SUBSTITUTE FOR VICTORY

By John Dille

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Here is a firsthand report by a young man who kept his eyes and ears—and his mind—open while he was in Korea. It is the objective story of what happened there and what the situation is there now and in Japan and in Formosa. He feels we have stopped, for the time being at least, the surge of Communism in the Far East. And should Communism strike again we will be ready—and strong.

John Dille (who pronounces it "Dilly") was born in Fort Morgan, Colorado, and went off to war in 1943 just after graduating from college. He was a lieutenant in the Tank Destroyers in Europe, where he won the Bronze Star twice and the Croix de Guerre for his bravery at St. Lô, Brest, and Jülich. Since 1947 he has been with *Life* as reporter, editor, and foreign correspondent and is currently representing *Life* in Central Europe.

SUBSTITUTE FOR VICTORY

I

THE WAR IN KOREA was a good war. It was more than that: it was a magnificent war. It had to be fought. And considering the odds we faced—the tremendous distances over which we had to transport men and guns, the overwhelming disadvantage of standing precariously on a small, narrow peninsula and fighting virtually uphill against a mainland Asiatic power—it was fought exceedingly well.

At the same time, the truce which brought the war to a halt —if only temporarily—was a wise and a necessary step. There was no point at the time in our attempting to push any

farther. The cost, especially in lives, would have far outweighed the gains. We had attained our original objective, that of building a wall against Communist aggression; the war was becoming increasingly unpopular at home; and there were sound and compelling *military* reasons for stopping it where we did.

There is no real guarantee, of course, that the enemy will not resume the battle. There is no doubt that we left a good deal of unfinished business. And it is difficult for us to understand and accept the combination of non-victory and non-defeat which Korea amounts to.

Nonetheless, there is nothing about the Korean war for which we should feel ashamed.

Perhaps no war in our history has been so fully reported and at the same time so little understood as was the Korean war. Platoons of reporters were deployed across the front by their papers and news agencies. To keep the copy and the potential headlines flowing toward home these men phoned their stories direct from front-line command posts to rewrite men in Seoul—much as police reporters call in to the city desk on a newspaper. The rewrite men shared billets with Eighth Army briefing officers, and with this professional advantage they kept the bulletins and the war yarns moving over the wires to Tokyo and the U.S. in a constant stream. Radio circuits were set up nightly so that network broadcasters could drive back to Seoul from the front and go on the air with fresh, hot-off-the-bunker accounts of a battle, a soldier's heroism, a jet pilot's exploits that afternoon in MIG Alley. Photographers roamed the front, dodging enemy artillery barrages alongside the soldiers, so that readers at home could see with their own eyes what the war was like. Name columnists went out to lend the war the prestige of their bylines, and vice versa.

Yet, despite all this attention, the meaning of the Korean war got lost somewhere in a sea of confusion and disillusionment. It became a political issue, a shuttlecock for competing pundits, and a ready-made challenge to armchair strategists. It became a kind of disembodied war, in which even the men who died in it seemed to be at times not so much flesh-and-blood heroes as statistical arguments for one political view or another. In an election year this was both inevitable and understandable. Before the campaigns ever began, the war was a confusing mess. And then, as the war became identified more and more as a political issue, it ceased to exist clearly in the public mind as a war at all, as a clear-cut matter of geographic realities and military facts. It ceased to make sense.

I do not mean to imply that the folks at home did not appreciate the efforts of their men in Korea. I am sure they cared deeply; and, considering the remoteness of the war and its seemingly fruitless ups and downs, I marvel that they sustained the interest they did. One can read an overwritten, blood-and-guts news item to the effect that "Hordes of fresh Chinese troops last night attacked game but battle-weary U.N. forces" on just so many consecutive mornings without going into breakfast-table shell shock. I often wondered, as I read these accounts in Korea, how many readers in the commuting trains back home were discriminating or skeptical enough to ask themselves, as they put down their papers: "How many hordes do you suppose there are in a platoon?"

Even the constant reader, beset daily by a bewildering array of charging hordes, casualty lists, and all the complicated minutiae of the Panmunjom agenda to relate in his own mind, one to another, must have felt hopelessly out of touch with it all. But it was not his fault, or the fault of the press, or even of the politicians, that the Korean war became such an enigma. It was in the nature of the war itself and, in fact, its

fate that it should have been misunderstood. For it was a war of paradoxes.

It began as a police action, in a little-known and faraway place, with dubious congressional legality and, so far as its international godfather, the fledgling U.N., was concerned, under uncertain auspices. And yet before it was over it was to become a full-scale war, in which nearly 150,000 Americans were to become casualties, 25,000 of them to die.

It was the first modern war we have fought with no clear end in view as we waged it, no known geographical goal at which someone would blow a whistle and it would all be over. The shores of Japan were in our sights in *that* war. In Europe we knew that when we linked up with the Russians at the Elbe we could quit and come home. In Korea, ironically enough, we were pointed roughly in the same direction, but with a vastly different purpose: we knew that if we ever linked up with the Russians *there* we could *not* quit and might *never* come home.

It was also a war of sudden and exasperating surprises. There were no rules in the military manuals to cover them, no previous experience to guide us, and, worst of all, no advance preparation for our problems back in the bustling cities and on the peaceful farms of the U.S., whence lay our real source of morale and strength. The men in Korea knew this, and consequently they often felt they were working in a lonely vacuum.

I shall never forget one particularly heart-rending day at the front. The enemy had thrown in a heavy concentration of mortar and artillery shells just as our men were trying to push forward in a daylight offensive. Our men were caught in the open, casualties were high, and morale was sagging. As I climbed up and down the hills that day no less than a dozen soldiers spotted my correspondent's patch and came forward

to beg me to tell the people at home what was going on. "If they still think this is a damned police action," said one corporal, pointing at the litter cases being carried down the hill behind us, "for God's sake, straighten them out that we ain't standing on no corner with a billy club and a goddamned police whistle!" Then he adjusted the carbine which was slung over his shoulder, rounded up the Korean litter-bearers he was in charge of, and started up the hill again to pick up more casualties.

It was a war which, in the very midst of the fighting, became enmeshed—at Kaesong and at Panmunjom—in all the surrealistic gobbledygook of Communist invective and trilingual bargaining, a maddening game of words which went on for interminable months like a kind of dissonant counterpoint to the main theme of simple, understandable warfare. Again, the Americans involved—in this case the delegates at Munsan—felt alone and occasionally despondent. For it seemed the Reds were making up all the rules and doing most of the talking. Our delegates feared the people at home could not possibly understand. While Nam Il snapped at Admiral Joy, the soldiers went on dying. Back home this must have seemed intolerably stupid and tragic. Actually, there at the site of it all, it made tragic sense. For we on the ground knew we were engaged in a new kind of war, a war of limited scope, in which our side and the enemy both realized—at about the same time—that *neither* of us could quit *or* win. Like chessplayers who have mated each other, we had to settle for a draw. The reporters who were there knew there was little they could say, in their daily dispatches, that would communicate this complicated and frustrating fact to their readers.

Then, during the long and annoying periods of stalemate, the war became boring even for the soldiers and the re-

porters, for there was nothing new or enlightening they could get hold of. It must have been terribly boring to read back home. Unfortunately there was no Mauldin in this war, to ease the tensions and lift the heart with humor. Even Bill himself, I'm afraid, would have had serious trouble making this war seem human or acceptable. It was just not a war you could chuckle over.

The enemy, whom we had once dismissed vaguely as "the yellow peril," turned out to be possibly the craftiest opponent we had ever encountered. As the battle progressed he massed so much artillery that near the end he had as much as we did, in some areas more. And he knew how to use it. His mortar crews were so good they could "walk" mortar shells right down the hill behind you—exploding them in murderous patterns.

The enemy had a knapsack full of sly professional tricks, which he loved to use on us to whipsaw us back and forth until we became dizzy. Over a period of months, for example, he "gave" us prisoners—including North Korean colonels and commissars—whom we were delighted to get and obligingly tossed into our bulging POW cages on the island of Koje-do, hundreds of miles from the front. Then, too late, we found we had been had. In our own rear area, and under our very noses, the same colonels we had once thought ourselves so lucky to capture set about organizing an army. It was equipped with crude weapons made in our own compounds, and it was so defiant and well led that it engineered a series of mass prison revolts which stood us right on our ears. The first revolt occurred in February 1952. When the prisoners got out of control again the following May, the situation was devastating enough to cause Tokyo to suppress news of the break for some forty-eight hours, during which time General

Ridgway—who was the responsible officer but who had just been appointed to NATO—quickly briefed General Clark, his successor, ordered a four-engine plane, and prepared to fly to his new assignment in Paris, leaving Clark to hold the hottest potato he had fondled since the Rapido River episode in Italy.

We sent a couple of brigadier generals named Dodd and Colson down to Koje-do to restore order. Dodd proceeded to get captured in his own camp. And Colson, apparently more concerned with saving the life of a fellow general than with maintaining U.S. prestige in Asia, bailed him out. It was a new low, even for the Korean war. And it underlined, all too clearly, how unprepared we were, with brains and experience, for fighting a war so "total" that the enemy could use our own POWs against us. The knowledge that we had made fools of ourselves throughout the world did nothing, of course, to make the Korean war any more palatable or understandable at home.

But the cruelest blow of all came when the war refused even to end properly. Being a perverse war, it could not just come to a nice, sensible, meaningful conclusion. It had to end "not with a bang, but a whimper." And as it did so it found the U.N. in the fantastic position of trying to negotiate, simultaneously, with an enemy who wanted a truce and with an ally, Syngman Rhee, who wanted to keep on fighting. Many people, who were sick of the war and had never thought it a particularly good idea in the first place, were swept up emotionally by the pluck and patriotism of Rhee and found themselves arguing that the war should be continued for his sake. When Rhee turned loose 27,000 prisoners we had agreed to hold for a final rescreening, the jigsaw seemed scrambled for fair. We recovered the fumble (because the enemy wanted a truce badly enough to forgive us).

But we were in no mood for further surprises from Korea. Everyone was fed up. All was confusion. And the war had lost its last vestige of respectability.

"The tremendous defeat in Korea," Senator McCarthy called it.

"The only American war that has settled nothing," said the Washington *Times-Herald,* forgetting, for a moment, the War of 1812.

"There is no substitute for victory," General MacArthur had said, and his warning was widely repeated, as proof that the war was a failure.

"I've kept quiet until now," cried Mrs. Georgia Lusk, a former congresswoman from New Mexico, "but I question national strategy which causes our boys to fight to the top of the hill, but not over it."

Well, Mrs. Lusk, the top of the hill is a better position, militarily, than the vulnerable valley on the other side. And I've kept quiet until now too. I did my job as a reporter, and my editors faithfully relayed my reports. But when all the reporters and newspapers and magazines have done their level best to explain the war, when all the facts have been reported and the readers *still* seem confused, when ideas like those above become common currency for lack of any clear alternative—then it is time, perhaps, to go back over the ground again and try to set the record straight.

I discovered how helpful this might be when, after covering the war in Korea for two years, I returned to the U.S. for reassignment and went first to my home town in Colorado for a vacation. One after another, people I knew called up to ask if I would come over to their church or club for a luncheon meeting and talk about Korea. It was clear, from their questions, that the war lacked perspective. Any-

thing so frustrating and humiliating as the war in Korea, they seemed to feel, must have been wrong. And anything so complicated as the truce we were engaged in to end that war must be bad. The noisy, unanswered cries of "defeat," "disgrace," "failure," and "appeasement" rang in their ears, and they wanted to know if all this was true.

I told them that I did not happen to think so, and I tried to tell them why. I suggested it was a little like looking at something a long way off through the wrong end of a telescope. I had had the same trouble, I added, trying to keep up with some of the events here at home. It was not until I came home and looked at them up close that they came into focus and made sense. And so I tried to do the same thing for them —by bringing a few of the lesser-known aspects of the war up close—by turning the telescope about.

My home-town neighbors seemed so relieved when the meetings adjourned that I decided I ought to pass the telescope around. That is the reason for this book. It is a personal interpretation of the war, as it added up to me, and I submit it with the sincere hope that perhaps it will allow its readers —and especially the men who fought in Korea—to feel a little better about their war.

They deserve to.

II

THE FIRST THING to know in order to understand the Korean war is that it was really several wars. That is, it had several distinct phases, and it was seldom the same *kind* of war for more than six months at a time. The enemy had much to do with this constant shifting of our fortunes. But we had a good deal of control over it ourselves. In general, and with only a few exceptions, the war at any given moment was a reflection of the personality and skill of the U.N. general in command at that moment.

In the early days, for example, when General Walton

Walker was in command, we tried to wage the war by moving up the roads and establishing lonely strong points from which to fight back at infiltrating enemy troops. This was an archaic and futile form of warfare, but under the circumstances it was the only kind of war we could fight. For we had to enter the peninsula overnight, in order to block the enemy, somehow, before he got too far. We could get only a handful of men there in a hurry, and we were forced, in the early weeks, to fight a loosely knit, hit-or-miss battle. The situation was entirely fluid, the terrain cut us off into isolated strong points, and we could not even begin to build a wall of men across Korea for months.

General Walker, who as commanding general of the Eighth Army in Japan—an occupation job—took the army to Korea and was its first commander there, had made his reputation in Europe, where he commanded one of Patton's tank corps. There, the enemy had been tough. But he had also been fairly predictable. He was fighting "our kind" of war, and we had him on flat terrain where it had been possible to use the network of French and German roads to fence him off, one section at a time, with tanks and firepower, until we had him cornered with his back to the Russians. But the Korean war bore no resemblance to World War II (in its later, trench and artillery-duel phase it was more like World War I). There were almost no good roads in Korea, and it was not good tank country in the Patton and Walker sense. The little peninsula (with a population, however, of 30,000,000) was so cut up with mountains and valleys that it was virtually impossible to sweep the enemy into a corner. If you were a unit commander, you discovered that by the time you had chased the enemy from the top of one mountain, where he had been taking pot shots at you, he would pop up on another peak nearby. Then, when you sent the rest of your men up there,

you'd find your rear unprotected. And on the first quiet, rainy night when you were trying to get some sleep, a company of North Koreans, wearing canvas sneakers, would come noiselessly up the valley *between* your two hills, and you would be lucky if you still had half your men when morning came.

Gradually, however, as we got the 7000-mile pipeline to Korea in working order and filled it with the men and guns we needed there, the situation changed for the better. When I got to Korea, eight months after the war started, guerrillas still operated in the rear areas, but it was possible to jeep up to the front lines, sit around in the open with the soldiers, and even go out on patrol with them without necessarily taking serious chances. The enemy was there, but he was elusive and lightly armed. He had almost no artillery at that time and he was more dangerous for his cunning and for his sudden fits of ratlike temper than for any real power.

Our own increased firepower proved too much for him, and when the enemy began to fall back in the winter of 1950, General MacArthur decided he could extend his original mission—which was to repel aggression by kicking the enemy back across the 38th Parallel—and push him, instead, clear to the Yalu, thus accomplishing, as a kind of political by-product, the unification of North and South Korea.

This was indeed a worthy cause. But it was destined, by its very nature, to run into trouble. We stirred up a hornet's nest of Chinese, who lived just across the Yalu and took a dim view of our attempt to press our luck. We might have known it, but apparently we did not.

At his Wake Island conference with President Truman, General MacArthur assured the President that the Chinese would not interfere. And then, not long before the Chinese struck, he flew to Korea to tell the troops that their war would be over by Christmas. The Chinese had different plans.

Should Mexico ever become politically divided, with the U.S. deeply interested—because of our geographical proximity—in the affairs of northern Mexico, while an enemy of ours aligned himself with southern Mexico, it might then be clear to us why the Chinese behaved as they did in the winter of 1951. If Mexico were invaded by an enemy force, the Monroe Doctrine, of course, would apply and we would come to the rescue. But let us assume, for the moment, that there was no such doctrine and that we were faced with the problem the Chinese faced in the winter of 1951. If an enemy army *were* to invade Mexico, we might not take any overt action so long as he did not come too close to us—if, say, he pushed only as far north as Mazatlán on the Tropic of Cancer and holed up there, his mission accomplished. But if he were to proceed on up the peninsula and finally had his troops wading around in the Rio Grande on our own border, I suspect that Texas, at least—Monroe Doctrine or not—would be raring to go to war. And Texas would be right.

The Chinese doubtless felt the same way. We knew, of course, that we were not about to invade Manchuria. But the Chinese, who had been conditioned for years by the Russian fear that the Red world was being encircled, probably made no such assumptions. It is probable that China was *asked* to "volunteer" in the Korean war when Russia discovered that her North Korean satellite troops were unable to hold their ground. And they may have been more than willing to do so. For they certainly gained a great deal from Russia (jets, arms, technical assistance, *and* the industrial rehabilitation of Manchuria) in return for their participation. But it is also probable that the Chinese would have lacked the motivation to take the fatal and expensive step of *attacking* us had we not gone roaring up to *their* Rio Grande and stood there, virtually thumbing our noses.

It is even more likely that no enemy in southern Mexico, hypothetical or otherwise, would make the mistake we made in Korea. If he were at all experienced in wars he would have assumed, as he came nearer to our Rio Grande border, that we would be getting nervous. He would have alerted his front-line troops for the possibility that they might be attacked by the Americans. He would be extremely naïve if he left us out of his plans and ignored the eventuality of our entry into the war altogether. And certainly, if his troops actually *captured* some Texans, the enemy commander would be completely derelict if he scoffed at this new development and continued to assume he had a clear field for his bravado.

But that, unfortunately, is precisely what happened in Korea. Our commanders did not foresee the Chinese intervention—or, if they did, they chose to ignore the danger signals—and as General S. L. A. Marshall brilliantly reports in his book, *The River and the Gauntlet,* our men were not prepared on our vulnerable front line for such a thing to happen.

A fellow correspondent dropped into a U.N. command post near the Yalu River one night—just before the big retreat—and saw a Chinese soldier who had just been captured and brought in for interrogation. The correspondent had been in China and so, because the interrogators had not and were not sure how to proceed, he spent the night giving them a hand.

Oh yes, the Chinese soldier said, there were quite a few of his people in Korea. And there were a lot more on the way.

The next day the same correspondent attended a briefing given by General Walker. Someone asked Walker about reports there were Chinese in the war.

Oh no, said Walker. That wasn't so. He wasn't worried about the Chinese.

General MacArthur was not worried either. Not only were his front-line troops unprepared for their rendezvous with the Chinese, but he had committed the additional military indiscretion of splitting his command. Tenth Corps, on the right flank, was commanded by General Ned Almond, one of MacArthur's Tokyo staff officers—in effect making the corps a sort of private MacArthur army. General Walker, though the Army commander in the field, had little or nothing to say about the disposition of troops on his own right flank. When the enemy hit, consequently, the divided front came apart at the seams and much of Tenth Corps had to be evacuated by sea. As a result of this collapse we rolled all the way back beyond Seoul, where we dug in to collect our wits, and our men wrote home that they would miss Christmas after all. It was an unmistakable defeat. Once, when our troops were falling back, General MacArthur rationalized the rout by saying it was a good idea, really, to make the enemy run that far trying to catch up. It extended his supply lines. The thought occurred to a number of other people at the time, in a moment of exasperated whimsey of course, that if that were the case we ought to refine that tactic and build long ramps out into the sea. Then we could lure the enemy out even farther and, when we got him out far enough, push him overboard—provided he didn't push us first.

At any rate General MacArthur's explanation served, just then, as a handy substitute for defeat.

General Ridgway came into the war about this time. And just in time. With his grenade and first-aid kit bouncing photogenically on his chest, his piercing eyes burning holes through everything and everyone he looked at, he roamed the demoralized front, telling off lax commanders, relieving frightened ones, putting tired ones out to pasture. "I don't

want your plans for defense," was his famous retort to officers who had fallen into the mood of the time. "I want to see your plan for attack."

Then Ridgway went out on the roads, where he stopped convoys heading south and told them to turn around and go back where they came from. He sent out orders for his troops to stop fighting just from the roads and the valleys and to get up on the ridges and hold onto them. Almost singlehandedly he turned the Eighth Army around, welded it into a solid line, and pushed it northward again, sweeping the enemy in front of him. The general even got into the battles himself. Once, when the 187th Airborne RCT (regimental command team) was making a parachute drop at Munsan in an attempt to seal off a segment of the enemy, Ridgway landed in a small plane before the area was secure and before the airborne commander himself had landed. When the latter, a brigadier general, finally did drift down in his chute he dropped into a mud puddle. Somebody reached down to help him up, and the tardy general was more chagrined than surprised to see it was the Army commander.

With Ridgway's prodding we got to the 38th Parallel once again, and across it—so we would have a better defensive position in case the enemy still wanted to fight, which he did. Once again the mission—to repel and punish aggression against South Korea—was accomplished. And once again General MacArthur was talking—this time in a public argument with his superiors in Washington—about moving on up to the Yalu. This time, however, he was removed from command, presumably on one or both of two grounds: (1) that no soldier, whatever his rank, could practice open insubordination and get away with it; (2) that even if we *were* to go to the Yalu again General MacArthur, because of our earlier debacle up there, was perhaps not the man best suited to handle the

assignment. General MacArthur flew home and General Ridgway went to Tokyo to replace him. It was a fitting reward for Ridgway's accomplishments in Korea.

When General Van Fleet took command from Ridgway, we had already gone about as far north as we were to go. Van Fleet's job was to hold the fort. And he, too, did an excellent job.

Van Fleet was a big, burly, likable commander. He had no flair for the dramatic. And I never saw him flustered. The story of his arrival at the front, which I happened to witness, explains a good deal about the success he was later to have.

The Chinese were in the midst of their spring, 1951, offensive. Their objective was to be in Seoul by May Day. I had been to the front the day before—or rather almost to the front. I had to stop to repair a tire at corps headquarters near Uijongbu, well to the rear of the front lines. And there I learned that the Chinese had broken through in some sectors and that they had even succeeded in sneaking patrols between corps and its divisions to the front and were setting up roadblocks. A few jeeps had already been ambushed. Someone suggested I bunk down at corps for the night rather than risk going any farther. It was a good idea, and I accepted.

I found a cot in the liaison tent, where officers from adjacent and subordinate units lived in order to be on hand for relaying messages and co-ordinating battle orders. The front was alive with Chinese attacks and U.N. counterattacks. No one slept. Throughout the night the liaison officers stuck by their crackling field radios and telephones, communicating with a tank battalion here, filtering reports from an infantry division over there, and trying to ascertain the situation in other corps areas across the front. It was the best place in Korea that night to get an idea of what was going on. The

situation, which was fairly critical, was not helped any by a report that came in from a nearby unit sometime after midnight warning us that a band of Chinese who had broken through were known to be milling around as far back as a road just west of corps headquarters. Tanks were sent out to find them.

I felt rather useless and helpless, just sitting on my bunk, so for lack of anything else to do I put on my pistol belt and went outside into the dense fog to run an unofficial check on the command post guards. As I was chatting with an MP we heard a series of strange, low whistles coming from the fog-shrouded valley in front of the CP. They seemed too mechanical to be sounds of nature. It was not difficult to conjure up a picture of Chinese cunningly signaling to each other that they had found the corps command post. We *would* have been a juicy target. The guard went inside to fetch an officer, who came out and listened with us. He finally decided the noises were made by birds. But he admitted it was an awfully early hour for birds to be awake, and he stayed outside, too, sending a soldier back into his tent to bring him his helmet.

Dawn finally came, without incident. Patrols which had been sent out to search the area returned with word that the Chinese had melted back behind their lines. But the corps officers, who bore a heavy responsibility for co-ordinating the battle, decided they could think better about the big picture if they did not have to worry all night about themselves. It was a sensible decision, and immediately after breakfast the tents were struck and the headquarters, with its three generals and numerous colonels, fell back some twenty miles to Yong Dung Po, which is just across the river from Seoul. The only thing they left behind, except for some closed latrines and garbage pits, was a clump of spring flowers

which had been planted, in a moment of optimism, outside one of the staff general's vans.

Hoping to catch a plane to another sector of the front, I went back to the Seoul airport. When General Van Fleet arrived at the same field a few minutes later for his first look around, it was a hectic moment to take command of an army. He did not know all that had transpired during the night. But he did know the situation at the front was critical. And he was just about to transfer to a small plane for a hop to Uijongbu and a conference with his corps commander when someone informed him his corps was no longer there. I have known a number of generals, some of whom were quite mild, but I do not believe any of them would have taken this minor but disturbing bit of chaos quite as General Van Fleet did. He did not turn on his aide, as some generals might have done, and bawl him out for not knowing this. He merely looked a little helpless. It was I, I remember, who mentioned that corps had moved to Yong Dung Po. Then, not knowing just what one *does* do for a lost general, and not knowing General Van Fleet as yet, I shut up. He spotted a Negro sergeant sitting in the only available jeep, ambled over to where the sergeant sat, asked him politely if he knew where Yong Dung Po was, and when the sergeant replied, "Yes, sir," asked him if he could bum a ride. Then he rode across the river to work, and those of us on the airfield knew that the Korean war was in steady, unrattled hands.

Within a few days the Chinese were out of breath and Van Fleet set out to tackle what was to be his greatest contribution to the war: the reorganization and retraining of the South Korean army. General Ridgway had begun the program in 1951. Van Fleet carried it to its conclusion. He was just the man for this job. We knew the general had made out extremely well with native troops in Greece, and we soon

learned in Korea that his earlier success had been no accident.

Throughout the war the Koreans had often been more of a liability than an asset. This was not their fault, however. Under Japanese rule, which lasted forty years, the Koreans had not been allowed to progress or to learn any skills—for fear they might become too good and rise against their masters. The Japanese had provided the technicians, leaving only the dirty work for the Koreans. When we went to Korea, for example, we had to search out Japanese port supervisors who had worked there and take them back with us. For the Koreans had never been allowed to learn how to operate the unloading machinery on their own docks. And when we tried to help the Koreans get their fishing fleets operating again, we had to go to Japan for the charts that told where the fish were. To keep the Koreans from becoming self-sufficient, the Japanese had always taken them out themselves and told them when to start fishing; the Koreans had never even been able to learn where they were. A few Koreans had served in the Japanese army, but always either as enlisted men or as junior officers. Consequently the average Korean soldier, though a game and amazingly sturdy little fellow, had little mechanical know-how and almost no experience in the art of leadership, without which any unit under pressure will fall apart.

There were individual exceptions. Early in the war we had taken a good number of Koreans into American units as extra riflemen and scouts, and they were invaluable. They learned quickly, and with proper leadership they became such good fighters that I often heard American sergeants and lieutenants say they would rather have ROKs for certain missions than GIs. But these men were considered good because they were serving directly under and with Americans.

To stem the tide against the Chinese and to help man the 150-mile-long front, we had had to rush all-ROK units into combat, in many cases without even giving them basic training. And because they were not adequately trained we could not afford to entrust to them the more expensive weapons of war like tanks, planes, and artillery pieces. It was a vicious circle, and as a result the poor ROKs were ill prepared for the crushing attacks the Chinese threw at them. They hated and feared the Chinese—because of earlier historical experience with brutal Chinese overlords—and the Chinese, knowing their weakness, usually picked on them more than they did on us.

To make up for the ROK deficiency in equipment, we sent U.S. tank and artillery units over to give them a hand. Even with this extra support the ROKs often buckled under the pressure of modern, unfamiliar war. And when this happened they usually ran so fast and so silently to the rear that the GIs in their midst did not even know they had left until it was too late and the Chinese were on top of them. We lost a good number of Americans because of this, and for a long time the average American soldier had no use, understandably enough, for the average ROK. The Koreans are sensitive people, and when the word got around among the Americans that they could not fight they developed a serious inferiority complex and decided we were right.

This was where General Van Fleet came in. Flying up and down the front in a cub plane, he visited all the ROK units, spotted the smartest officers, put them in command of training schools to turn out other smart officers, pulled ROK units from the line, one at a time, for extensive maneuvers and retraining—in some cases for their first *basic* training—and saw to it that they got their full complement of weapons, including artillery.

Through it all he treated his eager charges as if he were their firm but friendly uncle. He let them know he trusted and respected them. He told them he knew they could fight, and that when he sent them back to the front he expected them not to let him down. They did not. The same troops who had once crumbled and run in front of the feared Chinese went back up front and at places like Whitehorse Mountain took on wave after wave of Chinese assaults and withstood some of the heaviest artillery barrages ever fired at anyone, in any war, anywhere. There is no doubt that they did all this for General Van Fleet as much as for their own honor. He liked them, and they knew it. And they reciprocated.

Van Fleet was the right man in the right place at the right time. Through the long periods of stalemate which coincided with his command, it was his personality—solid and plodding where Ridgway had, with similar necessity, been flashy and dramatic—which best fitted the ticklish job of keep the Eighth Army on its toes, but at the same time in right rein. For Van Fleet's orders were to defend the line and hold the fort, but not to move forward on any casualty-consuming adventures. He was to inflict as much punishment on the Reds as he could with minimum losses to his own side. It was a difficult assignment for a two-fisted general like Van Fleet. He understandably chafed at the constraints placed on him. And his own personal frustration at not being allowed to fight it out to a finish, with his friends the ROKs at his side, boiled over when he finally returned home and had his say.

As the Koreans responded to Van Fleet's magnetic warmth, he responded to theirs. And as they fought their hearts out for him, their goals and their desires—including fighting on to the Yalu and the unification of Korea—became his, and Van Fleet became the Koreans' most devoted champion. Consid-

ering how he felt about the war in Korea, Van Fleet's achievement—that of fighting a classic example of static, limited warfare—is all the more remarkable. For he worked under some serious handicaps.

One of his problems was that he could go just so far with his masterpiece, the ROK army. Its generals were all young men (mostly in their early thirties) whose only previous experience had been as junior officers in the Japanese army. Even under Van Fleet's expert tutelage they could hardly have been expected to acquire, overnight, the kind of solid judgment and experienced intuition which is necessary to plan and run off large-scale battles. They were at their best when they had a U.S. division in the line next to them, as an anchor and an inspiration. And they were too young and inexperienced (compared to our generals, who are in their fifties before they take on such tremendous responsibilities) to turn completely loose. They especially lacked experience in the kind of high-level staff work that is necessary to dovetail and manipulate all the hundreds of units and hinges and overlapping flanks which make up a front as long and complex as that which jutted across Korea. They would be able, because of their retraining, to stand alone against an all-North Korean army, but against the wily Chinese soldier, with all his professional tricks, they were still likely to make some amateurish and fatal mistakes. They could not—and still cannot—go it alone. They still need us, right in the line beside them.

Though the concept of Oriental "inscrutability" is usually overstressed by Westerners, the Korean officers—for all their West Point-type training—retained a number of strictly Oriental characteristics which made it difficult for them to run a modern army with our standards. A ROK colonel, for example—a regimental commander to whom we had given

extensive training and attention—had his position attacked one night by the Chinese and was forced by strong enemy pressure to pull his troops back off a crucial hill. He decided, in a moment of Oriental embarrassment, not to report his predicament to higher headquarters. It was simply a matter of face. Instead he kept his own counsel and before dawn the following morning he was all set to order his regiment into a frontal assault on the hill. He was hoping to take it back before anyone missed it. But in order to keep his problem a secret he had to make a further decision: he would launch the attack without air or artillery support—which he would have had to request through channels, thus giving it away that he was in trouble.

Fortunately an American advisory officer learned of his plan in the nick of time and put a stop to it. Without air and artillery to support his attack he would almost certainly have annihilated his own regiment in a suicidal mission. The enemy could then have poured through the gap in the line caused by the ROK colonel's failure, and that, in turn, might have meant the eventual loss of the entire divisional sector. But even more important, the colonel had withheld important information from his higher commanders. They would not have blamed him for the loss of the hill; but it was important that they *knew* about it, and in time to take emergency action. The failure of one colonel to report the exact situation on his front, whether it was caused by a matter of face or a broken telephone line, could be disastrous.

We did our best to teach the ROKs these basic principles. But it was impossible, in so short a time, for us to change their entire psychology to the point where they *thought* like us and we could trust them implicitly. In a way the ROK army was like a Frankenstein monster. We created it and it fought magnificently, but we could not always control it.

But General Van Fleet's greatest problem was not the ROKs. It was the nearly insurmountable job of maintaining morale and fighting spirit in a static army. The GIs were credited with so many points per month—depending on how close they happened to be to the front. As soon as they had totaled enough points they could leave Korea. This was a fair and necessary personnel policy, and one of its benefits was that it produced a turnover in men which not only spread the duty equitably around but at the same time gave the army a larger cadre of experienced fighters.

However, the policy also had its drawback: it seriously hampered fighting initiative. It is the most understandable reaction in the world that many men took the line of least resistance, kept their heads down, took as few chances as they could get away with, and lived for each month and its points to pass safely by. To keep an army on its toes in such a situation was a difficult task. And *that* is one of the reasons I believe the war in Korea was well fought. It was nothing short of magnificent to see the number of American kids who did *not* keep their heads down, who *did* take chances, and who were willing, when the chips were down, to stand up and fight, whether the war seemed to make much sense to them or not.

We could not have stayed in Korea if we had not had a lot of men like that. And it is of those men, and of their feats, that I am thinking when I say we were not *defeated* in Korea.

III

WHY, IF WE HAD so many good men in Korea and such good generals to command them, did we not fight the war there to a finish? Why, if it was a good war and needed to be fought, did we not go on up to the Yalu again, destroy the enemy, and give ourselves a real victory? Why did we have to take a substitute?

These are the $64 questions about Korea. It is the answers to *them* which have become lost in the general confusion. They are not so complicated as they seem. The difficulty lies chiefly in finding the original thread and following it to the end.

The war in Korea was never intended as a conclusive war. Unlike World Wars I and II, which were supposed to *end* something, once and for all, the Korean war was fought from the start as an emergency measure. No one thought—or should have—that by landing on that tiny appendix to Asia we would be defeating world communism. We went to Korea for two simple reasons: (1) a stand had to be made someplace; the enemy had to be warned; (2) we could not afford to let Korea go.

It was a ghastly place to make a stand. It was, as I have said, poor terrain, unsuited to the efficient tank-infantry combinations we had used so effectively in Europe. And it bore no resemblance, despite an Oriental cast of characters, to our war against Japan. We had chased the Japanese from island to island, with the full realization that as we kicked them off one island they could not come back *there* again. We had no such assurance in Korea, where we dangled precariously from a narrow peninsula and were in the position of butting our heads against all the dead weight of a vast continent looming above us. Our forces had to be supplied by sea—painstakingly, boat by boat and gun by gun—while the enemy had only to pour his men and materials overland from the secure interior of Russia and China. We were in the enemy's own back yard, within easy reach of his millions of reserves, and it was a brave act on our part ever to invade it at all.

