually branches out in every direction from its focal point. But in North Korea in early 1952 isolated cases of plague and cholera cropped up in places widely separated and not connected. There was no other explanation for this phenomenon – even if there were not the evidence of American air-dropping – than that the diseases were being artificially spread. And the laboratory tests showed that the bacteria were artificially cultivated, with different strengths and characteristics from the natural varieties.

After Winnington returned to Kaesong I left for the P.O.W. camps – and there had my closest experience of an insect raid. After lunch on June 6 I had planned to drive from Camp 5, 45 miles to Camp 1, but I was delayed for about an hour by an air alert. I then had to cross an arm of the Yalu, with my jeep aboard a ferry. About halfway across, I noticed that schoolchildren aboard were excited about something in the water, and the two ferrymen too were gazing fixedly at the water. Thinking it must be a school of fish, I got out of the jeep and saw the water was covered with a patch of insects on an area of about 200 by 50 yards. While we watched they began clambering on to the ferry, shaking their wings and trying to fly. There were two types, both of them winged. One an inch long with trailing abdomen and pincer-like jaws which moved horizontally, the other a smaller one, something like a very slim house fly. The two old ferrymen were obviously puzzled and on subsequent investigation said they had never seen such insects either on the water or any other place before.

Later in the day, reports came from two other points – that insects had been dropped from American planes. In one case the insects had landed in the middle of P.O.W. Camp 2, in the other a container was seen to drop into the Yalu not far from Camp 3, and boatmen had found many insects in the water. Early next morning reports came from Camp 3 itself, that the beach was covered for a distance of about 50 yards with winged insects swarming ashore. In Camps 2 and 3 prisoners of war helped destroy the insects and signed statements as to what they had seen. The times of the droppings, the sighting of the container and the air alert at Camp 5 all tallied within a few minutes. The air distance between Camp 2 and 3 is about 50 miles, with Camp 5 in between. The whole area is part of what are known as the Finger

Lakes, formed by the damming of the Yalu, and providing the water supply for that area of North Korea.

I interviewed many prisoners in both camps who testified to having taken part in dealing with the insects. The raid had taken place in the South Korean section of Camp 2 and I spoke with a medical orderly who supervised the activities of his squad in sweeping the insects into heaps and burning them. Samples had been preserved and they were identical with the larger type which I had seen. As the raid took place just after lunch, the P.O.W.s had been enjoying their post luncheon two hour rest period, and none had seen anything drop. But schoolchildren in a school, actually within the prisoners of war compound – they shared the same basketball court – had actually seen containers coming down as planes passed overhead. They described them as “shining globes as big as two baseballs.” (From the report of the International Commission of Scientists, it is obvious that what the children saw was what was named the “egg-shell” bomb, made of calcareous material, porous enough to allow insects to breathe and which shatters into a thousand fragments on impact and would pass unnoticed by anyone looking for containers.)

My main interest in the camps was to interview American airmen. The testimony of those who admitted to taking part in germ warfare has already been published. I talked to all of these airmen at length and on several occasions. I am convinced that the statements they made are accurate and were made of their own free will.

Many people are puzzled as to why these airmen spoke out and told everything they knew, even to naming other of their comrades who had also taken part. The short answer is that they are men who know they are taking part in an unjust war. (It must be remembered too, that there are many more airmen prisoners of war who have undoubtedly also taken part in germ warfare but who have not yet spoken out.)

A good example of a man who felt he was in an unjust war is Lt. Paul Kniss of the U.S. Air Force, serial No. A01909070, of 1103 Southwest Military Drive, San Antonio, Texas. It so happened that I was the first person to speak to Kniss when he arrived at the P.O.W. camp, a few days after he was shot down. I was collecting material for an article on the morale of U.S. airmen at the time, and I did not raise the question of germ warfare with him. I was too fascinated with his story of the grumblings in his squadron when Van Fleet's

son was shot down and every pilot had to turn out and search for the missing Van Fleet jet. And every plane in Kniss's squadron was shot up. Two crashed on the way home, others landed back full of bullet holes and wounded pilots. "Nobody came looking for me when I got shot down" he said wryly, "but then I'm not a general's son." Kniss, in fact, was the son of an agricultural labourer, himself an unskilled odd-jobs man before he joined the armed forces. He talks in the simple, straightforward way of a worker, and is an honest-looking man who has known misery and poverty.

I was surprised shortly after this interview to hear that Kniss had immediately admitted that he had taken part in germ warfare and had given a vast amount of factual information which tied in with everything already known, including specific details given by another member of Kniss's own squadron, Lieutenant O'Neal. I talked with Kniss again and asked him why he had decided to speak out.

"Well," he said, in his serious way of talking, "the last thing before I left the States, I and the five other pilots travelling with me had a lecture at Camp Stoneman, our processing centre, about germ warfare. It was given by a Captain Holleman. The main thing about it was that we might hear rumours that America was waging germ warfare, but this was just North Korean propaganda and we must deny it wherever we heard it. Then he went on to say that other nations might use it, so America was prepared, and he told us how we would retaliate, the different ways of waging germ warfare by using artillery, planes or secret agents to infiltrate behind the lines.

"That was fine. I was pleased he'd scotched a rumour, because I'd seen a paragraph in the paper that the North Koreans said we were dropping germ bombs. Then we came to K. 46, that's the 18th Fighter-Bomber Group base. The day after we arrived, we were sent for by the Group Intelligence Officer, Captain McLaughlin. He took us into his office, locked the door, and after telling us that what he was going to say was top secret, and not even to be discussed among ourselves, he told us the 18th Group had been carrying out germ warfare since the beginning of the year and that all other Groups were doing the same. Then he went on to tell us how it was being done." Kniss then went into the sort of details which have already been published, describing the types of bombs and bacteria McLaughlin said were being used, and other information.

