

# THE WAR THAT FAILED

By L. BERNSTEIN

**O**NE SUNDAY morning in 1950, an unsuspecting world was startled by the announcement from the American Government in Washington that .... "The American Ambassador to the Republic of (South) Korea has informed the Department of State that North Korean forces invaded .... at several points in the early morning hours of June 25th." Frenziedly, the United Nations Security Council was summoned. In the space of a few days, North Korea had been named as an aggressor, America had been "asked to take charge of military assistance to the forces of South Korea in the name of UNO, all members of UNO had been asked to send troops against North Korea.

Only later, when the war had been joined irrevocably by all the imperialist powers, did it become clear that the American Government had swindled UNO and world opinion. The actual cable from the U.S. Ambassador in South Korea had stated: "According to (South) Korean Army reports, which are partly confirmed by (United States) Military Advisory Group field reports, North Korean forces invaded Republic of Korea at several points this morning." The vital words "...according to South Korean reports ....," omitted from the American Government announcement and concealed from UNO until decisions had been reached, could not have been omitted accidentally. Their omission was deliberate, part of a carefully prepared American scheme to make North Korea the aggressors, and the American puppet state of South Korea the victim.

## Well Laid Plan

The plan for war in Korea had been well laid. Ever since the liberation of Korea from the Japanese armies by the Korean people themselves and the armies of the U.S.S.R., the Americans had concentrated on the destruction of the liberation movement and the establishment of a reactionary, military despotism in the Southern half of the country — the half agreed on with the USSR as the "American occupation zone." By 1950, they were ready. Mr. John Foster Dulles, adviser to the State Department, long known as a Nazi sympathiser and denounced back in 1947 by Vishinsky at UNO as one of the world's foremost "warmongers," left on a tour of inspection of South Korea. Four days before the Korean war started, he left Korea for Japan where he promised reporters "positive action by the United States to preserve peace in the Far East." On June 25, the war started, General MacArthur's biographer, John Gunther, states he was told by MacArthur's chief political adviser that "A big story has just broken. South Korea has attacked North Korea."

It was to be a bigger story than ever General MacArthur or Mr. Dulles dreamed. "As the largest producer, the largest source of capital and the biggest contributor to the global mechanism, we must set the pace and assume the responsibility of the majority shareholder in this corporation known as the world." These were the terms in which one of the United States' multi-millionaire oil magnates proclaimed the outlook of American big business in 1946. The politicians were not far behind in this dream of world domination and world-wide exploitation for profit. By the following year President Truman, in what has

become to be known as the "Truman Doctrine," laid down the right of the United States to intervene in any country anywhere to ensure the maintenance of the type of government favoured by it. By 1948 the doctrine of the "Cold War" had passed formally into every action and pronouncement of the American State Department, expressing the military-financial alliance of big business with the diplomatic and military organs of the American state machine to "set the pace and assume the responsibility of majority shareholder" throughout the world.

Korea was singularly attractive as a jumping-off ground for the new world-conquerors. As a result of Soviet-American agreement after Korea's liberation from Japan, the country had been divided across its centre — on the 38th parallel — into separate zones, the North occupied by Soviet troops, the South by American. Long before the outbreak of war, the Soviet troops had departed, leaving behind in the North a strong and flourishing democratic government, drawing its strength from the national liberation movement which had contributed powerfully to Japanese defeat during World War II. In the South, American occupation had been devoted to the destruction of the national liberation movement; to imposing, on an unwilling population, a Government headed by Dr. Syngman Rhee specially brought from Washington for the purpose; and to the building and equipping of a modern army, officered, tutored, equipped and controlled at top level by American Military "Advisory" Groups. Here at hand was all the raw material for a first venture in American expansionism in Asia, with a well armed and indoctrinated South Korean puppet government to attempt the "unification" of Korea by force of arms, and thus restore to the United States a small part of the empire in Asia which had vanished with the complete collapse and defeat of her former running-dog, Chiang Kai Shek in China.

Strategically, Korea filled the needs of the advocates of "cold war" against the U.S.S.R. and China admirably. As a base for future hostile operations, it was close enough to Japan, America's main Pacific military base, for easy supply and reinforcement; and also close enough to the Soviet eastern frontiers and to China's vital industrial regions to provide a jumping-off place for aggression. Together with Japan, Chiang's last stronghold on the island of Formosa and a chain of smaller islands, control of Korea would facilitate a strangling blockade of the China coast, thus enabling America to carry on by economic means the struggle against the People's Republic which she had formerly pursued through military aid to Chiang.

## **Dream and Reality.**

There were further military-political considerations. North Korea, while rich in mineral and industrial wealth, particularly in nickel vital to the American rearmament programme was yet small enough to promise hopes of quick and easy conquest. A quick and hopelessly one-sided war would provide the opportunity for testing out under battle conditions, the new techniques of war and the new weapons developed in American laboratories and research stations since the end of world war in 1946. Furthermore, a quick and victorious war would be a signal lesson to the whole world, and especially to the colonial peoples, that when America spoke of "world leadership" and the "crusade against Communism" she meant business, backed with all the military might and political support which her financial dominance could muster.