The war in Korea was started at a time in our history when we were reduced to answering the enemy's challenges. Wherever he started a fire, we sent a fire engine. We called this a policy of containment, and though it served its purpose it became apparent after a while that there might be some question as to who was containing whom. There were piles of tinder everywhere in the world, and if the enemy chose to

stick matches to all of them simultaneously, we would soon be out of fire engines. At least we would have deployed them where the *enemy* had wanted them sent when he started the fires. And then, if that had been his only goal, he would have won the game.

But we had to send the fire engines to Korea. We had to contain the Red Army there. One look at a map will show why. If the enemy had seized all of Korea he would have had a perfect outflanking position from which to nibble away at Japan. Pusan is only 125 miles from the vital Yawata steel mills on the southern Japanese island of Kyushu. Japan, herself, is as vital to our over-all defense, as a Pacific base, as England is on the other side of the world. Both islands are unsinkable aircraft carriers anchored permanently off the shores of either unfriendly or potentially unfriendly continents. But though England is a friendly and secure ally of long standing, Japan, of course, is not. And unlike England, she was—and still is—in no shape to defend herself. (See Chapters XI and XII for a further discussion of Japan.) We had to counter the threat ourselves, even if it came from that most unprepossessing of enemy outposts, North Korea.

And so we went to war. Our task was to push back the flood of Communist power which threatened Korea and Japan, and to build a dam across Korea against it, a dam of determined men standing on sandbagged bunkers, with guns and tanks to back them up.

But it was not our show alone.

Though the U.S. challenged the enemy's move and was the first to send in troops, we also called for help, as we entered battle, from the United Nations, which we had helped found and nurture for this very kind of emergency. Troops from fifteen different countries responded—including, eventually, a full division from the British Commonwealth (which was

also sitting on other hot spots throughout the world), a regiment of Turks (who had good reason, because of their dangerous proximity to Russia, to stay home under the covers if they wanted to), a battalion from France (which had a dam of her own to build in Indo-China), and companies and platoons from such varied and brave little countries as Thailand, Belgium, the Philippines, Colombia, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, South Africa, Ethiopia (which remembered that a prior united action might have saved *her* life), and Greece (which remembered Van Fleet).

It was a motley crowd, and many a front-line switchboard operator went slowly crazy trying to unscramble the nightly babel of tongues that poured through his earphones—Turks trying to reach their mission headquarters in Tokyo, Greeks trying to get word to the Greek transport pilot in Pusan to bring up some more olive oil on his next courier run, the French complaining about the lag in their wine ration, a Cockney sergeant trying to raise NAAFI (the British PX in Seoul) to request another batch of tea and marmalade for his colonel's mess. The Puerto Ricans had a regiment in Korea, and sometimes one of their men would get on the line and momentarily forget his broken English. And every once in a while an operator, if he was lucky, would hear the soft, lovely voice of a Norwegian or Swedish nurse trying to get through from a forward hospital to a compatriot on a hospital ship anchored off Pusan.

It was a pleasant and stimulating juxtaposition of brave and dedicated people. And one of the miracles of the Korean war was that so many diverse people, with so many different food requirements, fighting methods, and tongues, could have been welded together into a cohesive army. Exciting as it was, the adventure often had its tragic moments. The U.S. provided liaison officers and communications personnel, who

were scattered through all these front-line units to handle the complicated equipment and radio jargon necessary to bring in a flight of supporting American jet planes—whose pilots, of course, did not speak Greek or Ethiopian—or a barrage of supporting U.S. artillery. Now and then, in the rush of war and the clash of accents, there would be a misunderstanding: a plane would come in and accidentally drop its bombs short of its target—sometimes, unfortunately, on top of the Greeks or the Turks. Or occasionally the American specialists who were sharing the battle with the non-American troops would become casualties themselves. Then, until replacements could be sent up to handle the microphones, the non-Americans would have to go without American air or artillery support.

Perhaps the worst disaster of all along this line occurred to the British, whose only language problem in a war managed by the U.S. for the U.N. was that they did not speak American. Commands and bits of intelligence passed along in the heat of battle are often so subtle that even a mispronounced word can spell tragedy.

Once, when the Gloucestershire Regiment happened to be under the control of an American division, it was hit by a furious enemy attack. The American general, so the front-line legend goes, got a call through to the British colonel commanding the Gloucesters and asked him, "How are you making out?" The situation was critical, even untenable. But the colonel was too much of a soldier, and a gentlemanly British soldier at that, to put it just that way. Instead, with a stiff upper lip and typical understatement, he muttered back over the phone, "It *is* a bit sticky." A British general would have understood his meaning and might have pulled him back in time to save the unit. Instead the American commander, who could not be expected to understand, muttered

something like "Well, carry on," and hung up the phone. The Gloucesters stuck by their position, willing to fight, as they thought the Americans wanted them to, to the very last. Finally, with the Chinese overrunning them and the situation hopelessly out of hand, the Gloucester colonel gave permission for his men to leave and make it back to friendly territory if they could. The Chinese followed them as they went, picking off one man at a time. As if this were not bad enough, American tankers on the front line thought the British crawling toward them were Chinese and shot up several more. Only a handful survived. The colonel kept his lip stiff to the last and remained behind to beg the enemy to care for his wounded. He was taken prisoner.

And so we did not go it alone. As we pushed the enemy back toward the 38th Parallel and over it again, our fortunes were bound up, almost inextricably, with the fortunes and men of fifteen other nations, without whose help we could not have accomplished the task. The Greeks took this hill, the fanatic Ethiopians took that one; the Turks held one divisional flank, the Puerto Ricans another; the British helped seal off the enemy's route to Seoul; and the ROKs—who were to have some 45,000 of their men killed in action—manned more than half the line as the war ended.

It was not entirely our war, then, to win or to lose.

There was no way to fight it out in Korea without sustaining heavy casualties. But some of the small countries, which had already spent heavily of their treasure, could not afford to spend more. And neither, if I have read the results and some of the speeches of the 1952 presidential campaign correctly, could we. If we could not get our boys home, we at least did not relish throwing them into any more bloody battles.

But it was not merely manpower that curtailed us from seeking an all-out victory. If it had been only a matter of cannon fodder, we could probably have found enough, somewhere. Again, the explanation for our predicament does not lie on the surface, in the hands of some diplomat or general whom we can pin down through investigation and publicly horsewhip for his error. It lies, once again, in the elusive nature of the war itself.

It is just possible, for example, that we had the enemy licked at one time and did not know it.

When the truce talks began in July 1951 the enemy was hurt. In May of that year we had counterattacked the Chinese and had crippled him badly in several sectors. In some areas we had overrun his stocks of ammunition, which, because these are normally placed to the immediate rear, near the guns, indicated that we must have pierced through the crust of his defenses. In some sectors, then, we had the enemy on the ropes. And it is possible that had we been able to sustain our attack and keep punching we might have kayoed him. That is, we might have destroyed the bulk of the armies he *then* had in Korea.

But we lacked two items we needed to finish the job then and there: (1) We needed reserves. Our men were tired just putting the enemy on the ropes. The situation had developed so suddenly that we had no time to prepare for it. We needed a new team, and quickly. That called for major decisions in Seoul, Tokyo, Washington, London, Paris, and a lot of other places, all at once. It meant getting dozens of wheels moving, hundreds of ships and planes, thousands of men and millions of bullets—all in a rush, if we were to capitalize on our big chance. But (2) we lacked the necessary solid information on which to base such momentous decisions. We

lacked confirmed intelligence reports. We knew the enemy was hurt, but we were not sure just how badly. We were not sure of his residual strength. We knew we had captured much of his front-line ammunition, but we did not know what proportion of his total ready stock this amounted to. And though we had a hunch the enemy was reeling, we did not find out how badly until later, from hindsight, though the enemy himself was only a mile or less away.

This problem, the nightmare of intelligence, haunted us throughout the Korean war and is another phase of that war which must be understood before it is possible to realize what really happened in Korea, and why.

No general, even if he has a million spare men, a thousand extra field pieces, and a blank check from home, can conscientiously or safely move so much as a regiment against the enemy until he is certain what he will run into. He is like a businessman who cannot gamble his resources until he knows what the market is. The general must at least know the odds. His intelligence—knowledge of the enemy's strength and disposition, his morale and will to fight, and his probable line of action—is invaluable. But it is also extremely difficult to procure (anything so valuable always is). The job of collecting intelligence in Europe, where we had innumerable informers eager to help us and with whom we could plant our own people without too great risk of detection (because of racial and language similarities) was difficult enough. In Korea, an alien land in which we had no ties of culture or blood or language, the work was often nearly impossible.

A good illustration of how important and difficult it was to keep tabs on the enemy came on the first day of the truce, when both sides began, for the first time, to rise up from the protection of their holes and look across at the other side

without the danger of being blown to bits by a sudden barrage of mortars. It was a fantastic experience, especially for the Marines. For months they had been face to face with the Chinese. They had watched the enemy lines like hawks looking for a mouse, and they had listened to every sound coming from the enemy with the earnest concentration of a convocation of bird watchers trying to identify a new wren. They finally decided that the Chinese dug in opposite them consisted, at most, of a company. This was an important decision, for if the Marines had been ordered to attack the Chinese their success and their lives would have depended upon their taking along enough men to handle the job. Imagine their shock on truce morning when the Chinese crawled out of their hillside bunkers and turned out to be not a company of about two hundred men but a regiment of more than a thousand!

If you are a commander, squared off across sandbags, guns, barbed wire, and mine fields, against an enemy who is playing for keeps, there is little you can do, in the way of a direct approach, to find out what he is up to. But that must not deter you. You cannot just sit and wait and see what *he* does. You have to know before he attacks whether he is likely to attack, and about how hard. If you don't, you stand to lose your men, your hill, your job, *and* your war. There *are* ways.

Sometimes you can pull off a small attack, small enough so that you don't risk too many of your own men, but large enough to ensure piercing the enemy's lines and getting back with a live prisoner or two. The more the better, but they must, of course, be alive. Then you put your interrogators to work on the prisoners and hope they come up with something. Sometimes if you can learn only the prisoner's home town you've got something. It may give you your first clue,

for example, that Cantonese troops have been moved into the war. This may not mean so much to you, on the front lines, but it will be helpful to men in higher headquarters who are keeping track of the enemy's armies. In order to clarify your own situation, there on the front line, you need more detailed information than that, of course. You need to know exactly where, on that range of hills facing you, he is dug in at his strongest; you'd like to know where his artillery pieces are—so you can have them knocked out—and you have to know as much about the enemy's troop movements as you can determine. Prisoners are good sources of this kind of information—provided you can get enough of them, for purposes of cross-checking, and provided they *know* anything. In Korea, unfortunately, we usually had to interview a large number of men—we rarely got an infantry officer—before we could string together enough miscellaneous sentences to make even a paragraph for G-2. The men were not loquacious, and they were not too well informed.

Instead of attacking for your information, you could also send out patrols, to probe and feel the enemy's muscle. This was done daily. The patrol's job was to wend its way through the barbed wire and mines and the enemy's field of fire and creep as close to the enemy positions as possible. There the men were to keep their eyes open—without being seen—and their ears alert—without being heard—and return again with whatever scrap of information or hunch about the enemy's strength and disposition they could gather. Sometimes they were able to bring back a prisoner. More often they returned minus one or two of their own men.

During the early days of the war, before we went to the Yalu, patrols were able to go out in daylight, when it was possible actually to see something and when, on their return, their officers could ask, reasonably enough, "Well, what did

you see?" About halfway through the war, however, the enemy's artillery and mortar fire became so heavy and accurate that we had to stop sending out daylight patrols. They were sitting ducks, and it was a waste of cannon fodder to shove them into the open. We shifted, instead, to night patrolling, so the enemy could not see and fire on our men so easily. Of course the patrols could not see the enemy either. And we had to be content from then on with a good deal less information from that source.

Night patrols usually went out immediately after dusk and followed a prearranged route—so the men who stayed behind could follow their progress and keep them covered in the event the patrol came under attack. Sometimes the patrol would find a place to hide and lie in ambush for an hour or so—just in case the enemy happened by on a patrol of his own. At other times, when we had been out of contact with the enemy for some time and our commanders were begging for *some* idea of where the enemy was, we would order a patrol to go out as deeply as it could, make a little noise so as to draw fire—thus determining the enemy's approximate strength and his nervous reaction as well as his location—and hightail it for home. More often than not the men on these patrols did not see or hear a thing. Either the enemy had pulled back to regroup, or he purposely held his fire in order to make us think he didn't live there any more. On these occasions, when the pickings were slim and the sightings rare, the intelligence officer could only ask a patrol on its return, "Well, did you smell anything?" This was not as silly a question as it may sound. The Chinese liked a good deal of garlic in their food. And the odor from it usually lingered over an area for several hours after they had eaten. An experienced patrol could sometimes hazard a good guess as to the enemy's approximate strength, the hour he'd been

around, and perhaps even the direction he had taken, all from studying the subtle whiff of garlic in the still, night air. It was a fascinating game, but an extremely inconclusive way to fight a modern war.

We had other ways of studying the enemy. We made reconnaissance flights over enemy territory and brought back aerial photographs. Our intelligence experts would pore over these through high-powered magnifying glasses, and an experienced photo-interpreter could tell a fresh hole in the ground, or a fresh bit of camouflage, from an old one, just by looking at a picture of it, taken from thousands of feet in the air. Sometimes, if he spotted enough holes, he knew he had an enemy build-up area. We usually let these areas ripen until we were sure they were chock-full of men. We could seldom see the men in the pictures, for in daylight, when our recon planes went over, the men usually hid out. But at night, when we were fairly certain they'd be outside getting some fresh air or listening to the exhortations of their commissars, we'd fly a B-29 or two in very high, and ever so quietly, and let them have it. This was good use of intelligence, but it was a drop in the bucket compared to the millions of men—and shovels—which the enemy had at his disposal.

One of our best sources of information in this, as in all wars, was from agents. We were lucky in this field to have had another right man in the right place. He is a man whose name was never reported in the press, and probably won't be. I happened to stumble across his existence, and though I spent months haunting his hideaway, trying to get him to spring at least a part of his story, he was too conscientious a spy ever to give in. Without divulging his name—in order to keep

a promise not to publicize him so long as he was on the job—I'm going to tell as much about him as I can, to show how few our friends were in Korea and how difficult they were to come by.

Fortunately someone had thought about Korea long before it happened—six years before, to be exact—and had sent this American, whom I shall call Bill, to set up an intelligence apparatus there. Bill is a big, beefy, fast-talking man who looks and acts more like a motor sergeant or a chief cook than he does an agent—in fact he once *was* a motor sergeant. He learned to speak Korean fluently, a most difficult feat, and he had a good head start on the war. Before it began he had roamed the length and breadth of Korea—under various guises—and when it broke out he had a small but devoted band of friends on both sides of the Parallel whom he knew he could count on. He had compiled dossiers on North Korean leaders, and he knew more about Kim Il Sung and his generals than perhaps even their wives and mistresses knew. He had also kept tabs on enemy airfields, barracks construction, and troop locations. He was our only solid link with North Korea, and it was his advice and inside information that were responsible, more than anything else, for our ability to stay there, against the tremendous odds and under the immense confusion which marked the early days.

When I discovered him, Bill was well hidden away in a compound in Seoul. You had to pass several furtive-looking, on-their-toes Korean guards to get in, then climb a steep flight of stairs, wind around through a maze of hallways in what appeared to be an old schoolhouse, climb another flight of stairs, and finally reach his door, which was always closed. You always knocked before entering, for you never knew whom he had closeted with him.

He wore an old pair of fatigues, which had been washed

too often to fit him, and he sat, awkwardly, in a huge, red, revolving, overstuffed chair that had once belonged to Kim Il Sung. On the floor were big trunks full of snapshots—pictures made by his agents of North Korean planes and pilots, of Communist executions and firing squads, of Pyongyang politicians, and of his own eager young helpers. He had a terrain map of Korea which was so big it had to run sideways along one entire wall. A stuffed bird of some kind, presumably left over from the building's school days, stood on a filing cabinet, like a mute guard over the room when Bill was out. At his elbow was a short-wave radio with which he kept in touch with his detachments on the secret islands off both coasts, from which the U.N. carried on radar, rescue, and intelligence operations. He also had telephones on his desk, but he seldom used them. Usually he just opened a window and bellowed for someone in the compound when he wanted anything.

It wasn't Hitchcock, but it worked beautifully.

Most of Bill's unit consisted of bright young Koreans who had heard about his work and come around to volunteer their services. There was no pay in it for them. And no glory. They had to keep their work secret for fear some "friend" or even relative might turn out to be with the enemy and tip off someone in North Korea to watch for them.

These men were Bill's agents, and their job was to get into North Korea, learn all they could about the enemy, and then get word of what they knew back to Bill in time for it to do the U.N. some good. There were all kinds of ways of getting them in. Some just drifted across the front when no one was looking. Others were dropped in by parachute in the dead of night. Still others were landed by boat on enemy shores, then picked up later at some rendezvous point.

Bill could not get the kind of boat he needed for this

risky operation—it had to be fast, quiet, strong enough to withstand shore fire, and well armed—so he built his own, in a boatyard he set up in the back yard of his compound, right in the center of Seoul and fifteen miles from the nearest harbor. Whenever he could get away from his secret reports and his radio, he'd sneak down to the yard and spend his time sawing on a piece of timber or watching the Korean shipbuilders (who were also volunteers) as they hammered away at the deck planking. He watched every piece of wood go into his boat, and for a good reason: about twice a month Bill went along on a mission himself, just to keep his oar in, and he wanted to make sure the boat would get him there, and back.

There was no military precedent for this kind of outfit, and so Bill had to scrounge for much of his gear: boat engines from the Navy at Inchon, plywood from an Army headquarters, radio parts from the Signal Corps, and even food and medicine for his Koreans from friendly quartermaster and medical depots. He had a staff of American officers and enlisted men working under him, but he supervised every detail himself. Once, within the space of fifteen minutes, I saw him talk over the radio with an agent in North Korea, discuss the merits of an engine he needed with a naval officer who had dropped by, assign a lieutenant to go out with a truck and steal some extra cots someplace for his men, pick up a hammer and show his Korean carpenters how to anchor a joist in an improvised recreation room he was building for his unit, go back to the radio to give instructions for the evacuation of a wounded agent from a secret island base, then jump in his jeep and head for the airport, from where he hastily flew up to the base himself to make sure the man was properly cared for.

He was the hardest-working man I ever saw in Korea. He

kept moving a good eighteen hours a day, seven days a week. He interviewed agents before they went out, interrogated them when they returned, and read every scrap of information that came in about North Korea. He ate lunch at his desk—brought to him by his Korean number one boy, who'd been with him for six years and could tell, just by looking at Bill, what he was thinking—in English or Korean. Bill never took a drink and he didn't smoke. And he was never seen with a Korean girl. A sergeant who worked for Bill—and who confessed to me one day that this was the weirdest outfit he'd ever been associated with during fifteen years in the Army—told me Bill had no personal life at all. His only relaxation was tinkering with his boats. As for girls, Bill had an idea his Korean followers would lose their respect for him the minute he stopped working and showed he was human. So long as he kept them guessing, he was boss. He set a fast and relentless pace, and with the odds against him—as they were against anyone in his kind of work—he knew he could never relax it. When he went to sleep at night, it was in the same compound he worked in, with two telephones by his bed—one of them hooked up to his short-wave radio.

But even Bill, with his dedicated, inexhaustible energy, was fighting an uphill battle. The Koreans are a tough, and by nature a cruel, people. Like other Orientals, their society is shot through with intrigue and with complex, built-in channels of intelligence and counterintelligence. They have had so much experience with police repression—even under Rhee—that they seem to have developed an instinct for knowing when they are among friends and when someone in the group is a stool pigeon. No one trusts anyone. And despite the fact that every other Korean boy seems to be named Kim—and the ones in between Paik—the Koreans themselves have no trouble keeping their people apart and watching

them all. It may take a long time, if the man is clever, but an agent is usually found out. And when he is, the reaction, in cruel Korea, is always swift and usually fatal. On Bill's wall were framed portraits of some of his own young agents who had not come back.

We had a good deal of trouble along this line from people on our own side. Once the South Korean police captured a North Korean air force officer who had escaped and made his way to Seoul. Presumably he knew a good deal about the enemy's air potential. The U. S. Air Force, hungry for anything it could learn on this subject, heard about the captured officer and sent an intelligence man hurrying to the Seoul police station to have a good long and informative talk with the prisoner. We knew that as an escapee he was probably a turncoat and would be likely to tell all he knew. But our man got to the station too late. The South Koreans, in a typical moment of angry retribution, had summarily shot the officer as a spy. It had never occurred to them that he might be more valuable alive. They had made no attempt to question him.

The enemy behaved the same way, only worse. Rarely did one of our agents, who was unlucky enough to get captured, face any alternative but immediate execution. The occasional exception came when he fell into the hands of an enemy unit which was smart enough—usually the more practical Chinese—to think of a better solution: put the man to work for *them.* When this happened the man would be milked of all he knew, given a brief brainwashing, and sent back to us. He would tell us just enough not to arouse our suspicions, and then, after a brief rest, we would send him back again to spy on the enemy. There he would tell the enemy officers just enough about us not to arouse *their* suspicions—and come bouncing back again. It was a precarious life at best. And it

watered down by a good fifty per cent the man's value to us. Even so, what few little tidbits he continued to provide were better than no intelligence at all.

For a good deal of our lower-level intelligence, upon which we had to base our day-to-day conduct of the war, we were forced to rely on an even further refinement of this system. We used men, and occasionally women and even children, who went back and forth across the lines, pretending to be simple peasant folk who were naïvely innocent of the fact that they were cutting right across the margins of a war, and yet who were known to everyone for what they really were: double agents—spies for both sides. Because each side naturally prided itself on being able to get more out of these agents than the other side did, the practice developed into a steady, if erratic, source of information.

We had to learn something, often *anything*, about the enemy to our front. Our patrols had penetrated as far as they could go. We could spot nothing significant on the aerials. We had to have some splinter of intelligence on which to base our plans. The naïve old Korean farmer might, in his nervous excitement, give us just the clue we needed. Usually it was nothing very solid. Perhaps only that "two days' walk before" he had seen some strangers—no, he would say, they were not Koreans, they were Chinese—and they were digging a hole for some kind of gun. No, they had no truck; they had to pull the gun by hand. Where was the gun? Behind the village of Kodum-ri, next to the road, maybe one hundred paces from the last house. (Our officers pinpointed this on a map, for future artillery target designations.) How big was the gun? Oh, he hadn't looked too closely. It was too dangerous, you know, to act too curious around the enemy. But perhaps the hole in the end of the gun was just about as big as that can of food there on the stove.

This was nothing startling or tremendously valuable. We probably would have discovered the gun by taking sound bearings on it later, when it began to fire on us. But, as any reader of detective stories knows, a good investigator can fit enough small clues together and finally, if he's lucky, solve the crime. So can a good G-2 officer.

The enemy, of course, played the same game. He also needed information. He was ahead of us already, for he was indigenous and he knew better how to handle the people. Even so, he usually had big gaps on *his* intelligence charts. And so, when the old man left our command post with his can of food—roughly the size of a gun tube—he was sent along through channels and allowed to cross the lines, so he could come back again one day. The Chinese would meet him when he got across, usher him to *their* command post, and ask him what he had seen. Oh, he might say, nothing important this trip. But they would not accept this, and after making this clear they would ask him again.

Well, he might say, he had seen some big tanks across the valley. Yes, the enemy interrogators would say, they knew about those—the tanks had been *shooting* at them. What else had he seen? Well, he had seen an officer with silver insignia in the American tent. Naturally, said the enemy—they assumed the Americans had officers. What else? Their tone of voice might have sounded threatening by now. And because the farmer lived with his family on their side of the line and depended for his family's life on pleasing both sides just a little, he had to think of something that would satisfy them.

Describe the patch on the officer's shoulder, the enemy might prompt him, just in case the unit had been shifted and a fresh outfit brought in. The old farmer had not noticed, and he grew a little panicky as he stroked his black, thin beard.

Oh yes, he said finally, his old head shaking as if to tell

them how stupid he really was. When he returned through the lines, he explained, he had had to be very careful. For two days before, when he went across, he had noticed that the Americans were out digging small holes and planting things in the ground. He had had to walk a long way around his usual route. Where was this? the enemy shouted at him, bringing out their maps and making him bend over them. Carefully, they showed him on the map where he was just then, where he had been on the American side—they often knew the command post locations—and where he had come across the previous evening. Where were the holes in relation to all this? The old man, who could not read a map, did not understand. They showed him again, describing how everything looked on the ground in relation to the map. Had he come over this field before he reached their lines? Or down this draw? Was there a stream where he left the road? Was there a farmhouse where the holes were?

Finally, when he understood, the old man nodded swiftly, relieved that at last he had pleased them. A Chinese officer took out his pencil and marked his symbol for our mines over the spot the old man settled on.

We would have a fact, and the enemy would have a fact. That the enemy sometimes got a bigger and better fact than we did was due not so much to inferior intelligence—for after the Yalu debacle we had learned our lesson—as it was to the original and nearly insurmountable proposition concerning Korea: that we were fighting an uphill battle in an alien land.

IV

THERE WERE no short cuts to a victory in Korea.

It was the first war we had fought since the advent of the Atomic Era, and it was natural that something remarkable should have been expected from it in the way of an easy victory. We now have planes capable of flying halfway around the world, releasing atomic bombs, refueling in the air, and flying home again. We have perfected and tested artillery pieces that can fire atomic shells. We know that these are devastating weapons, capable of inflicting tremendous damage on the enemy.

Why, then, could we not, especially in a tiny country like Korea, just sit back and blow the place up by pushing some buttons? Why didn't we drop some atomic bombs and get it over with? Why didn't we turn our Air Force loose, especially across the Yalu, and really get down to business? Why didn't we use atomic artillery? Why did we have to waste so many men on the ground when we have such modern weapons which are supposed to make war so much cheaper and easier to fight?

These are the easiest questions of all to answer.

Korea *is* a tiny country, as countries go, and relatively backward. Its Japanese conquerors had built railroads and a few highways in order to simplify the task of milking the country of the rice, fish, and minerals they wanted from it. But the average Korean still lives much as his ancestors did. He has no car or truck, or access to one. When he has something heavy to haul, even over a great distance, he simply bends over, shoves the load onto his strong back, and starts plodding down the road. Korea's startling ability to produce championship distance runners is due largely to the fact that her young people are used to running, not riding or cycling, when they are in a hurry. They have a reserve supply of stamina.

Korea is a backward country. But it is also a tough and resilient country. And its very backwardness served the enemy well. In fact the enemy's ways at times were *so* obsolete and crude that our modern superweapons were on an entirely different level. The two opposing ways of life just did not meet and the two sides were often poorly matched. We were *too* modern. We counted too much on our fast planes and our big machines of war. We could hurt the enemy, but he always found ways to minimize the punch. Then, when we weren't looking, the enemy—in his very back-

wardness—was able to bounce back and start all over again. Where we were powerful, he was merely rugged. Where we had the mobility to move fast, he was plodding and determined. But most important, he was resourceful and clever enough to turn these disadvantages to his own purpose, and to react against us on a cultural level so much lower than ours, and on a mechanical level so much slower, that we could barely reach him, much less destroy him.

For example, when the enemy decided to raise some hell around Seoul by harassing the area with his own airpower, he did not send down modern jet bombers which would flash over us in a second and hammer us with bombs and rockets before we knew it. If he *had* done that, we probably could have stopped him. For we had sleek jet interceptors standing by just for that purpose, and an extensive ring of radar warning stations to tell us of his approach. But he fooled us. Instead of using jets he got out some slow, old, propeller-driven crates which would have made us laugh had we seen him getting them ready. And then, instead of using rockets or bombs—the planes were too small and ancient—he put a man in the rear cockpit with an armful of mortar shells and a burp gun. After dark, he flew these improvised bombers down to Seoul. He came in too low for our radar screens to pick him up—another clever trick. (If he had used jets he would necessarily have come in high, where he would have been detected.) Instead he hedgehopped in over the hills surrounding Seoul and dropped mortar shells all over the place. Later, emboldened by his success, he improved this technique and sent down a few real bombs, with which he blew a hole disturbingly close to Syngman Rhee's residence and caused a fuel dump at Inchon to explode in costly flames.

It was a huge surprise, and we didn't know whether to laugh or get sore. The U. S. Air Force people were inclined

to be sore, for this made them look pretty silly. Here they were, just itching for a chance to use their newly improved night interceptors. But the enemy planes were too old-fashioned for us to attack with our jets. You have to *track* an enemy plane to shoot him down—especially at night when you can't see him and have got to get him located in your radar sight before you can pull the trigger. But if you're flying a jet, which goes several hundred miles an hour, you cannot possibly track a little enemy crate that is flying only a hundred miles an hour. If you do, you'll run right past it before you ever get your sights set.

To catch up with—or rather slow down to—the enemy's Bedcheck Charlies (so named because they woke everyone up at bedtime), we had to turn the clock back a war or two and unmodernize ourselves. We got out some of *our* old trainers and put machine guns in them. We also called up the Navy and asked them if they could loan the Air Force some of the slow old dive bombers they still kept aboard their carriers for flying extra-heavy bomb loads. The Navy said sure, and sent some of their seagoing planes to Seoul.

One night, when the Air Force pilots were all sitting around on their bunks chewing their nails because they had only fast planes to fly, a Navy lieutenant went up and became an ace—the Navy's first in Korea—by shooting down his fifth Bedcheck Charlie. The Air Force had gotten over feeling silly by this time, but it all went to prove that the most powerful outfit (or nation) with the fastest planes isn't *necessarily* the one that's destined to win. It was a little like the race between the hare and the tortoise.

A more serious example of our inability—because of our modernity—to defeat the enemy—because of his backwardness—also involved the Air Force.

Our airpower in Korea was immense, and it was superbly co-ordinated. The top commander, with headquarters in Seoul, conveniently across the street from Eighth Army, had at his disposal not only the fighters and fighter bombers of the Fifth Air Force but also the planes the Marines had brought to Korea to support the ground activities of the 1st Marine Division, as well as the planes the Navy had on its carriers with Task Force 77, out in the Sea of Japan.

This combination of striking power was controlled from one room in Fifth Air Force headquarters. Here, staff officers of the Army, the Air Force, the Navy, and the Marines sat together over the same maps to co-ordinate the daily attacks. They divided the work into missions for each service, and traded planes around whenever the situation was critical. It was a perfect example of unification at work in a war area.

The Sabre jets were assigned mostly to flying patrols to the Yalu and back. There they constituted a kind of mobile fence against the MIGs, to make sure the enemy jets were kept involved over the Yalu and did not get down into North Korea, where they could harass our other planes as they carried out bombing missions. The Sabres had orders never to cross the Yalu, for the officers in charge felt they had a big enough war on their hands as it was, without becoming involved in a bigger one in Manchuria. The Sabres flew up to the border, hoping, of course, for trouble. Whenever a MIG pilot was eager for a scrap or was ordered over to get some fighting experience, the Sabres were glad to oblige.

The MIGs, which had only to take off from their bases across the Yalu and gain altitude to be in fighting position, had a decided advantage in fuel consumption over our own pilots, who had to fly some three hundred miles from *their* bases just to get to the arena. This meant the MIGs could afford to play around in the air, feeling us out, a good deal

longer than *we* could stay there. Sometimes our pilots had time only to make one or two quick passes before their fuel ran low and they were obliged to skip the fight and head for home. The Sabre was a good plane, but it was heavier than the MIG—partially because we valued our pilots' lives and added extra safety devices. And though a Sabre could outmaneuver a MIG, the latter was usually able, because of his lighter weight, to outclimb our plane.

Besides these technical and geographical advantages, the MIG pilot always called the play. Unless he came over and dared *us* to fight, we never got a crack at him. We could not go over into his yard. And yet we were able to account for 823 MIGs shot down, while the enemy got only 58 of our Sabres. It was a magnificent victory.

We were not so successful or so fortunate, however, in other phases of the air war. While the Sabres were keeping the MIGs isolated behind the Yalu, staff officers in the Joint Operations Control room in Seoul were assigning the fighter bombers at their disposal—including Marine and Navy planes —to other missions: enemy supply depots we'd spotted from the air or learned about from agents; railroad and highway bridges; enemy supply traffic; concentrations of enemy troops in rear areas, to break them up before they reached the front; and, when the tactical occasion called for it, strafing and bombing missions along the front line itself, to help the ground troops out of a tight spot. By co-ordinating every mission in that one room in Seoul, the Air Force was able to get maximum use of its airpower. If a flight of Navy bombers was known to be headed for a bridge in the enemy's rear area, for example—a plotting board kept the staff informed of the whereabouts of each flight—it could be called off this assignment in mid-air and diverted to a front-line

mission where an enemy attack had suddenly broken out and the troops needed instant support. If a flight of Marine planes happened to be closer to the front-line action, the Navy would continue with its rail mission and JOC (Joint Operations Control) would divert the Marines from whatever mission *they* had started on and send them to the front. Whether the beleaguered ground troops were Marines, U. S. Army, ROKs, or Ethiopians didn't matter. The important thing was to make maximum and instantaneous use of our airpower against the enemy.

During those long periods when the war was in a static state and the troops were not engaged in pitched battle, most of the air missions were scheduled against enemy supplies and bridges far to the enemy's rear. This policy annoyed a number of ground force commanders—including some high generals—who accused the Air Force of ignoring its tactical mission, which they felt should be the direct and *immediate* support of their ground troops.

Air Force officers argued back—with a good deal of sense, I think—that it was far better to destroy the enemy's replacements and supplies in the rear, before they ever reached the front, than it was to wait until the enemy troops were hurling these things at us at twenty paces. The air officers also pointed out that there was little their planes could do to help the ground troops so long as the situation remained static. The enemy was dug in deeply, sometimes in trenches and bunkers three layers deep. Only a direct hit with a huge bomb—a rare combination on such small targets—could have hurt them. It would be better, the Air Force conceded, if the ground troops used their own artillery and mortars to hammer away at such *nearby* targets and free the planes for tackling other targets, farther to the rear, for which the plane was the only weapon available. The air officers felt that

their weapon—the airplane—should be reserved for targets the ground force could not reach, and that the plane's special assets—speed and range—could best be used *beyond* the battlefield, not over it. There was no strategic air force in Korea. It was not that kind of war. The planes we had there had to fight both kinds of air war: tactical and strategic.

So long as both sides were in their holes, facing each other, there *was* little the Air Force could do from a practical standpoint. Planes are effective against enemy troops only when they are attacking in concert with our own troops. When our men were on the assault, routing the enemy from his holes and making him run, *then* the planes could come in and splatter the enemy in the open. But so long as we were fighting a static, dug-in war there were no miracles, the Air Force admitted, that it could produce.