“And at the end of the talk,” continued Kniss, “he produced a statement for each of us to sign promising not to discuss the subject of the lecture with anyone, under penalty of being prosecuted under the Articles of War. McLaughlin said he’d keep the statement in his office and use it against us at a court-martial, if we broke security.”

That is the moment when the U.S. Armed Forces lost a faithful officer. It was the beginning of Kniss’s disillusionment in his government, in the military hierarchy and in his immediate military superiors. “It knocked me,” he said, “coming right on top of the lecture at Stoneman. For the first time I began to wonder who was right and who was wrong in this war, if they’d lie like that to us and to the people at home.” He went on to relate his gradual disgust at the type of missions the pilots were flying. He had been trained as a fighter-pilot but his missions in Korea were mainly dropping napalm or high explosive on peaceful villages. “And the way they put it in the communiqués,” he said disgustedly. “A village of mud huts that we’d blown sky high or burned out with napalm was so many ‘military barracks.’ Raids in which towns were blindly plastered with high explosive were against ‘specific military targets.’ And on top of all this, the germ missions. All this, we were being told, was done to liberate the North Koreans. I never could figure out how it happened you had to wipe people out so you could liberate them and teach them democracy.” And he concluded by saying, “As far as germ warfare was concerned, I’d made up my mind that if I was ever shot down, I’d tell everything I knew about it as soon as anyone asked me. I’m ashamed to have had any part in it and I’m sure the American people would be ashamed if they knew it was going on.” And Kniss told the whole story as soon as he was questioned.

Other captured airmen helped fill in details. Lt. Floyd O’Neal’s testimony was particularly interesting because having been trained as a scientist, he absorbed much more of the preparatory germ warfare lectures than the others. He was able to present a vivid and horrifying picture of American scientists poring over their microscopes and test-tubes, turning back the record of medical science to the Middle Ages when the Black Death and cholera ravaged the populations of Europe. He described in detail how these perverted men worked to develop more virulent types of bacteria than those naturally spread, of how they were developing bacteria – and insects to carry them – which would flourish in cold, sub-zero climates where diseases were formerly unknown.

One of the inhibiting factors which kept O'Neal silent for a time was, as he expressed it to me, "because I was ashamed for the outside world to know of the degradation of American science. But I soon realised it was more important that the world should know the truth so that this black sheep of science could be halted and banned before these madmen in the laboratories destroy civilisation itself."

One thing common to these airmen was that immediately they decided to speak out, they developed a fervour to let the people of the whole world, but especially the American people, know what was going on. They felt they only had to speak out and the news would be flashed throughout every newspaper in the United States and the American people would take action. It was difficult for them to imagine that such a stupendous piece of news would be suppressed, that American journalists in South Korea, either were prevented or deliberately refrained from going to the various air-bases to check whether such persons as Captain McLaughlin existed or to get comments from officers named as having briefed pilots on germ warfare, or pilots named as having attended such briefings or as having taken part in germ missions. These airmen who spoke out were dumbfounded to learn of the shameful conspiracy of silence.

An extraordinary document published in the Report of the International Scientific Commission is a photostat copy of an article on germ warfare, published in the Japanese newspaper *Mainichi*, on Sunday, 26 January 1952. It is typical of the infamous conspiracy of silence on germ warfare, that no western pressmen ever cabled a copy of this article abroad. It is signed by a Sakaki Ryohei, who describes himself as ex-commandant of the Prevention Epidemic Corps of Japan's elite Kwantung army.

It starts by describing a night conference in October 1936, when the decision was reached by the Japanese High Command to start large-scale production for germ warfare. Preliminary research had been good. A plan had been submitted to the top military authorities and at this conference the go-ahead signal was given.

"For a country like Japan, extremely poor in raw materials, germ warfare is the most appropriate arm. With a few square metres of laboratory and some test tubes, one can easily produce a weapon capable of decimating tens of thousands of people."

Sakaki Ryohei goes into precise details of the Japanese development of germ warfare and states that it was decided that bubonic

plague was one of the most favourable diseases to be employed. He names the officer in charge of breeding rats, the officer in charge of raising fleas and explains how it was possible to increase the virulence of plague bacteria by one-third by passing it first through the bodies of rats. He gives instructions for the loading of bacteria and insects into containers and stresses how important it was to pump a sufficient supply of oxygen into the containers to keep them alive. The article is illustrated and photostats of the illustrations are contained in the Report. The infamous “Ishii” porcelain bacterial bomb is shown, named after MacArthur’s war criminal protégé.

A few of these bombs were recovered intact from the germ warfare factories the Japanese maintained in Manchuria – and which they blew up when the Kwantung Army surrendered. More interesting even than the Ishii bomb is that Mainichi carries an illustration of the almost exact counterpart of the four-compartment leaflet bomb, which was the favourite container used by the Americans in Korea and North-East China. The Mainichi illustration actually shows a three-compartment bomb, split lengthwise (as is the American one), with a parachute attached and a rat leaping out of one of the compartments. It describes a self-destroying reinforced paper container – also similar to ones used by the Americans – dropped by parachute which ignites after it has deposited its cargo of rodents, destroying both container and parachute.

This article was published after germ warfare had started in Korea, but before the Korean authorities knew it had started. It is the perfect answer – from the criminals themselves – to MacArthur’s claims on behalf of the Japanese militarists, that the latter never employed germ warfare. The only possible explanation for the article is that it was intended to tell the Japanese people that Japan still had a weapon suitable for her status in the world, capable of winning wars.

Why did germ warfare carried out against a completely unsuspecting Korean and Chinese people fail? The Korean and Chinese people were not quite unsuspecting and certainly not unprepared. In fact germ warfare caught both North Korea and China in the middle of vast sanitation campaigns which had been started several years earlier and were conducted on an intensified scale each year. The North Koreans even had some prior experience of germ warfare. One of the tasks of the secret agents of Rhee Military Intelligence,

in the first part of 1950, was to infect water and food supplies in the North with bacteria.

