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REPORT ON KOREA

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KOREA is a prime Soviet-American tension point today because the announced policies of the US State Department are not those followed by military leaders on the strategic peninsula where armies of the two countries face each other across the 38th parallel of North latitude—the line dividing the American from the Soviet zone of occupation.

The United States is a signatory to the Moscow agreement which charts a democratic course for the Korean people, but this has resulted in no change in the dangerous anti-democratic maneuvers undertaken by Lt. Gen. John R. Hodge, commander of US Armed Forces in Korea. The general continues to use, and be used by, a small group of Koreans who are distinguished only for their past enthusiasm for Japanese rule. This clique completely dominates the South Korean Representative Democratic Council—it is neither representative nor democratic—which the general created as the American instrument for cooper-

ation with the Korean government in the Soviet zone to the North.

But at this juncture his continued reliance on such fascist-minded Koreans has more ominous possibilities, in view of the agreement made at Moscow for “the development of democratic self-government” in Korea under a joint Soviet-American trusteeship to last no longer than five years. And Gen. Hodge’s reliance upon pro-Japanese Koreans jeopardizes the execution of the Moscow agreement. For the political clique used by General Hodge has no basis in popular support whatsoever outside Seoul, the Korean capital. It is composed of those who profited directly from the thirty-five-year Japanese rule of the peninsula, and could only maintain their wealth and their positions through its continuation or by inheriting its control. The clique includes the former Seoul consul for Japanese Manchuria; the “patent medicine king” of Korea, whose fortune was founded upon morphine; former Japanese police spies; businessmen whose “success” was

dependent upon full collaboration with the Japanese against their own people, and a handful of big landlords. This junta calls itself the Korean Democratic Party.

It is buttressed by the Shanghai-Chungking emigre government, a group whose members had all been remote from Korean political life for thirty years when they were brought back to their homeland by the American military government. It had been freely predicted by Democratic Party spokesmen that the Chungking group alone would be permitted to return to southern Korea, although other exile governments of equal or higher standing were in existence elsewhere.

Furthermore, Democratic Party spokesmen said, the Chungking group would take over intact and without change the apparatus for administration and exploitation of Korea created by the Japanese. And finally, those political leaders who had gained their following by leading the long fight for Korean independence from within the country

were to be barred from any participation in the government. As for ballot-box ratification of this program by the Korean people, that would come "later—maybe."

THESSE predictions were uncannily accurate. Only a storm of protest prevented General Hodge from retaining the Japanese government staff intact. However, this protest forced only a slight change in his plans to use the governing apparatus created by the Japanese to dominate and loot Korea. The apparatus was maintained intact, the only change being the substitution of pro-Japanese personnel for the Japanese themselves.

Meanwhile the general, as predicted, consistently ignored those left-wing parties which represent the great majority of Koreans. Worse, when he did confer with the respected leader of the People's Party he greeted him with cynical insult, asking: "Well, how much did the Japanese pay you?" This opinion may have been formed in the company of those pro-Japanese upon whom the general relies, and whom he installed in nine of the eleven seats on the first "Korean Advisory Council." In Seoul these "Democrats" have been able to create an old-style Tammany machine, complete with graft, bribery and corruption, because they have been given control of all jobs open to Koreans. How complete is this control was shown by the demonstrations against the Moscow decisions which the Democratic Party was able to engineer in Seoul. Government offices were barren of employes, and the buildings themselves were used as distribution centers for placards, banners and flags denouncing the Moscow Agreement. Those gentlemen who serve as aides to General Hodge were reduced to firing the furnaces in his quarters in the palace of the former Japanese governor-general when the Democrats ordered his Korean servants out to demonstrate.

Selection of the men to serve as members of the new Representative Democratic Council is also in the hands of the Democratic-Chungking junta, which dominates it completely. For this reason, leaders of the left-wing parties, with one exception, have refused to serve upon the council. The present composition of the council, which repeats the advisory council farce, indicates that negotiations for political unification of Korea on a democratic basis will meet great obstacles. Indeed, that can be predicted from the state-

ment by Dr. Syngman Rhee to newsmen in the presence of General Hodge, and apparently with his consent:

"No one in General Hodge's office or the military government is in favor of an allied trusteeship over this country."

This attempt to conceal opposition to creation of a democratic Korea under the guise of opposing trusteeship is typical of Dr. Rhee, who learned his politics during thirty years spent in Washington as American representative of the Chungking group. On first returning to Korea he made an even more revealing statement to newsmen when he called for immediate attack on the Soviet forces north of 38 degrees.

In making such wild statements with the approval of American military leaders who had him brought back to Korea, Dr. Rhee does not speak for the Korean people. Nor does any member of the Democratic-Chungking junta. Even with American military support the junta has been unable to recruit any following outside Seoul, where they control the jobs. Last week Dr. Rhee was granted "a temporary leave of absence" by the Representative Democratic Council because he was supposedly in poor health. That development is almost meaningless in view of the fact that Rhee will still continue his anti-Soviet propaganda as a "private citizen" and manipulate the council from behind the scenes.

DESPITE American repression and opposition, the parties of the left supporting the People's Republic, which was formed before the Americans arrived, continue to gain in popularity. Only the Democratic Party refused to participate in the congress which formed the republic, and even today in south Korea provisional governments installed by the People's Republic are in full control of local administration in a number of provinces.