I once spent several weeks at Fifth Air Force headquarters in Seoul, watching the plotting maps as the staff officers assigned the missions and then comparing the assigned targets with the results when the aerial photographs of the bomb damage began to flow through for analysis. This was during the winter of 1951–52 when the Air Force was engaged in an extensive campaign of destruction which someone in Washington had given the unfortunate nickname "Operation Strangle." The thesis was that here was Korea, a narrow little peninsula with only a given number of roads and railroad lines, each with so many bridges. And there were the enemy troops, dug in along the front like moles. If we could not hit *them* effectively, we could at least see to it that they got as little in the way of ammunition, food, and guns as possible. We already had bombed every building in North

Korea that might conceivably be producing bullets, hand grenades, or rifles. Trained photo-interpreters were straining their eyes to spot all the camouflaged supply dumps scattered through the valleys and villages of North Korea. We would continue to plaster those places, to make sure they did not get back into operation. The only juicy target left for us was the enemy's one remaining source of materials: his transportation network.

We were already hitting that too, of course, but the plan was for us to step up our attack and go about it more systematically. The ammunition the enemy was throwing at us from his front-line positions might have been manufactured in Russia or China, where we could not get at it without biting off more than we could then chew. But before this material got to the front, and down into the holes with the soldiers, it had to make a long, bumpy trip in a truck over narrow mountain roads or a long, snaillike jaunt in a North Korean railroad car. All we'd have to do to put the squeeze on the enemy would be to concentrate on those bridges, highways, and railroads we had not already knocked out. We might not stop everything. But at least, we thought, we could slow the flow to a trickle. And then, if our ground troops could bluff the enemy into using up what he had left in his holes and what little he continued to receive, we might have him licked. After all, it *was* a narrow peninsula. We might just choke him to death. We just might "strangle" him.

In all fairness, it should be explained that few Air Force officers in Seoul thought at the start that we could really choke the enemy to death. But they did believe we could hurt him, and they went about the operation with real zeal. An entire section of the headquarters building was set aside for a task force which kept track, on its maps and aerial

photos, of every railroad car and engine in North Korea. If anything was moved, we knew it, and where. Then the transportation system was divided up into sections, and the officers began the systematic assignment of missions to knock these sections out, one at a time.

"This may sound dull to you," said the briefing officers to the pilots, "but believe us, if you do this job you may help to end the war." It did sound dull to the pilots, who would much rather have been aiming their guns and bombs at live enemy troops they could *see* hit the dust. And they became dizzy, as they ran up and down the enemy zone, following the curving tracks and the winding roads looking for transport. But the zeal in headquarters caught on. Individual units started races to see who could knock out the most track in one week. And posters went up in every air-base shack with the proud slogan, "We've been working on the railroads."

But it was the tortoise and the hare all over again.

Day after day we sent fighter bombers against the enemy's bridges, roadbeds, and marshaling yards. We plastered every mile of railroad in sight. In some places we cut the track with bombs every few yards, just to make sure we had mangled it for good. We broke bridges at both ends and in the middle. We waited until trains ran into mountain tunnels to hide, then we caved the tunnels in on both ends and cut the rails leading into them for good measure.

At night, light bombers took over and cruised up and down the highways, searching for truck convoys. Every now and then they'd catch a line of trucks just before the drivers heard the planes and had a chance to switch off their headlights. For fifteen minutes or so the planes would take turns running up and down over the stalled convoy, blowing it apart with bombs and strafing the ditches along the road to get the drivers hiding there. Thousands of trucks, according

to the Air Force—which claimed it underestimated its kills—went up in flames every week.

Then, on the following day, we sent out reconnaissance planes to bring back aerial photographs as evidence of the damage. I saw many of these aerials and the results were impressive. Twisted rails and mangled boxcars lay scattered over mile after mile of track. Huge holes straddled the narrow mountain highways. Bridges and smoking railroad engines lay in wreckage.

The enemy soon proved how badly we were hurting him. In a few short weeks he hustled hundreds of anti-aircraft guns down from Russia and planted them along every important route. He set up fake headlights on the sides of steep mountains to lure our night bombers in for a run—and a crash. He set up phony engines along the track to entice us into ack-ack traps. The cost to us of carrying on the operation went up astronomically. And we lost planes (974 altogether, some 600 to ground fire) at a rapid rate as the enemy anti-aircraft gunners—with Russian technical advice, if not actual triggering—began to get a good lead even on our fast jets. We lost bomber pilots too—including General Van Fleet's own son.

The enemy resorted to other clever tricks to counterattack our war on his life line. He built bridges across streams just *under* the water level, where he hoped we wouldn't spot them in our photographs. At one place, after neatly knocking out the center span of an important railroad bridge, we went back day after day to make sure the enemy was not replacing the span. There was no sign of work, and we merely continued to keep an eye on it. Then one night, on a hunch, we photographed the bridge after dark, using a parachute flare to light the picture. There on the picture, big as life, was a train chugging across the bridge with a trail of smoke curl-

ing up from the engine. We got out our daylight pictures and studied them again. Sure enough, on a siding near the bridge we spotted a flatcar. And on closer inspection we saw that the flatcar held a portable span. Every night the enemy had trundled the flatcar onto the bridge, lowered the span into place, and gone into business again, removing the span just before dawn so we would not see it during our daily check.

Fortunately for the enemy, the Japanese had built a double track over the most important sections of the railroad line. When we bombed these stretches he merely switched to single track and cannibalized the extra rails to keep it going. The rails were so thin that in many cases they could easily be bent back into shape and relaid in place, sometimes even without ties.

The enemy's best counterattack against our campaign of attrition lay in the size, the cheapness, and the availability of his supply of manpower. He organized entire villages of North Koreans—men, women, and children—along the rail and truck routes, and he kept them standing by throughout the night with their shovels and picks to make repairs. We usually sent our planes in just before dusk, to hit him as late as possible. The planes cut the track to pieces with bombs and left mile after mile of track or roadbed so full of holes it looked like a punchboard. But as soon as the planes had left, the enemy rushed his road gangs to the site and worked them so hard that before dawn—when we returned—he had filled in enough holes and laid enough rail to get at least one train across. Because the track was flimsy it would have to be a slow train. And it would have to meander across so many fields and curl around so many deep holes that the engineer must have become dizzy from the motion. But the train would get through, and with it went enough supplies to keep the enemy going at the front for at least another day or two.

It was a battle of airpower against massed, cheap manpower—and shovelpower. And though the unrelenting pace of the bombing hurt the enemy severely, slowing his flow of supplies to a crawl and destroying thousands of his rails, boxcars, engines, and Russian-built trucks, it did not lick him. I heard a frustrated Air Force colonel say one day, in the midst of the uphill battle, "If we could only find out where he makes his *shovels* we'd have him." But even this was wishful thinking. The enemy would have used his hands; and he had more hands than we had bombs.

Sometimes we did succeed in stymieing him. We'd bomb a mountain pass which he could not easily fill in, or destroy a bridge he could not replace. But even then the enemy had a solution. He merely unloaded the trucks or the train, parceled the supplies into 50- or 100-pound loads, and hoisted them on the backs of several thousand farmers he had standing by. Each farmer had an A-frame on his back—a simple carrying platform made of rope and wood which the Korean coolie has used for centuries. When the farmers were loaded with as much as they could carry, they'd wind their way down a narrow footpath around the bombed-out railroad or find a ford across the river, and portage the ammunition, the rice, or even the dismantled fieldpieces for ten or twenty miles to a spot where another train or truck convoy would take them aboard and shuttle them on to the front.

The airplane was not designed to cope with the A-frame. The battle of airpower (the use of trained, valuable pilots) versus manpower (the use of dispensable human draft animals) was not an efficient squaring off of weapons, or of cultures. We could have continued the campaign indefinitely, but unless we were really *getting* someplace, unless we were using up our strength in a winning situation, there was not much point to it—especially when we were also giving the

enemy an extensive course in ack-ack gunnery, with our own planes for target practice.

"Operation Strangle" was a worth-while try on our part. But perhaps in this instance we *did* sustain a defeat—if it is an act of defeat merely to find oneself on the wrong end of an unsolvable mathematical equation.

Why didn't we use the atomic bomb on all those people? Why didn't we subtract several million North Koreans with a series of explosions and turn the equation around?

We did not use the atomic bomb in Korea simply because there was no target for it. Our decision had nothing to do with the question of the morality or the immorality involved in using atomic weapons. We were already killing so many people, piecemeal, with everyday bombs and bullets that we might as well have increased the ratio and done it all at once. But there was no way to bring the bomb to bear. The cities of North Korea had all been bombed into desolation earlier, and no atomic bomb could have knocked them any flatter. The military targets which remained in North Korea were so scattered and deeply dug in—in caves and underground workshops—that the bomb would only have been wasted. The atomic bomb is a shock weapon. It is a specialized weapon requiring a special target. There must, first of all, be enough people collected within the area to make the bomb worth considering as the correct, most efficient weapon. And the area must be enclosed, either by mountains or buildings, so that the highly concentrated force of the shock waves will have full effect. Even as a psychological weapon, dropped to frighten the populace into submission, the bomb must create such staggering desolation on its first dropping that the people will have cause to fear more. In Korea, where there was already so much desolation and where the targets

were dispersed too far for any one bomb to be effective, the atomic bomb would have added insult but not extensive injury.

By day, North Korea was a wasteland. The population was hidden in countless farmhouses and tiny villages outside the devastated cities. Many of them had moved into deep caves, where they carried on small-scale industry. Our reconnaissance pilots sometimes flew over the area day after day without seeing a sign of life or a target worth recording. At night, of course, the country came alive. Troops moved down by single file to the front, hustling along in order to make another village hiding place before dawn. Trucks crept along with their lights off, scheduling their drive so they, too, could reach a tunnel or a series of underground parking areas before our planes caught them. Groups of one or two thousand people were clustered along the railroad lines, hurriedly tossing dirt and re-laying rails so that a train could sneak across before the night was over. We could, and did, bomb and strafe all these people—when we could find them in the dark. But we did not stop them. They kept right on going, asking for more. They were so well knit by their Communist masters that no amount of nightly pounding from us ever broke their will or scared them into quitting. Even if we *had* been able to aim an atomic bomb at one or two of these relatively small and scattered groups—and a small bomb would have sufficed —we would not have deterred other groups from keeping at their job.

The A-bomb, powerful as it is, was no match for the endless and amorphous procession through the night of A-frames.

The same principle was true regarding the use of atomic artillery. It is a fine weapon for obliterating large masses of troops who are caught in the open, in a relatively enclosed

area. But even the "hordes" of enemy soldiers who overran our positions consisted, as targets, of separate companies and platoons. They came at us up the deep ravines and out of the intricate crisscrossing of hills and valleys which make up the Korean terrain. And they came from all directions. Atomic shells would have been useful only had we been able to catch the enemy while he was still in his assembly areas, before he divided his men up into the separate assault teams. Unfortunately the enemy was not in the habit of letting us know when and where he was assembled. And by the time we knew he was coming it would have been too late to use atomic artillery. In the attack, the enemy would be protected by the valleys and hills through which he crawled, and which would have deflected and muffled much of the blast. He would also, by that time, be so close to our own positions that we could not have aimed atomic shells at him without endangering our own men.

Atomic weapons are devastating but they are not miracle weapons. They can be used only under certain conditions. The battle situation in Korea did not provide these conditions.

Why did we not at least bomb across the Yalu, and deny the enemy his sanctuary there?

I once asked a high Air Force general that question, and I pass along his frank answer: We *could* have bombed targets in Manchuria, from a technical point of view, almost any time we wanted to. That is, we had the planes and the bombs. We did not always have the *air*. In the midst of the war we had to shift from daylight bombing of North Korea to night bombing, using instruments to find our targets. The reason for this was that the enemy's jet fighters were so numerous that they were sneaking across the border in broad daylight

—despite our Sabre fence—and shooting down our slow B-29s. Our jet fighter bombers, however, which were on other missions, were able to continue, though not unscathed.

But even if our large bombers had been able to bomb freely by daylight, there was no compelling reason for our extending their flights from North Korea into Manchuria. We could probably have chased the annoying MIGs away from their base at Anju, and we could have hit all kinds of supply dumps and marshaling areas and transportation facilities to further increase the pressure on the enemy's supply system.

But these benefits would not have been worth the extra cost, which would have been tremendous. The MIGs would merely have moved to other fields; and even though the MIGs were able to force us to give up much of our daylight bombing of North Korea, our officers felt it was better to shift to night bombing and try to *avoid* them rather than run the risk of expanding the war by going after them on their home bases. As for the enemy's supplies, it was more efficient to tackle *them* after they got into the narrow bottleneck of Korea itself than it was to chase them all over the broad expanse of Manchuria. If we could not strangle tiny Korea, we could hardly knock out Asia.

The bombing of Manchuria would not only have meant extending the war (and straining the bonds with some of our allies who were opposed to such a project) but it would also have meant extending our own effort beyond the limits of practicality. The real *strategic* targets of this war—the truck factories, the main arsenals, the plane plants, and all the other more important sources of the enemy's long-term strength—were not in Manchuria at all. They were even farther out of reach, in China and in Russia. We had enough on our hands trying to seal off a small peninsula and cope

with the A-frame without opening up a new and even larger phase of the war—a phase which might not hurt the enemy nearly so much as it would extend ourselves.

Korea was a tough nut. And there were no short cuts to the cracking of it.

V

BESIDES the military lesson which Korea taught us—that the biggest, most modern, and best equipped nation is not necessarily destined, *per se*, to win all its battles—we also learned a basic lesson in geopolitics which is a corollary to the military lesson: when two major forces are squared off against each other, as the free world and the Communist world were opposed in Korea, it requires more than token combat, no matter how determined, skillful, and morally sound it may be, to carry the day.

We have been lucky in our wars. We were successful

against Germany on two different occasions. And we defeated the Japanese. As a result of these successes we came dangerously close to taking our luck for granted. We came to think of war as a decisive game, in which one side or the other—and by this we really assumed *our* side—always won. We went into Korea with our most recent victories still fresh in our minds, and that is one reason the war there was so frustrating.

We did not "win" in Korea. And we were disturbed when General MacArthur, with whom we associate so much of our previous military infallibility—and rightly so—warned, concerning Korea, that "there is no substitute for victory."

There *is* no substitute, of course, when one is engaged in an all-out, fight-or-die struggle, when the war is total and all the chips are down. Against the Germans and the Japanese, who were on the rampage and were playing for keeps, there could have been no substitute for victory. We were in those wars all the way; we had reached the finals, and the championship—our physical existence—was at stake. We *had* to win or die in the attempt.

We also went to war against Germany and Japan at a time when the rest of the world was as equally determined as we to stop them. Germany had made the mistake of taking on too much of the world at once. And hers was a blatant and arrogant mission: to Germanize the world. It was a useless, inexcusable mission. It did not even have the saving grace of claiming to forward a political idea. Unlike Russia—who tries, with some success, to camouflage her mission as a crusade to undo the economic wrongs of the world—Germany had nothing to offer the world except a disgusting display of racialism. The world was nauseated at the sight, and because it was a stronger world in those days and had not been bled white of its manpower and its will, it was

not difficult to muster a concentrated alliance of power against the Nazis. Once Germany was ringed on all sides by powerful armies—and one glance at a map will show the difficulty, if not the impossibility, of repeating this tactic against the land mass of China and Russia—she was finished.

The Japanese, the most industrialized and "modernized" nation of Asia, took us on in a similar match. Again the challenge was total and demanded a total response. We won again, because we were able to concentrate enough force to defeat an enemy who had challenged our very existence.

We were successful in both these wars because we were able to bring to bear a preponderance of power against two enemies who had staked everything they had. The U.S. started late, but because of our industrial genius we were able to outstrip both nations at once in the production of the guns, ships, planes, bullets, and bombs needed to bring them to their knees. And we took that immense gamble with our materials and our men because the crisis had reached its peak danger point. There were no preliminaries. Had we stopped the Japanese in Manchuria in 1931, or nipped Germany's mad mission in the bud when she entered the Sudetenland in 1938, we might have saved ourselves countless troubles and thousands of lives later on.

That, of course, is why we had to go to Korea. We had learned, against both Germany and Japan, whom we challenged only when the finals rolled around, that it is best, if only from a training standpoint, to get in on the preliminaries when we can. We learn the enemy's tactics that way, and we are better prepared to oppose him if he should choose to challenge us later in a showdown match.

Korea was a preliminary. The enemy, by his very choice of that tiny, insignificant country as a battleground, made it so. If he had wanted to defeat us, militarily, and take the cham-

pionship title immediately, he would not have chosen Korea. He would have chosen, instead, to push his strength in industrial Germany or in some other more centrally located and more indispensable arena—perhaps even America—where we would have had to respond to him, as we did against Germany and Japan, with all our power. And he would have had to do the same. He would have had to summon all *his* resources and all *his* planes and armies in an attempt to crush us for good.

It is obvious that the enemy does not relish such a conflict. Instead, he has taken the expedient action of picking on us in little jabs, in small, isolated places like Korea and Indo-China —and perhaps more to come—where we cannot possibly come to grips with him. We have to respond, for he is clever enough to choose sensitive spots we cannot let go by default. But he knows when he starts the battle that it will not become a death trap for *him*. His only hope is that we will be sucked so far into a series of little wars and commit so much of our determination and strength in trying to "win" them that we will soon tire and collapse of our own exertion.

We could no more defeat Communism in Korea than the enemy could defeat democracy there. It was too small a battleground on which to settle such a huge conflict. And we could no more have defeated Communism on the peninsula of Korea—just because we happened to be engaged there with some Communist forces—than we could have defeated Nazism down on the peninsula of Italy or the Japanese down in New Guinea. We had to enter Germany itself to cut out the roots of Nazism—the steel mills which supplied its armies and the people who blindly supported them. We had to lie off the shores of Japan, after tackling most of the stepping-stones in between, before she finally gave up. Similarly, if we are ever to attempt a final pitched battle against Commu-

nism, we shall have to bring to bear all the military power we have on Russia herself, and on Red China too. That is a formidable job even to think about. We are definitely not prepared for it yet. The fires are not that hot, and there are still enough alternatives to an all-consuming conflict that we can afford to hope, a little at least, that such a battle will never come off.

That is why we had to stop where and when we did in Korea. There was no point in straining ourselves any further. We had accomplished the mission we assigned ourselves when we took on North Korea: we had stuck it out through three years of fantastically difficult and bloody warfare. We had proved we were willing to fight. But unless we *were* prepared for the finals, for an all-out war against Russia and China themselves, we were wasting whatever energy and power we continued to apply in Korea. As any experienced fighter knows, preliminaries are not supposed to be fifteen-round bouts, and for good reasons.

To have fought on in Korea would have been a little like trying to kill a lively and hostile octopus by hacking away at just one of its tentacles instead of at its brain. It might have been the braver and more impressive thing to do, to go on hacking away in Korea. But discretion in war, as in other endeavors, is the better part of valor. I have known a number of heroes who have won dozens of medals for their military exploits. But in most cases I have noticed that the hero, at the moment when he performed the brave and fearless act for which the world applauded him, was practically devoid of judgment and discretion. He was angry and in his anger he was willing to risk his life rather than live to fight another day. Heroes are the catalysts of warfare, and when a nation is in trouble it needs all the brave, foolhardy men it can find to man the bunkers and fly the riskier missions. And they de-

serve all the honors we can bestow on them. But if the nation *itself* becomes foolhardy, and in its frustration engages en masse in an unnecessary tampering with the odds, it may find itself carrying its valor indiscreetly close to the edge of suicide. Discretion is not only the better *part* of valor. According to Euripides, "Discretion *is* valor. A daring pilot is dangerous to his ship."

When President-elect Eisenhower arrived in Korea for his inspection trip, he spent three days visiting division and corps command posts, saw a demonstration of ROK training methods, and was briefed constantly by the generals who were in command of the war. Correspondents were not privileged to attend the President's private briefings, but from the facts that were generally known at the time, I have reconstructed the following outline of what the generals probably told him. I was briefed on most of these facts myself by one of General Clark's highest staff officers:

1. We *could,* with enough men and supplies, push the enemy back to the Yalu.

2. Or, if that were considered unnecessary to our cause, we *could,* at least, inflict heavy damage on the enemy forces then in Korea.

3. We *could,* in order to accomplish this, break through the enemy's front line and chew up his forces. It would be a formidable task. And it would require a much larger force than we had in Korea at the time. During the long stalemate periods, when both sides had been trying to come to terms, the enemy had hedged his bet on peace and had so improved his positions that when Eisenhower visited Korea the enemy was dug in along the front in a solid interlocking series of fortifications twenty miles *in depth.* (Considering the cost, against massed enemy artillery and his unlimited manpower,

of taking just one hill a thousand yards to our front, it is not difficult to imagine the problem of trying to penetrate twenty miles of enemy positions.) The generals told Eisenhower that to crack this line—which we would have to do if we were to attempt to roll back the enemy—would require sustaining an estimated 50,000 casualties.

4. Once we had broken through, we would need additional men, to replace those casualties and to beef up our units for the extensive job of mopping up and following our attack through to a final victory. We would have to keep moving north, of course, in order to keep the enemy on the run and prevent him from regrouping for a counterattack. We would take additional casualties during this operation, not so high, perhaps, as those required for breaching the line.

5. We might *not* be able to pull off another end run as successful as the operation MacArthur produced at Inchon. We caught the enemy off balance on that one, and unprepared. We had also taught *him* a lesson. As a result, he now had plenty of reserves scattered all the way from his front lines to the Yalu, organized and equipped to counter any attempt on our part to outflank him from the rear. We could *try* to pull off a landing but it might not be nearly so successful as Inchon, and certainly it would be expensive in lives.

6. In order to defeat the enemy *in Korea,* we would have to combine a concerted frontal attack, as outlined in Item 3, with a landing, as in Item 5. This, of course, would result in sustaining a *combination* of the casualties we would suffer in either operation. And at the same time we could expect the enemy to beef up his own forces with troops he had standing by in China. The war would not be won or over by any means.

7. We *could* try all this, however, the commanding generals told Eisenhower, if he but gave the word and provided the

necessary men and supplies. (It should be pointed out here that generals are paid to fight, not to think up reasons for *avoiding* a fight. This was the only war we had, and it is natural that the generals in command of it, in Tokyo and Seoul, whose profession is warfare, should have thought in terms of continuing it. It might also be pointed out that President Eisenhower, who was once a commanding general himself, was familiar with this military psychology and undoubtedly took it into account.)

If the generals thought they had convinced him we should fight on, however, they were wrong. For when the President-elect flew home and had been inaugurated, he sent back word that the delegates at Panmunjom were to proceed with their endeavor to reach an armistice, and that they should make early arrangements to bring home the sick and wounded prisoners. He agreed, apparently, with Euripides. He would be a safe rather than a "daring" pilot. He would bring the Korean war to an honorable conclusion and husband our strength, our power, *and* our lives for some future and, he hoped, more advantageous time and place to apply them.

The line we finally halted on is probably the best place in Korea for us to hole up. The so-called MacArthur Line, across the narrow waist of Korea, has received a great deal of publicity. And because it is shorter it is generally referred to as a better, cheaper line to maintain. However, it is one hundred miles farther north, and though this would give us one hundred extra miles of Korea with which to placate Syngman Rhee's ardent desire for unification, it would also give us an extra hundred miles of severe military headaches.

Had we pushed the enemy farther north, we would have done so at the cost of giving him an advantage and ourselves

a disadvantage. For one thing, we would have extended our own supply line by a hundred miles. We would have had to haul our rations, our ammunition stocks, and our new men an extra hundred miles beyond where we now have to haul them to get them to our defensive positions. And at the same time we would have *shortened* the enemy's supply lines for *him*. He would have one hundred less miles of roads and railroads over which he had to supply his troops. Moving north, then, would have made our job more difficult and his a good deal easier. And we would have sustained the afore-mentioned losses just pushing our line up in the first place. There did not seem to be much point in that. We would also be stuck, as a result, with the responsibility of occupying some ten thousand square miles of territory which the enemy had held before and which we had wrecked with our bombs. To prevent civil unrest, disease, and economic chaos we would have been obliged to rebuild it all ourselves. There would not have been much point in taking on that extra chore either.

In addition to all this, we would have placed ourselves one hundred miles nearer the enemy's sanctuary across the Yalu. We would be that much closer to his MIG bases, and thus in greater danger of air attack should the war be resumed.

We are sitting now on a line that is reasonably safe from attack by the enemy's MIGs. The MIG, like all jets, is a high-altitude plane. It performs efficiently in the rarefied atmosphere of twenty or thirty thousand feet, and it uses minimum fuel at a high altitude. But once it descends—and a plane would have to come down on the deck, of course, to an altitude of a few hundred feet to strafe or bomb ground troops—it begins to burn fuel so fast, because of the higher oxygen content at that level, that its range is cut down tremendously. Where we sit now, manning our wall against Communism, the MIG cannot come down, attack our positions, and have

enough fuel left over to return safely to its bases on the Yalu. We are just out of reach. Had we gone farther north we would have lessened that advantage. There would not have been much point in that.

There is the possibility, of course, that the enemy will move his jets down into Korea anyway now that the shooting is over. We can no longer deny him these bases, as we did during the war, by bombing them out as fast as he builds them. We saw this contingency coming, and in the truce talks we tried to avoid it by writing into the agreement a stipulation that neither side should be allowed to build or even improve its air bases once the truce began. (While we argued for this stipulation, we set up flares and torches and worked nights to complete all the work we needed on *our* bases, so we would not be caught short by our own rule.) But the enemy turned the stipulation down on the grounds that no military armistice commission (and he pointed out that Panmunjom was purely a military affair) had the right to interfere in any way with the "civil" affairs of North Korea. If the North Koreans wished to build "civilian" airfields after the truce, said Nam Il, that was *their* business. We had no right, he repeated, to interfere with their internal affairs simply because we had signed a truce with their armies. It was a clever and rather unanswerable position, and we finally had to accede.

We have had to give up a number of other valuable advantages. We had secret islands far up along both coasts—one right off Wonsan Harbor—from which we carried on radar warning operations and intelligence raids and from which we flew helicopters to rescue our pilots who had been shot down. Often, while our fighter planes held off enemy troops, the helicopters hovered over a downed pilot in the very heart of North Korea and lifted him right out from

under the nose of an enemy division. The islands from which the copters operated had to be given up because they were situated north of the truce line which was agreed to by both sides. If we ever need them again we shall probably have to take them back by force. And if the war resumes in Korea we shall probably do just that, for the islands were invaluable.

We also had to give up our aerial reconnaissance flights over North Korea—since they would have constituted a hostile act and would have given the enemy an excuse, if he needed one, to disobey the rules of the truce himself. We have no new aerial photographs, now, on which to spot his activities. Our only check on the enemy—and his only check on us (outside of agents)—consists of teams of neutral observers who are designated by the truce agreement as referees. These observers are supposed to roam both sides of the fence and make sure that neither side increases the military potential he had when the war ended.

We still have agents in North Korea—there being no way a neutral observer can spot an agent—who will continue to keep us at least slightly abreast of the enemy's movements and advised of his war potential at any given moment.

And the double agents will continue to find a way to come and go, regardless of the neutral buffer zone we have drawn across the mountains with strands of barbed wire and warning signs spelled out in three languages—English, Korean, and Chinese.

We shall not be able to relax. And we shall have to keep our men in Korea for a long time to come, dug in along the front and ready for action. But the price for our alertness will not be so high. The men will be able to fly to Tokyo a little oftener to drink the good Japanese beer and buy gay kimonos for their girl friends. They will also be able to stand up in the

noonday sun in Korea and strip down to their white T-shirts or to their bare skin without worrying about the enemy's using their unarmored bodies for target practice. They will not be content, and their parents at home will worry about them and wonder why they should have to sit out in Korea at all when the war there is over. But they will be alive. They at least will not be sitting in some crowded enemy prison camp or lie buried in the U.N. cemetery at Pusan. And they will be serving a good and necessary purpose. Japan and Korea will be safe. We will have two footholds in Asia which we would not have if we had defaulted in June 1951. There will be two less places we would have to take back for our own protection, at some future and deadlier date, when the price would have been even higher.

We will have our wall.

VI

IT WAS a good war.

We got our jet air force into being. We learned how to fight a jet war, against both enemy jet planes and enemy targets on the ground. We worked out bugs in our planes and hastened a number of improvements in jet design as a result of battle tests in Korea. We gave our jet pilots the realistic kind of training, against live targets and tricky enemy pilots, which they would never have had otherwise. They defeated the enemy jet force in the air, and they performed the invaluable service of keeping the enemy's planes from hitting our troops.

We trained a huge cadre of officers and men in the toughest kind of war there is: mountain warfare, trench warfare, mortar and artillery duels, cover and concealment, hand-to-hand combat, grenade throwing, "garlic" patrolling, bayonet tactics. Most of these men are still in the reserves, and though the attrition on our men and officers was high at times, the ones who lived through it are experienced, toughened, battle-wise warriors. We could never, with the most realistic maneuvers in the book, have accomplished the training job for possible future wars which the Korean war gave us.

We gave our Navy its first real taste of carrier-jet warfare. The Navy, fighting its battles out at sea, got very little publicity in this war compared to the Sabre pilots, the soldiers, and the Marines, who were stationed in Korea where the reporters who produce the stories could easily get to them. But the Navy carried a heavy load. Steaming up and down the coasts, it shelled coastal railroads and gun emplacements, sometimes fired its big guns in artillery support of troops so far inland the sailors on the ships never heard the shells explode as they hit. Navy jets and dive bombers were responsible for the bridges, railroads, and enemy supply dumps along the east coast.

I once stood on the bridge of an aircraft carrier attached to Task Force 77 and watched Admiral John Perry as he made a ticklish decision. The seas were rough, but there was an important mission for his planes, and Admiral Perry wanted, like any good commander, to get in his licks. But he had millions of dollars' worth of precious jet planes aboard. He could let them take off and complete their mission in Korea. But with the sea pitching as it was, and the carrier deck rolling and tossing with each wave, he was not sure that he could recover them again and bring them safely aboard. He wanted more than anything to do his bit that day against

the enemy. But the admiral also had to think about his investment in planes and pilots. On the carrier, which was his flagship, he also had millions of dollars' worth of weather gear, radar equipment, and some highly trained weather officers to tell him how the sea would probably be behaving at any given hour. But he could not trust even these modern gadgets and experienced specialists to tell him whether he ought to let his planes take off. Instead, Admiral Perry relied simply on his sea legs. He was an old salt of fifty-four. Besides knowing the modern and intricate art of jet warfare, he was also a master of the most ancient of all naval subjects, the sea. There on the bridge, as I watched him, he simply spread his legs a little and planted his feet firmly. Then for about five minutes he felt the rolling deck under him and watched the waves tossing up spray on the window of his lookout. Twice he gave orders for a small shift in direction. Each time, as the ship swerved a little into the wind from its original course, he took a short step on the deck and planted his feet again. Finally it was the salt in Admiral Perry's veins and the sensitive nerves in his sea legs that told him what to do. He turned to his chief of staff and growled a quiet order: "Launch jets."

It was a well-fought war, in the air, on the sea, and on the land.

Every unit in Korea had its hero. Sometimes he was a hell-for-leather fighting man who thrived on action and danger. More often he was a sober lad who stayed quietly in the background and performed his feat of daring only when the fortunes of war suddenly thrust upon him new responsibilities. Pfc. Albert Lang, a blond, soft-eyed Marine of twenty-three from North Hollywood, was such a hero. When I met him he had been a Marine for only thirteen months, and he had been in Korea for seven. He had a fiancée back home and his ambition, he told me with some embarrassment, for fear

I would laugh, I guess, was to become an interior decorator.

Ever since he was a boy Lang had wanted to learn how to run a radio. Finally, when he got to Korea, he pestered a sergeant into showing him how. It was this small whim that later saved his life, and the lives of about fifty other men.

Early in the month of October 1952, Lang found himself on top of a Marine outpost, a strongpoint stuck out beyond the Marine front lines as a listening post, and a buffer to take the brunt of any Chinese attack. The outpost was nicknamed "Frisco"—every outpost had a radio code name—and the Marines on Frisco liked to joke that theirs was so named because of all the night life up there.

One night, without warning, the Chinese suddenly hit Frisco with everything they had and the place was livelier than usual. It was the night when Lang, whether he looked the type or not, was destined to become a hero.

"Everything was okay," he told me a day or so later, "until they started dropping incoming on us. It was terrific stuff—mortars and artillery. We suffered quite a few casualties and finally we had to call for relief. Another platoon came out from the front lines to take over. We had only a third of the men we had started out with. Everyone else was either dead or wounded or his nerves were all gone. Just as the relief platoon got to us the goonies overran our position.

"They came in right under their own barrage. They must have killed forty or fifty of their own people coming in that way, under their own artillery. I was in the command post bunker with the lieutenant. Our platoon sergeant was in there too, and a few casualties. We were getting set to take off in a few minutes, as soon as our relief got squared away. But just then our gunnie [gunnery sergeant] came in and said the goonies were already in our trenches outside the bunker. The lieutenant said that was impossible and he went

outside to look. He got hit by grenades. They were out there all right.

"Somebody remembered we didn't have any weapons with us. They were all busted by the incoming mortars or clogged up with dust. The gunnie said we'd fight them with our fists. He walked out with a couple of other guys and they got it from burp guns and grenades. We pulled them back in with us. We were getting pretty crowded then, because the bunker was only built for five and we had about fifteen men in it.

"I got on the radio and told the boys back at the front line to send in artillery right on our position. I asked for VT (which would explode right over the enemy) and also for a 'Box me in' [an artillery pattern laid down all around the bunker to drive away the enemy who surrounded it]. There were about two or three hundred goonies running around outside, laughing and screaming. I guess they must have had some dope. When our artillery came in, they quit yelling and you could only hear some of them moaning. Then everything was quiet and we figured they had left.

"But pretty soon we heard them digging. There were still 'many many' of them [Oriental patois]. After they finished digging we heard them running down our trenches, tossing grenades into all our bunkers to make sure our guys were dead. Finally they came to our bunker. We could hear them going through the supplies we had stacked outside. One of them came to the door and looked in. All we had left was one carbine, but it didn't even have a bolt.

"The goonie lit a cigarette lighter—I guess he got it from some dead Marine—and our hearts just about dropped to the deck. He looked at Pfc. Smith with his carbine, and Smith looked at this goonie, and they were both snowed. They couldn't do a thing. The goonie went away and came back

with some more. They had burp guns and grenades. We had put up a barricade of sandbags just inside the door and that was all that saved us. They tossed their grenades and sprayed us with burp guns, but everything hit the sandbags and none of us was hurt. Then they brought up a couple of M-Is and opened up. Those bullets went right through the sandbags and we could hear them going over our heads.

"Then they brought up a satchel charge [dynamite] and set it down inside our entrance. It went off with a terrific explosion and knocked down our sandbags and shook us all up. But it didn't hurt anyone. I radioed to the boys in the rear again and told them to open up on us with their machine guns. They did, and that stopped the goonies for a while. But one of them was real crazy. He got on top of our bunker and started to dig a machine gun right into our outside wall. He pulled the sandbags off our roof to wall himself in, and every time he pulled one away he poked his machine gun through the hole and gave us a few rounds. He was laughing like hell. I'm sure he was doped up. I was going Able-Sugar [code for a GI expression denoting excitement] on the radio by that time and told our buddies back on the line to keep those machine guns going, not even to stop to reload."