When the Americans retreated from North Korea in December 1950, the North Korean Ministry of Public Health announced that they had infected four cities with smallpox – another disease previously unknown in Korea. Epidemics broke out in Pyongyang, Chongjin, Kuwon and Yongdok, in each case six or seven days after American troops withdrew. The incubation period for smallpox is ten days and the bacteria must have been spread a few days before withdrawal. The bacteria were found to be of artificial culture – and in this case less virulent than the natural variety. The four cities are widely separated, but the epidemics broke out simultaneously and no other centres were affected. The cities were not connected by the retreat route, that is to say troops withdrawing from Chongjin, did not pass through Pyongyang, Yongdok or Kuwon and vice-versa, so the epidemic – even if started naturally – could not have been transmitted by the troops. And in any case there were no outbreaks in intermediate towns or villages.

A highly suspicious circumstance in connection with this is that in March 1951, American press agencies reported that a special bacteriological research ship was anchored in Wonsan Harbour, where a medical team headed by Brigadier-General Crawford Sams, chief of the U.S. Army's "Public Health and Welfare Section" (the Japanese also used high-sounding names like "Anti-Epidemic Organisation" to camouflage their germ warfare organisations) carried out medical tests on prisoners picked up from the North Korean mainland. Sams later told the American press that he "knew there would be epidemics after we withdrew" from North Korea. American correspondents who wished to go on the Sams' expedition were refused permission and there was a great hue-and-cry at Tokyo headquarters to discover how correspondents got wind of the mission. It was given the highest security classification used by the U.S. Army – hardly necessary if Sams were going on a "humanitarian" mission to try and halt epidemics in Korea.

In the smallpox epidemic, 3,523 people were infected of whom 358 died, mostly babies under 12 months. Due to the American occupation babies born in that area had not been vaccinated – American humanitarianism could not be stretched that far.

Primarily the Americans failed in germ warfare because they were fighting against an entire people led by real People's govern-

ments. It was impossible for American fascist-military mentality to understand what this meant or to evaluate the changes which had occurred under the People's governments. There was not even any way of the American authorities knowing what had happened. The State Department had blown its brains out and anyone who dared suggest that important reforms had taken place was hounded out of public service as a "Red." American military intelligence relied for information on Kuomintang landlords and reactionary missionaries whose only interest was in bolstering the idea that the entire Chinese people were sighing and panting for American "liberation." The American militarists fell into the same error as did Hitler by relying on reports from White Russian émigrés that the entire Soviet people were awaiting the Nazi liberators with bouquets. There was no one to inform the American militarists that People's China had carried out the greatest and most successful anti-epidemic campaign that any nation had carried out in history – in a little over two years, completely eradicating epidemic diseases which had been endemic for generations. Hundreds of millions of people were inoculated every year. Plague, cholera, smallpox, the recurrent scourges of Asian peoples, were completely eliminated. And from the application of inoculations on a scale never before known, the Chinese, with the aid of the most advanced science of the Soviet Union, had accumulated rich experience to be placed at the disposal of the Korean people in their hour of need.

At a time when medical teams were plodding on foot through snow to that typhus-ridden mountain village in South Korea, virtually the entire population of North Korea, including troops at the front and Chinese Volunteers, had been inoculated against cholera, plague, typhus, the typhoid group and against every type of disease which it was known the Americans were disseminating. Literally tons of serum were given first priority of transport from China. By the end of March every person had been inoculated.

Every military unit, every town and village had its insect reconnaissance and sanitation squads. Reports on germ and insect droppings had first priority on all civilian and military communication channels. All-out war was declared on rodents, flies, mosquitoes, spiders and other disease carriers. The entire country – and later when the Americans extended their operations the same applied to north-east China – was mobilised to fight germ warfare. The governments could count on the people, the people had complete faith

in the authorities. There was no panic, as the Americans had counted on to spread the epidemics. If a case of plague was reported, the house was isolated but the people stayed on to fight the rats and fleas instead of spreading them in all directions by flight. The people were mobilised and the finest scientists of Korea and China were mobilised also. First-class modern laboratories were set up in caves hewn out of the mountains. Among the 16 Chinese bacteriologists who played a leading part in the fight were four Research Fellows from the Department of Bacteriology, Harvard, three from New York State University, two from the London National Research Institute, and others from the Rockefeller Institute, Paris. All of them held science degrees from western universities and their names are internationally known in their respective fields. The two medical scientists in charge of anti-epidemic work in Korea were both decorated by the American Government for their work on the Anti-Typhus Commission in Burma in 1946. (They returned their decorations after the Americans launched germ warfare in Korea.)

After insect droppings one could see literally thousands of people with improvised gloves and masks, tweezers of two sticks used like chop-sticks, slowly moving over the field, picking up insects and dropping them into buckets to be burned in heaps. They were the “first-aid” teams. Later would come truckloads of figures, cloaked in white except for where their trousers were tucked into black, knee-high rubber boots, equipped with anti-insecticide sprays.

Every house was equipped with D.D.T. sprays and fly-swatters. Rat-holes in the ground and in walls were blocked up, even holes in trees which might have provided breeding places for mosquitoes were filled in with a kind of cement. Every propaganda medium, from newspapers and films to the primitive wall newspapers in the tiniest hamlet with their crude drawings of flies and insects, rallied the people to fight against the microbe war. Sanitation squads went from home to home, from office to office to ensure that anti-germ warfare measures were being rigorously applied. It was impossible to enter marketplaces, ride on buses or trains unless one could provide an up-to-date inoculation certificate. Regular checkpoints were set up on every road in Korea, where certificates were produced, the traveller and vehicle sprayed with D.D.T., and the vehicle had to roll over a D.D.T.-soaked matting bed to ensure the tyres were also disinfected. Trains coming from Korea or the North-east were emp-

tied of passengers at certain points, certificates produced, passengers and train sprayed. Goods trains were shunted into special tunnels where an ingenious system of pipes with holes in them quickly and effectively sprayed cargo and freight cars.