Nevertheless, the military attempt to dupe the people of the United States as to the real political situation in southern Korea continues. During a recent State Department broadcast a returned military government official painted this picture of the Korean political scene:

"... The smaller parties have merged into five main groups, the largest of which are the Democratic Party, which is supported by various classes, including businessmen, landowners and tenant farmers; the People's Republic, which advocates drastic economic reform and is supported,

though not dominated, by the Communists, and the People's Party, which is also leftist in tendency."

Apparently the unnamed fifth group would be the Chungking emigres, who should be lumped with the Democratic Party. In all other respects the statement is a complete distortion. In the first place, the Democratic-Chungking junta is not a political party with national Korean standing; it is a machine operating only in Seoul, and even there it is able to maintain its dominance only with American military support.

In the second place it could not expect support "by various classes" because its leaders are known to the vast mass of the poverty-stricken Korean people as men who profited by the Japanese system of exploitation. General Hodge himself admitted the Democrats' "businessmen" were hated by the Korean people when he explained his intention to use them in these words:

"Korean businessmen must have ability; they made money even under the Japanese. They are hardheaded and realistic—but of course they are not liked by the Koreans."

It is even more preposterous to say that the handful of big landowners in the Democratic Party is "supported" politically by the tenant farmers. Fifty, sixty and even seventy percent of each crop raised by the tenant farmers was formerly claimed by these same landlords as their share; this was standard practice under the Japanese realty corporations which still hold "legal" title to eighty percent of the land.

Increasing agitation and pressure for reduction of these rates by the parties supporting the People's Republic forced the military government to limit the landlord's share to one-third. Further agrarian reform is feared by the landowners in the junta, since the program of the People's Republic also calls for grants of "land to the landless" through expropriation of the holdings of Japanese corporations and pro-Japanese Korean landlords.

EXPROPRIATION is also a nightmare to General Hodge's businessmen, who made vast profits during the war. And nationalization of the industrial properties that the Japanese built from the blood, sweat and tears of the Korean people, which is also part of the program of the People's Republic, will dispel forever the beautiful dream of old-style private ownership that General Hodge had first conjured up for them.

This program for agrarian and in-

dustrial reform, which is the only logical solution for Korea's economic problems, has already been put into operation north of 38 degrees where the People's Republic is in complete control of internal Korean affairs. Consequently, political unification of the country and unhindered passage and communication between the two zones would immensely strengthen the parties supporting the People's Republic in the south.

General Hodge is fond of comparing his position in Korea to that of a man sitting on a powderkeg, but he himself

has created the explosive situation by his opposition to all democratic elements in Korean life. Moreover, he himself has laid the fuse to the powderkeg through his reliance on those fascist-minded Koreans who would involve the United States in war with the Soviet Union in their own country, rather than allow democracy to prevail. Thus far neither the War nor State Departments have criticized Hodge and some observers are drawing the conclusion that what he is doing has official approval in Washington even if it means serious violation of the Moscow pact.

The danger in Korea is clear and immediate. It can be ended only if the Moscow Agreement is carried out to the letter, and in the spirit in which it was written, by those military men charged with its execution. Unless the agreement is carried through the danger of increasing strife on the continent of Asia, to which Korea holds a very important key, will be immensely sharpened.

Mr. Izard was a staff correspondent for "Yank" and has recently returned from Korea.



Dedication

*I am that exile
from a future time,
from shores of freedom
I may never know*

—Sol Funaroff.

For all who died too soon
For the early dead and the wasted young
For those who were taken at their noon:
Alexander Bergman betrayed by a festering lung,
Sol Funaroff executed by a poverty heart.
For Sam Jacobson, Ben Leider, Bernie Jacobs:
For all American airmen
For the Soviet pilots, the flyers of the RAF
and their final signatures of smoke and flame.

For the millions we can never name
For those lined up and shot in Paris, Warsaw, Odessa,
Madrid
For the million and a half at Maidanek
For the five million Jews and their Pentateuch of pains
For those who were strangled with gas in their veins
For those who were cremated, torn by tanks,
left for display on a gibbet of shame.

For the frantic ranks
of refugees
For the children bewildered by their riddled parents and
their hunger
For those who could resist no longer
and quietly put the bullet through the brain
For those who died
merely of starvation and disease:
for all of these.

For those whose heroism was repaid
in the counterfeit of neutrality, the bankruptcy of abandon-
ment
For those who are buried at Guadalajara
For those who survived to see the dead betrayed
and refused to betray themselves and went on fighting,
died in the windy Kasserine pass,

the hot Sicilian hills, the winery Normandy grass,
found their graves in the green inferno of Guadalcanal,
became familiar with the maggots of Morotai.
For those who never got to the beaches, killed in the
Kwajalein lagoon:
for each of them, for all.

For all who died too soon
For those who died without knowing why,
harried by blizzard and fog and the endless rains,
cursing the mud, the lost years, the interminable campaigns
northwest of New Guinea, northeast of Rome.
For the unwary, hit by the sniper at Samar,
the youngsters grenaded in foxholes while they dreamed of
home.

For the forgotten, the anonymous
For the thousands at Babi Yar
For the child who cried
mother why are they throwing dirt on us
For the Filipino and the American
and that bloody Easter morning on Bataan:
for all who died
in the harshest bitterest time:

We cannot honor you with plaques
We cannot build you monuments enough
We cannot write on the accusing scroll
more than a merest fraction of the toll.
Our tributes are continuous attacks
on the bristling beach, the contested bluff;
in peace, on the persistent enemy:
the final fortresses of prejudice,
the pillboxes of poverty.
We pledge no armistice
till out of all the horror we have hewn
the future for which you fell;
till we can point to our lives and say:
this joy is not for us alone
but for all who died too soon.

EPHIM G. FOGEL.