Back in his command post on the front lines, Lieutenant Colonel Russell, who was Lang's battalion commander, listened to the radio messages and faced a difficult decision. He knew that if he sent reinforcements out to rescue his beleaguered men on Frisco they might get killed before they even reached it. It was his only chance, however, and he scraped together a group of volunteers and sent them forward. They came under heavy enemy fire all the way out, and by the time they got to Frisco they had only one officer and five men left. Russell scraped together another rescue party. But they came under heavy fire as soon as they started

through the valley, and Russell called them back. He had just decided he had done all he could and would have to let Frisco fall when Lang came in on the radio again. It was his first message in nearly an hour.

"Give us some more VT," Lang pleaded, "or we'll all be dead by morning."

Morning was only an hour away. But Lang's message was so moving that Russell decided he must make one more try. He sent out another rescue party and called for mortar fire on top of Lang's position. This forced the Chinese to take cover and keep their heads down (the dope was apparently wearing off by now and the Chinese were using their heads).

"We thought we were gone for sure by this time," Lang remembered later. "The wounded in our bunker were calling for water, but we had no water. Someone had sent out a case of beer, so we all lit up what we figured was our last cigarette and drank what we figured was our last can of beer. We just couldn't see the goonies killing us and drinking our beer too. I kept calling for fire missions, and this kept the goonies moving. [Russell later estimated Lang's coolness and skill resulted in killing over two hundred of the Chinese.] Finally Smitty yelled out, 'Here comes Mr. Moody. His .45 is really smoking!' I looked out and sure enough there was Mr. Moody charging up the hill with the relief platoon, waving and shooting his revolver. He looked just like John Wayne. When he looked in on us I said, 'I could *kiss* you.' He just blushed and told us to get set to go back.

"The goonies were running down the hill themselves by this time, but when Mr. Moody took us down *our* side of the hill they sniped at us with 76s [cannon] and machine guns all the way. Everybody made it back, though. We carried our wounded. The only ones we left behind were our dead. They were buried in the bunkers under all the dirt. We didn't rec-

ognize the hill when we came off. When we went out it had looked kind of pretty, with lots of foliage. But when we came back the incoming had churned it up so much it was only a sandpile.

"It was Colonel Russell who saved our lives. If it hadn't been for him we'd all be dead. He's hot to trot."

It was a well-fought war.

It was also a superbly organized war.

We made tremendous strides in military medicine and in the care and evacuation of wounded troops. MASH units (Mobile Army Surgical Hospitals) were scattered across the front, so close to the actual fighting that the artillery pieces were sometimes *behind* them and the tents often shook as the guns sent over their deadly shells. And yet despite their tent existence these units were so well equipped, and staffed with such fine specialists, that a man could be provided with everything from an appendectomy or an amputation of a finger to a sensitive brain operation—all within an hour from the time he was injured. Each MASH had a helicopter strip attached to it, and the helicopter pilots, a dedicated group of daring men, would fly their choppers right through a mortar barrage at the front, land next to an aid tent, strap the wounded man into a basket on the outside of the chopper, make him snug with blankets, and then fly him back to the MASH, where he could be taken direct from the helicopter to the operating table. No one knows how many lives we saved which would have been lost had the men been forced to make a long, bumpy ride over rocky roads in a jeep ambulance.

In addition to these local advantages, the war also had its effect at home. It caused us to get our defense machinery

going. We woke up to the physical danger of Communism. And the very fact that the Korean war was more frustrating than decisive has forced us to realize that we must stay awake, that we cannot win this sort of battle in a hurry and go back to having fun again.

We got our first taste of a new kind of war, a pattern we will undoubtedly see more of before we can relax, a war which is only *part* of a war, a battle which cannot be decisively won simply because the real enemy we are fighting is not even in our gun sights. The French are engaged in the same kind of conflict in Indo-China, on another precarious peninsula. They too are fighting a native attack which is inspired and encouraged and was probably triggered by Moscow. And even if they can win a real victory there—which seems unlikely, for reasons similar to those that prevented our winning a real victory in Korea—the true culprit, whose leaders reside in Moscow and whose own troops are not yet committed, will not be defeated. He will use the same trick again, somewhere else. He may try to pull our world apart at the seams by getting us involved in as many limited little wars as he can, in as many different directions. *Our response should be to counterattack where we have to, but to keep each battle in perspective, to let no one battle get us so deeply enmeshed on untenable terrain and against overwhelming odds that the conflict serves the enemy's purpose more than it does ours.*

It *can* be said that *we* defeated the *enemy.* It was Russia's Malik, not we, who first proposed the truce talks. It was the enemy, not the U.N., who was hurting in May 1951. And it was the enemy who was so eager for a truce in June 1953 that when Syngman Rhee turned loose 27,000 of the men the enemy wanted back, the enemy's spokesmen could only

sputter and then shut up. The enemy had miscalculated his own chances, and he was ready to quit long before he did. He would, in fact, have signed the truce earlier if it had not been for the matter of prisoners. The enemy insisted on having all his prisoners back. He could not afford the loss of face in Asia which he suffered when 35,000 prisoners let it be known they did not want to go home to Communism and to the glorious Red democracy. We had taken these prisoners in good faith. We dropped leaflets on them and sent broadcasts across the line by loudspeaker, telling them that if they but quit the war and surrendered to us we would take care of them. It was a smart thing to do on our part, for it is far cheaper and more efficient to knock off the enemy's troops, one by one, with words, which are free, than with shells, which are costly. But once we had these men we were committed to keep our word. They did not want to go back to the horrors of Communism, and we, who had wooed them away from those horrors, could not, without forfeiting our reputation for humanity, force them to.

It was Syngman Rhee who tried to force the issue. Rhee is a remarkable man. He has fought for his native land since the days of his youth—which is some fifty years. The Japanese tortured him for trying to organize a movement in opposition to their long and ruthless occupation. For most of his life he roamed the world, settling down in one capital after another, trying to arouse interest in the plight of his people. No one listened to him, and, as often happens to dedicated people who are given no outlet for their emotions and no satisfaction for their zeal, he became a fanatic on his favorite subject, Korean independence.

Rhee is not a democrat. His country is not the kind of land that can be organized and governed, at least for the present, along democratic lines. It has too much to learn. It must first

become more sophisticated, more experienced in self-sufficiency, more aware of the basic ideas of human dignity which have been beaten out of the Koreans and stifled during the long years of oppression and rule from the outside. It is a backward and primitive country. Rhee, who feels it is his manifest destiny to unite Korea—his ideals go no further than that—has kept himself in power through the ruthless and efficient use of his police. He wants to be alive and ruling when unification comes, so that he can have the personal satisfaction, at long last, of seeing his dream come true. This is both an understandable and a tragic ideal. It is understandable because he is the leading figure in Korea (to preserve his power, he has seen to that: no other leader can become too popular or strong without finding himself, before long, out of a job). Rhee controls everything: press, education, the army, and even the elections at which his name comes up, along with a few others, for the honor and glory—and awesome responsibilities—of holding Korea together as a political entity. He has opposition within Korea. A number of men—for various motives—feel the old man has done his job and should step aside. But Rhee is the only name even vaguely familiar to most of the farmers in the remote villages. And when the opposition becomes too hot he knows how to handle it. Once, in the midst of the war, Rhee's term as President had run out. And he was blocked by the new Korean constitution, which limited the number of terms the country's President could serve. Rhee was determined, however, to continue in office, so he would be top man if and when victory finally came. To make this possible, he started a parliamentary move to amend the constitution, and when a number of Korean legislators had the effrontery to oppose him—on the grounds the constitution must be preserved—Rhee tossed them into jail to think things over.

He also had some second thoughts about his Vice-President. A hardheaded political operator named Lee Bum Suk was leading contender for the job. He had served, among other things, as boss of Rhee's police, and he tried to cement this advantage in power by busily seeing to it that the people of South Korea learned of his ambition and heard his name. Rhee, supposedly, had given him the nod. With energy worthy of a Tammany man running for mayor, Lee had huge posters printed with his name and picture emblazoned across the paper. Then he had his henchmen paste these right next to a Rhee picture wherever they found one, so that the people would be sure to note that it was Rhee and Lee for the country. But at the very last moment Rhee decided Lee was becoming too powerful and getting a little too close to him. Biding his time until it was too late for Lee to counterattack, Rhee had his police—whom Lee had once administered himself—hie themselves to every block in Seoul and Pusan and to every little valley village. There they spread the word that Lee was not the old man's choice after all. And they whispered, instead, the name of an obscure politician the people had never heard of. When the ballots were counted, Lee had lost. And Rhee, once more, was undisputed boss of Korea.

It is undoubtedly heady stuff, being an undisputed boss, if only of a backward, war-ravaged, and hapless little place like Korea. The ultimate conclusion, however, of such an arrangement is that the boss soon begins to feel he is at the center of some great but imaginative stage where he can behave exactly as he wishes. There are plenty of examples in history—living and dead—of strongmen who have felt and behaved in the same manner: Perón, Tito, and Boss Hague, to name but three varied examples.

The tragedy of Rhee is that he soon came to feel he stood not only at the center of the stage in Korea but at the center

of the universe as well. And why not? The only hot war in the world at the moment was taking place in Korea. It was a war between the great, opposing powers of the world, and the basic concept of freedom versus slavery was at stake. Sixteen different nations, from all over the world, had sent their troops to fight and die for Korea. The great U.S. had sent its best generals, its hottest pilots, a million men—even its new President—to look after Korea. He and his country were the focal point of the world. *The* war against Communism was being waged in his land.

And once—in the winter of 1950—we *had* liberated and united his country for him. For a few brief days before the Chinese entered we had erased the 38th Parallel as an artificial boundary and had made Rhee's lifelong dream come true. Surely, he thought, if we had done it once, we would do it again. Surely, while we had all this steam up and all these soldiers on the ground, we would preserve and unify Korea. Surely we would not hurt *him* to appease the Communists. Did we not know how dangerous and treacherous the Communists were? Did we not know we could not trust them? Did we not realize we would someday have to fight the Communists to the end? Why did we not do it *now,* in Korea, where we had them in flight and had almost licked them once before? On and on, in an almost hysterical outburst of emotional frustration, Rhee criticized the only friends and allies he had in the world.

The tragic truth, of course, is that Rhee, insofar as his own country is concerned, was right. There *is* no rhyme or reason to the artificial boundary across Korea. It was drawn arbitrarily after World War II as an expedient for dividing up the task of taking Japanese prisoners. Neighboring Russia cleared the northern half and we cleared the southern. We were thinking more slowly in those rosier days and the men who

drew the line did not foresee that it would become frozen, with Russia immediately organizing her side into a satellite and with the Western powers forced to follow suit in the south.

Divided, Korea is a hopeless anachronism. Its industrial center and its best industrial brains are located in North Korea. (Scholars who know the country well say that the North Koreans, for this reason, are in general the sharpest and most adaptable of all Koreans—which helps explain why they were such stalwart, resourceful fighters.) The rice bowl, on the other hand, which all of Korea is used to drawing on for food, is in South Korea. Neither side can exist or have a balanced economy without the other—unless both sides are given immense quantities of aid from outside sources.

All of this is true. And it is tragic. But it is no more tragic, when one looks around the rest of the world, than the partition of Austria, of Germany, or of Trieste. We would never go to war, and use up our men and our pilots and our capital, merely to *unite*, say, Austria. That goal, in itself, would not be worth the cost. Our people would not back such a venture. We might be involved someday in an all-out war against Communism, in which we are able to concentrate so much power and treasure in the final event that we *defeat* the Communist enemy decisively and thus, as a result of a war fought for a larger purpose, also succeed in driving the enemy from Austria, abolishing the zones, and reuniting the country. And if the enemy were to attempt to unify Austria for his own purposes, we would probably fight. But that kind of unifying maneuver would never be a cardinal aim of our military policy. It would not be the excuse, in itself, for the war.

The unification of Korea will similarly have to wait. And Rhee will have to wait. The unification of Korea was not, in itself, justification for continuing the war. The only justifica-

tion for continuing that war would have been to extend our training maneuver a little longer, to keep the pressure on the enemy and prolong the attrition on his forces (and on ours), to keep the enemy's forces pinned down in Korea so that they could not be pulled out to go elsewhere (likewise, ourselves), or to add to our growing cadre of trained and battle-wise soldiers, sailors, and pilots.

We *might* have done all that. But the seams were beginning to loosen. The U.S. public was growing restive at the sight of the daily casualty figures. U.S. mothers were beginning to argue that their sons were in Korea for no good purpose. The war itself had reached the stage where it was costing us more, in some respects, than the damage we were able to inflict on the enemy. It was wise to stop.

But the wall is there. We answered aggression, stopped it, punished it, and threw it back. If we paid heavily for the battle, so did the enemy—in trucks, in guns, and in the consumer items which, apparently, the enemy population would like to have too. The ending of the war in Korea does not mean at all that we have appeased the enemy. We are still there. Our pilots are on the ready-lines. Our men are in their bunkers. There is ammunition for all. We will not attack the enemy, but if he attacks us we are ready, this time. We have merely rung the bell on the preliminary round. We need only remain alert for the bell signaling the next round. We have, in a war neither side could either win *or* lose, found a necessary substitute for victory.

VII

THE WAR along the front lines was a weird one. But it was weirder still at Kaesong, and later, when a number of embarrassing military incidents caused the armistice talks to be shifted there, in the dusty little village of Panmunjom. There, too, the war raged on. Only in this case the protagonists were an unarmed group of delegates and several platoons of correspondents, whose only weapons were their pens, their flashbulbs, and their unflagging curiosity.

Correspondents drove to both sites in convoys of jeeps and trucks. We always stuffed our pockets with candy bars when

we left, and tossed them into the road, as we bumped along, to the crowds of smiling Korean kids who came down out of the villages to watch us pass. At Kaesong, where the talks began, we were photographed from the front and from both sides by Chinese photographers, who crept up on us slyly with their Russian-made cameras and snapped away for identification pictures which were presumably sent on to Peiping and Moscow to be pasted on whatever dossiers the Reds have compiled on Western reporters. At Panmunjom we stood in the middle of the dusty road, stomping our feet to keep warm in the intense cold, and watching the artillery shells from both sides land on the front lines two miles or so away.

When the talks started the correspondents had the additional unsettling experience of becoming participants in the drama they were supposed to be reporting.

General Ridgway had suggested the truce talks be held on a neutral hospital ship, anchored offshore where there would be no danger of military incidents and where there would, by happy coincidence, be room only for the official participants. The enemy objected. He said he would not play unless we came to Kaesong. The U.N. was anxious to get going, so Ridgway acceded. But from the first day the Reds made hay. They stipulated that U.N. convoys enter Kaesong with white flags on the bumpers of their vehicles—so the enemy troops would not fire on them by mistake. This we did, only to discover that the enemy photographers were gleefully distributing pictures to the Red press showing our side coming to the talks under the flag of defeat. We quickly canceled that propaganda bonanza by ripping off the flags. Then we discovered that the enemy was using the truce talks as a pretense for moving armed troops into the area—ostensibly to guard the site against unruly enemy civilians. We protested that violation of good faith also.

In the meantime the U.N. press corps was furiously putting pressure on Ridgway to get reporters and photographers into Kaesong to report the story. Why, U.N. reporters asked, should the Reds be allowed to have *their* press there and we not? Why should the enemy be allowed to make *all* the propaganda he wanted to while we sat back and failed to let our own free press even answer it?

The pressure became so great that General Ridgway was forced to take time out from his busy preparations at Munsan and drive to Seoul in the rain to try to placate the two hundred angry correspondents gathered there. He strode into the briefing room at the Seoul press billets with his famous grenade and first-aid kit still dangling from his harness.

"What's the first-aid kit for?" a new reporter asked one of his colleagues.

"In case the grenade goes off," said the tired old-timer.

Ridgway turned on all his charm and tried to explain to the press that it was not time yet for them to make their entrance. He had enough trouble "getting the talks on the tracks," he said, without taking a chance on upsetting the delicate arangements by bringing in a new and, for the Reds, an unfamiliar element. Then he drove back to Munsan after promising us a press train for working quarters and some briefing. The angry press was not mollified. "It's another Yalta," growled one big-league newsman who had just arrived from the U.S. to get in on the story. "They just don't want us to see what's going on there."

A day or so later, however, Ridgway changed his mind. The Reds were becoming so obstreperously arrogant at Kaesong that he needed a gimmick to give them a scare. He ordered a truck loaded with correspondents and added it to the usual convoy of Army stenographers and aides who drove over daily from Munsan to attend to the delegates (who flew

in by helicopter). The Reds, who were already losing face because they had no helicopters, stopped the convoy and protested that reporters were not yet allowed in Kaesong. The convoy officer said he had orders from Ridgway himself to bring in the reporters and that if the Reds did not allow them in the entire convoy would turn back and the talks would be off. The guard stood fast, the convoy returned to Munsan, and the fat was in the fire. A number of young reporters wondered if they ever dared show their faces up front again, once the GIs learned that the talks which could end the war were off, all because a few correspondents insisted on riding into Kaesong to see the sights.

When they saw that Ridgway meant business, however, the Reds relented and the free press joined the circus.

It was a minor victory for the press. We could not enter the meetings, of course, and there was little we could do but send back reports on what Kaesong looked like, whether Nam Il and Admiral Joy frowned or smiled when they adjourned for the day, and what Alan Winnington had to say.

Winnington was the foppish, rather effeminate correspondent for the London *Daily Worker* who came down each day with the Reds, and was thought, by some of our observers, to be a leading adviser to the Chinese on psychological warfare and propaganda. He was an articulate, insufferably stuffy sort, and although he occasionally did come across with an inside tip on what was going on in the meetings (he was briefed by the Reds, whereas the free press was often left in the cold by our own delegates), he was thoroughly hated by us all.

For a time, when the talks dragged on for hours inside and Winnington had run out of dialectic, we played a game with him. He was constantly surrounded by furtive-looking Chinese, who we assumed from the start were agents who

knew English and were assigned to keep a shrewd eye on Winnington. It was Fred Sparks, the witty correspondent for the Chicago *Daily News,* who cooked up the game: each day, when the usual badinage about U.N. violations and Red stupidity had been traded back and forth, Fred would get Winnington aside and in a loud stage whisper congratulate him for some piece of military information he had slipped to *us* the day before. "We know you're really a British agent, Alan," Sparks would whisper, "and we want you to know we think you're doing a jolly fine job. Keep it up."

Winnington would turn pale, look around to see if any of his Chinese henchmen were listening—they always were—and do his best to laugh the matter off. The only drawback to the fun came when we occasionally wondered, among ourselves, if Winnington really *were* an agent and we were ruining his masquerade. We decided he lacked the brains for such an assignment, however, and the game went on as long as Fred Sparks was around to spark it.

There was little laughter in the meetings. All we could hear from the outside was the steady droning of interpreters, reading each speech in English, Korean, and Chinese, and then back again. Once, for more than two hours, we could detect no sound at all. And later we learned this was because no one had said anything.

It was the day of the twenty-first session at Kaesong, and the item on the agenda concerned whether the truce line would be drawn back at the 38th Parallel no matter *where* the war ended (the Communist demand) or would rest on whatever line both sides happened to occupy when the fighting actually ceased (since we were already north of the parallel, this was *our* position). Nam Il, a schoolteacher turned diplomat, opened the session with a brief but academic question: "Will you accept our fair and just proposal?"

Admiral Joy replied that Nam's proposal was neither fair nor just. Then he gave Nam a severe tongue-lashing for trying to inject into a military armistice some purely political points. "By your inflexibility you have slammed the door on every attempt to make progress. . . . You did not come here to stop the fighting. You did not come here to negotiate an armistice. You came here to state your price, your political price for which you are willing to sell the people of Korea temporary respite from pain. You have engaged in these conferences only to present demands and not to negotiate solutions. . . . You have insisted on discussing the political division of Korea at the cost of the people of Korea. *They* are the victims of your refusal to discuss a *military* solution to a *military* problem. When you are ready to discuss purely military matters (such as the demilitarized zone, which was the item on the agenda) I am confident that equitable arrangements can be worked out."

It was tough talk and schoolteacher Nam was at a loss for words. He obviously needed to stall for time in order to consult his principal back in Pyongyang. While Admiral Joy waited for Nam Il's reply, Nam shuffled a stack of papers in front of him and leaned over to chat with the Chinese delegates—who, many observers felt, were really running the show, with Nam as a Korean front. But he said nothing. For *two hours and fourteen minutes* not a word was said in the Kaesong meeting hall that day. Joy waited patiently. Nam stole fleeting peeks at his watch and doodled a series of red stars on his note pad (with a red pencil). But he did not budge.

Finally, his weathered face still calm and composed, Admiral Joy broke the long silence. "It appears we are deadlocked on point two. Can you offer a solution as to how this deadlock can be broken?"

Nam leaned over for another quick chat with his Chinese colleagues, then he replied: "The solution to the deadlock is to establish a military demarcation line at the 38th Parallel."

The meeting broke up and the delegates rose to go home. Once outside the hall, a U.S. Army stenographer collapsed on the grass, waiting for his jeep. "I don't know why, but I always want to come back tomorrow," he said. "It's like going to a Wild West serial."

"Yeah," said a lieutenant, "but the trouble is they always show the same reel."

A day or two later, however, Nam suddenly weakened. His aides trundled into the room a large-scale map on which they had drawn a proposed demarcation line and a demilitarized zone. It was *not* drawn along the 38th Parallel, but along the front line itself. Admiral Joy had squeezed a concession.

On and on the talks went. They may have seemed ridiculous at times to the folks back home, but they were as much a part of the war as was the artillery duel going on day after day within earshot of Panmunjom itself. The enemy was sly, and he was well armed. We were straightforward and dogged but, as in the war itself, we were not always well matched.

In the winter of 1951 the subject of nominating neutral observers to staff a future Korean armistice commission came up on the agenda. (The agenda itself had taken three weeks to draw up.) We were not yet ready to tackle the subject of neutral observers, for we knew full well that the enemy had a number of satellite nations on his side which were "neutral" insofar as the Korean fighting itself was concerned, but certainly *not* neutral insofar as their attitude toward Communism versus freedom was concerned. One of the U.N. delegates at the moment (they were constantly shifted as we tried

to find military men who could bargain) was Major General Howard Turner, a big, burly, Air Force general better known for his imposing stature and loud voice than for any quick finesse in the clinches. He had been passing through Tokyo and was pressed into service by General Ridgway for a trial period as a top negotiator.

"Are you ready to select neutral observers?" the Communists taunted.

"It is under active consideration," was General Turner's consistent rejoinder.

Then, for five successive days, we tried to get the *enemy* delegation to agree to setting up a subcommittee immediately to work on item four of the agenda (relating to prisoners of war, a pressing issue). On each of the five days we asked the Reds to come to the table with an idea or two which could at least be bandied about.

Each time North Korean General Lee Sang Jo looked straight ahead and replied, throwing the U.N. phrase back at us: "It is under active consideration."

Just as he had on the battlefield and in the prisoner compounds on Koje-do, the enemy resorted to numerous tricks. Many of the delays were caused by the necessity for both sides to examine every gift horse the other side proposed from mouth to tail and back again.

In November 1951 the Communists finally came around to the U.N. position that the armistice line should be drawn wherever the war halted, and that both sides would then draw back two kilometers from that line to provide a four-kilometer buffer zone. (While the talks continued, both sides proceeded to take as many hills as they could two kilometers *in front* of where they really wanted to wind up. Thus, when they had to draw back, they would be sitting pretty, with good trenches and good observation on the enemy. This

maneuvering accounted for many of the bigger battles which raged on to the end of the fighting.)

Finally the Reds proposed that we determine the line of contact of both armies—in some areas, a no man's land made it a lengthy problem of debate—and that this line be considered the center of a mutual two-kilometer withdrawal. This sounded fine to us. It was what *we* had been asking for all along. Nevertheless, the U.N. delegation was wary of accepting the proposal. It was so good, we reasoned, that something must be wrong with it. And so, for three days, *we* killed time at Panmunjon while our delegates did their homework and tore the Red proposal apart back at Munsan. "Our men have read the thing backward and forward and standing on their heads," said an aide. They still hadn't found any enemy booby traps, but they were still convinced the enemy was not playing fair. Why would he suddenly give in? "The proposal is too ambiguous," a U.N. spokesman told the enemy, not really sure as he said this why it was ambiguous.

Then our delegates read the fine print again and discovered that the enemy had, indeed, laid a trap. He intended his proposal to go into effect immediately, and if we had accepted it he would have tried to hold us to an immediate withdrawal of two kilometers from our front line. We would then have been faced with a de facto cease-fire, which meant the fighting would stop and the enemy would have a chance to rest and recoup his losses while the talks continued. We gave the horse back and said no, thanks.

"What are the negotiations like inside the tent?" a reporter once asked Rear Admiral Arleigh ("31-knot") Burke, of Japanese war fame and a leading delegate for several months.

"The Reds laugh when they are embarrassed," Burke said. "But there is no personal warmth between the teams. These

guys are died-in-the-wool Communists, and they are cold as hell. They want to kill as many of us as possible, and that is the goal. You don't persuade them by logic, fairness, or the equity of a thing. You persuade them purely through power."

In the fall of 1951 we tried just that. Along the western front General Van Fleet unleashed a limited offensive to show the enemy we still meant business. Throughout the truce talks Van Fleet had kept his army warmed up for business. He toured the front constantly, pointing out inadequate positions and personally changing the fields of fire his guns were arranged to cover.

"We would consider it a great opportunity if they were to attack," Van Fleet said. "I don't doubt that our men have been getting letters from home urging them to be careful. Nobody wants to be the last casualty in a war. But if the enemy starts fighting again he will find an eager army waiting for him."

"I'm sure going to feel cheated if I get killed at *this* stage," said a young platoon leader as he flew back to Korea from a brief five days of rest and recuperation leave in Tokyo. He had heard about the limited offensive.

Throughout the talks the press did its best to keep track of the twistings and turnings, the innuendo and the dialectic. In so doing they sometimes got into the hair of the delegates. It was a ticklish job, at best, trying to negotiate with the Reds without having to perform the feat in a goldfish bowl where all the world—including the Reds—could study each move, false or sure.

The press was only trying to help, however, and most correspondents felt that, since the war was all about freedom, the free world should know what was going on. The generals did not always agree, and at times they did their best to sneak one over on the watching press.

During the night of November 27 a special set of instructions went down to front-line units. Platoon leaders—who got the word from their company commanders, who got it from their battalions, which presumably had in turn been briefed by regiment, which got it from division—plodded through the crunchy snow from one frozen hole to another to inform their men on the front line that until further notice they were to fire at the enemy only in self-defense, and that patrols would go out only to collect information, and not to pick a fight. It was a unique twist in warfare and it was to have some unique consequences.

Soon after dawn on the following morning a young British infantry lieutenant name Ian Powis picked eleven men from his platoon and started out on a routine patrol into enemy territory. He had the new instructions. For several days there had been a kind of gentleman's agreement between Powis' unit and the Chinese facing it on the next hill, which lay in a kind of no man's land along the demarcation line. The British patrolled and controlled the hill during the day; and at night, when the British returned to their lines, the hill was taken over by the enemy. As a further sign of increasingly peaceful intentions on both sides (no man on *either* side wanted to be the last to die), both friend and foe shared one of the bunkers which stood on the hill. The British would warm themselves in it during their daily inspection trips. And when they got there they usually found a small fire, left burning by the enemy to keep the bunker warm for them. This was not very warlike, and it was by no means the rule across the front, but while the talks dragged on at Panmunjom arrangements similar to this one were not unusual.

When Powis and his men reached the hill that morning to look for signs of enemy activity, the lieutenant went first to the bunker to warm himself. But as he opened the door two

very surprised Chinese soldiers stuck their heads out. For a second Powis and the Chinese merely stared. Then the young lieutenant, who had been well schooled in England and had learned the art of saying just the proper thing at the proper moment, uttered a crisp apology: "So sorry. I'm just the postman." This was in reference to a whimsical habit the Chinese had of erecting "peace mailboxes" between the lines and stuffing them with notes, in English, suggesting that U.N. troops quit fighting and go home. Pretending confusion at finding no mail, Powis backed down the hill. The Chinese, who made no move to lift their burp guns, merely stared after him.

Powis led his men safely out of range, and then he sat down to radio his battalion for further instructions. Obviously, he said, he was not supposed to shoot the poor devils—not after the instructions he had heard the previous night. But the Chinese had shown no intention of *leaving* the hill. And it *was* supposed to be our area during the day. What, he asked, was he supposed to do now?

It was a good question and battalion passed it along to regiment, which referred it back to brigade, which sent it on to division, where it was bounced on up the ladder again to General Van Fleet's headquarters. The officers there knew that the map makers were still in Panmunjom drawing up the final demarcation line, so they passed the problem on to them. (It was a superb example of the old army game.)

Whose hill *was* this, Eighth Army asked, that Lieutenant Powis had gotten himself onto, only to find the Chinese already squatting there? The map makers consulted their drawings and sent back a ruling: the final line was drawn just on the U.N. side of the disputed hill. The Chinese, therefore —as they must have known—had a perfect right to be there. Powis was recalled to his own positions.

No one, least of all the professional soldiers, professed to know what kind of war *this* was. General Van Fleet indicated he was having trouble understanding the order himself. Everyone who knew Van Fleet and his methods of fighting had do doubt at all that the instructions to take it easy on the enemy had not come from him and that he was only stuck with the task of trying to explain them. Powis' own British superior officer was especially perturbed. "Good Lord," he said, "we might have to take those blighters on again; and that might create an international incident. Can't have that, you know."

Here is what had happened. In an effort to find a gimmick which would cut through the endless bickering at Panmunjom, test the Communists' sincere desire for a real peace, *and* put a halt in the meantime to the daily bloodshed, a commander somewhere along the line had decided to try simmering the war down to a slow boil. We would sit on the accepted line. We would repel aggression but not attack. We would fire only when fired upon. We would, in effect, offer a clear and unmistakable demonstration of *our* good intentions. If the enemy followed suit, then we knew he really wanted a truce. If he did not, the maneuver would show us where he stood. We would at least put the burden of proof on him—and we would save some U.N. lives. Meanwhile we would remain alert.

The only trouble was that the U.N. commanders forgot to tip the reporters off. They assumed, for some reason, that the reporters were all snugly back in Seoul, drinking brandy and trying to keep warm. Many of them, in fact, were roaming the frozen front looking for stories for the home folks. It was a sad mistake on the Army's part. If it had wanted to keep the trick a secret, it could have called in the reporters, briefed them, and sworn them to secrecy. No one would have spoiled

the game. Instead, the Army followed its usual procedure where matters of psychological warfare are concerned: it bungled the job. Reporters at the front actually heard the instructions being passed down to the men. One radio correspondent made a tape recording of the order being read. Naturally, they filed stories.

From then on, for the next week, there was nothing but general panic and confusion in Seoul. Some reporters, who had not been at the front, got garbled versions of the order and these men put out stories to the effect that an actual state of cease-fire existed. (There could not have been a cease-fire, of course, when we were ready to fire whenever the enemy did; it was a partial cease-fire, at best, an engraved invitation for the enemy to participate in a cease-fire if he so desired.)

General Van Fleet was forced to correct immediately the impression that his army was through fighting. He had to maintain his men's vigilance at all costs. He also could not afford to let the enemy relax. So he took two steps to correct the newspaper accounts. First, he released a statement to the effect that his mission was still "to kill Chinese" and "repel Communist aggression in Korea. . . . There is hope [for peace]," he said, "but that hope must not be sabotaged by wishful thinking." Then, for his second step, the general unleashed a tremendous barrage of U.N. artillery across the front—just to show the enemy we were not softening.

The "phony cease-fire"—as it was called at the time—was a worth-while trick. Unfortunately, however, the Army failed to realize—as it usually did—that when it wanted to play psychological warfare it ought to have cut in the men who could make or break any such program with one headline: the correspondents.

VIII

NO ONE was angrier over the "phony cease-fire" debacle in Korea than President Harry S. Truman. For an agency reporter, sitting in Seoul, Korea—7500 air miles from Washington, D.C.—had written into his copy, in an effort to "needle" it (make it sound more important than it was), that "Orders from the highest sources, possibly from the White House itself, brought the ground fighting to a complete but temporary halt."

Back in Key West, Florida, on vacation—he wasn't even at the White House—Harry Truman had a fit. He called a press

conference, where he took the occasion to read the White House reporters a statement on press responsibility: "I hope everyone understands now that there has been no cease-fire in Korea and that there can be none until an armistice has been signed," he scolded. ". . . We cannot allow our men to be caught off balance by the enemy. . . ." Then he launched into an off-the-record lecture to back up what he had read. He related how, as an artillery officer in France, he was reading a headline one day announcing an armistice just as a German 150-millimeter shell burst no more than a hundred yards away. That armistice story was a fake, he said. This cease-fire story was a fake too. You must be careful in these very dangerous times to stick to the truth, he warned the reporters. "I understand this story came out," he said, "because of intense competition in Seoul. Well, it seems to me that the welfare of the United States, the United Nations, and the world is much more important than any competitive situation that may exist among newshounds." Then, still angry, the President sat down.

The President's understanding was correct. There were dozens of reporters in Korea, most of them working for rival newspapers and news agencies, and when a major story came along they fell all over themselves trying to squeeze a little more juice from the story than the opposition. The hills often ran redder with blood in the news columns than they actually did on the terrain of Korea.

News, to a news agency, is a competitive business. And he who provides the newspaper editors at home with the best yarn and gets it there *first* is, by agency standards, the best reporter. If one agency circulates a story over its wires saying there were 12,000 Chinese in a certain attack, the other agencies—if they want to sell *their* stories—must increase the number to at least 15,000, or get ready for a curt message

from the circulation-wise home office demanding, "How, please?"

Perhaps the worst example of this sort of thing came in April 1953, when the first batch of sick and wounded U.N. prisoners was sent to Panmunjom by the Communists for repatriation. As the ambulances were unloaded, most newsmen had but one story in mind—atrocities—and their pencils were sharpened and their questions loaded for that story. Each struggling reporter lived in fear that another reporter would dig up *two* "Death Valley" stories to his one, or that a prisoner with an especially grisly story to tell would get past him.

There is no doubt that the enemy perpetrated a good number of atrocities. For he was a ruthless opponent who went about using his prisoners for his own political purposes. But that should have been no surprise. What did we expect from an enemy whose religious attitude toward life, whose level of civilization, whose medical skill and knowledge of sanitation or disease, and whose physical equipment for transporting prisoners in safety and comfort were all far inferior to ours from the start?