In government offices – even in Peking – cadres were given a certain quota of flies and mosquitoes to be destroyed each day – and they had to produce the results in paper envelopes for inspection. As a result visitors to Peking in the spring and summer of 1952 were amazed to find it a city without flies or mosquitoes. And the same in every village and town in China and Korea. Garbage piles – some of which had been added to for centuries – were moved and the strictest control of all refuse enforced. In some cases where cats and dogs were known to have picked up infected rodents dropped from planes the entire cat and dog population of villages and towns were destroyed.

Only in countries where government and people are entirely one could such measures be taken. Such mass organisation and mass discipline are outside the comprehension of American militarists and so their monstrous scheme failed. They did succeed in killing innocent Korean and Chinese men, women and children, but they did not succeed in their main plan of starting vast epidemics to weaken the Korean-Chinese will to resist their aggression.

One point which has puzzled many people is why did the Americans follow the “old-fashioned” Japanese methods instead of using the highly-publicised push-button methods of aerosol, bacteria suspended in air and disseminated in clouds of mist from high-flying aircraft. Reams of newspaper articles had been written in the United States boasting of the perfection of such methods.

According to the opinion of competent western scientists who investigated germ warfare, there are many technical objections to the use of aerosol. In the first place, if it were as terribly effective as the publicists claim it would not have been possible to keep the matter secret and American prestige was dependent on it being kept secret. Second, for spreading most diseases it is ineffective. It is fine for the armchair strategists to sit back and look at administrative charts showing how many pounds of plague and cholera bacteria is necessary to infect a given number of square miles and to wipe out a given number of people. But in practice it is a different matter.

(The world can be thankful for the infantile faith of American militarists in their administrative charts.)

Bacteria are extraordinarily sensitive things. Plague bacteria die within a few minutes of exposure to sunlight. For most diseases spread by bacteria or rickettsia (plague, cholera, typhus, the typhoid group, etc.), spraying in aerosol would be a waste of time. Unless the mist happened to settle on its intended victims immediately, and unless conditions of temperature and humidity were just right, the bacteria would be useless. Certain types of sub-microscopic viruses and toxins could be employed, but in Korea adequate protection could not be given to American troops for virus and toxic diseases for which no antidotes have yet been developed. Aerosol mists are at the mercy of every wind which blows – and they could easily blow back to South Korea or even Japan. (The Americans did try spraying bacteria suspended in jelly, but this was done from low-flying aircraft, with no possibility of dispersal beyond the area sprayed.) Bacteria-carrying insects are a much more effective medium – and complete protection could be given to American troops, as every type of disease employed had its known antidote – and American troops, as we know from the P.O.W.s, were given inoculations against every disease employed.

Plague-carrying fleas can infect from human to rodent host and back again for an indefinite number of generations. They are not dependent on temperature or humidity – especially the acclimatised ones bred by American scientists. Anthrax-infected tarantulas dropped by the Americans live to a ripe old age of several years, including two years without food or drink, and even naturally bred can withstand light frosts. For years they are capable of biting animals or humans and infecting them with anthrax. A type of fowl-mite known to spread encephalitis transmits the disease through its eggs for endless generations. Humans can be secondarily infected by eating the poultry.

By using artificial means of producing bacteria, normally harmless insects can be turned into deadly disease carriers. By spreading out a typhoid culture medium on glass slabs and letting millions of midges wade about in it, the normally harmless midge is converted into a deadly typhoid carrier. Flies and any other insect inhabiting human dwellings can be used in the same way. The same thing with the ptinid beetle, normally a harmless creature living in granaries or any place where food is stored – converted by American scientists into an anthrax carrier. Its life span is up to five years.

For the conditions and circumstances in North Korea, the Japanese type of germ warfare was the only one that could have been used. And there is ample evidence that at least one branch of American germ warfare research was based on adaptation and improvements of Japanese experience. That is not to say that under other circumstances the Americans would hesitate to use aerosol. There is good reason to believe that they did carry out an experimental aerosol spraying of encephalitis over Mukden, but at the time the International Commission of Scientists made their investigation the evidence was not conclusive. They noted the suspicious circumstances, however, in the Annex of their Report.

That the Americans failed in their initial attempt to use germ warfare in Korea and North-East China should not lead to any complacency or relaxation of the fight to have germ warfare banned. The conditions in Korea were peculiar ones with American troops exposed to dangers if the aerosol method was used and America fearful of world public opinion. The American germ warfare experts have boasted that they have isolated the very essence of bacteria, the botulins – a few ounces of which, they claim, could wipe out the world's population. Whether this is so or not, we do know that America's "best" scientists – to their everlasting shame – are working day and night to produce ever more virulent types of bacteria, viruses and toxins and to develop more effective methods than those used so far. Doubtless they are doing their best to rectify the failure of the Korean experiment.

Humanity can only be safe from this scourge when America and Japan, the only two world powers who refused to ratify the 1925 Geneva Protocols outlawing germ warfare, are brought into line with the rest of the civilised world by banning germ warfare. The death factories of the U.S. Army Special Projects division at Aberdeen, Maryland, and Camp Detrick must be put out of operation and American scientists return to the honourable road of using their talents to preserve life rather than destroy it.

Chapter 18

STRIKING THE BALANCE

Whatever the final outcome of the Korean war, the U.S. Government has suffered a staggering military, political and moral defeat. Militarily they failed to defeat the smallest unit – with the exception of tiny Albania – of the 800,000,000 strong peace bloc of nations. Politically, they have lost whatever influence and prestige they had in Asia and have taught the entire world the U.S. definition of “liberation.” Morally, they have incurred the odium of every decent human being for the brutalities, the atrocities committed by American forces on the battlefield and in the rear, against helpless prisoners of war and in the employment of saturation bombing, chemical and germ warfare.