None of these extenuating circumstances should excuse the enemy in any way for the actual atrocities he committed. And the bona fide stories should serve to remind us of the suffering our men endured. But neither should the stories be allowed to get out of hand and whip us into an emotional response which belies our own intelligence and our own level of civilization.

One U.S. Senator, questioned about the reported enemy atrocities—and facing a campaign for re-election, as the interviewing reporters must have known—replied indignantly that the U.S. ought to drop the atomic bomb immediately on all those guilty of perpetrating them. An eye for an eye, an

atrocity for an atrocity, was this Senator's solution—assuming, of course, the feasibility of rounding up all the tough prison guards and all the derelict enemy medics, then holding them still long enough, on suitable atomic terrain, while we flew a B-36 overhead and got our aim.

"We cannot have a peaceful, stable world," said Senator McCarthy, "unless we have the friendship and respect of the people of the Orient." The senator's recipe for achieving that friendship? We should send a message, he sputtered, to the Chinese—who were reported at the time to be withholding some U.N. prisoners—and tell them this: "You return those men, not next week, not next month, you will do it *immediately,* or we will wipe your accursed Communist leaders who are responsible from the face of the earth." The angry Senator did not stipulate how we were to accomplish that feat; presumably he, too, had the atomic bomb in mind.

Actually, with the exception of several outbursts of savage Oriental cruelty in the early days of the war—and a clumsy attempt to make propaganda by forcing germ-warfare confessions from some of our flyers—the Communists treated most of our prisoners about as well as they treated their own soldiers. Should we have expected more? Most of the prisoners themselves, who were not running for election and were contented enough only to be home, did not seem to think so.

When the first groups of sick prisoners arrived at Panmunjom, reporters were not allowed to do much talking with them. The Army was anxious to sort out the probable mental and political cases before the men were interviewed. The press interviews, therefore, were postponed until the men reached their Army hospital wards in Tokyo, where special press rooms were set aside, complete with tape recorders, bright lights for the newsreels, and a staff of censors to see to

it that the men did not compromise the chances of their buddies whom they had left behind.

One by one the men were brought down to the press room and placed in the center of a battery of cameras, lights, microphones, and eager reporters.

Invariably the first question—after "How does it feel to be back?"—would be something like this: "Well, Corporal, tell us about *your* atrocity." Some of the men did have gruesome stories to tell. They had seen men dying of tuberculosis and dysentery (diseases all Orientals die of themselves, by the thousands). They had been forced to march forty or fifty miles to their camps (because the enemy had few trucks and the U.N. was strafing and bombing what trucks he had to prevent them from carrying ammunition). Usually the worst cases were picked up eventually by a truck and sent on ahead. But in the meanwhile many men died trying to keep up with the pace. (Because of that, you *could* call it a "Death March.") The ex-prisoners sitting there in the hospital remembered how they nearly starved because the enemy lacked food (we tried to see to it that he lacked enough for his own men too). Many of them had heard about buddies being beaten by brutal guards when they did not behave (Orientals often resort to this practice as a matter of habit). And they told of having to attend propaganda classes in which the men were forced to listen, day after day, to lectures on the glories of Communism and the horrors of democracy. (The prisoners we held at Koje-do were given daily lectures on the horrors of Communism and the glories of democracy.)

Many of them had been packed together into tiny, rat-infested hovels (we bombed all the barracks, unless they bore plain POW markings on the roofs). But for the most part the men I heard tell their stories did not consider them

to be examples of atrocities. They had not expected much when they *got* captured. They knew they had been fighting a rough, relatively backward enemy. And when their number came up and they were forced to crawl down the *other* side of their hills, in front of enemy burp guns, most of them had withdrawn into a shell of numbness and fatalism and had, because it was the smartest thing to do, just died a little.

There was one Puerto Rican soldier in the Tokyo hospital I shall never forget. He was brought into the room in a wheel chair, because both of his legs were gone. They had been amputated above the knee by Chinese doctors when it was discovered the boy had contracted gangrene on his way to the prison camp. One arm lay badly mangled in a cast. Perspiring under the newsreel lights and trying to remember to speak into the microphone, he slowly described his care. The enemy had not had much to work with, he said, but he seemed to think the Chinese doctor had done the best he could. He had long since become resigned to the feeling that his luck had been bad.

"Well," said a reporter, trying to work the story into something more usable on the front pages at home, "you would say you were pretty badly treated, wouldn't you?"

The Puerto Rican made a final effort to make his audience understand how he really felt. "No," he said, "I wouldn't say I was treated bad. And I wouldn't say I was treated good. I'd say I was treated just fair."

The reporter sighed and the man was wheeled back to his ward, past another man the assembled corps of newsmen hoped would have a "better" story.

One day, when the interviews were over and one Donald Legay, a twenty-three-year-old corporal from Leominster,

Massachusetts, was being escorted back to his ward, I tagged along and asked him if he would mind spending a little time in some quiet corner with me, to spell his story out at his own speed, *sans* lights, *sans* microphones, *sans* cameras. He agreed, and we found a spot in one of the lounges.

Legay was still trying to get used to the idea that he was really free. And he could hardly believe his luck. Doctors and nurses hovered over him, examining his wounded left arm and trying to make him comfortable. Army interrogators had patiently recorded his stories for the files. Intelligence men had cleared him of all suspicions of being "progressive." A Post Exchange cart came right to his bed with supplies of candy and cigarettes—which he chain-smoked to help relieve his jumpy nerves. And a long-distance call had been placed for him to Leominster, Massachusetts, so he could visit with his folks. Seven times a day someone came up to his bed with a tray of something to eat or drink. North Korea seemed a million miles away, and as Legay talked with me he contentedly summed it all up: "It's just like being in heaven."

Legay's story *could* be called an atrocity case history. For it is full of discomfort, pain, despair, and enemy stupidity. But it is bad enough, just the way he tells it, without giving it a label.

Legay fell into enemy hands on November 4, 1950, when his unit was attacked by a company of Chinese who were freshly arrived in the Korean war and who swarmed around Legay's position, blowing their bugles and screaming.

"When they took us off the hill that night," he recounted, "we were so scared we thought we'd never see the rest of the world again.

"The Chinese had hit Cav [1st Cavalry Division]," Legay said, "and we went up on a hill behind Cav so they could pull back through us. Then the Chinese came at us. They

hit us about ten that morning and we fought all day. I got it through the left arm. Two slugs. Our medic was already wounded, but he tried to patch me up. Then he died. Finally, around four in the afternoon, they overran us for the last time.

"The Chinese took us down the hill and started marching us to the rear. They had just about all of my company. Most of us could walk, and we carried our buddies who couldn't. They marched us only at night. My wound was leaking so bad I was soaking wet all the way down my left leg. After three nights I was so weak I couldn't walk any more myself. About that time they got some trucks and hauled us the rest of the way up to the Yalu.

"They put us in a dirty little village," he went on. "Nothing but mud huts. That was all the camp consisted of, and that's where I stayed all the time I was there. There were fourteen of us in one house. I guess altogether there were about a thousand of us in this one village. There wasn't any barbed wire. Just guards. But they knew we couldn't go anywhere.

"We'd get up about dawn, and for two or three hours we cleaned up the camp and had physical training. I was excused from that because of my bad arm. They made me just sit back and take it easy. For breakfast we had rice and some soy beans. We only had water to drink until some of us got the idea of parching barley and making a kind of coffee out of it. After breakfast we had work details or just sat around. At first they made us go to school, where they were building up their own kind of government and tearing ours down. We had to go to a lot of lectures. We didn't have any radios, but they had a PA system in the camp and they were always playing Chinese or Russian music over that or making announcements all the time. There wasn't much news. They didn't tell us about Eisenhower's election until three months

after it was over. They did tell us about Stalin's death. We got quite a thrill over that.

"About four o'clock every day we had our second and last meal of the day. It was usually something cooked up out of flour. Maybe some turnip or potato soup. There was a little pork sometimes. But that's about all you could say for it. It was just there. I lost a lot of weight on that diet. I weighed 165 when they got me, but I went down so far I looked like a human skeleton. I could hardly walk, and I was so afraid to look at myself I never took off my shirt, even in the summertime.

"When the peace talks first started, and it looked like we might be coming home, the food got a little better. But then it tapered off into slop again when the talks bogged down. We could always tell how things were going by how bad the chow was. Just before we started down for Panmunjom, though, they rustled up some eggs and french fries and things like that, and they really tried to put it out. I weighed 145 when I got here."

Next to the inferior food and the scarcity even of that, Legay's worst memories were of the medical care he received. Just before he was captured he was given first aid by his own medic—who was himself doomed to die in the battle—and despite the fact that his arm was broken and infected, this was nearly the last attention Legay got in twenty-nine months of prison life.

"They didn't have any bandages," he says, "so they made a bandage out of my OD undershirt. I didn't even have a sling and had to carry my bum left arm with my good right one. I never had a cast. Two days after I was captured a North Korean medic put a splint on me, but then some Chinese came along and took it off." This was unusual; the Chinese were usually more humane than the Koreans. "From

then on the doctors didn't do much of anything. The bones moved around in my arm and it hurt like hell all winter. One of the doctors was so doped up all the time he couldn't do anything if he wanted to. 'Hopeless cases,' we called them. They didn't have anything to work with and they didn't seem to care much. There was only one Chinese doctor who ever took any interest in trying to help any of us. But he didn't get there until last winter, almost two years after I was wounded. He was a pretty good doctor. He moved in an X-ray machine and I had my first X ray in January 1953. By that time my arm had grown together crooked. He didn't do anything about that, but last month, when they decided to send me down, he gave me a local anesthetic and scraped away at the bone to cut away the infection. Then he filled the hole up with some cotton and wrapped it, and here I am."

The specialists hovering over Legay at Tokyo Army Hospital told him they would rebreak and reset his arm when he got back to the States, and that it would be as good as new.

But bad as the food and the medical attention were, Legay decided the awful monotony of life in prison was even worse.

"We never got any packages. We had mail call every ten days, and we were issued writing paper about three times a month. But I don't think all my letters got home. They more or less told us what to put in them if we wanted to get them out. Like how we were well treated. They kept telling us how Truman was no good and Ridgway was no good and how our whole government as a whole was no good. We had to take part in discussions afterwards. Being there, you more or less had to agree with them and keep going with it. After a while some of the fellows agreed with them quite a bit. These fellows got extra privileges like not having to do any work. We called them 'number one boys.' There were quite a few of them. After a while we didn't have to go to the

lectures if we didn't want to. Some of the fellows kept on going, though—some of the number one boys.

"Sometimes some of the guys would rebel against the lectures or refuse to eat the food. The guards always pulled out an instigator, though, and sent him to a labor camp. The guys who went there never came back. And the guys who tried to escape didn't get nowhere. When they got back they seemed to see things the Commie way.

"As for myself, I wasn't mistreated. And I never saw anyone beaten up or anything like that. Once I saw a fellow come back who'd been mistreated. I don't know what he'd done, but they kept him in confinement outside the camp for about a month. Then they brought him back and put him in what they called 'the jail.' A lot of us had to help carry his stuff back. They *had* to beat him the way *he* looked.

"We adjusted ourselves. We had no feeling we'd ever get out. We'd just go along with it. In the summertime we'd plan what we'd do in the winter, and in the wintertime we'd plan for the next summer. When I left, the guys were getting ready to knock the mud out of the windows to cool the huts off this summer. This winter they'll wall them up again to keep warm." Legay did not know it then, but the war would be over before winter came. "They gave us a couple of decks of cards a year to keep us occupied, but they were pretty bad cards. I got hold of an American deck here in the hospital and couldn't hang onto it. The cards were too slick.

"At first I'd just sit back and play cards or read. They told me to take it easy. The other guys were out on work details. I finally went to work a couple of months ago as an orderly, just for something to do. I went for the chow and served it for our squad. I didn't have to, though. About a fourth of the guys went out of their heads from all the monotony. They were jittery all the time. They stayed right with us. Just

about everybody had given up and adjusted themselves to the immediate camp. I never let things bother me. We didn't have any American magazines to read. Only Commie stuff. Russian magazines in English. The *Daily Worker*. And a few books. I remember *The Twilight of World Capitalism*. And there was a history of the Korean war floating around. But you had to be a 'special' or a number one boy to get that. I never got to read it.

"Sometimes we passed the time watching the air battles over the Yalu. We really had a grandstand seat for that. We were only about thirty miles from Sinanju, I guess, and we could usually see the jets zooming around overhead and the ack-ack going off. The Commies kept telling us how many Sabres they were shooting down, but they never told us their MIG losses. One day we saw a MIG hit the dirt just a little ways away. The pilot went down with it and we cheered like hell. The guards were mad, but they didn't do anything."

Then finally, on April 9, 1953, Legay learned about the plan to repatriate some of the sick and wounded. Four days later the Chinese told him he was one of the chosen. They gave him a watch to replace the one they'd confiscated when he was captured, dressed up his wound, and started him down the road to Panmunjom.

"When I left," he says, "we had two fellows right in our own company who were worse off than I was and we tried to find out why they couldn't go too. But the Chinese claimed they were too sick to move. They didn't want them to die on the way home."

One of Legay's most vivid impressions on getting out was the sight of American nurses in the Army hospital he was taken to in Korea. "That was something to see, a white woman after all those slant-eyed ones."

Since that first small touch of the world he thought he'd

never see again, Legay had kept busy sorting out his ideas and his impressions. After two and a half years of "going with it," his mind was naturally a confused mishmash of his own beliefs, Red propaganda, and a long, monotonous nightmare of playing cards, mudding up the windows in winter, dangling a stiff, useless arm, and listening to Russian music over a squawking public address system. Legay still maintained, "I wasn't mistreated." And he seemed willing to accept the whole long episode of bad food and indifferent care as proof not so much of the Communists' brutality as of their pathetic inability to do any better by him if they'd wanted to. After twenty-nine months under such uncomfortable conditions he came to regard them as normal and routine, and to check them off as one of the fortunes of going to war. But if the Chinese sent Donald Legay back to his world ahead of his buddies because they thought they had converted him into a number one boy, they were in for a rude shock.

Legay told me he was going back into the Army. And he already had received an answer for the lengthy hours of indoctrination he sat through.

"They used to tell us up there how our way of life was too rich, how our standard of living was too high and how we had to pay such high taxes to support our kind of government and all that. They'd show us advertisements for American cars and tell us that was just a bunch of propaganda. Well," Legay said as I left him, "when I talked over the phone to my folks the other night they told me I had about four thousand bucks of my Army pay saved up in the bank and that they'd already picked out a convertible for me. Looks like I've got a lot of good old American 'propaganda' waiting for me when I get back."

IX

"I'm looking over a well fought over
KOREA that I abhor . . ."

" 'K' is for that krumby little country,
'O' is for the odor I despise,
'R' is for the rocky, blank-strewn hillside . . ."

SO WENT THE FIRST and more quotable lines of a couple of ditties the men in Korea devised to describe how *they* felt about the war, and which they are probably still singing whenever the beer ration arrives at their front-line bunkers, or at their barracks on the airfields. To anyone who has ever had to fight in a war far from home such bitter, woeful lyrics as these should sound more than appropriate. Just singing them helps to make more palatable all the frustrations of being away from home, all the fears and the dangers which they must face and the immense disgust with their unlucky lot

which can overwhelm an army of civilian soldiers anywhere. Unfortunately, the frustrations and the loathing which abounded in Korea were not always confined to harmless battlefield ballads.

It is an ironic fact of war that a liberating army often finds itself hating and even hurting the very country it is supposed to be freeing. This was true among many of the Americans who were in Italy in World War II. (Not many men acquired bells for their Adanos.) It was true in France in both World Wars. And it was a problem of some magnitude in Korea. At a time when the U.S. may have to send its young men into many more lands, to man the fire engines and build the walls against Communist aggression, it ought to be a cause for some concern that quite a few of the men who will be going will make better fighters than they will ambassadors—though both are badly needed in this kind of war—and that in the process of making themselves tough enough to combat the enemy they are likely to spill over a good deal of damage, both physical and psychological, on their allies as well.

In January 1951, soon after he assumed command of the Eighth Army in Korea, and several months before he was to take over MacArthur's job in Tokyo, General Ridgway took a quick look at the temper and attitudes of his men and then, apparently with some alarm at what he saw, put his staff to work immediately on an extensive program of troop orientation. In a personal statement, entitled "Why We Are Here," which served as a keynote for the campaign, Ridgway laid it on the line: "Never have members of any military command had a greater challenge than we . . . to show ourselves and our people at their best—and thus be a credit to those who bred us."

The parents who had bred a good number of the men would have been shocked had they known the extent of

Ridgway's problem. In isolated villages all across the wintry front there were almost nightly incidents of assault and rape. Some of the men, engaging in what they thought to be a harmless sport, were using their rifles for target practice. And their targets were more often than not the windows of Korean buildings, valuable power-line insulators, and the already scarce Korean livestock.

In the supply depots—especially in chaotic, miserable Pusan—entire shipments of American cigarettes, Army rations, and badly needed gasoline were funneled by their GI handlers into a flourishing and lucrative black market. And on the narrow roads there was a popular game among truck and jeep drivers which involved seeing how close they could come to a frightened old Korean without actually hitting him.

The Koreans themselves were partly at fault for the popularity of that particular game. They are a superstitious and, in their way, very religious people. They believe in ancestor worship, and they also have the idea that some of their late predecessors, in the form of evil spirits, are following them around like shadows to torment them. When they saw the jeeps and trucks careening down the road, many Koreans, who felt especially harassed by spirits breathing down their necks, devised a unique and rather resourceful way of getting rid of them: the Koreans would wait until the jeep or truck was almost upon them. Then, like witless chickens, they would run across the road, timing their dash so the vehicle would just miss *them,* perhaps even graze them a little. In this way, they hoped, the spirit following them would be hopelessly caught on the bumper and killed.

But this idiosyncrasy of the Koreans, dangerous and annoying as it was, should not have excused the drivers who reciprocated and decided that if the Koreans were *that* fatalis-

tic they *deserved* to get run down. The attitude on the part of too many soldiers toward the country they were supposed to be rescuing from the enemy could best be summed up in one word: contempt.

At Army headquarters, Ridgway's education officers started up their mimeograph machines and cranked out a series of lessons on deportment for the troops. One of the first brochures, engagingly titled "How to Alienate Friends and Eliminate People," tackled the traffic problem. "Americans are notably impatient," the pamphlet admitted. "But swearing at the driver of an ox cart will not make the ox move any faster. . . . We are not in this country as conquerors. . . . Certainly the residents of this nation have an inherent right to travel their own streets and roadways without being threatened and abused." To drive the message home, Ridgway's headquarters designed a poster and hastily printed it, for lack of any other paper, on the backs of some outdated terrain maps. The poster showed a cursing GI jeep driver running down a baffled Korean who was lugging a load of wood along the road on his A-frame. Said the poster's tart slogan: "Keep your shirt on! After all it's his road!"

The mimeograph machines rolled on. "Remember," advised another poop sheet, "that to our Korean allies personal dignity ('Face') is as important as a healthy bankroll is to most Americans." "No amount of aid will mean anything," read another statement, "unless accompanied by a friendly smile and a little courtesy." Then, getting at the heart of the matter, the Eighth Army told its more cocky soldiers off: "We Americans are all too prone to compare other countries with the United States. . . . If there isn't an automobile in every garage, a refrigerator in every kitchen, a radio in every living room, and an indoor toilet in every house, the average American looks upon that nation as primitive. . . . At first

these differences are regarded with curiosity and interest which later turns to derision." "You are the salesmen of democracy," read still a later challenge. "Don't sell it short."

This kind of frank talk helped to clear the air, and the incidence of daily destruction and vandalism appeared gradually to lessen as a result. But no amount of mimeograph ink could smother the soldier's private opinion that the "K" in Korea stood for "krumby," or that the country's odd-looking inhabitants were nothing but "gooks." (The Italians, to an earlier American Army, had been "wops," and the French "frogs.")

In all fairness, it should be said that only a small percentage of the men engaged in overt acts of destruction. But even those soldiers who behaved themselves could not resist falling into the pattern of contempt for a country so dirty and so strange. It should also be added, in fairness to all the men, that their opinions of Korea were not altogether unreasonable.

As seen from the back of a jolting 2½-ton Army truck, or from under the rim of a heavy steel helmet, few countries would look very attractive. Korea had less of a chance than most. Its mountainous scenery, though extremely beautiful in spots, was so tough to climb—especially under full pack—and so difficult to dig a hole into for protection that the occasional charm which was offered by the "Land of the Morning Calm" was completely lost. The roads were so few, and so incredibly bad where they existed at all, that merely getting from one battle to another was a nightmare for an army whose men were used, from childhood, to riding something wherever they wanted to go.

In summer the roads sent up a choking cloud of flourlike dust and the men driving them had to resort to face masks to keep from suffocating—except when the same roads were

oozing away in the torrential rains. Korea is probably one of the few countries in the world where one can ride over a summer road just after a rain and suffer from dust, so quick is the transformation. The night air was filled with swarms of relentless mosquitoes. And in winter the cold was so severe and penetrating that no amount of clothing would keep a man really warm. Riding with a tank task force in an attack on Munsan in the early spring of 1951, I tried the GI method of keeping warm: during frequent halts to clear mines from the road ahead of us, I climbed up on the radiator of a tank which was just ahead of my jeep in the column. But that was even worse. The exhaust from the tank's idling engine was so full of carbon monoxide that it nearly made me sick. As it was, it caused several of the GIs to double up in unconsciousness. It was better merely to freeze.

The people, too—by our standards, at least—*were* rather queer and unprepossessing. Their faces, perhaps because of centuries of cruel oppression, were stoic and expressionless, and so lacking in visible signs of personality that most Koreans seemed, to the average observer, to be sullen, vacuous, and exactly alike.

Sociologists have decided that the Koreans are more like the rugged, temperamental natives of the cold Russian steppes than like any other nearby race. They are taller than the Japanese, and shorter than the average Chinese. They are also less intellectual than the Chinese, some of whose ideas—mostly Confucian—they have borrowed and carried to such rigid, even irrational, extremes that the Korean father is an absolute tyrant in his house. And despite the Korean gifts with ceramics, painting, and metalwork, they are less aesthetic than the Japanese, who have copied many of their ideas and rounded off the sharp Korean edges. The Koreans' social merits are few and primitive. Their homes are neat and

well constructed. In fact, because of the fireplace, which is placed under the floor of the most important room in each house, they can probably be credited with having invented radiant heating.

But even this does not make them a warm people. In the long, freezing winters they seem to store up their temper and exuberance, like a tiger in hibernation. Then, when spring comes, they explode with violent arguments and fatal stone fights. Their language is a baffling mixture of Turkish, Finnish, and Manchu dialects. It is almost impossible to learn. The inhabitants of Korea are a bewildering group of people, and most foreigners find themselves, for a variety of reasons, either loving them or hating them.

And the country's odor *is* bad. The offal, instead of going down the sewer—which does not exist—is collected instead in wooden buckets and hauled to the open fields to be used as fertilizer. Many a careless jeep driver has had to spend a half day or more washing his vehicle after rounding a corner too fast, skidding into a honey-bucket cart, and overturning it. The streets of Pusan, crowded with thousands of refugees, reeked with the smell of defecation. For most Koreans, young and old, think nothing of relieving themselves wherever and whenever they feel the urge.

As if this were not bad enough, the Koreans also have chosen for their national dish a concoction which they call *kimchi*. This is a foul-smelling mess of fermented cabbage, onions, and garlic. The longer it ferments before eating the better. Nearly all Koreans love it—its spicy tang helps keep them warm in the freezing climate—and the odor, which is nauseating to the uninitiated, lingers for several days after a meal and seems to precede its owner through the streets in a strong, vaporous cloud several feet in radius. (*Kimchi* inspired a few GI ballads on its own, most of which are scato-

logical in theme.) One U.S. officer, commenting once on the number of rape cases he had to investigate in his unit, wondered how any man could even *look* at a Korean woman—shy, for the most part homely, flat-chested, dressed in a colorful but unflattering high-waisted skirt, and usually smelling strongly of *kimchi*—and have any further desire, even to linger, much less repose.

Such was the surface impression the soldier got from Korea, and on which he naturally based a good deal of his behavior there. There were plenty of extenuating circumstances for those who cared to look for them. Living on a narrow, rocky, and vulnerable appendage to Asia has given the Koreans a tremendous feeling of insecurity. And their long centuries of complete subjugation, to Chinese invaders or Japanese conquerors, have so deprived them of political maturity and material progress that their sense of inferiority often reaches the level of complete self-deprecation. Koreans are also a frank and direct people. After watching them shove each other around in the market place, after seeing their youngsters play their ruthless game with rocks—in which the point of the game is to bring blood—and after learning of their standard procedure for discipline in the army—a severe beating or hefty slaps in the face—one gets the impression that they dislike themselves almost as much as other people do.

Strangely enough, the net result of this lack of group humanity and charity toward one another seems to be a feeling of personal self-reliance and individual pride which would have done Emerson's heart good. There is no concept of organized social consciousness in Korea. Charity for the poor is a matter of family, not state, concern. I once spent several days among the wretched, dirty little beggar boys of Pusan—the Korean version of the Italian shoeshine boys.

They are a pathetic lot. They have lost their families. They have no clothes except those on their backs—which are filthy. Many of them are suffering from advanced cases of tuberculosis. Their only source of income or of food is the occasional candy bar which a passing GI will give them, just to make them quit bothering him. They sleep huddled together in shivering groups in the damp gutters of Pusan's dismal dock area. And yet, when they are rounded up by the U. S. Army and taken to Korean orphanages or hospitals to be cared for, they escape as soon as they can and make their way back to the street. They are happier there, on their own, than in the snug, if crowded, wards of an organized home.

The Koreans do not bow and scrape and disarm their acquaintances with a wide, saccharine smile as do some Orientals. They are almost cold and haughty in their pride. There were fewer sights more moving during the war than that of a lone Korean woman trudging bravely down a deserted road just ahead of the advancing enemy, her remarkably sturdy physique proudly erect under the weight of her belongings on her head and of the baby on her back. She did not whimper. And she could handle the situation alone.

But the visiting soldier, burdened with the tormenting discomforts of the battlefield and harried by the constant possibility of instant death—in *defense* of this "fouled-up" place —had little time to notice these compensating traits. In Europe, where I happened to be an infantry officer, I often had to cope with the fact that some of my men frankly, sometimes crudely, preferred the autocratic German enemy to the liberty-loving French ally, regardless of the principles involved, and usually for the simple reason that the Germans had better plumbing, an easier language to understand, and fairer complexions. They were more "our kind" of people. In Korea the same standards prevailed. As a result—and the dis-

comforting fact should be recognized at home—a good number of American soldiers were more prejudiced than open-minded, more crude than gentle, more profane than polite, and more arrogant than democratic. The impression these men made on the Koreans—even though they were in the minority—did not advance our cause or our reputation.

Mulling over this problem one night, I asked a number of South Korean acquaintances of mine to tell me frankly what American characteristics *they* found least attractive. (One can often learn about another person by ascertaining his impressions of oneself.) The Koreans' most frequent judgment on Americans was: "Your relentless preoccupation with sex." Now the Korean moral code is probably one of the most puritanic in existence. And unlike the American code, it is adhered to strictly. Virginity, among both men and women, is common. Social dancing is prohibited by law as unseemly. And before a movie can be shown in a Korean theater it is supposed to be trimmed first of all kissing scenes—a rule which naturally makes mincemeat of many an American import.

The Koreans themselves do not kiss in public, and they would rather not see other people doing it. Their love-making, in fact, is about as staid and unadorned by displays of emotion and affection—even in private—as it is possible for love-making to get. When a Korean woman marries, she goes to her husband's house, attaches herself as a servant to her mother-in-law, and keeps quietly in her place. In the typical home she does not speak to her husband unless he speaks to her first. Her duty is to keep house, cook up the batches of *kimchi*, and bear her husband a son so that the family line will be maintained. There is little or no romance.

Even when a Korean and his wife or fiancée had been separated by the war for several months, it was not unusual,

upon their reunion, for them to greet each other solemnly and sedately on the street, exactly as if they were passing acquaintances who had already passed on the street three times before on the same morning. There was no visible emotion. It is not difficult to imagine the impact made on *this* particular, and sacred, segment of Korean custom by the wolfish and irrepressible GI.

A Korean who had made his way back into Seoul after a long absence brought about by the war told me once what a difficult time he had getting his family to open the gate when he returned. It seemed the neighborhood had been plagued for days by a group of extremely persistent American Romeos, and everyone was keeping his house tightly locked and bolted against all comers. At night, whenever a jeep or truck was heard in the streets outside, his family blew out the candles and hid.

A young English-speaking lawyer named Min Choon Sik recalled a night in Pusan when he was accosted by four GIs. "One of them had a club and another carried a whip," Min said. "They came up to me and said, 'Sexy! Sexy! [The standard password on these patrols.] Where is girl?' I said I was sorry but I was a stranger and didn't know. One of them hit me in the face with his fist."

Eighth Army's campaign against this sort of thing was continued vigorously under General Van Fleet. Though his officers claimed the record of assault was no worse in Korea than it had been in any other large military campaign—and no worse, perhaps, than it is in any average U.S. city, for that matter—the general had to take time out from his military worries several times a week to study a stack of papers on his desk relating to general courts-martial—which involve cases comparable, in civilian life, to felonies. Approximately a fourth of these cases involved crimes of violence against the

South Koreans. Most of these concerned sex crimes of a "heinous" nature, and they ran all the way from manslaughter and rape to sodomy—occasionally involving an unfortunate Korean boy who had been lured behind a pile of rubble and forced into compliance. The errant GI's possession of loaded weapons—which were sometimes used to force the issue—and the secure sense of anonymity which a uniform and presence in a backward country a long way from home afforded him, gave the record a primitive and degrading twist it would not have had at home.

One of the more widely publicized cases of violence against South Koreans happened to involve Canadian troops, though it was a typical case and could easily have happened to any of the contingents. On the night of March 17, 1952, the men of the Princess Patricia Canadian Light Infantry had been removed from the line for a brief rest and were celebrating the occasion with a rousing beer bust. Sometime during the evening seven of the soldiers set out from their regimental camp in a jeep to find some women. In their search they entered the nearby village of Chung Woon Myon and came across a small Korean house which was crowded that evening with many people: the aged owner, his wife, a homeless boy from across the street, seven refugees who had sought shelter for the night, a half dozen ROK soldiers under the command of their lieutenant, who were temporarily billeted in the house, and two young women, one of whom was the sister-in-law of the ROK lieutenant and had come over to visit with him for the first time in several months. The other girl was a friend she had brought along.

The Canadians, who had celebrated well, were advised when they knocked on the door that the house was a respectable one, and two of them meekly departed. The others, not so easily discouraged, stayed behind and three of them de-

cided they were going to accomplish their mission whether the girls and their Korean friends agreed or not. They entered the house, the women promptly screamed, the ROK soldiers came to the rescue from an adjoining room, and after a brief fist fight all around the outnumbered Canadians were ejected from the house. As they went, however, one of them unlimbered a grenade he had been wearing at the front and tossed it into the room, killing the lieutenant and two of his men.

After several weeks of waiting while the men were traced and the evidence was assembled, the tragic story was finally brought before a Canadian military court. The setting, a strange blending of Canadian and Korean motifs, was a room on the second floor of a schoolhouse in Seoul, which had been fenced in with barbed wire and served at the time as a Canadian stockade for offending troops. Two blackboards in the well-scrubbed room still bore their lessons in Korean script. Behind three long tables, which were covered with Canadian army blankets for decoration, sat the six officers of the general court-martial, including three colonels with legal training who had been flown from Canada especially for the occasion. Above the table the Canadian flag was tacked across a window. And above the flag hung the portraits of King George and Queen Elizabeth, the latter slightly askew.

The three soldiers, who had been accused in the charge sheets of murder and attempted rape, were tried separately. As each trial began the defendant was marched into the room at quickstep, sworn in, and then seated to one side with his defense counsel—who had also been flown from Canada to see that the men were given a fair trial. Nearby was the captain who was acting as prosecutor in the case, and in front of him, as the only link between Korea and Canada—between King George and the ROK lieutenant—was a young Korean

named Bill Surh, who had once been a prosperous Seoul trader and was now employed by the Canadian brigade as its interpreter. In the center of the room, facing the court, was the witness chair.

One by one the Korean witnesses were brought into the room by a Canadian guard, led to the witness chair, and sworn in through Surh—who held a scrap of paper on which the official Canadian oath, which had to be used in the trial, was written out in Korean characters. The witnesses included the two girls, the ROK soldiers who had survived the grenade, some Korean MPs who had been first on the scene, the homeless boy from across the street, and the owner of the house, a frail old *papa-san* with a white beard whose name was Lee Pong Ku. Lee was blind in one eye and so nearly deaf that he had to lean patiently into Surh's face to hear the questions Bill put to him. He explained at the start that his wife, ill at home and nearly insane as a result of frequent Allied bombings near the village, was unable to testify.

The prosecutor-captain asked endless, interlocking questions as he tried to pin down the meager and elusive evidence: What did the soldiers look like? It was too dark, said Lee, and no one actually saw their faces. But they wore berets. What time did the soldiers come? Mr. Lee explained that as he had never had a watch he had no conception of time. What time of year was it, then? Lee had no calendar, he said, so he could not be sure. The boy later testified that he knew nothing about "March," but that the incident had taken place ten days after the second moon. The prosecutor nodded wearily and the court reporter duly noted the answer in the record. What did you hear, that night? the prosecutor asked the boy while he was on the stand. The boy said he had heard the girls scream. Any other voices? Yes. What voices? Foreign. What *kind* of foreign voices? American, said the

boy, who, like most Koreans, thought that all the strangers in South Korea those days must have been Americans. The Court, which had other evidence on the Canadians, could only smile.

On the tenth day the last of the three trials was over, all of the evidence had been painstakingly pieced together, and justice, of a sort, had been done. There were still appeals to be heard in Canada but the local panel sentenced one of the men to two years minus a day, another was given eighteen months, and the third man, who had thrown the grenade, was given a life sentence for manslaughter.

As the men were led away, their officers, including the reluctant prosecutor, were anxious to forget the embarrassing case and get back to Canada or on with the war. Old Lee Pong Ku was anxious to forget it too. He had patiently tried to answer all the puzzling questions, but he had become very homesick during his long stay in Seoul and he wanted to return home to his ailing wife. It had seemed to him like a lot of unneccessary bother, he told another Korean. After all, what was done was done. And he knew that if a ROK soldier had been accused of such a crime the man would simply have been taken out and shot. These "Americans" were strange people, he said.

But these isolated cases of real violence did less damage to the Allied reputation in Korea than smaller, more frequent, and more subtle blows at the Koreans—blows which were aimed more at their dignity than at their chastity, arose more out of thoughtlessness than from brutality, and hurt all the more because they *were* more numerous and more petty.

As part of a campaign to woo and encourage understanding of the war in Japan—who did not particularly relish the idea of our using her as a base from which to fight Commu-

nism; she was afraid she would get dragged in too—General Ridgway's Tokyo public relations staff sent a platoon of Japanese journalists to Korea and installed them at the press billets in Seoul. The Korean boys who waited on tables there in the correspondents' mess, and who were old enough to remember the Japanese occupation with hatred, were shocked at the prospect of having to serve their former masters again, so soon, and under American auspices. To them it seemed rather tactless.

The Kaesong talks had just begun, and a group of the Japanese was given permission to go as far north as Munsan, where they boarded the train provided there as living and working quarters for the press. At noon one day they were in the rickety dining car, happily eating lunch, when a South Korean lieutenant stopped by for a bite. He happened to be an official correspondent for the ROK army, and so he was more than entitled to press privileges. If one of us had been caught at a ROK outfit at lunch, the Koreans would have been most hospitable. Instead the American mess sergeant halted the lieutenant and told him he could not eat there. Without a trace of emotion on his face the officer departed. As he drove away the sergeant remarked loudly that if he let one Korean aboard "all of the god-damned gooks in Korea would try to get a meal here." Our recent enemies could eat; but our present allies could not. Since there was no ROK unit within miles the lieutenant presumably searched out a Korean farmer and shared a pot of *kimchi*.

Lee Jong Hee, an articulate young Korean who had a great liking for Americans but was conscious, as a friend, of some of their faults, analyzed the problem this way: "A lot of the bad feeling between Americans and South Koreans," he suggested in a bull session one night, "is due to the language barrier and to your ignorance of our customs. When your

soldiers cannot make themselves understood they often get angry and start cursing or swinging at us. Koreans are very slow-moving. It is an honored tradition that a Korean gentleman walks along the street slowly and sucks very calmly on his pipe. It is bad manners to hurry. After all, we are an old nation, more than four thousand years, and it hurts when you Americans, who are young and do not like slow motion, show too much contempt for our ways. Some of our customs must seem very strange. And we are a little country. But there are many of us who love it."

An old woman who was too ill and weak to leave Seoul during the shifting tides of war had her troubles with the North Korean, Chinese, and American occupations. She admitted one day to a neighbor, who passed her observation along to my interpreter, that of them all she had the most respect for the Chinese. They were disciplined and polite, she said. When they wanted something from her house—usually food or a place to lie down—they would first knock on her door. (The Chinese, we learned from intelligence, had been given strict orders to make friends, not enemies, of the South Korean populace.) Then they apologized for troubling her, consoled her for her sickness, and, as is the custom in Asia, removed their shoes before they entered. The North Koreans, she added, had behaved not quite so well, but about the same.

"And the Americans?" her neighbor asked. "Didn't they knock or apologize?"

She smiled and shook her head, the neighbor related. "No," she said. "They came right in. Usually they took just some little thing for their girls. An umbrella or a teapot. Or a mirror."

"The GI always seems to think that *his* girl is the cream of the Korean crop," Bill Surh, the Canadian court interpreter,

jokingly told me one night. "She's the best. He's even got her wearing lipstick and the American-style dresses he got from a catalogue. He's certain that just as soon as he leaves the Koreans will all race to take her over. He thinks they'll all want this beautiful new thing he has created. He doesn't know Koreans. These girls will be ruined. No one will marry them.

"Our word for 'prostitute,'" Bill went on, "is *galbo*. It's a nasty word, because Koreans have no use for these girls. They're scum. But we've got another word that is even worse. It's *yang-galbo*. And it means 'prostitute for foreigners.' You can't get any lower than that in this country. *Any* girl who went around with Americans is automatically *yang-galbo*, especially if she starts wearing lipstick and American dresses. Even girls from good families, who worked for you because they learned English in a good school and made good secretaries, are *yang-galbo* to most Koreans. All they have to do is ride home once in their boss's jeep and the kids all start jeering at them."

The enemy, whose attempts at psychological warfare were usually more humorous than effective, recognized this cleavage early in the war and did what he could to capitalize on the U.N. soldiers' well-known weakness for sex. "Officers and soldiers of the ROK Army!" read a ringing leaflet sent down once from the North Korean People's Army. "While you are dying on the front lines in a senseless civil strife among brothers, American soldiers are destroying your home life—playing with Korean women—YOUR MOTHERS, WIVES AND SISTERS!"

The document ended with a gossipy item worthy of Walter Winchell: "The wife of the ROK 9th Division Personnel Officer has been having a good time with an American officer

since her husband was sent to the front. BE ON YOUR GUARD!"

There is no record of the 9th Division personnel officer's having taken this gossip seriously. Even if he did, he probably was more angry with his wife than with the Americans. For most Koreans accepted the Americans, faults and all, with a good deal more patience than we accepted them. And they were prone to rationalize our behavior with politeness and tolerance. There was never a sign of open hostility or even of open criticism. It was only after I became rather well acquainted with the Koreans that I ever heard a word of complaint. And then it came from Koreans who happened to like Americans themselves and thought we ought to know exactly how we stood with some of the rest of their people.

Suh Chin Won, a girl of twenty whose father was a National Assemblyman and whose mother was a major in the Women's Police Corps—and who herself wanted more than anything to come to the U.S. so she could return to help educate Korea's children—was typical of the more thoughtful Korean who tried to reconcile both sides of the question. "Koreans stand firm on the side of Americans," she told me at a dinner one night, "even if there are many rapes and violence. They have suffered too much to mind such things."

Others, in the same spirit of gratitude, excused the offending soldiers on the grounds that they were far from home and that the terrible pressures of combat and the severe demands on their courage and on their very lives were enough to cause any group of men to be rougher and cruder than they would be ordinarily.

Bill Surh, the court interpreter, even felt it was fortunate for his country in the long run that we *were* challenging its traditions and scoffing at some of its customs. It was high time, he thought, that Korea got a good dose of Western ideas and took them to heart.

My interpreter and I happened on the scene in Seoul one night just after a GI had shot a prostitute who had made the mistake of turning him down. Instead of being horrified, my interpreter said, the neighbors were all murmuring, "Well done, well done." So far as they were concerned, the soldier had helpfully eliminated from their society another *yang-galbo.*

There was little the Army could do in cases like this but to punish the culprit if and when they found him. No amount of mimeograph ink could change overnight the character of the soldiers who, until recently, had been civilians. That job had to begin back home, in the families, in the schools, and in all the media of public education, including the amusement industries. I have gone into the matter here, not because such problems were out of hand in Korea—most of the men behaved themselves—but because the behavior of our men overseas is another aspect, and *weapon,* of the kind of total war we fought in Korea and may have to fight elsewhere.

When two cultures which are unprepared even to meet actually collide, as the Americans collided with the "gooks," there are bound to be sparks. And some of the sparks will burn. Late in the war, as the GIs increased their respect for the ROKs as soldiers, the term "gook" began to fade out of use. But the damage to Korean sensitivity had been done. It does not help the situation to say, as a rationalization, that only a few of the men were at fault. This was true. But the Koreans could not be blamed if they did not often notice the better-behaved men, and could only generalize from the few who hurt them deeply. Neither does it help to say, as a defense, that, after all, the men did not *ask* to go to Korea but were sent there. The point is that many of them had simply not learned how to behave away from home. Somewhere

along the line the U.S. has failed to prepare its soldiers to fill the nation's present desperate need—especially in anti-Western Asia—for warriors who are also traveling salesmen.

The Germans and the Japanese behaved far worse than our soldiers when *they* left home. But theirs was, as we have said, an arrogant mission of racialist expansion. No one was surprised when they went wild. The American mission is to help hold together the free world with the strength of our character, as well as with our guns. It will be a most difficult task if we do not show character.

"We were under Japanese rule for nearly forty years," said Lee Jong Hee, "and we learned not to show our feelings. We did not dare. We held our fears only in our hearts. Now, if a GI does something unthinking, we say, 'Okay, okay. He's here to help us.' But the hurt feeling accumulates inside."

I was standing in the market at Yong Dung Po one day when I noticed a Korean mother waiting while her child accepted a piece of candy from a soldier. "Americans are very kind," she volunteered to my interpreter. "They always stop to smile at our children."

With the help of their candy and rations of chewing gum, American soldiers have endeared themselves to the children of every country to which they have ever been sent. In Korea enlisted men, entirely on their own initiative and financed from their own pay, set up homes for literally thousands of war orphans. Every city in South Korea had a booming sidewalk shoeshine industry, simply because when a small boy with a dirty face and ragged clothing came along with his box of polish and a shy smile, few soldiers could resist stopping, whether their boots needed shining or not. The children reciprocated. Some of their best shines they gave away for nothing. And dirty though they usually were, they were not

considered "gooks." They were not even Koreans. They were just kids.

It is an enlightening commentary on the social maturity of America that when its soldiers find themselves in a strange country, which is full of queer-looking and sometimes exasperating people, who speak an unintelligible language, with whom the soldier can find no sense of kinship and to whom he can on occasion even be cruel, he turns instinctively to the children, and, by making an immediate and firm alliance with *them,* seems to say that he wants to maintain at least a junior membership in the human race.

X

ACCORDING TO the Chinese lunar calendar, spring in China begins on February 5. I happened to be on the Chinese island of Formosa for the beginning of spring 1953, and there the day brought more than the usual sight of February morning glories, the harvest of leafy Taiwan tobacco, and the transplanting of delicate rice seedlings in the hundreds of shimmering paddies. President Eisenhower had just announced that the U.S. Seventh Fleet would no longer attempt to keep the Nationalist Chinese penned up on their redoubt. They were free to attack the mainland whenever

they wanted to. (The fleet would continue to protect Formosa from Communist attack, a fact which was omitted from the early news broadcasts, the omission of which caused a good deal of consternation on the island at the time. The Americans stationed there knew that without the U.S. fleet to shield the place against the Reds, the Communists might try to take it, and could probably succeed. For Formosa has a tiny navy. Chiang Kai-shek still remembers that his original navy turned out to be full of traitors, and he lost so many ships when their officers surrendered to the Reds that he has had trouble rebuilding his fleet.) What Eisenhower *had* done was to rescind the order which President Truman had given the fleet, in an effort at the time to localize the war in Korea and so avoid an additional imbroglio with the Chinese mainland. The Nationalist Chinese thought it was a wonderful way to start spring.

From one end of the mountainous island to the other, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek's troops rose early in their barracks and marched through the chilly February fog to their training grounds. Just as they had for three restless years, the soldiers toned their hardened muscles with rigorous calisthenics, charged fanatically across rice paddies and cane fields in mock attacks, improved their nerves by tossing live grenades back and forth to each other and by dividing up into opposing forces for practice and attacking one another's positions with live mortar and machine-gun fire. The exercises were not new—the men had gone through them many times—but their spirit had reached a new high. With Eisenhower's announcement that they would no longer be held back, the men lit into their training with a second wind and with the soldier's understanding that it might now make some sense.

The excitement was not confined to the soldiers, most of

whom are mainlanders who left their families behind when their homes fell and are now determined, after three long, frustrating years, to return to them. Even the Taiwanese farmers, whose families have been on the island for generations and no longer have strong ties on the mainland, rose voluntarily in meetings to proclaim their own support for an early recapture of their homeland. And on school blackboards, children practiced writing Chinese characters with these words: "Little friends of Free China are the most fortunate little friends. Get ready to counterattack the mainland."

Taiwan is a garden spot (Portuguese sailors called it "Formosa," or "Beautiful Island"), lush with bananas, pineapple, tea, and rice. Its tropical climate and quiet isolation have attracted restless mainlanders to its shores for centuries. But none of the approximately 2,000,000 Chinese, who had retreated there from the Reds three years before, forgets for one moment that his exile is only temporary. Most of them have good reason for wanting to return home as soon as possible. A young Chinese Air Force major explained it to me this way: "I had to leave my family behind when we bugged out. Not long ago I heard my father had died under mysterious circumstances. I have three brothers there. One is a doctor; one is a lawyer; and one is an engineer. All were prosperous when the Communists first came. And yet my mother had to write to me for enough money to bury my father. Something awful has happened there. We *must* go back."

Though Eisenhower's statement cleared the air and charged it with a new determination, it did not automatically alter a basic military fact: the Chinese Nationalists are not yet ready to go back en masse. They have the courage and the will. But they lack the equipment to launch such a tremendous military operation across one hundred miles of

water, against a mainland force which far outnumbers them. And it is doubtful if they would be a serious match for Mao's huge forces, even if they *were* fully equipped.

Here is what they *can* do: they can continue to send hit-and-run nuisance raids against Communist positions on the opposite coast; they can continue to train and send over guerrilla leaders to move inland and set up cells of opposition for the day when Chiang may be strong enough, through outside support, to make an all-out attack; they can continue to bring back prisoners in an effort to add to their information on mainland installations and to undermine morale among the Red units facing them. The Nationalists were doing all this even under Truman's neutralization order (by operating not from the island of Taiwan, which the order covered, but from their offshore bases in the Pescadores and Quemoy).

The immediate effect of Eisenhower's announcement was twofold: (1) it allowed Chiang to operate directly from his Taiwan bases, thus making it possible for him to mount larger raids involving more men. (This would cause Mao to pin down an increasing number of Red troops on the mainland coast to meet such a threat.) And (2) the order converted Chiang's forces overnight from a useless, isolated army, hamstrung by public proclamation, into at least a psychological weapon. Even if Chiang's forces were not yet ready to launch an all-out attack on the mainland (which the enemy surely knew from his own intelligence), at least the enemy knew as a result that it might now be only a matter of time. He could no longer assume anything. He would have to start guessing. There was evidence before I left Formosa that Mao was guessing hard. Nationalist officers reported that Communist troops were known to have been reshuffled along the coast. The enemy was already feeling the psychological effect; he was nervous.

The only real answer to whether a force can or cannot fight is to turn it loose and find out. Chiang's forces are not yet equipped to the critical point where they can be turned completely loose. Even as a defensive force, to sit tight and guard Formosa, they are far from prepared. And they are the first to admit it. But they lack nothing which additional supplies and training would not correct. They need landing craft, communications equipment, ammunition supplies, better planes, standardized weapons—all of which must come from the U.S. They have the men, the morale, and the motive for attack. It is now up to the U.S., having sharpened their will, to hand them the sharp bayonets and the sharp-nosed bullets to do the job. Their assets are many:

They have a tightly trained army of hard, well-fed, spartanlike soldiers. It is not as large as many of its fans have claimed. Its strength of effective troops organized into units for deployment in combat amounts to ten "armies," each of which numbers about 20,000 men—the average size of a U.S. division. Neither is it as old as some of its critics have claimed. Many of its soldiers who fought on the mainland were very young, and their average age today is about twenty-seven. Nearly all of them had combat experience on the mainland and the criticism that Chiang's army was—and still is—a defeated army can be answered by the fact that these particular men are the cream of the crop, who did not defect but who cared enough about freedom and their loyalty to Chiang to follow him to Taiwan and start all over again. Their three years of intensive training have welded them tightly together.

One of the Nationalist Army's greatest assets is its leader: General Sun Li-jen, a graying but vigorous fighting man of fifty-two who studied at Purdue University and V.M.I. in the U.S., and speaks fluent English. Sun commanded an army on

the mainland and he is almost solely responsible for the increasing stamina and skill of Chiang's present ground force. A superb field soldier, Sun spends seven days a week at his job. His pride and joy is the officers' academy at Fengshan, situated on a huge sunlit plateau near the southern tip of the island. He knows that any army depends heavily on the strength and skill of its junior officers, and nearly every Sunday finds him leaving his office to stride across the field in his high cavalry boots, personally checking on their training. Most of the young candidates for commissions come to Fengshan as a result of competitive examinations in the ranks, and these are the cream of his noncoms and enlisted men. For two and a half years (the course is now being lengthened to four, as at West Point) the men concentrate on basic training, rugged calisthenics to harden their bodies, and, finally, specialized training in artillery, bridge building, infantry tactics, horsemanship, signaling. As they train, General Sun walks through the ranks, stopping here and there to scold a mortar crew for not digging its piece in properly, feels the muscles of a young cadet to check on his physique (he is an excellent athlete and onetime basketball star himself), and often gets down on the ground beside a rifleman to correct his sighting and aiming technique. He is a strict disciplinarian and a hard-driving soldier. But he also has a good sense of humor. Once, while escorting a visiting American general on an inspection of one of his units, Sun stopped before one soldier and proudly told the visitor that this man was one of several thousand Taiwanese boys who have been integrated into the Chinese army. The American officer asked how the Taiwan boy liked it. With dozens of accompanying officers looking on, General Sun dutifully interpreted the question to the nervous soldier and then turned to give the American his

answer. "He likes it," he laughed. "What did you think he'd say?"

Sun's sense of humor comes in handy, for he faces some tremendous problems. Though he is commander-in-chief of the Chinese army, he can give few orders. His army is broken up among several area commanders, each of whom is responsible to a higher authority than Sun. His duties are largely confined to training. Some of his units are outfitted with Belgian Mausers, others with U.S. Springfields, still others with Enfields. He has some artillery, but it would have to be increased with extra equipment to support a permanent landing of any great size. And he lacks the field telephones and radios needed to co-ordinate the fire of the guns with the movement of his troops. But though supply is normally the direct problem of the commander-in-chief, Sun has little control over his own logistics. That job is given to the Combined Service Forces, under another set of generals. He also has no armor under his command. All the Chinese tanks—many of which are small, obsolescent M-IVs—are concentrated in a separate force, under the command of one of Chiang's sons, General Chiang Wego. (His Chinese name is Wei-kuo; he changed it after military school in Germany.) Wego is a tough, skillful soldier who served as a private in the German army and has come up the hard way in the Chinese forces. His father makes a point of giving him no favors he does not deserve or work for. But this does not help Sun, who—were he to go ashore tomorrow—would first have to go through channels to get the necessary supplies and ammo from one general, the necessary tank support from another, and would then have to find out, probably from the Generalissimo himself, just what authority he would have with his own separate division commanders to get the show

on the road. The confusion that would result is enough to make the American military advisers shudder.

One of the most colorful figures on the island is the commander of the Chinese Air Force, General ("Tiger") Wang Shu-ming. A squat, husky fighter of forty-nine, with a smile that wrinkles his entire face and an inner fiber as tough as the struts on one of his planes, Tiger has been flying since he was twenty. He was in the first class to graduate from Whampoa Military Academy, which was commanded at the time by a rising general named Chiang Kai-shek. When Dr. Sun Yat-sen started the first flying school at Canton, the Tiger was among the first ten cadets to join up. Later, because the Chinese Republic was running low on fuel and planes, he was sent to Russia to continue his training. He did not think much of Russian pilots (he says they were sloppy and not so brave as foolhardy) and when he returned to Russia in 1937 to purchase Russian planes for the Chinese to use against Japan, his opinion of Red aviation fell even lower: the plane *he* was given to fly home just barely got him there. Most of the others were equally defective. He also remembers that the Russians changed their minds and terms so often that he was not at all surprised by the Red tactics at Panmunjom. His memory of the intimidation and fear he saw among the Russians still haunts him, and it explains a good deal about his anti-Communist zeal today.

Later he went to Italy to learn bombing techniques (a superior officer thought the Italians had made some nice patterns against the Ethiopians) and came home to command a flying school. While he ran the school with one hand he took over a Chinese air force with the other. When General Claire Chennault arrived in China with his American Volunteer Group, Wang was soon tapped to be his chief of staff, and it was while he worked with Chennault's "Flying Tigers" that

Tiger Wang picked up the nickname he has been known by ever since. Then, when General Curtis LeMay took his bombers to China, the Tiger was given the job of building the airfields for him. He did such a good job of organizing an aircraft warning system on the side that he was soon given the job of organizing a similar system for all of China.

I was chatting with him one day across his desk, which has a huge statue of Bismarck in one corner, when Air Force Colonel Ed Rector, who had worked with Wang in the war and is now his U.S. military adviser, started reminiscing about the old days and remarked that the Tiger's warning system against Japanese air attacks was the most effective the U.S. had ever seen. "We knew when the Japanese planes were coming almost as soon as they'd taken off," Rector remarked.

"Hell," Wang laughed loudly, "I had two Japs working for me!"

Outside observers had considered Wang the best candidate for boss of the Chinese Air Force long before he got the job. He was its deputy commander beginning in 1946, but he did not get the top appointment—because of high-level politics among the generals—until 1952. When the news of his promotion came the Tiger jumped impetuously into his own B-25 and spent two hours alone in the air, just flying around for the heck of it. It was his last carefree gesture.

When the news of Eisenhower's order came, Tiger, like General Sun, had plenty of problems on his hands. He had a group of pilots—carefully hand-picked and tutored in English—enrolled in U.S. flying schools to learn how to fly jets. He had some maintenance men among them to learn the intricacies of jet repair. And his engineers, with U.S. instructors standing by, were busy building airfields which would have strips long enough to handle the new planes when they arrived. The Tiger was happy about all that. But

even with the new planes he still had a lot more experienced and battle-wise pilots on his rosters than he had cockpits to put them in. And the planes he had—F-51s, some newly arrived F-47s, and a few light bombers—were hardly a match for the Red Air Force. If he did not get more planes soon, his pilots would become rusty from lack of flying time. And if they did not keep up their flying time, how could they adequately support the ground troops if and when the time came?

Despite these problems the morale of the Chinese Air Force was high. It was so high in fact that the Tiger had had to crack down a little. His men were getting too cocky, and they were somewhat spoiled. Before Wang assumed command, the air force had taken it easy on dishing out punishment and demerits—presumably on the theory that it might someday need all the pilots it could get and that a pilot who received a demerit just might get sore and defect to the Communists. The Tiger changed all that. Once, on an inspection trip, he was in a hurry to get to a remote base and asked one of his local commanders in the field to provide him with a car. He had ridden about halfway to his destination, along a lonely road, when the car suddenly broke down. For two hours the Tiger sat on the fender, watching water buffalo lumber by and cursing the memory of the commander who had loaned him the car. Finally, when he got back, his first act was to relieve the unfortunate colonel—not because Wang had been *personally* inconvenienced, but because the colonel had been grossly inefficient. "He knew that there is not a car on Taiwan you can trust," said the general later. "So he should have sent a standby car to follow me. I don't want a man commanding my planes who does not think of things like that."

I was never able to find out what Wang, the perfectionist,

did about a report which came to his desk some time later. Two planes had collided on a training flight, and one pilot had plunged to his death. The officer in command of the flight, trying to write an accident report which would get himself off the hook, put it this way: "Pilot Lu of the accident aircraft was dead. . . . He was relieved of his responsibility."

Though Pilot Lu, being dead, was relieved of *his* responsibility for the defense of Formosa and the attack on the mainland, it is certain that no one who is *alive* and working for the Nationalist cause is ever allowed for a moment to forget his own. The man who probably reads more reports and knows more than anyone else on the island about responsibility is the Generalissimo's eldest son, General Chiang Ching-kuo. As head of the Political Department of the Ministry of National Defense, Ching-kuo is one of the most powerful men in the government. And he got there, say most observers, not because he is the Gimo's son, but because he is a strong, dedicated, and expert boss in his own right. His tentacles run through the entire military structure from the highest command to the smallest unit, and his own responsibilities are immense: he is responsible for all special service and entertainment functions in the military; his department runs the physical training program and promotes all organized athletic events; the chaplains are responsible to his office, as are the Chinese version of the Red Cross and the Veterans Administration; the task of wiping out illiteracy and educating the soldiers, sailors, and airmen in Chinese history, language, and ethics is his; he supervises the psychological warfare program waged against the mainland; he handles ticklish jobs of intelligence, counterintelligence, and counterespionage—with all the frills of spies, counterspies,

and investigations which these entail. He is in charge of all home-front propaganda and the heavy barrage of political indoctrination which is constantly drummed into the military in daily lectures. And as the inspector general of the entire military system, he has teams planted in the navy, the army, and the air force who report directly to him. If there is any question about the disloyalty or defection of anyone on Taiwan, from a private to a full general, Ching-kuo is the first to know of it. He is the commissar general of Free China.

Looking at all this power, a number of foreigners on Taiwan have concluded that Ching-kuo is the next in line for his father's job. But others, who know Ching-kuo well, say this is not so, that he has no personal ambitions and that he is merely filling the job because someone has to do it and he is the best man fitted by temperament and experience to bring it off. The general, who is forty-eight and surprisingly warm and affable for one who wields so much cold power, prepared for his role by studying the political commissar system in Russia. He speaks Russian, is married to a Russian, and his children look more Russian than Chinese. With this in mind, some American advisers look askance at his organization, feeling that it concentrates too much power into political channels—a Russian failing—and that Ching-kuo's political structure in the military might one day prove just as disastrous to the Chinese generals as it has to many Russian generals who have found the political commissars running their battles for them.

In the face of American criticism, Ching-kuo has backed down a little. He no longer insists that all orders put out by millitary commanders have to be countersigned by his political officers. He has agreed to cut down on political indoctrination classes until they take up only ten per cent of the training schedule—thus giving the men more time to learn

how to fight. And he claims to have no interest in controlling the tactical decisions of the military commanders. His only interest, he says, is in seeing that his father's army does not crumble this time for lack of loyalty or political stability, as it did on the mainland. And there he has a point. The Chinese armies were at their best and most victorious, he points out, from 1924 to 1945, and were at their worst from 1946 to 1950. Well, he adds, they had political officers from 1924 to 1945, and they did *not* have political officers from 1946 to 1950. As logic, that's hard to beat. It is Ching-kuo's hope and determination that when the soldiers go back this time they will know—every one of them—what they are fighting for and why. And he also hopes to know, before they go, what the soldiers—every one of them—are thinking. As the pace picked up after the deneutralization order, the stack of dossiers got thicker on the general's desk and the three phones next to them rang a little oftener than usual.

While Chiang Ching-kuo is busy in his tiny office, tightening the reins of loyalty and stamping his personal chop on the thousands of reports concerning indoctrination, military fitness, and Communist intelligence, his two young sons—Hsiao-wu, seven, and Hsiao-yang, four—are more often than not up at their grandfather's house, playing with their cowboy pistols, wearing their Chinese-made Hopalong Cassidy uniforms, and taking turns using the Generalissimo's aged but patient black spaniel for a horse. They are the apples of the Gimo's eye, and after his afternoon nap he often walks into the garden to play with them before going back to his work.

When I was there, Madame Chiang Kai-shek was still in the U.S. undergoing medical treatment, and without her the Generalissimo's personal life was a lonely one. But it was as full and busy, at sixty-seven, as it ever was. He rises at dawn,

does some setting-up exercises to keep himself trim, and then —after a brief prayer in his chapel—sits down to a simple breakfast of fruit. After breakfast his secretary reads him the day's news and by nine he is on his way to his office on the second floor of the huge red brick Ministry of National Defense building in Taipeh. There, until noon, he meets with from twenty to fifty visitors. He does not spare himself. He goes home for lunch and after a short nap spends the rest of the afternoon receiving callers and having conferences at his home. In the evening he stops for tea and a brief walk and then, just before dinner, he retires again to his chapel for prayer. After dinner, which he often eats alone when Madame is away, he usually works on his copious diary. Before retiring at eleven he sometimes has American and Chinese newsreels run off for him on his private projector. (Several times a month his young grandchildren take over the projector to watch their favorite cowboy movies.)

At his office one morning while I was present, the Generalissimo had a brief visit from an American professor, in town to do an educational survey, talked with the publisher of a Chinese magazine about his editorial policy, and interviewed several officers who were about to be promoted, in order to assure himself of their personal loyalty and integrity. It is one of the strengths—and weaknesses—of the Generalissimo's government that he refuses to delegate such chores to other officials. Every officer, for example, of regimental rank in the army, or of group rank in the air force, must personally be interviewed by the Generalissimo before he can be promoted in rank or shifted in his job. This might seem to be a tremendous waste of the Gimo's time, and a tedious chore that could just as well be handled by his army and air force commanders. But Chiang has a good reason for it: he has had such bitter experience with disloyal or badly placed officials,

who have let him down in the past, that he now feels it was his own fault for not having paid closer attention to them. He seems to think that once he has seen them and looked them in the eye—and they have looked *him* in the eye—they will be his followers forever. Perhaps he is right.

I also happened to be present one morning when two dozen young air force officers were brought in to say good-by before journeying to the U.S. to study. They were mostly lieutenants, captains, and majors. They had their orders. They had learned their English lessons, so as to be able to study. And presumably they had all been hand-picked and sorted until they were above reproach. But still the Generalissimo wanted to see them. They lined up neatly in two files and practiced their saluting and bowing. They were nervous and a little embarrassed. Several of them smiled at me as if I might find the rite rather amusing. Suddenly the door opened and an aide barked an order. To a man, they sprang to ramrod attention and bowed toward the door as the Generalissimo walked in, slowly and with a slight stoop. He had a sheet of paper in his hands and after looking the group over he began to walk down the row, calling the roll of their names. Each man as he answered thrust out his chin, stuck his fist into the air in salute, and looked right into the Gimo's piercing eyes. I have never seen such fire or devotion as in those two dozen pairs of eyes. When the Gimo had read the entire roll, and personally checked off each man's name, he stood the men at ease and talked to them for about five minutes. He told them he was proud to send them to America, that he expected each of them to work hard, to set a good example to the Americans they met, and to come home prepared to add substantially to the plans for counter-attacking the mainland. He looked them over again, nodded, and went back to his desk as they jumped once more to

respectful attention. The officers filed out. They were probably dedicated enough when they came, or they would not have been chosen. However, I have no doubt but what they were one hundred per cent *more* dedicated when they left.

For all his faults of leadership—his overcentralization of power, for example, and his tendency to control the balance by playing his generals against one another and making them scramble for supplies and even for tanks—Chiang Kai-shek is still the heart and soul of the Nationalist movement. His greatest strength—and his greatest weakness—is that there is no one else around who can match him, or could easily replace him.

But there is nothing of the 1984 Big Brother or dictator-god about him. Two huge statues of the Generalissimo were erected not long ago in Taipeh, the capital city. It looked for a time as if there might be a scramble on to see how many statues his admiring underlings could erect. But the Gimo stepped in just as the second one was finished and put a stop to it. "We must remember," he warned later, in a message to the nation, "that, although we are today enjoying temporary peace in Taiwan, we must not allow ourselves to live in self-complacency." Then he outlined the job ahead: "The social and cultural reform movement is the foundation to the coming counteroffensive. In the social field, everybody must love his own people and render service to others. In the cultural field, everyone must have a sense of propriety and righteousness. . . . We must be inspired by a new spirit. . . . It does not mean that we must introduce changes all the time and plan new and strange devices. It does mean that we have to discard what is out of date for what is new and replace what is corrupt and outmoded with better things."

Perhaps nowhere else has this new spirit been put to better

use than in the land reform movement. Had the Generalissimo been as successful in this field on the mainland as he has been on Taiwan, it is possible he could have held China against the Reds. For it was on the dissatisfaction of the peasants and the small farmers that the Communists capitalized most. Even now, regardless of how big an army the Nationalists storm the mainland with, the odds will be against them unless they take something else along too: a new deal, as it were, for the masses of people there, who were downtrodden under the old landlords and are even more downtrodden today under the Red communizers. The strongest weapon Chiang now has for recovery of the mainland is not his hardened army or his eager air force, or even his small corps of 14,000 hard-bitten Chinese Marines. It is the set of social reforms which he has worked out on Taiwan and which he now hopes to transplant, like a bed of tested rice seedlings, to the larger paddy fields of China.

For nineteen generations the family of Wong Shen has lived on the island of Taiwan. His ancestors went there to escape the unrest of seventeenth-century China. They found peace, but aside from that life seemed as hard, and as fruitless, as it had on the mainland. The Wongs started out as farm hands, working for their food and shelter on the farms of others. They were still working as farm hands until some thirty years ago, when Wong Shen moved with his father to a farm near Taichung and the family rose a notch to become tenants. It was only a notch, however. The Japanese, who won Taiwan in 1895 as booty from the Sino-Japanese War, occupied the island. They stipulated the crops, collected the harvests, and appointed all the officials with whom Wong Shen had to deal. And from his crop of rice Wong Shen had to give his landlord half (and sometimes

more) in rent. It left him little to eat, and even less to sell in exchange for clothes and other necessities of life. Life was peaceful, but it was not kind. Wong Shen's wife, Li-mei, often prayed before the household shrine of Kwan Yin, the goddess of mercy. But not knowing of a better life, she usually thanked Kwan Yin for what little they had.

Then one day World War II ended, the defeated Japanese departed, and the first officials came from Chiang Kai-shek's headquarters on the mainland to take Taiwan back into the fold as a province of China. They got off to a very bad start and the Taiwanese had good reason to wish sometimes that the Japanese would come back. The Chinese soldiers who came to liberate them were brutal and overbearing. They took what food they wanted and slapped down whoever got in their way. And the first governor Chiang sent over, a man named Chen Yi, was as tyrannical as any old China had ever known. When the young Taiwanese dared to organize in an effort to protect their homes from the rowdy Chinese soldiers Chen Yi ordered five thousand of them rounded up and shot. If this was the new democratic government of Chiang Kai-shek, Taiwan wanted none of it.

Fortunately for Taiwan—and for Chiang Kai-shek—Chen Yi did not last. He was sent back to the mainland, where he later began to traffic with the rampaging Communists and was finally ordered executed by Chiang. In a moment of poetic justice the execution was carried out in Taipeh, so that the Taiwanese might know of their tyrant's fate.

Then, having learned his lesson, Chiang began to provide Taiwan with increasingly better government. Wei Tao-ming was sent direct from Washington to take over from Chen Yi and repair the damage. His first move was to employ some Taiwanese in the provincial government. Then in 1949 Taiwan got its first real Chinese friend in the person of Chen

Cheng, a devoted disciple of Chiang's who had started life as a lowly farm boy and risen through the ranks to become a top general, Minister of War, and finally chief of Chiang's general staff.

One of Chen's first goals as governor was to ease the lot of the farmers. He knew they were the backbone of the economy, and from the Communist revolution on the mainland he had learned that no government could stand against the inroads of Communism unless it lightened the burdens of debt, taxes, and misery which the farmers had been made to carry. Before his year's term was out, Chen had designed and pushed through the legislature a rent-reduction policy which lowered the rent any tenant paid for his land to 37.5 per cent of the value of his main crop, instead of the usual half or more, which they had paid before.

In 1951 Chiang made Chen's provincial policy the official law of the land and the farmers were jubilant. Since then the government has added two more features to the land reform program—one providing for the sale of government-owned land to the farmers at a nominal price (two and a half times the value of one year's crop, payable over a ten-year period); and another which limits the amount of land that any absentee landlord can own—thus freeing another 440,000 acres for the small farmer. Wily old Chen Cheng, now Premier of the Nationalist Government, has followed through on every step. The Legislative Yuan, which had to pass the bill limiting landlords' holdings, was heavily represented by the very landlords who would be losing the most land. A number of them muttered their opposition to the plan. Though ailing—he cannot drink and smokes sparingly—Chen invited groups of legislators to his home for dinner. Raising his glass of rice wine in a token toast, he smilingly persuaded them that by letting their tenants make more profit and eventually *buy*

up the land, the landlords would have the extra *capital* to invest in industry, and thus get in on the ground floor of Taiwan's expanding economy and at the same time help make Taiwan industrially self-sufficient. The argument worked and the bill passed.