The outstanding exponents of military pressure, the U.S. militarists have been defeated in their attempts to apply it. In two and a half years of warfare, with more than one-third of U.S. combat forces involved, the battle-line remains roughly along the 38th parallel where the frontier lay before the R.O.K. invasion of June, 1950, and where the battleline was when the cease-fire talks started in July, 1951. The attempts to force surrender terms on the Korean-Chinese delegates by military force also failed. At the beginning of the talks, U.S. delegates demanded a demarcation line which would have advanced U.S. troops into 12,000 square kilometres of North Korean territory. This demand was refused. The U.S. High Command ordered Kaesong to be bombed. The talks were broken off while the Americans wasted two months in violent and costly offensives to try and occupy the 12,000 square kilometres they were claiming. They failed and came back to the conference table. This time they abandoned the claims to 12,000 square kilometres but demanded Kaesong. This was refused. The talks were stalled while offensive after offensive was launched to take Kaesong. U.S. delegates backed down on the claim and Item Two of the Agenda was settled.

When Item Three was discussed, they demanded the right to tramp on the sovereign rights of North Korea by preventing the repair of airfields and depriving the Korean people of the urgently needed facilities to defend themselves against further U.S. air atrocities. This demand was also refused. The U.S. High Command then ordered the use of germ warfare to force compliance. Germ

warfare was also defeated. Only when it was clear that germ warfare had failed did the Americans withdraw their demand and settle Item Three.

On Item Four, they demanded the detention of scores of thousands of Korean and Chinese P.O.W.s. When this was refused, they launched their terrorist raids to wipe out 78 North Korean towns and cities with the avowed aim of bringing the Korean people to their knees. Towns and cities were wiped out, but this only increased the burning resolve of the Korean people never to submit to American demands.

The savagery of these American air attacks shocked the world – and made a particular impression on Asian peoples who noted that napalm and germ warfare, in addition to the atom bomb, were marked “to be used against Asiatics only.”

At least 6,000 civilians were killed in one raid on Pyongyang in order to force the Korean-Chinese side to abandon 30,000 of their prisoners to their fate on Kojedo. World reaction to the earlier raids forced the Tokyo Command to assert that only “strictly military objectives” were being attacked.

And what were regarded as “military targets?” We have a good description in a despatch by Reuter on July 22, 1952, reporting on a briefing given to newly-arrived Royal Air Force pilots who were to serve with the Royal Australian Air Force squadron in South Korea. “Innocent looking huts beside roads,” they were told, “are probably emergency refuges for Communist trucks and tanks... An ox-cart plodding down a road almost certainly carries munitions. Both these tricks of the Communist supply organisation have been revealed by explosions which *followed attacks against seemingly harmless targets.*”

In other words everything which stood or moved above the ground was a “military target.” If you see a civilian, shoot at him. He might blow up! Every home in Korea, as in any other country, is alongside a road. Blast it to bits! It may someday shelter a Communist truck! Everything that moves on the road, pour machine-gun bullets into it or shower it with flaming petrol! Some of the other harmless targets, like ox-carts that we fired at just for fun, exploded! So the war was carried on and international conventions were blasted and napalmed out of existence.

On summer days in Kaesong, I used to watch Korean children swimming. In any group, at least half were covered with napalm

burns. Ears which were shapeless blobs melted into the rest of the face, arms and legs with great rubbery, raised weals on them, and one boy who seemed to have stepped out of Hugo's *L'Homme qui Rit* with a fixed, terrible smile in a distorted mouth which would never close. And these were the ones that could run about and swim. There were tens of thousands of others under the rubble of schools and homes who would never again run about. There were cases in the hospital too terrible to turn loose among other children, faces that were dead, horrible masks, eyes that were gone, staring, red eyes between eyelids that would never close, eyes hidden by eyelids that would never open, and where one could not distinguish where upper and lower lids met, limbs on which the flesh had been fused into the rest of the body, hands and feet that were twisted, useless claws, flesh that had been cooked and boiled – mute testimony to American “humanitarianism.” After all, these children would only grow up to be Communists!

Despite the worst the U.S. militarists could do in the way of atrocities, the military balance shifted inexorably against them. They threw the world's “mightiest air force” against the shortest supply lines of any country in the modern world, and could not put roads or railways out of action for 24 hours. The combat strength and fire-power of the Korean-Chinese forces grew daily stronger despite “Operation Strangler,” until the Americans were complaining that they were being outgunned in heavy artillery in the proportion of 5 to 2. How was this possible?

Because they were involved in a People's War, the full import of which they were incapable of comprehending. They were fighting against people who repaired bridges and rail tracks before the sound of the planes that wrecked them had died away. The American militarists had not even learned the lessons of Spain: that terror bombings only steel the resolve of a people to fight to the finish. Their “military pressure” and terrorist-tactics did not win them one concession of principle from the Korean and Chinese people.

By their own mistakes and miscalculations, the Americans have been forced into a dilemma in Korea. They are afraid of peace, and every time the word is mentioned a shudder of terror passes through Wall Street. They can no longer carry on the war alone. And their reluctant allies become every day more unwilling to commit further troops to Korea. Faced with this situation, the U.S. High Command developed the convenient theory of “long term” stalemate. Political

stalemate at Panmunjom, military stalemate along the battle front with the Air Force continuing its terror raids in the rear. It was the best compromise Washington could think of in the face of military realities. Without further drain on manpower the “hot” war would be on, war production could be continued, defence appropriations would be maintained and the same rate of profits flow into the war-makers’ pockets, world tension would continue and force the European Allies to pursue their course of disastrous rearmament – and in the meantime the balance of military power would change in their direction.

But it takes two sides to make a stalemate. The Americans wanted one which would suit their side and allow them to carry on their merciless destruction of civilian property and the Korean people. Previously they had insisted that the war must continue, that they must be free to “apply military pressure to get their prisoners of war back home,” even after the demarcation line was agreed on. They held up agreement for weeks because they claimed it would mean a *de facto* cease-fire.