"Chen is the strength of Asia," said Dr. Hubert Schenck, chief of the MSA mission in Taiwan. "The simple farm boy and the experienced soldier, he is one of the few men here who understands free enterprise, the common man's problems, the value of education and the strength of the free labor movement. Everything we talk about and stand for in the U.S., he understands without being told."

"All of us have learned our bitter lesson from our failure on the mainland," says Chen, tugging gracefully at the khaki shirt which shows under his simple black uniform. "And we are all ready to start over again."

Chen Cheng's successor as governor was the plucky, hard-working little ex-mayor of Shanghai, K. C. Wu. A man of imagination and showmanship who went to Grinnell and Princeton in the twenties and was also mayor of Hankow and Chungking before he took over at Shanghai, Wu went to work, reorganizing the schools, shifting the island's language and culture back from Japanese to Chinese, and continuing the job of making Taiwan a model for the kind of government the Nationalists hope to take back with them to the mainland. To find out what the people needed, Wu made constant inspection trips to remote villages and islands, bucking up the local government and flying back to his office in Taipeh with a briefcase full of new ideas. As the farmers' lot became better, he turned his attention to the 100,000 fishermen along Formosa's shores. When a typhoon wrecked many of the fishing villages, K.C. went down to find out what had happened to the weather-warning system and to set about im-

proving it. Then he instituted an insurance fund to help them over their losses, buy new junks, and improve their harbors.

The cost of creating a new government, instituting reforms, and at the same time maintaining a huge defense budget for the training and support of an army, a navy, and an air force has put a severe strain on the Nationalist economy. Taxes were already so high that they could not very well be raised any further. But it was not so much a problem of raising taxes as it was of *collecting* them. The farmers, whose land and animals and crops could be easily seen and taxed, had traditionally carried the burden of taxes in China. And the merchants had always been notoriously successful at *dodging* their taxes—either by juggling their books or by hiding their cash. So Wu thought up another gimmick to settle that problem. He made the merchants give receipts for all purchases over ten dollars Taiwan (about seventy-five cents U.S.). He had the government print the receipts with a number on each one to make them easier to keep track of. Then, to force the merchants to *give* the receipts (and thus provide the government with a better check on their income for tax purposes) he told the customers that they were lottery tickets. Every month, now, the provincial government gives fifty thousand dollars Taiwan to the holder of the lucky receipts, with smaller prizes going to lesser numbers. No customer in his right mind will make a purchase these days without demanding a receipt, and Wu was able to collect so many taxes from the once clever merchants that he thought he could get by without having to increase taxes at all.

The leading brands of cigarettes on sale in Taiwan these days are labeled "Paradise" and "New Paradise." For all its tropical fruits and bubbling enthusiasm, Taiwan is not, in any

real sense of the word, a paradise. There is, for example, a serious lack of raw materials for industry. And much of the industry which does exist on the island is so handicapped by lack of proper machinery and cheap materials that it is inefficient. Taiwan can never hope to be entirely self-sufficient. But in the short space of three years, under pressure of imminent attack from the mainland, and against awesome odds, Taiwan changed tremendously. Some of the signs of the changing times are most impressive:

The 1952 rice crop was 1,700,000 metric tons—far more than the Japanese, with all their forceful persuasion, were ever able to glean from Taiwan's paddies.

Nearly every farm today has a new building, a new tile roof to replace the dirty straw, three or four more pigs, more and better food in the larder, and new and warmer clothes in the wardrobe. Farmer Wong Shen was able to save enough money to send his fourth son to high school (an impossibility under the previous high rent). And his third son could afford a wedding so much finer than he would have had in former years that he was able to persuade a girl from a healthier and better-educated farm family to marry him. Some of the neighbors smile and say that Sze-chuan, a pretty girl of twenty-four who also brought along a sewing machine when she married into the family, is Wong Shen's 37.5 daughter-in-law—which is a local joke, meaning that she can be directly attributed to the reduction of land rent to but 37.5 per cent of the tobacco and rice Wong grows.

Though most of these impressive gains are the result of hard work and idealistic determination on the part of the Chinese, many of them have been made possible—or at least easier—with U.S. aid. ECA and MSA have, among other things, provided for barracks, hangars, fuel facilities, medical equipment, ordnance shops, and the material for military

uniforms and boots. They have helped repair school buildings and waterworks, helped build bridges and highways and irrigation projects, expanded the production and transmission of electric power, increased the fertilizer production, helped the Chinese to explore for minerals, streamline their textile production, and improve their breed of pigs. By 1957, it is hoped, the economy will be strong enough and the factories, farms, and fields we are now developing so much more productive that Taiwan can carry on by itself.

Perhaps the best thing to come out of the entire experiment is a small organization known as JCRR (Joint Commission on Rural Reconstruction). Set up first on the mainland, JCRR consists of two American farm experts, appointed by the President of the U.S., and two Chinese farm experts, appointed by President Chiang Kai-shek. Its fifth member and chairman is a wise old philosopher and educator named Chiang Monlin. Chiang (no kin) first became interested in land reform on the mainland, where he was president of the Chinese Red Cross, chancellor of Peking University, secretary general of the Executive Yuan, and a long-time friend and associate of modern China's founder, Sun Yat-sen. In his first mainland experience with land reform, Chiang Monlin carried a gun to protect himself from the irate landlords. When another member of the crusading group was slain, Chiang and his friends prudently decided China was not ready for this kind of thing, and the movement broke up. Now, at last, on Taiwan, he has seen his early ideas bear fruit. Today JCRR is a household word and nearly every farmhouse on Taiwan has its rooms decorously papered with the posters, fertilizer-mixing charts, and farm newspapers which are provided by the commission.

JCRR is a model of what all international aid organizations ought to be. The original money was U.S., but instead of

moving in and spending U.S. dollars lavishly to buy up an economy—as similar projects have done—JCRR moved slowly. Experienced field workers tour the farms looking for trouble spots. When they find a problem that needs solving they wait until a local sponsor comes forward to guarantee the project. It may be the sugar company, looking for a better way to irrigate cane, or a farmers' association which needs fertilizer to help increase its yield. As soon as JCRR is convinced that the project is sound and for the farmers' best interests, it makes a loan.

The sponsor must put up some of the money; JCRR never puts up all. Then, when the project begins to pay off, in better crops, fatter hogs, additional irrigation water, or a disease-free tobacco plant, the sponsor sees to it that JCRR gets its loan back and the commission looks around for another project to work on. JCRR has practically rebuilt the agricultural economy of Taiwan at a cost of but ten million dollars U.S. But only a half million of that has actually come from the American taxpayer. The rest represents counterpart funds—Taiwanese dollars resulting from the profits and gains achieved in the program. One year's rice crop alone is worth the cost of the entire program. Never in the history of American aid, perhaps, has so much been done for so little. And the beauty of it is that the program is, as the title indicates, a joint effort. No move is ever made unless the Americans and Chinese on the commission all agree that it is sound. The farmers know there is American money in the program, and they are grateful. But the Americans do not hog the show or the credit. Thus the Chinese government is allowed to gain face and prestige in the eyes of the Taiwanese and—as everyone hopes—in the eyes of the farmers on the mainland.

For the only hope for Free China is that if and when men like Sun Li-jen, Tiger Wang, and Chiang Wego land on the

mainland with their guns, planes, and tanks there will be men like Chiang Monlin and Chen Cheng not far behind with their ideas. The two teams belong together. Without the reforms worked out on Taiwan the military will have little to offer China but a bloody battle. Reports filtering out of China through Hong Kong from time to time indicate that the people on the mainland have learned of the Nationalists' work on Taiwan—of their elections and land reforms and of the new roofs and the 37.5 wives. Chiang has a small army, as armies go. But if he can one day land enough of it at one time to establish a bridgehead, and then proceed to transplant the government he has tested on Taiwan, it is *possible* that the enslaved population of China will rise to help him. If they do, then China will once again be free.

When I last visited him, old farmer Wong Shen looked around at his farmhouse—which his landlord still owned—and at the fields he had not yet been able to buy up. He figured that in another five or six good years he would be able to own them all. According to the law, he will have ten years in which to pay for them. But he is willing—because he is excited now—to pay for them sooner than that, even at a higher price, and thus consolidate his gains. He is not impatient, but with the adventure of freedom at last in sight, he would rather suffer no long delay. Trying to explain to me why he felt this way, he quoted an old Chinese proverb: "If the night is long, there are too many dreams."

On the tyrannized mainland of China these days, the nights are long with waiting and the nightmares are endless.

XI

ON SEPTEMBER 2, 1948, three years to the day after he had stood on the deck of the battleship *Missouri* to take Japan's surrender, General MacArthur issued an enthusiastic and ringing statement of praise for the progress of the Japanese under his occupation: "They have here, in a confused and bewildered world, a calm and well-ordered society dedicated to the sanctity of peace. . . . There need be no fear concerning the future pattern of Japanese life, for the Japanese people have fully demonstrated their will and their capacity to absorb into their own culture sound ideas, well tested in the

crucible of Western experience. [This progress] points with unmistakable clarity to the fallacy of the oft-expressed dogma that the East and the West are separated by such impenetrable social, cultural and racial distinctions as to render impossible the absorption by the one of the ideas and concepts of the other. It emphasized again the immutable truism that sound ideas cannot be stopped."

The general had good reason at the time for much of his optimism. For in the three years which had passed since he first touched down at Atsugi airport near Tokyo his occupation forces had destroyed Japan's military machine, purged its wartime leaders, supervised free elections, freed the educational system of state control, ordered the propaganda-filled textbooks rewritten, abolished Shinto as an authoritarian religion and proclaimed religious freedom, broken up the huge industrial combines, driven the ultranationalists into hiding, encouraged the emancipation and enfranchisement of women, helped draft a new constitution which demoted the Emperor and renounced war, decentralized the hated police forces, reformed the courts and provided for habeas corpus, put a stop to thought control, and decreed a sweeping program of land reform under which two million former tenants bought land from their feudal landlords and struck out on their own. It was an impressive beginning.

The defeated, humiliated Japanese were so surprised by the lack of revenge and cruelty shown them by American troops, and so grateful for the food which MacArthur brought in when they fully expected he would let them starve, that they responded to his aloof paternalism as if he were the Emperor's own replacement. They affectionately called him *Ma Gensui* ("Field Marshal Mac") and they thronged the sidewalks daily outside the Dai Ichi Building to

see him arrive for work and depart. To all appearances he had Japan in the palm of his hand.

The Japanese, who are the first to admit that they borrowed much of their original culture from ancient China and Korea, bent with the new American winds of reform and change like a grove of green bamboo. Eager to absorb the way of life which the Americans were thrusting upon them—the Japanese tongue pronounced it "democrassy"—they went all out to acquire at least the symbols. Since America was the model democracy as well as their esteemed conqueror, they would try to be just like Americans in as many ways as possible. As the two thousand-year-old nation went about learning the ways of its hundred-and-seventy-five-year-old teacher, the result was nothing short of a major social revolution.

Many women who had never worn skirts in their lives discarded their *obis, geta,* and kimonos and hurriedly whipped up new wardrobes with whatever old material they could find. Young Japanese couples, watching GIs make public love to their newly Westernized girl friends, threw strict tribal custom to the winds and followed suit. They walked hand in hand down the streets—a practice unheard of before the war—cuddled closely in the grassy parks, and embraced in the movies. Japanese radio stations scheduled programs of English lessons. Movie studios began for the first time to film torrid love scenes, replete with thirty-second kisses. Street stalls in Tokyo's Ginza had a thriving bonanza in lipsticks, rouge, eye shadow of all colors, and—to correct a common Japanese deficiency—mass-produced rubber falsies.

Hundreds of thousands of women, now walking abreast of their husbands instead of two paces behind, went dutifully to the polls in the first election and sent thirty-nine women—the first in Japan's history—to the National Diet. Women traditionally had been expected and trained to be no more than

delicate ornaments in the home, slaves in the kitchen, and the loyal bearers and keepers of the gang of children which every Japanese family is expected to raise like so many national treasures. Right up to the end of the war the accepted semi-official attitude toward women was still that found in a guide for feminine education written by a seventeenth-century scholar named Kaibara Ekken: "She should get up early and retire late, never lie down during the day, keep busy, not neglecting spinning, weaving and sewing. She should not drink much of such things as tea and *sake* wine . . . should refrain from going to temples, shrines and other crowded places before she is forty years old." This attitude still persists among many old Japanese. Yet here the women were in 1946, wearing suits and blouses, mixing in politics, asking men to vote for them and helping to run the country. "The women of Japan," said MacArthur to a visiting delegation of them, "are responding magnificently to the challenge of democracy."

The revolution spread to other fields. MacArthur decreed that there should be labor unions. Feeble attempts had been made long before the war to organize Japanese labor, but the *zaibatsu* capitalists, the army, and the innate conservatism of the Japanese people had mitigated against them. Now, with MacArthur's blessing, the old labor leaders came out of hiding and the movement mushroomed until in the short space of one year the unions had a total membership of more than a million and were calling for a general strike. The poorly paid, overworked laborers thought democrassy was fine.

While labor was busy learning American methods of organization and action, their employers were also looking around. Saddled with inefficient production methods and the necessity to streamline their plants if they were to recapture their share of the world market, Japanese industrialists sent engineers to the U.S. to price American machines and study

mass production techniques. In most cases the machines turned out to be too expensive for the bankrupt Japanese, but a few large companies discarded their old methods and went to work with everything from modern infrared racks for drying newly painted automobiles, copied from Detroit, to belching open-hearth furnaces copied from Pittsburgh.

Even the Japanese vocabulary sputtered with unexpected Americanisms. The Japanese had long called their department stores "depato" and ridden to their top floors in the "erebeta." And baseball, which had been popular in Japan for many years, had long rung with cries of "sutoraiku" and "boru" (the Japanese commonly make a word their own by ending it with the vowel *u*). But since the war the Japanese had added many more: "Boogie-woogie," "dancu party," "penicillin," "new looku," and "sutoripu [burlesque]!" A filling station near Kyoto erected a sign which was the final touch: "Last chancu."

But despite the alacrity with which the Japanese set about imitating their American conquerors, and despite the impact with which American customs and ideals dented the *surface* of their society, they were also able, from the very start, to preserve a good deal of their own individuality and status quo. The Americans had installed new engines in the ship of state, provided new charts, and even changed the crew on the bridge. But the Japanese retained their own anchor. And as the ship got up steam and slowly left the port, with its fresh banners waving and its Japanese passengers cheering at the rail, few Americans aboard ever noticed that the anchor was dragging bottom.

The military clique was gone, and many of its members were either dead or in jail. The politicians who had cooperated with the clique were discredited and out of office. But the lower levels of the bureaucracy—the thousands of

government workers and civil servants needed to man the boilers—were necessarily the same who had shipped out before. MacArthur's directives from Washington had read clearly on this point: "In view of the present character of the Japanese society and the desire of the U.S. to attain its objectives with a minimum commitment of its forces and resources, the Supreme Commander will exercise his authority through Japanese governmental machinery and agencies, including the Emperor. . . . The policy is to use the existing form of government in Japan, not to support it. Changes in the form of government initiated by the Japanese people or government in the direction of modifying its feudal and authoritarian tendencies are to be permitted and favored."

It should not be surprising that the Japanese government initiated little or nothing. It was willing to bend like bamboo in the wind, but not to be yanked up by the roots. Besides, Japan had little experience in the workings of democracy. Even those officials who were not purged and stayed on to manage the government did not *want* a real democracy. They were not dangerous ultranationalists—the only criterion for the purge—but they were not democratic either. They were seasoned old-guard bureaucrats whose entire tradition was one of authoritarian government, in which the people are assumed incapable of making their own decisions, and in which the elite rule for all. From the very start MacArthur had to provide most of the initiative himself. Thus democracy, instead of springing from the Japanese with the help of their own leaders, had to be thrust upon them in the form of U. S. Army decrees. It was MacArthur's military government teams, not the Japanese, who saw to it that the local schools, police departments, and courts were purged of personnel who had shown ultranationalist tendencies in the past and could not be trusted with the task of preserving order or of

inculcating Japanese youth with the new way of life. Four months after the occupation began, General Courtney Whitney, MacArthur's government chief, announced that his office had been forced to *order* the Japanese to purge the government of many workers still remaining at their desks who had helped foment and direct the war against us. "It had been hoped," Whitney said with an air of exasperated disappointment, "that Japan itself would clean its own stable."

Japanese statesmen were often annoyingly obtuse and cunning as they dragged their feet on important matters or pretended not to understand just what it was the Americans were driving at. Their habit of balking began early. During the rewriting of the constitution—which had previously called the Emperor "sacred and inviolable"—the Japanese tried to get away with suggesting that the wording merely be changed to read "supreme and inviolable." The Americans explained that this missed the point entirely: the Emperor was *not* supreme; and he was not inviolable either. He was merely a figurehead, the "symbol of the state and of the unity of the people," as we put it, but with no more rank—for this was to be a democracy—than any Japanese farmer or office worker. The Japanese nodded and wrote the American phrase —"symbol of the state and of the unity of the people"—into their constitution. It is doubtful that many of them even knew what it meant.

Then Prime Minister Yoshida, a crusty and conservative little diplomat who had made himself acceptable to us by coming out in the last days of the war as a worker for peace —but who was not a man of great democratic inclinations— started to drag his feet too. Yoshida wrote MacArthur that he thought it was imperative for the new constitution to retain some old criminal statutes which provided for punishment as high treason any attempt on the Emperor's life or on that of

his family. (Japanese law had also stipulated that a man who murdered a stranger was not nearly so criminal as a man who murdered his own father.) Yoshida argued that these were sound Japanese ideas, rooted in national ethics, and should be retained. Even as the "symbol of the state," he argued, throwing our words back at us, the Emperor would "ethically [be] the center of national veneration." A crime against *him*, therefore, must be treated with more severity than a crime against an ordinary individual.

If MacArthur had any doubts at this point about the social and cultural ideas of the East being just like those of the West, he did not let on. He wrote Yoshida that *lèse-majesté* might have been considered a special crime in old Japan, but that it was unheard of in a democracy and such a law had never been practiced in America. "As the symbol of the state and of the unity of the people," he added, "the Emperor is entitled to no more and no less legal protection than that accorded to all other citizens of Japan, who, in the aggregate, constitute the state itself." That was that, and Yoshida finally yielded.

With MacArthur's prodding, the American imprint was stamped even further. When the Japanese failed to provide a preamble for their new constitution, the general took pen in hand and sent along a draft of his own prose: "We, the Japanese people, acting through our duly elected representatives . . . determined that we shall secure for ourselves and our posterity the fruits of peaceful cooperation . . . and the blessings of liberty throughout this land . . . do proclaim the sovereignty of the people's will and do ordain and establish this constitution, founded upon the universal principle that government is a sacred trust the authority for which is derived from the people, the powers of which are exercised by the representatives of the people, and the benefits of which

are enjoyed by the people." Though this was a fine American blend of Jefferson and Lincoln, the statement was almost devoid of any Japanese meaning or spirit, even in a Japanese translation. But the Japanese, still bending like supple bamboo, dutifully tacked it on.

At the height of the debate over the constitution, when the Americans were trying to change and reform as much as they could, and the Japanese were trying to hang onto as much as *they* could, a heated argument broke out one day in General Whitney's office. That night one of the Japanese who had been present sat down and wrote Whitney a note trying to explain the deadlock. "Your way is so American," he wrote, "that it is straight and direct. Their way," he added, apologizing for his die-hard friends, "must be Japanese in the way that it is roundabout, twisted and narrow. Your way may be called an Airway and their way a Jeep, over bumpy roads. (I know the roads are bumpy.) I think I appreciate your standpoint well and I must confess I have a great admiration for it as I have for so many things American. I still am an ardent admirer of Lindbergh's flight across the 'uncharted' Atlantic, for the first time and unaided. But alas! The Lindberghs are so rare and far between, even in America. I do not know if we ever had one in this country. . . . I am afraid I have already accelerated the paper shortage by writing this mumble, but I know you will forgive me for my shortcomings, for which my late father is also partly responsible."

The writer of this letter was sincere in his criticism and merely felt, as a friend, that the Americans should go a little slower as they tampered with such an ancient and complicated culture as the Japanese. So did many others. But the Americans were still determined to make Japan conform to their own pattern, and when MacArthur finally despaired of getting the constitution he wanted from the Japanese, he put

a staff of Americans to work preparing a long memorandum. In effect it was a draft constitution, and he made it clear that he desired the Japanese to accept it as their own, whether they fully understood it or not. At this point Dr. Joji Matsumoto, chairman of the Japanese committee drafting the constitution, wrote a scholarly paper explaining that Japan actually considered herself to be more like the Weimar Republic in Germany after World War I than like America, and scholarly old Matsumoto pointed out, as politely as he could, that "only native institutions, slowly developed over the years and tested by time and experience, would survive. A juridical system," he warned, "is very much like certain kinds of plants, which transplanted from their native soil degenerate or even die. Some of the roses of the West, when cultivated in Japan," Matsumoto concluded gently, "lose their fragrance."

Wise old Admiral Kichisaburo Nomura, Japan's ambassador to Washington at the time of Pearl Harbor, also tendered his advice: "[I have] strong doubt whether the new Constitution may not be too advanced in its provisions to suit the prevalent standard of the Japanese nation. . . . Despite a great many virtues, the Japanese still remain on a low level of social education, being self-centered, eager in seeking their own profit before others, and negligent of communal service and obligation. . . . These socially undisciplined people are apt to abuse freedom. . . . The apparel belonging to an adult must needs have alterations before being put on a child."

But the general was not to be swayed by such sweet or sensible words. Whenever the Japanese argued, the Americans seemed to feel they were less motivated by an honest concern with reality than by a desire merely to water down our reforms. Democracy or democrassy, the Japanese were going to learn it the American way. "A sound idea," Mac-

Arthur repeated, "cannot be stopped." Finally, in desperation, the Japanese officials took their problems to the Emperor, who, as the symbol of the state, sighed and sagely advised the committee to proceed with full reform as requested by the Americans. He knew how to bend like the willow too. This was enough for the committee and they completed revision of the constitution along the lines of MacArthur's memo. An Eastern nation was to begin all over again, this time with a Western pattern superimposed.

How has it all worked out? Has the Western rose lost its fragrance?

In May of 1952 a by-election was held for the upper house of the Diet. In the village of Ueno, Fuji County, Shizuoka Prefecture—some 140 miles from Tokyo—the village bosses looked up all those who had no intention of voting, collected their poll-admission tickets, and then, with the full knowledge of the election officials, used the tickets to admit a number of partisan voters more than once. Satsuki Ishikawa, a seventeen-year-old girl who had just learned enough about democracy in her school civics class to know that this was not right, wrote a letter to the authorities. As a result the village headman, the chairman of the election commission, and a dozen others were arrested by the police. Ten of these were later indicted. Democracy was thus protected. But the village had its revenge on Satsuki. Invoking the old rural custom of *murahachibu* or boycott,[1] no one in the village spoke to the family or visited its house. Satsuki's father, a farm laborer, was denied work. And the high school newspaper carried an article condemning Satsuki: "It is not human that one should incriminate others who live in the same village. Even though

[1]The boycott is only ninety per cent. A natural disaster, such as a fire, would bring the villagers running to help, if only to save their own paper houses from burning down.

a fact like that existed, it is outrageous for anyone to expose it. It is against the etiquette of the villager." After that, whenever Satsuki walked by the fields the people would point at her. "There goes the spy," they scoffed. "There goes the Commie."

The Japanese society is a complex and well-balanced system of loyalties and alliances, painstakingly designed over many centuries so as to fit the greatest number of people (now more than 80,000,000) into the smallest available space (smaller than California—which has a population of 11,000,000) with the least amount of human friction and bumping together. When the Japanese bow to each other, which they do incessantly, even on crowded elevators, it is not so much out of simple politeness as from a psychological need to keep in the exact proper social balance and relationship with other people, including their bosses and their hired help, at all times. They know instinctively who is to stop bowing first.

Japanese education, which in the early years is necessarily concerned chiefly with the task of teaching youngsters the thousands of Chinese characters which make up their alphabet, is thus so saddled with pure memory work that there is little time for really imaginative teaching or for the exchange of eye-opening ideas. The teacher becomes the temporary authority and the child learns early to buckle down and conform. Conformity is the rule. Schoolboys from grade school through college wear drab black uniforms with black caps. Schoolgirls are not allowed to curl their hair—they must wear it long and braided, and straight. This rule is invoked so strictly that one poor girl in Tokyo, who happens to have *naturally* curly hair—a rare phenomenon—was recently ousted from her classes. The principal, who had a rule to conform to, did not believe her excuse. When last I heard of her case it

was still being appealed to the Minister of Education. Such emphasis on conformity results in a standardized, introverted personality which does not, of course, encourage the flowering of democracy. An old Buddhist saying still pertains today: "A stake which lifts its head higher than the others will be driven down."

As long as they can remember, the Japanese have lived on a human pyramid. There has always been someone on top to serve as the keystone, whether he was the Emperor, the feudal landlord, the office boss, or simply one's own father. No Japanese in his right mind would think of slipping out of place, lest the entire pyramid come tumbling down and he find himself in lonely isolation, without the social and economic security which that pyramid alone affords him.

Right up through the war the Japanese nation rested on a base of neighborhood associations called Tonari Gumi. Every ten houses formed a unit; several units formed a neighborhood (a pyramid in itself); and the neighborhoods made up larger county or city units which fitted into the national pyramid controlled by Tojo. The small local associations served many purposes. The politicians used them much like U.S. ward bosses use their clubs, to round up votes—except that in Japan the structure was much tighter and the vote one hundred per cent assured. When Tojo needed to buck up the nation, he passed the word "Don't be afraid" down through the network of Tonari Gumi and all Japan responded with its courage. The associations were used to organize air raid drills and warnings. If the mayor wished to announce that everyone must have medical shots, he used Tonari Gumi to spread the news. During food shortages, crops were collected and rations of rice distributed in turn through Tonari Gumi. Therefore, if one wished to eat, or get fair warning of an Allied raid, or procure his share of precious fertilizer for his

farm, he had to stay on the pyramid where he belonged and conform to all the rules. If he did not, he was left out—just like the family of Satsuki Ishikawa, who tattled on the wrongdoings of her village elders.

The Tonari Gumi are not dead. For though MacArthur destroyed the organization of authoritarianism in Japan and lopped off the top levels—the Tojos and their kind—he did not and could not destroy the latent power. We did not rip the Tonari Gumi up by the roots. We could not. And according to a post-occupation newspaper poll, seventy per cent of the country people and thirty per cent of those in the cities want the system restored. One of Yoshida's own cabinet ministers went on record, saying he thought it would be a good idea.

This does not mean the Japanese are getting ready for war. In fact just the opposite is true. The Japanese are violently and sincerely pacifist these days. And the Tonari Gumi, as we have seen, had many peaceful uses. Neither does the Japanese yearning for a pyramidal existence mean they want dictatorship. For unless it is taken over on the top level by a strong clique, the Tonari Gumi system is not necessarily fascistic. It serves merely as a convenient hierarchy which helps keep everyone sorted out in a crowded land. The longing does indicate, however, that the Japanese feel much more comfortable and secure when they climb back up on their cozy pyramids than they do trying to live in a democracy—which requires that they all spread out separately on an even plane and figure things out for themselves.

Once, in the process of working on a *Life* story, photographer Margaret Bourke-White and I found ourselves spending the night in a small farming village some sixty miles north of Tokyo. After a chopstick supper of bean-paste soup, raw egg poured over rice, salted plums, raw fish, and *sake* wine (a meal which was repeated the next morning at breakfast) we

attended a political meeting called by members of the ninety farmhouses in the village. The peace treaty had been signed and the occupation was over, but throughout the long years of the occupation no other Americans had ever stopped in this village, much less submitted themselves to a Japanese meal there, and the people were fascinated. When the neighborhood meeting was over, the village elders invited Miss Bourke-White and me to answer some questions. Through an interpreter they asked about farming conditions in America and were very pleased when Peggy, who had recently photographed the U.S. South, told them that a Japanese plant, the *kudzu* vine, was revolutionizing crop rotation there. Then a young farm leader raised his hand and directed a question at me. Under the land reform program, he explained, he had had to sell some of his land to his tenant. He thought the program was a fine idea, but he had some complaints. For one thing, the price he was paid for his land was so low (after inflation had cut into his cash) that it meant he had practically given the land away. For another thing, his taxes were too high. And, thirdly, he thought it criminally unfair to the farmers that the price on cultivating machinery had been allowed to rise, to the benefit of industry, far faster than the prices *he* was getting for his crops. Would I please convey his complaints to the proper American authorities in Tokyo, he requested politely, and what did I think about his plight?

He thought he had me, and for a moment, while I sat on the floor and sipped my tea in front of all those smiling people, I thought he did too. What could I say? Then I realized he was sitting, figuratively, on a pyramid and asking someone who was not even in the same triangle to help him out. I explained as best I could that in proclaiming land reform the Americans had not prescribed the details or set the price of cultivators. We had merely told the Japanese govern-

ment to see to it that farmers were allowed to own the land they farmed. The details were left for the Japanese to fill in. I reminded him that the occupation was now over, that he had a Diet member—who was in the room at the time—his government had a Minister for Land and Agriculture, and that he and his wife each had a vote. If he did not like the way things were going, his best and only recourse was to do what he could to change it at the next election. If enough people felt as he did, the situation would certainly be changed. I could not resist adding that that was how it was done in America and how we hoped it could be done in Japan. The entire crowd nodded gratefully as if this were a brand-new idea which had never occurred to them. The Diet member told me later he had tried for months to teach his people this principle of democratic government. He doubted whether either of us had convinced them.

Actually, though land reform has been the most popular of all occupational reforms—so much so that the Communists have tried to take credit for it themselves—it has left Japan with a number of serious problems to work out. The idealistic zeal with which the Americans guided the program through its inception failed, in the first place, to take into account a few basic realities of the Japanese situation. In outlining the reforms, for example, we insisted that the old customs of primogeniture—by which only the first son was allowed to inherit the farm on his father's death—be abolished, and that all the children be allowed to share equally in the inheritance. It was a noble idea and was written into the law of the land. But well-meaning as it was, it has simply not worked out. The size of the average farm in Japan is only two and one half acres—hardly enough to support one family—and the practical Japanese could only chuckle at the idea of dividing these tiny farms any further. In practice, therefore, they are

ignoring the law. Either the father gives his farm to the eldest son before he dies, in order to circumvent the law, or the younger brothers and sisters wisely let their inheritance go by default to their older brother and take off for the cities—as they always have—to look for jobs as day laborers, policemen, or streetcar conductors.

One of our purposes in pushing the reform was to free the tenants of serfdom and thus raise their social status and spread democracy into the rural areas. We had high hopes that, once on their own, the former tenants would take an active interest in local government and would assume their rightful places on the local city councils and school boards which were once dominated by the landlords. In some instances this has happened. But in most villages the new landowners still feel inferior to their former landlords and explain sadly that they lack the education and experience to fulfill our hopes. Furthermore, the former tenants hasten to add, the landlords of Japan never *were* big feudal tyrants as in Europe, but were for the most part hard-working smalltime farmers themselves, who merely rented out their extra land (usually only two acres or so) and took good care of the tenants in bad times. The new landowners, then, despite their pride of ownership, are content to remain in their places and to take little more social initiative than they did before. The only hope is that their sons, who can now get an adequate education for the first time—because of the families' new prosperity—will be better prepared and inspired in another generation to fill the new roles.

The farmers, too, feel insecure and slightly unhappy in the new society. They are blessed with independence, and the challenge to their initiative and self-reliance is a healthy one. They no longer pay half their crop in rent but are allowed, as free-enterprisers, to keep whatever profits they can make.

The initiative is theirs. But to the Japanese peasant, whose entire experience has been one of fitting onto a pyramid like everyone else, such independence can also be a curse. They must now pay their own taxes, buy their own seed, and take their own risks in times of poor harvest. These risks were once assumed by the landlords. The feeling is growing among the new landowners that the old days were somehow more secure. Though the Americans, who thought up the program, can thrive on such challenges, the Japanese, who lack our long background of freedom and pioneering, are more likely to suffer and worry. Like many non-Americans, they think that we are democratic only because we are rich, and that somehow the possession of rights is linked to the possession of automobiles—which they do not, and cannot, have. In many areas today the former tenants are secretly and voluntarily selling their land back to their former landlords and crawling back, with no sense of loss, onto the old pyramid. The reform came too fast and too sweepingly for them. It came from the outside and was not something they themselves had fought for. And it arrived in the midst of an economy so shattered by war and so erratic that the benefits were more costly than they could afford.

Japan has profited, in the long run, from the great experiment of land reform. And this will probably be the most lasting monument to our occupation. But, like all our reforms, it will have to be shaken down some until it better fits the Japanese character and the facts of Japanese economic and social life. The rose will lose a little more of its fragrance.

The same sort of thing is happening to some of our other basic reforms. In the process of emancipating women and revising the educational system, we suggested that the Japanese adopt co-education. (In the past, boys and girls had been separated after fourth grade and the girls given heavy

doses of home economics and watered-down courses in history, geography, languages, and some science.) The Japanese educators obeyed our dictum and today the two sexes share the same classrooms and the same textbooks. But even in the most progressive schools professors have been heard to admonish their students that it is one thing for them to mingle in the classroom, and quite another and less desirable matter for them to fraternize publicly outside. These teachers, like the girls' parents and grandparents, would like to see them put safely and snugly back in their place.

We tried to break down the political control over teachers —who had been used by the state to teach the verities of Japanese nationalism—and thus free the teachers to help spread the new ideas of freedom and democratic government. In many communities the teachers, smelling fresh air for the first time in their lives, became interested in politics and in after-hours missionary work for democracy. One of the first bills Premier Yoshida introduced before the Diet after the occupation ended, however, was a law providing that the national government regain control of education and put the teachers back on the national payroll—where they can no longer afford to mix in politics or spread any gospel which is frowned upon by the Cabinet. Mr. Yoshida explained, as he submitted the bill, that he was forced to undo some of the "excesses of the occupation."

As Japan's ship of state continued on its postwar shakedown cruise, other weaknesses began to appear. To protect the public from police repression and abuse, we had decentralized the police force and stripped it of so much power and prestige that the police had a difficult time, especially during Communist riots, preserving everyday law and order. The Japanese had argued bitterly against the reforms when they were first proposed, and now, in hindsight, it appears they

knew what they were talking about. Another bill which Mr. Yoshida introduced—also to undo some of our "excesses"—provided for the *re*centralization of rural and city police, under his control.