They were able unilaterally to declare a stalemate in the talks at Panmunjom by staging walkouts, beginning with unilaterally declared three-day recesses on June 3, stepping up to seven day recesses from July 27 and finally breaking off the talks on October 8, 1952. But they could not unilaterally stage a stalemate at the front.

Local counter attacks by Korean-Chinese forces from September onwards, showed the Americans were incapable of taking the initiative. They were capable of reacting only when the Korean-Chinese forces moved. From the time the Americans staged their unilateral recesses, they began to suffer some of their heaviest casualties of the war – and these losses increased sharply after they broke off the talks in October. That was the situation when the U.N. met in October and Acheson sounded his rallying cry to bludgeon America’s partners into providing more cannon fodder.

As I have described in previous chapters, on every occasion in the talks when agreement was near, the Americans shied away. They never yielded one obstructing point without ensuring that they had raised an insuperable obstacle on some other point. The same thing occurred in the diplomatic field on every occasion in which some positive steps were being taken to solve a deadlock.

The last diplomatic effort before the break-down was a behind-the-scenes move by the Indian government. According to western

press reports, Nehru had sent Krishna Menon (Indian High Commissioner in London and later appointed Ambassador to Moscow) to England in June with offers of Indian mediation. Semi-official circles in London were commenting in mid-June that they were hopeful current diplomatic moves would solve the deadlock. On June 21, Nehru came out openly and told a press conference that he “would be happy to offer our services” in finding a way out of the Korean deadlock. Two days later, the U.S. Air Force, acting, as it was officially announced, on direct instructions from Washington, launched their raids on the Yalu hydroelectric stations on the Chinese frontier. This was a direct provocation to China and a violent snub to Nehru and the British government. Nehru told the Indian Parliament that he “was aghast at the provocation at the very moment when delicate negotiations were under way to solve the deadlock on prisoners of war.” Contrary to agreements, Washington had not notified Britain of the attack and after a sharp remonstrance from Eden, Acheson flew to London and tried to smooth matters over by saying it was an unfortunate bungle. The Defence Department thought the State Department had notified Britain and the State Department was sure this had been done by the Defence Department. In effect the raid was a sharp reminder to Britain that she was a satellite and had no business monkeying around with Nehru behind American backs to solve issues which Washington preferred to leave unsolved. The behind-the-scenes moves were thus stopped cold and the final result was the American walk-out on October 8.

This action, coming after an armistice agreement had been accepted by both sides, drafted down to the last full-stop and comma, with agreed translations in three languages only awaiting the signature of the chief delegates, was the final act in torpedoing the talks.

It was never sufficiently publicised in the western press that as from August 6, 1952, an armistice agreement had been finally drafted by the staff officers on both sides, in accordance with principles agreed by the senior delegates. It awaited only signature, but the Americans announced in advance their intention not to carry out the agreement they had helped draft.

The key paragraph in the agreement, article 51, referring to the repatriation of prisoners of war states: “All prisoners of war held in the custody of each side at the time this armistice agreement becomes effective, shall be released and repatriated as soon as possible.” Article 52 states “Each side ensures that it shall not employ in

act of war in the Korean conflict any prisoner of war released and repatriated incident to the coming into effect of the armistice agreement.”

There is not a line or word, stated or implicit which hints at “voluntary repatriation” or which commits either side to anything less than full repatriation of all prisoners. But for more than two months before the Americans broke off the talks, they daily announced at Panmunjom their refusal to carry out the agreement and their intention to detain more than 30,000 Korean-Chinese prisoners. This was the perfidious proposal which Acheson demanded should be rubber-stamped by the U.N. General Assembly.

Washington had no more success with its policies in the South Korean hinterland than on the battle-front. Despite an all-out offensive against partisans which started in December, 1951 – and the end of which was monotonously announced every month with reports of “total annihilation” of the partisans, the activities of the latter increased month by month and by the end of 1952 were more extensive than when the R.O.K. “mopping-up” campaigns started. Captured American pilots told me in mid-1952 that for over twelve months, the regular leaflet-dropping missions included dropping surrender leaflets to partisans over large areas of South Korea. Correspondents with the partisans sent regular reports published daily in the North Korean press.

The “solidity” of the R.O.K. rear was shown when Eisenhower in a spate of vote-catching demagoguery announced that if he were elected he would replace American troops in Korea with R.O.K. troops. A great howl went up from Rhee and others to the effect that this would be disastrous, that Communists would have first to be weeded out of the R.O.K. Army. Correspondents cabled Truman and Eisenhower emphasising the catastrophe which would follow if the R.O.K. regime were to be defended by R.O.K. troops.

Rhee consolidated his power in the summer of 1952 by as overt a coup d'état as has ever been staged by a fascist dictator. According to the R.O.K. Constitution, only the National Assembly could elect the President. As noted earlier, only 20% of Rhee followers were elected in the 1950 elections and his term as President expired in 1952. It was clear to Rhee that he would not be re-elected when the time came for the vote. Rhee imposed martial law, arrested a number of deputies and suspended the Assembly. Deputies demanded a session of the Assembly to lift martial law and secure the

release of those arrested. Under the Constitution Rhee could not refuse the request to convene the Assembly but he could – and did – arrest a sufficient number of them to prevent a quorum in the Assembly. Rhee maintained that the Assembly did not represent the will of the people – which was true, but not in the sense that Rhee intended – and that the Constitution should be changed to allow the President to be elected by direct vote. With martial law, R.O.K. troops and police in charge of the voting machinery and any real opposition branded as Communist, there would be no doubt of the results. The assembly members refused Rhee's demands, and when he persisted, they boycotted the Assembly. Eventually, Rhee and his police rounded up all those who were taking part in the boycott and locked them in the Assembly, warning them they would not be released until they had passed the necessary legislation. Five hundred of his plain-clothes thugs with clubs paraded outside the building. Two deputies who succeeded in getting out were brutally beaten up on the pavement opposite the Assembly. After 48 hours, the deputies gave in and gave Rhee the powers he wanted. He was elected President on August 24.

All this was reported by the western press agencies and it was highly embarrassing for Washington and the Allies to have their “great democratic leader of the Korean people” exposed for what he was – a ruffian, a gangster and a fascist dictator. Protests were made by the State Department, and the British and French Foreign Offices. The U.S. Ambassador was recalled to Washington and returned with a testy reprimand for Rhee from Truman. But Rhee was in a strong position to snap his fingers at anyone from Truman down. He had only to hint at making a peace with the North, or at withdrawing R.O.K. troops from the front because of a national emergency in the rear – and Washington was terror-stricken. Rhee even felt himself strong enough to ban American publications and stop Voice of America broadcasts from Seoul, because of the faint criticism of his crude, fascist methods.

Economically as well as politically, by the end of 1952 South Korea was bankrupt. The country was kept going by enormous injections of aid funds, most of which went straight into the pockets of Rhee and his henchmen. Rice prices were 50 times higher in the South as compared with the North, and the majority of the population were on starvation diet. The area under rice – the staple food of Koreans – according to the R.O.K. Ministry of Agriculture, was

only 60% of normal. More reliable sources estimated only 40%. The Ministry of Agriculture figures showed the 1952 rice harvest to be 700,000 suks short of the average yields of 2,000,000 suks (13 suks to the ton). In the North, despite enormous difficulties, with peasants and their animals bombed and strafed in the fields, with most of the work done by old men and women at night, the 1952 harvest was a bumper one with both acreage and yield in excess of the pre-war average.

In the South, 70% of industry was stagnant, there was no rebuilding; in Seoul even the telephone system had not been restored. In the North, despite the round-the-clock bombings, despite the attempts to wreck the whole electric power system, an economic plan had been worked out and was being meticulously fulfilled. Building and reconstruction never stopped. While ruins were still burning, towns and villages heavy with smoke and the air full of the sound of planes – even with time-bombs exploding – people were out gathering bricks, sorting out the rubble to start rebuilding. Despite the almost uninterrupted raids in Pyongyang, the city telephone system was never out of action for more than a few hours – a symbol of the way in which the economy as a whole was kept going. More details of the miracles accomplished in keeping industry going will have to await the telling for a time when they will no longer help the U.S. Air Force.

In every field American policy in Korea was a failure and the colossal implications of this were not lost on the nations of Asia and the western world. If seven U.S. divisions, with supporting troops, one-third of U.S. combat strength in 1952, could not break through on a front of 155 miles, with unchallenged tactical support from the air, how many divisions would be needed to man a global front which encircled the peace bloc of nations with a population of 800,000,000? If almost the entire U.S. Air Force and a large part of its Navy, together with considerable naval strength from other nations, could not put out of action a few hundred miles of roads and railways for even 24 hours, how many Air Groups and how many naval vessels would be necessary against millions of miles of railroads, waterways and sea-lanes? If the armed forces of a score of nations could not defeat tiny North Korea, with a population of about 1% of that of the entire peace bloc of nations, how many armies of how many nations would be needed to wage a global war?

By the end of 1952, the peoples of the world were demanding an end to the madness in Korea, with voices raised louder than ever before. It was symptomatic of the rising demand for peace that Eisenhower who started off his election campaign by donning the armour of Mars and promising to lead a crusade to “liberate” the People’s Democracies ended up draped in olive branches, camouflaged as a peace-maker, who would personally go to Korea and make peace. And this dramatic change in his strategy won him the election. The forces of peace have been immeasurably strengthened by the sacrifices of the people of Korea and China, by the magnificent epic stand of the Korean People’s Army and the Chinese People’s Volunteers. They have demonstrated by force of arms and by their incontestably superior morale, that the peace-loving world has the will, the leadership and the means to defend peace.

As I write the last lines of this book, the whole of progressive humanity is celebrating the 35th anniversary of the Great October Revolution. One cannot but recall that 35 years ago, the infant Soviet Republic stood alone against what was shortly to be an assault of the combined imperialist powers even though they had recently been locked in a death struggle amongst themselves – to strangle the first Soviet state at birth. Alone, the Soviet people defeated the interventionists.

History repeats itself but the balance of forces change. To-day the combined forces of imperialism have again attacked. This time, they selected tiny North Korea and had intervention there been successful it would have been extended to People’s China and elsewhere in a renewed effort to drown the newly established People’s Democracies in a sea of blood. But changes have taken place since the Soviet Union stood alone. The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea does not stand alone. At its back stands mighty People’s China, behind People’s China stands the Soviet Union engaged in the transformation of a Socialist to a Communist society, on the other side of the Soviet Union stand the young People’s Democracies with strong and expanding economies engaged in socialist construction, behind them stand the working class of the capitalist world, ready and able to strike powerful blows in the rear if the war-makers achieve their aim of expanding the Korean war into a world conflict.

It may well be that history will record that the issue of a third World War or world peace was settled in the shell-pocked mountain

ridges of Korea. The past two years have showed the truth of Stalin's statement that peace can be won if the people take the cause of peace into their own hands and defend it to the end. Whatever the historians record of this period, the peace-loving peoples of the world can never adequately repay their debt to the heroic Korean people who held the front line against the storm-troopers of the aggressors in what was intended to be the opening round of a new world war. Certainly if the line had not been held in Korea, 1952 would have seen the world already plunged into the horrors of a third World War.