Communist elements took such advantage of Japan's weakness and confusion during the spring of 1952 that the government also felt it necessary to force through the Diet an anti-subversive-activities bill which is far from democratic in its implications. The bill provides for the abolishment of any organization which plans, instigates, or carries out acts detrimental to the security of the state. But its wording is so vague and sweeping that it smacks to many Japanese of the thought-control laws of old Japan—most of which also started out harmlessly enough. Should a strong clique with dictatorial tendencies come along one of these days, the bill is there, waiting to be used in any manner the government deems fitting. The Japanese don't like it, but there is nothing much they can do about it. The Communists, in this case, did a fine favor for their worst enemies by strengthening the government's hand against non-conformity of all kinds.

Some of MacArthur's officers were realistic enough to foresee these problems from the start. "There is no magic," said an early SCAP section report, "whereby liberty, equality and fraternity can spring full grown, even from a violent indigenous revolution—still less from the peaceful reforms of a benevolent conqueror. The disarmament and demilitarization of the Japanese military machine and war potential, the deconcentration and decentralization of Japanese political and economic power, and the defeudalization of the Japanese system of family organization, of land tenure, and of labor servitude, have not automatically resulted in the immediate establishment of a democratic society."

That was the understatement of the year. But such dis-

claimers never caught up with the general enthusiasm in Tokyo and with MacArthur's own sense of drama. One after another, U.S. experts in various fields went to Japan to lend a hand. They were given guided tours of the countryside, had lunch or an interview with MacArthur, and came home full of praise for the new society we were building there. It is true that MacArthur accomplished a tremendous amout of good. But the very magnitude and daring of the undertaking required an assumption from the start that we would have the time and the peace in which to complete it. It is difficult to see how anyone thought we could change the character and the habits of such an ancient and complex structure as Japan in less than forty years. It would have required *at least* the time required to re-educate two generations of Japanese before we could be certain that our basic ideas and philosophy had taken root. Even then we could never be sure that they would continue to develop on their own.

But we did not have that time. And we did not have the peace. Instead, we soon found ourselves fighting a war from bases in Japan, using Japanese ships to land troops and supplies in Korea, and asking the Japanese munitions makers to go back to turning out mortar shells—this time for our use in Korea.

We even had to change our mind about demilitarization. When we realized that peace was not in the cards we suggested that the Japanese get cracking again on plans for an army, to help them defend their own islands and thus free our occupation troops for action in Korea. The Japanese responded and formed a National Police Reserve (actually a pseudonym for "army"). We provided American personnel to train the troops, and equipped them with everything from U.S. rifles to tanks and artillery pieces. We turned over some ships so the Japanese could form a new navy—also for self-

defense—and began training Japanese pilots (in cub planes) for a future air force.

The Japanese public is far from happy about all this. The people may not always have understood the democracy we tried to give them, but they craved the pacifism we also thrust upon them with our victory. The war had been a terrible burden; and though the Japanese may never have been truly sorry for the aggressive and arrogant plan for Asia which led them into it, the bombings, the suffering, and the defeat hurt them deeply, and it created in their hearts a profound contempt for war itself and for all its trappings. For the present, at any rate, their hatred of war and their love of pacifism is such that none but the poorest young man, who can find no other work on the farms or in the factories, can be prevailed upon to don the uniform of the Police Reserve. The soldier's profession in Japan these days is not an honorable one. We did, at least, see to that.

XII

IF THE RUSSIANS staged the war in Korea for no other reason than to stir up a disturbing undertow of political unrest in nearby Japan, some commissar in the Kremlin was using his head. For the war forced us to make a shift in our Japanese policy which sent ripples of discontent in all directions.

The Japanese government, in its handling of the rearmament problem, has reflected the public's craving for pacifism. The profession of arms is so unpopular that Premier Yoshida has been forced to sponsor legislation for the recruiting and

arming of soldiers (under the pseudonym of "Police Reserves") while at the same time denying in public that he was engaging in rearmament at all. He has stated publicly many times that Japan is not morally *ready* for rearmament. And until very recently, when American officials went to him and pleaded with him to step up the pace a little, so they could free more occupation and defense troops for duty elsewhere, Yoshida had only to quote the article in Japan's constitution which General MacArthur himself insisted upon: Japan "forever renounces" war. Even now, despite a change in his own personal attitude, Yoshida risks political trouble with the opposition whenever he inches toward rearmament.

As Japan rearms, her true liberals—who are committed to a policy of pacifism and democracy—find themselves out on a limb from which there is no retreat. Japan *must* rearm, but as she does so she will necessarily become less and less democratic. And all Japanese, from left to right, have a terrifying sense of being caught in the middle of a conflict between Russia and the U.S. which will not leave them unscathed. Most of them want no part of it. This is not a war, they feel, from which they will gain anything. They do not really fear Communism; and most of them do not really crave democracy. They only wish we would pack up our men and our planes and go away. They want to sit this one out. But that is not in the cards, either, and the Japanese know it. In the political confusion which this frustrating situation produces, opportunists of all sorts are crawling out of the volcanic lava. Those forces of democracy which are left in Japan are in serious danger of being trampled underfoot in the shuffle.

The first opportunists to take the stage were the Communists. The Japanese Communist Party has only about 75,000 registered members, and its leaders have long been

underground. (In the early, halcyon days, MacArthur freed the Communist leaders—along with other political prisoners we found in Japanese jails when we landed—as a gesture of magnanimity. When the leaders reciprocated later by getting tough, they were obliged to get out of sight again.) At first the Communists (who won nearly ten per cent of the vote in the 1949 general elections) contented themselves with decrying the desperate economic situation. Then, claiming to be the only true champions of Japanese nationalism (a role which was later to get them into trouble with the *real* nationalists), they widened their sights and began to attack the government and other parties as lackeys of the Americans.

Their appeal was particularly strong among students and intellectuals, most of whom were suffering economically and were also, because of their margin of sophistication, the groups most likely to question the motives of the Americans in Japan and to resent our presence there. The Japanese language is rich in puns, and the intellectuals, who delight in making them, were quick to point out that "democrassy" could also be pronounced "demokrushy"—from the Japanese word *demo* (meaning "on the other hand") and *kurushii* (meaning "difficult," "suffering," or "impossible").

It was to be expected, when the occupation honeymoon was over, that the Japanese, like partners in many quickie marriages—especially of a mixed character—would find some faults with their better half. It was natural that they should have tired of trying to ingratiate themselves, and would eventually begin to take our presence in their land more as a necessary evil than as a welcome salvation. The romance was exciting at first; there were new ideas to try out, new clothes to wear; we were the victors and for a time we were infallible. But they soon became bored with the marriage and this

attitude showed itself in many ways, some of them subtle and others not so subtle.

First of all, the Japanese made no bones about wanting back for their own use all the office buildings, private houses, hotels, playgrounds, and harbor installations which we had monopolized for years for our forces. A good number of bars and night clubs in Tokyo erected their own crude "Off Limits" signs, in an effort to preserve the liquor and the hostesses inside for the steady, Japanese clientele who more and more sought places of refuge where they could drink and chat without the ubiquitous GI stumbling over them to reach the next table. Most Japanese agreed wholeheartedly with these attitudes.

The Communists tried to capitalize on this growing restiveness. It was their best chance to gain attention and find an avenue to power. After the Korean war began they stepped up their anti-Americanism. "Yankee, GO HOME!" was their battle cry. And, beginning with May Day, 1952, they waged an almost continuous war of nerves on the police, the MPs, and any Americans who happened by—throwing Molotov cocktails, wielding spiked bamboo poles, and setting fire to American sedans parked across the street from the Emperor's palace. Their shock troops in most of these battles were drawn from Japan's population of 700,000 Koreans. Among these unhappy people are thousands of tough, hotheaded young men who were brought to Japan from North Korea during the war to replace drafted Japanese workers in the factories. When the war ended and the Japanese returned to take back their jobs, the Koreans were left without work. There was also no way they could go back to Communist North Korea. Syngman Rhee, who hates the Japanese almost as much as he hates North Koreans—perhaps more so—refused to take the young toughs off Japan's hands. Conse-

quently, without work and without any other place to go, they remained as a floating and fearless group of dissidents who had nothing whatever to lose by letting the Communists use them. One of them reached through the window of a car in Kobe one day, during a labor riot I was covering, and punched me squarely in the face. I can attest to their strength.

But the Communists—probably in Moscow, where the orders for most of these disorders originated—miscalculated and misunderstood the Japanese people. The Japanese were horrified by the Communists' tactics. They may not have loved the Americans by then, but neither did they hate them. And they were tremendously embarrassed by the violence of May Day. One of the major mistakes the Reds made that day was fighting outside the Emperor's palace. In the next general election the Japanese electorate showed its contempt for Communist methods and its complete lack of interest in Communist salvation by voting every Red in the Diet out of office. The Communists were shaken, and after receiving a new batch of orders from Moscow to behave themselves they shifted their course and tried wooing the Japanese public by being "nice" Communists.

That approach will not work either. I do not think there is any danger that Japan will ever go Communist. Like any country, she *will* go Red, of course, if she is ever captured and conquered by Communists from the *outside*—which we must guard against. But Japan, despite all her problems, is not a fertile field for Communist conversion from within. The danger in Japan, to the calm, sober society we tried to erect there, is from the other extreme: the far right.

Japan is basically a rural nation. Most of her population lies scattered across the mountainous island in tiny farm villages, isolated from one another by miles of muddy pad-

dies and isolated from new ideas by the conservatism, the ancient traditions, and the religious nature of the people.

I happened upon a small farming village one day while the people were celebrating the advent of land reform. They were holding a parade and a fair and consecrating a huge stone monument to the wonders of reform. But the parade was a religious one, led by the priests and participated in by group after group of solemn-faced old women, all dressed alike in their black gowns and all murmuring religious chants to the rhythm of tiny bells they held in their gnarled hands. The stone monument was impressive. It was also immensely enlightening. For the transcription on the monument, which was to commemorate the new land reform, was actually dedicated to the memory of a local saint who had tried vainly to institute agrarian reforms five hundred years earlier. The people were proud of the new reform, but they had not forgotten their saint either. And in a fashion which only the Japanese could think of, they linked the two ideas together on a stone tablet in the burial yard of their village's Shinto temple.

These people will never go Communist of their own accord. And neither, perhaps, will they fall into line again with the chauvinistic rantings of the rightist leaders at the other end of the spectrum. The latter, however, have a far better chance of success and a greater claim on Japanese minds.

The rightists and ultranationalists kept out of sight during the occupation, for though the Japanese public remained extremely conservative, dedicated to ancient virtues and proud of its ancestry, most of the people kept these things in their hearts and tried, out of deference to their conquerors, not to make a show of them. But the Reds gave them a handy excuse to regroup. As the Communists shook their fists and threatened to save the nation from the Americans, the rightist

groups began to collect *their* flocks and dust off their swords and banners to save the nation from the Reds. Many of these men are second-rate opportunists who are trying to take advantage of the confusion to wave the Rising Sun flag and rally a following. Some of them have succeeded in gathering small groups of disenchanted second and third sons of farmers, who have no future on the farms and would just as soon shake *their* fists as not. Most of these groups confine themselves to dreaming up flowery manifestoes and bright slogans and banners with which they hope to attract a larger following.

In their own confusion and excitement they lump all kinds of aims together: rally around the Emperor and revive the Emperor system; reorient the youth away from materialism and back toward religion; merge the religions of the world into one true gospel (they all look and sound like evangelists everywhere); co-operate with the Americans—for now at any rate—and accept their aid in fighting the Reds; down with the capitalists. (It is an ironic fact that most rightist fanatics hate the *zaibatsu*, whom they accuse of putting their own greed and economic power ahead of the general good.) These splinter rightists strike all kinds of poses with bamboo clubs and Christian Bibles and pictures of their beloved Emperor. If they could but merge their forces they might well get somewhere. But for the most part they are merely stirring up interest and running interference for bigger fish who are still hiding under the moss. And they are too busy squabbling and jockeying among themselves for position to be effectively dangerous.

Far more likely to succeed, both as crowd getters and as potential keystones of the Tonari Gumi in any future national adventures, are soberer and more proven men like Taku Mikami. Twenty years ago, when he was a hotheaded

young naval lieutenant just out of the academy, Mikami grew tired of merely brooding over Japan's troubles in Manchuria, and especially her decision to abide by an international covenant to reduce her naval power. Lieutenant Mikami decided to take action. With a group of other excited young nationalists he invaded the home of Prime Minister Inukai and assassinated him. Mikami was jailed, but his crime proved so popular with the masses of Japanese—some of whom even cut off their fingers and sent them in as traditional proof of their devotion—that he was eventually freed. He had served his purpose; he had awakened Japan and crystallized her latent frustrations.

On a gloomy, rainy afternoon one day on Kyushu, which is Japan's southernmost island and the breeding ground of her most famous generals and admirals, I looked up Mikami and found him brooding away in a dark, bamboo-shaded farmhouse where he was hiding from the curious. After a cup of steaming tea Mikami got out his bamboo flute and played some sad, brooding Japanese melodies for me. Then, through an interpreter, we talked about Japan and her future. Mikami admitted that both the present and the future looked bleak to him. But he quickly disclaimed any desire to resort again to terrorism to gain his objectives.

Between mournful dirges on his flute Mikami dreams of another mission: he will organize Japan's conservative rural population to combat Communism (just how he does not say). Then, when he has the farmers behind him, he will tackle the students, in order to correct their excessive liberalism and add an intellectual content to his movement. Already, he told me, he had gone into many communities and rallied the cadre for this mission. His final aim, when he has his organization completed, is to launch a one-hundred-year program to unite the peoples of Japan, China, and India. He

is in no hurry. He will not be around to see the fruition of his labors. But the program must be started. The reason? Like most Japanese, he does not think that either Russia or America offers the proper solution for Japan. Her fate is to be neither Communist nor democratic. Japan must find her salvation in a strictly Asiatic manner. And she can do this only, Mikami says, sipping his tea slowly and speaking quietly, by offering herself as the core and the ideological backbone of—Pan-Asia.

When last I heard of him Mikami had moved from Kyushu to Tokyo—presumably to be nearer the seat of power and the scene of action. He still disclaimed any further interest in terrorism. But it is significant that Premier Yoshida's government, which must walk the narrow, winding jeep path between the desires of its own people and the pressures of the rest of the world, has hired several members of the former "thought-police" and given them the job of keeping an eye on both the Communists *and* the resurging nationalists.

At Mito, sixty miles northeast of Tokyo, another famous Japanese nationalist is thinking along the same lines. He is Kosaburo Tachibana, now sixty and in retirement on his five-acre farm—where he also spends his quiet hours playing the bamboo flute. Mito is the cradle of a brand of Japanese nationalism called *Mito-gaku* (Mito school). The purpose of the Mito school is to perpetuate loyalty to the Emperor.

Tachibana was one of the plotters of the May 15, 1932, coup d'état in which Mikami pulled one of the triggers. He is a lively, bearded old man, and though he also denies any interest in terrorism, he is potentially one of the strongest figures in the philosophical reorientation of Japanese nationalism. He is a scholar and a poet. He knows Bergson's *Creative Evolution* and Frazer's *Golden Bough*. "There's a book," he says, referring to the latter. "Frazer brought tears to my

eyes when he mentioned so scientifically the man-god realization.

"I am a loyalist, not a terrorist," he adds. "It is difficult for you naïve Americans to make a clear-cut distinction between the two, or even between a rightist, an ultranationalist, and a patriot. But to the Japanese there is a distinct difference. I am a loyalist and a loyalist is a patriot. We loyalists believe in being loyal to the Emperor and to the Imperial Way."

Tachibana went on to explain that he resorted to terrorism in 1932 because "the government was corrupt. The *zaibatsu* were getting too fat. Industry was monopolistic and the poor farmers were in dire straits. That is why my forces joined the coalition. We represented the farmers, who are the bulk and the backbone of the country. I wanted to rescue agriculture and reconstruct the country as an agrarian state with the farmers and the common soldiers as the main foundation. Most of the soldiers were being recruited, anyway, from the farms. I did not hate Prime Minister Inukai, personally. I knew him and respected him. But his government was bad, and we could not tolerate any further his policy. I felt sorry for him, but he had to be sacrificed."

While young army and navy officers like Mikami were assigned to the assassination, Tachibana came to Tokyo from Mito that fateful Sunday morning with twelve young civilian followers, whose assignment was to blow up the power plants. They were not so successful.

"Weren't you afraid, trying to tackle the Tokyo police with so few men?" an American friend of mine asked Tachibana.

"Afraid? You naïve Americans," he replied, shaking his lean, bearded head. "Whenever a Japanese is entrusted with such a mission there is no thought of fear. In fact there is no fear. The mind is in a subconscious state."

Mikami and Tachibana are friends, and when Tachibana was released from prison a few years after the revolt, Mikami, who is a talented artist, visited his home and drew a portrait of the Buddhist saint Dharma on one of the sliding paper walls of Tachibana's living room. Mikami also inscribed the painting with the following traditional sentiment, which the two men still share in common:

Heaven and Earth, sublime and pure,
Is here in our land of the Gods,
And like Fuji superior among mountains,
Scatters like the Banda cherry blossoms
And flows around the Eight Islands of Yamato.

Tachibana disagrees with Mikami's scheme for a new try at Pan-Asia. "That is a thing of the past," he says. "We must discard theory and accept historical realization. But we can still attract China to our side, by offering her the things she lacks and is desperately in need of."

Japan will trade with Red China, and there is nothing we can do to prevent it. U.S. ambassadors who go to Japan these days almost always begin their tours of duty by dutifully warning the Japanese that they should not, of course, think of trading with our enemy, Red China. The Japanese politely applaud the sentiments. But they cannot live on them, and in the absence of any other alternative from us they can only proceed with their plans to find markets, anywhere they can. Before the war, approximately half of Japan's trade was with the China mainland. Today, deprived of her other outlets and forced to look around for some means of feeding herself, Japan has also begun to talk of trading with Russia—coal in exchange for fishing equipment, for example. There is nothing we can do about that either, unless we are prepared to sustain Japan's economy all by ourselves.

Surrounded by water and possessing almost no food other than fish and rice, and with no raw materials for production other than water power and plenty of cheap labor, Japan *must* trade in order to stay alive. After the war we broke up the huge trade combines like Mitsui and Mitsubishi and other *zaibatsu* organizations, and told the Japanese they would have to get along without such powerful monopolistic devices. We ordered the combines dissolved, their stocks sold to the public, and then we drew up regulations stipulating that no new trade organization could hire more than one hundred former employees in any one firm. Our motive was the same as it was elsewhere in the occupation: to destroy all vestiges of former nationalism and all organizations which had contributed to Japan's war effort.

But, as happened elsewhere in the occupation, our efforts, well intentioned as they might have been, were doomed to failure. The *zaibatsu* had served a useful and even necessary purpose, and Japanese economy could not have existed without them. For Japan is a nation of small industries. Much of the manufacturing is let out, in piecework assignments, to individual families who clutter up their cottages with spinning wheels, looms, and pottery kilns. They receive their raw materials from a central company—like Mitsui—and when their work is finished it is picked up by the company and sold. There is no other channel, except through some giant network like Mitsui—with its branch offices and its thousands of experienced, shrewd operatives all over the world—through which agrarian Japan, with her necessarily primitive industries and her eager but naïve little businessmen, can peddle her wares abroad and receive her raw materials from abroad. The *zaibatsu* combines provided a feudal arrangement, and, because we did not fully understand their function, they were bound to go. But now that Japan is on her

own again the practice is being restored. Purchases, sales, tariff, and financial arrangements of all kinds can best be handled by efficient merchant organizations which have overseas experience. The individual Japanese merchant or industrialist cannot handle the job alone. Outfits like Mitsui and Mitsubishi, which can function efficiently because they work on a mass-market level, are coming back into prominence. And if they find their best trade channels opening up in the direction of China and Russia, they will fill them. They cannot do otherwise, unless Japan is to starve. And a starving Japan, regardless of her conservative nature, probably would go Communist.

There is another important pressure on Japan, and on our record there, which bears watching. The Japanese, who love children and also, apparently, the act of creating them, are reproducing themselves at the rate of about one million little Japanese a year. Stacked up on those rocky islands, where there are not enough houses, jobs, and paddy fields to go around right now, these extra mouths and hands will become a serious problem. If the trading falls off, if the people get hungry for rice, if there is a major collapse in Japan's economy and morale, *and* if men like Taku Mikami hit just the right note on their brooding flutes, there is no telling what kind of explosion will take place in Japan within the next ten years. Despite her present pacifism, Japan may once again find the pressure of necessary conquest difficult to resist.

We were offered an opportunity to make a dent in this problem, but we did not take it.

Mrs. Shidzue Kato, who is the former Baroness Ishimoto and Japan's own version of Margaret Sanger, told me one day of how she thought we had missed our big chance. Mrs. Kato had met Mrs. Sanger years before the war, and they

had continued to correspond. Mrs. Sanger had even stopped off in Japan once to help organize a local birth control movement. Then came the war. The Japanese army, which wanted young men by the thousands, naturally frowned on the baroness' attempt to tamper with its supply. She was forced to cease her work, and it was not until the occupation began that she was able to try it again. This time the odds were in her favor. The Japanese are as aware of their problem of overpopulation as we are. In fact some communities have a high rate of abortion. And the Japanese had also made primitive stabs at birth control. But they needed help and advice.

The climate was fine for such a program. The Japanese people had lost the war and they were anxious to try any sensible panaceas we suggested to them which might help prevent another one. The baroness—who had remarried and was later to become a Diet member, as was her husband—asked SCAP for permission to leave Japan and visit the U.S. to re-establish liaison with Mrs. Sanger and learn the latest techniques for teaching birth control. But SCAP refused Mrs. Kato's request. Mrs. Kato got the impression that General MacArthur was reluctant to become involved in a program which might receive serious criticism from political and religious groups in America. She pleaded that, if she could not go to America, Mrs. Sanger be brought to Japan. Again SCAP refused permission.

Mrs. Kato did not give up. Arming herself with booklets and cutaway models of the female organs, she went from house to house to demonstrate to anxious mothers how they might lighten their burden of child-rearing. But it was a losing battle. She could talk to only a few women a day, and there were millions who never saw her. The Japanese government might have helped, but since it was government prac-

tice even in those days not to begin any reform unless it was told to do so by SCAP, Tokyo dragged its feet and the educational program failed to catch on. In some isolated communities Mrs. Kato's disciples are making slow headway. Even the midwives, once they learn the importance of birth control to Japan's future prosperity, volunteer to spread the gospel at the expense of their own careers. But even so, there are more babies born daily than there are mothers who can be reached in the remote villages and persuaded to slow down. Had our occupation leadership been more courageous in Japan and less preoccupied with political ambitions in the U.S., we could have helped solve the one key problem in that crowded land which has a bearing on every other problem, from food to militarism.

In Fukuoka one summery day, I sat on the floor in a Japanese room overlooking a canal which ran under a curved Japanese bridge. Bright yellow and blue advertising banners whipped in the breeze and tugged at their bamboo staffs. Overhead, American jets screamed through the air after taking off from a nearby U.S. defense base. A Japanese newspaper editor sat cross-legged on the floor next to me and as he ladled out our lunch of Japanese chowder we talked about the future of Japan. He was optimistic.

"MacArthur gave us a kind of democracy," he said, "but it was a textbook variety. It was not something we won, as you won yours, by bloodshed. It was a pattern which you imposed upon us, not one which grew from our roots. We need a democracy of passion, one we have fought for and which we can call our own. But we will have to fight for it. We will have to fight both those people on the far left and those on the far right. It will be a fight full of bloody riots, police repression, and violence. It will temporarily stifle our

young, struggling democratic elements. But it will show Japan's health and vigor, nevertheless. Do not be discouraged by it. If it comes, it will prove that our future is promising. Because, in order to acquire democracy, we must pass through this crisis, this struggle between two opposite poles. And no matter what form we take in the future, it will at least be something made of our own passion and blood. It will be a revolution that will last."

It was a sincere statement, and I wish I could endorse it. But I am afraid most of the evidence fails to support the editor's optimism. The Japanese themselves—who must live within the limits of their own character and experience—are already having to undo many of the patterns we thrust upon them. They are undergoing a revolution all right, and it will probably last. But it will not result in a "democracy."

The *zaibatsu*—whom we broke up—are re-forming their ranks. The thought-control police work once again for the government—in camouflaged agencies, to keep an eye on both the rightists and the Reds. The kimono is coming back to replace the Western blouse. Women have lost all but a handful of their seats in the Diet. The swordmakers, whose art we banned because it smacked of chauvinistic fanaticism, are relighting their charcoal forges to beat out the blades of shiny steel which serve, even to the most unwarlike Japanese, as the symbols of their religious faith and racial invincibility. Kabuki, the national theater, which stages fantastically intricate and beautiful productions of dancing, acting, and pantomime—the strongest, most fascinating theater I have seen anywhere—packs the house whenever its program lists one of the old classic melodramas involving such ancient and tear-jerking virtues as filial piety, national honor, and gentlemanly suicide. Samurai movies, full of charging horses and swashbuckling swordsmen, are replacing the mushy love

stories built around Japanese imitations of the American kiss.

Even the Emperor is the prisoner and the victim of ancient ideals. When his beloved brother, the athletic Prince Chichibu, lay dying of hepatitis, the Emperor rose in the dark of night and prepared to visit his brother's deathbed. But the court attendants, who are responsible to the Japanese government, forbade Hirohito's short journey on the grounds that it would "violate tradition" and that it was unseemly for the Emperor of Japan to indicate in public such human frailty as sorrow.

It was not until after Chichibu's funeral that the nation learned of their beloved Prince's own struggle with Japan's rigid code. Though he had also been ill of tuberculosis and had once requested modern surgery, the Prince had been denied that too—regardless of the fact that it might have helped save his life—on the grounds that it was unseemly for an imperial Japanese prince to bow to modern medicine. In his will, however, Chichibu got revenge on his stubborn court jailers. He stipulated that his remains should be submitted to autopsy—for the good of modern medicine—and that he be cremated, rather than buried, as is the imperial custom. The court officials balked, but Princess Chichibu forced them to carry out her husband's last wishes. The nation, which learned of all this through the palace grapevine, was proud of a Prince who was brave enough to defy the "undemocratic" forces of Japan which they, the little people, could not and cannot defy.

I once stood about fifteen feet from the Emperor, and saw how much of a prisoner he is himself. The occasion was the celebration, in the Imperial Plaza, of the third anniversary of Japan's constitution. Only two days before, the pitched battle of May Day, 1952, had been fought over the same plaza. Cordons of helmeted police and soldiers fenced the area.

And only invited guests—top-hatted Japanese functionaries and their wives—were allowed near the stands. The Emperor came on the stage, accompanied by his Empress, and read an imperial rescript congratulating the nation on its new life. When he was finished, the crowd of stately officials broke into the traditional three *banzais,* and the Emperor acknowledged each one with the customary wave of his top hat. Then, just as he turned to depart, the crowd sent up another loud and spontaneous *banzai.* It was an unprecedented act, and it meant that the people were so sincerely happy and proud that they could not resist honoring their Emperor with their feelings. Hirohito was visibly moved by the salute, and he turned back to face the crowd. His lips moved with emotion, and he raised his hat a few inches as if to return the salute. But he thought better of it, and lowered the hat again. One could sense the doubt in his mind: this was an unprecedented occasion, for which there were no ancient, prescribed rules. What was he to do? He raised the hat again, then lowered it. He turned as if to go, then turned back again and faced his people. He wanted so much to thank them and to reach out to them. He raised the hat once more, but still not in full salute. The hat shook in the Emperor's nervous hand and the Emperor himself shivered with emotion. Finally his chief court chamberlain, the man who tells him daily and almost hourly what he can and cannot do, came up to him and with gentle but firm motions shoved the Emperor off the stage before he had a chance to make up his mind. As he left, the people bowed solemnly.

A few days later, presumably at the behest of the Yoshida government, Emperor Hirohito performed another chore. The San Francisco treaty with Japan had already been signed and officially the occupation was over and Japan had her freedom. But the act was not official to most Japanese until

the Emperor made a long and tiresome pilgrimage to the national shrine at Ise, where his ancestors are commemorated. There he walked through the stately trees to the shrine and informed the heavenly gods in a prayer that Japan was free at last. That trip alone was enough to make the democratic elements of Japan shudder. "Good-by, democrassy," said one Japanese student when he heard the news. Japan was once again a Shinto society, in which its ancient gods even had to be let in on contemporary history before the history was considered to be in effect.

The middle-of-the-road Japanese who could stand against this sort of regression are weak and divided in their strength. The Socialist Party, which is the most liberal and democratically inclined party in Japan, is helplessly split into a radical wing and a conservative wing. Only by uniting its forces could it put up a solid front against the government's present anti-labor, anti-democratic measures. But in the Diet the Socialists only fight among themselves. They seem incapable of uniting.

Labor itself, though it numbers today some 7,000,000 organized workers, is equally schizophrenic in its leadership, and it lacks political effectiveness commensurate with its size. Organized labor tried, for example, to fight the anti-subversive bill, fearing that the bill would one day be used against labor. But one faction wanted to hit the bill hard *before* it could be passed. And the other faction, more cautious, thought it better strategy to avoid antagonizing the government with a "political" strike, let the bill pass, and *then* fight it. Consequently the bill was passed and labor has been unable ever since to get a foothold against the government. This was bad tactics, but typical of a people who have yet to learn the art of political procedure.

Minoru Takano, a mild, thoughtful little man who con-

scientiously limits himself to three cups of *sake* at dinner and sounds more like a professor than a union leader, is boss of Sohyo, Japan's largest (4,000,000 members) labor federation. Takano, like the editor in Fukuoka, is an optimist. He thinks that his group can hold on, despite the present weakness in the liberal, democratic center, and that eventually labor will be able, almost by itself, to preserve democracy in Japan against inroads from both left and right.

Takano spent six years in prison before the war because, as a pioneer labor leader, he refused to knuckle under to the wartime jingoists. He does not think that fascism of that variety will ever return to Japan. His own hunch is that the present conservative government will fail to solve the economic and moral crisis facing Japan and that it will eventually fail. Then, says Takano, Japan will be governed for perhaps ten years by a weak coalition of splinter parties. During *that* period, he adds, labor will grow strong enough to weld together a really democratic group and form a lasting government. It will take time, he admits. But he is confident of the day when, in the words of a Japanese proverb, his people can take their turn "pulling the ox by the nose."

His task, which seems to me almost impossible of fulfillment, was not made any easier by our own occupation.

In many ways, of course, our occupation was a success: we acted as a catalyst and a rallying point for the weak, scattered elements which already existed in Japan; and we served as a shield of hope while all the frightened little people—the women, the laborers, the farmers, and the students—came out of their shells and tried to give their country a new and adventurous way of life. In some respects these people succeeded. None of our ideas will ever be entirely forgotten. And many of them, once the Japanese have found a way of

making them their own, will live on and be a credit to our inspiration.

But we tried to do too much. In our idealistic zeal to show Japan where she had erred and how she really ought to live, we tried to make her over in our own image. This was a naïve attempt, foolish and even arrogant in its scope. And it was doomed, because of its unfortunate pretentiousness, at least to partial failure. It is a lesson, perhaps, which we needed to learn: we have a wonderful system, and the world is awed by it; but the system will not always work in alien soil. As good as our way of life is for us, there are valid reasons why other people do not crave it and cannot adapt it to themselves.

If it had not been for the Korean war, our experiment might have been more successful. But only ten short months after we took over we were forced—by sudden circumstances of defense and power politics—to change our signals. We had unleashed the forces of labor and told them to organize a strong bulwark of freedom. But when Japanese labor announced its first strikes, in an effort to consolidate its skimpy gains, MacArthur ordered them canceled, on the grounds that a stable Japanese economy was more important just then than a strong labor movement. SCAP had directives from Washington to "permit and favor" changes in the Japanese form of government, even if these changes involved the use of force by the Japanese as they tried to reach a democratic balance. But the occupation was not a year old before American MPs were being used to break up protest meetings and an American major was ruling Japanese newspapers and informing them that freedom of the press did not include freedom to criticize SCAP policies. We had the Japanese write into their constitution an article renouncing war; then we asked them to start rearming. In the light of the Russian

threat to the north—and Japan's northern islands are only a stone's throw from Russia's southern islands—these were understandable and even necessary moves. But to many confused Japanese they seemed selfish and heartless, and our growing unpopularity in Japan began when the Japanese realized not only that the honeymoon was over but that they were supposed to start washing our dishes, besides.

In short, we preached "democracy" but we practiced at times the same kind of government the Japanese had known all along: rule by edicts, pronounced and enforced by a strong, heroic, military man who tolerated no argument and no give-and-take. It is a wonder the Japanese learned as much as they did.

The occupation has long since been over. We can no longer give orders. But we can, and should, do all we can to encourage the friends we left behind. For if the experiment fails completely—and we started it—we have lost the best and only solid opportunity we shall ever have in Asia to show that we have more to offer than promises and warnings, and that we want more from this world than merely a free place to park our planes, dock our ships, and bunk our soldiers.

Psychologists who have studied the Japanese character think they probably lack the moral drive necessary to stand in the center of the street and *fight* for freedom against people attacking them from both the left and the right. They have no religious or philosophical background for such a position. They are more likely to drift over to one side of the street or the other and stay there. And they will go to whichever curb has the most people on it. As it looks now, the curb on the right will be jammed. But if everyone goes *there,* that is precisely where we came in, on December 7, 1941. If a good number go instead to the opposite curb, then that is what we are fighting now. Either way Japan presents a prob-

lem. The U.S. is not too popular out there just now. We were kind and well meaning, but we were also naïve. And we have overstayed our welcome. Already our armed forces are finding it necessary to make themselves as inconspicuous as possible by hiding our troops in remote barracks. Japanese innkeepers, who were once happy to see our soldiers, are now finding it expedient to give their rooms to steady Japanese customers whose country, after all, it is. We are hated by only a minority. But with the rest of the people we are becoming more and more a group of unwanted and rather bothersome guests. They would like to have us go away—just as we would like to have *them* go away had the tables been turned.

Somehow, if we are not to lose all face in Asia, we must find a way to prove to the Japanese that our interest in them lies deeper than our naval moorings at Yokosuka and farther afield than the air bases at Tachikawa, Itami, and Itazuke. (We might begin, whether our West Coast Senators like it or not, by buying their tuna. It is a small thing, but in Japan our tariff policy looms large against us.)

If it is "an immutable truism that sound ideas cannot be stopped," it is *also* a truism, immutable or otherwise, that the nation with the best intentions and the most enlightened ideas in the world cannot always make them stick on alien soil. When East meets West, in the charged atmosphere of this century at least, it is often necessary, in peaceful pursuits as in warfare, to take a substitute for victory.