Photos by Wilfred Burchett 1951-53

1. IN AND AROUND KAESONG



Wilfred Burchett (fifth from the left) and colleagues
(Tibor Mery, first from the left,
Lucian Pracki, third from left)
in Kaesong – see page 237



Wilfred Burchett with Hsio Ch'en, Kaesong





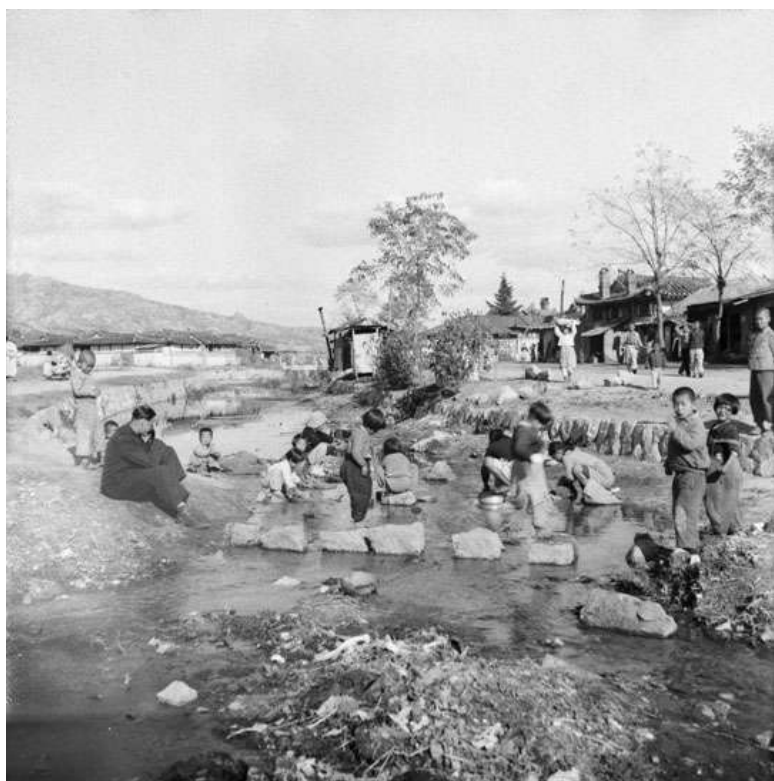








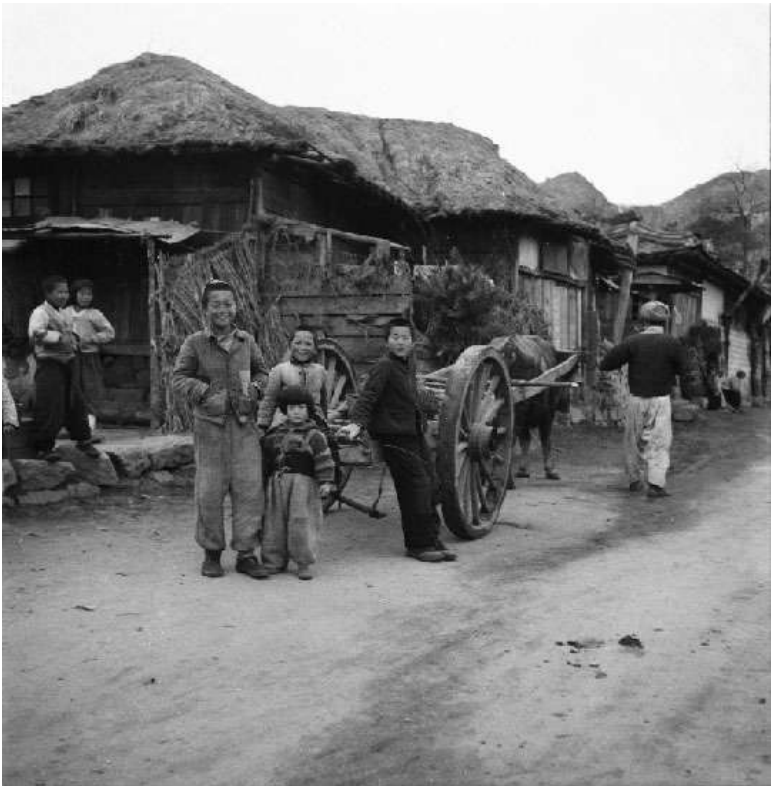




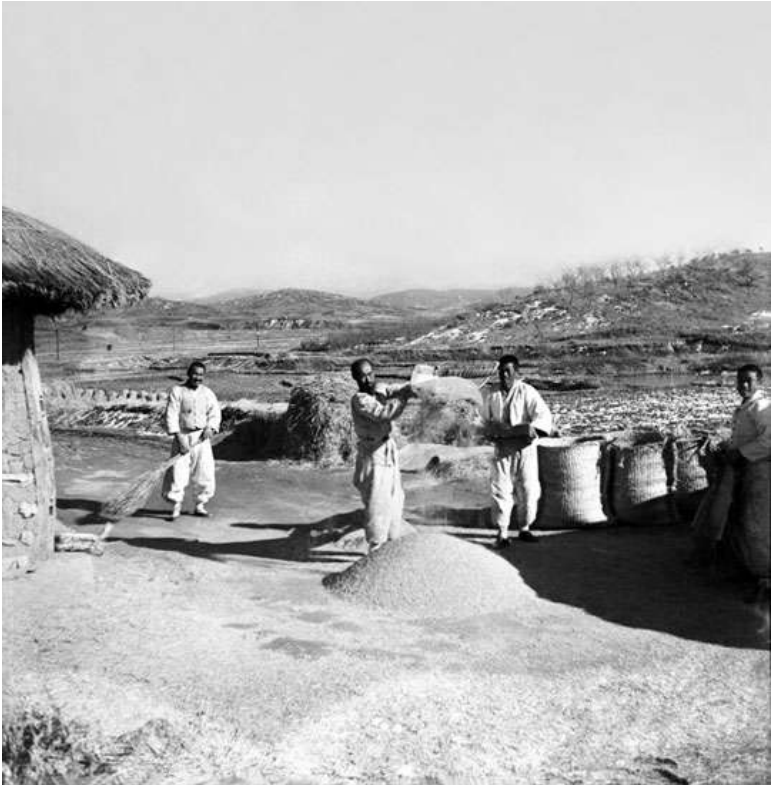




















KAESONG – POW EXCHANGE















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