Such dreams, taken over in their entirety from the author of "Mein Kampf," may have had some prospects in the world of 1939. But in 1950, in Korea, the dreams burst in the harsh reality of the modern world. The world was no longer the place it had been when Clive and Gordon conquered an empire for

Britain "by quick and easy massacre of unarmed, unorganised and unbetrayed colonial "natives." In place of the planned rapid advance of Rhee's troops to the North, came the shattering blows of the North Korean armies, sweeping the Americans and their puppets before them, till all that remained in the grip of their armies was the tiny bridgehead around the port of Pusan. What was to have been a minor foray, over in a matter of weeks, became a major war, straining America's military resources to the limit, forcing America to desperate resorts, to conscription for the first time except during world war; sending American diplomats pleading and demanding of her imperialist allies and satellites that troops, planes and equipment be rushed to Korea. What was planned to be passed off to the world as a "United Nations police action" became a large-scale war, costing more American lives than the whole of World War II. The 1950 empire-seekers had run up against a well organised, closely knit and determined national liberation movement, armed with modern equipment, steeled in struggle and united in defence of their land and their liberty.

Summoning all the resources they could muster, the American troops pushed painfully back to their jumping-off line, the 38th parallel, leaving behind them in their own puppet of South Korea a trail of devastation and destruction unparalleled in history. "The coolness of the welcome received by the liberators" said a United Press dispatch from Seoul, South Korean capital, after its recapture by American troops, "is understandable in the light of millions of dollars worth of damage." The "gooks" were being taught a lesson in American imperialist methods.

The American brass-hats, licking their wounds, and attempting to restore their shattered prestige issued a typically bullying, master-race declaration to the North Korean armies. "I broadcast General MacArthur to the North Korean Commander, "as United Nations Commander in Chief, call on you and the forces under your command ... forthwith to lay down your arms and cease hostilities under such military supervisions as I may direct." The demand for unconditional surrender took other members of the United Nations by surprise. So did MacArthur's decision two days later, on October 1st., to cross the 38th. parallel into North Korea. The police action stood revealed for what it was, an aggressive American adventure against the Korean People's Republic. But this time, the colonial victims of imperialist aggression did not stand alone. In the Soviet Union and the People's democracies they had friends and allies in their fight for land and liberty.

## China's Warning.

On the day that MacArthur launched his troops across the frontier, China's Premier Chou En Lai publicly warned that China could not supinely tolerate" an invasion of North Korea. While MacArthur's troops pressed on to the Chinese frontier in what they dreamt would be a "pushover," volunteers to fight with the Korean liberation armies began to gather in China. When the American armies, recklessly pushing forward to the Chinese frontiers, were joined by American planes bombing Yalu river power stations which supplied power to China's industrial plants across the frontier, the Chinese People's Volunteers, formed into units, crossed into Korea to stand shoulder to shoulder with their Korean comrades. The dreams of victory, exemplified by MacArthur's "lay down your arms" ultimatum, and by his later "Home by Christmas" communique to his troops, vanished into thin air. By Christmas, 1950, the American aggressors were once more back on the Southern side of the 38th parallel. They are there today, two and a half years later. The socialist sector of the world had come to the succour of the Korean people, destroying for ever the dreams that modern colonial ventures can be quick, easy and uncontested as they were in years gone by.

Bitter as were the blows to American military prestige and reputation, the blows to the vaunted "superiority" of their equipment and armaments were more bitter. In the air, the Chinese MIG jet-fighter outfought and outflew the best the American manufacturers could produce. On land, the Chinese and North Korean infantryman outfought the American, earning even from American newspapers the reputation of being "the toughest infantryman" in the world. Slowly, as the dead and the wounded multiplied, reality broke through the grandiose dreams of American militarists, proving once again and beyond the doubting that high morale and confidence, bred by understanding and conviction of the justice of a cause, makes better fighters than the best and most modern equipment lavished upon aggressive mercenaries. In the field of "super-weapons" of a new frightfulness, the dreams of easy victory have been demolished. The American "ideal" weapon of germ warfare has been countered and rendered largely impotent by the mass enlistment of the Korean and Chinese people in campaigns of mass inoculation, mass public health education and mass anti-bacterial defenses, possible only in the new lands of national independence, where the government is part of the people and the peoples' movement for progress.

And the atom bomb, whose alleged monopoly by the United States has been the decisive element for victory in the planning of the imperialist strategy, lies unused in its American stockpiles. For something new has grown up in the world since the Korean war started. The people of the world have entered into the struggle to preserve peace, in such overwhelming numbers in every land, America included, that their voice must now be heard. The last vestige of international toleration for American imperialism will vanish if atomic bombing is resorted to; and the American imperialists know it. Under the leadership of the World Peace Movement, the will of men and women everywhere for peace has become itself a weapon against imperialist war; a weapon which threatens such retribution that the stockpiles of atomic bombs dare not be used for military victory, because their use threatens drastic political defeat.

## **Back on the 38th Parallel.**

In its three years, the Korean war has turned full circle, from the blustering and arrogant branding of North Korea and China as "aggressors," through the blustering and arrogant demands for unconditional surrender, to the present peace treaty now, after every American military movement has been defeated, every political and diplomatic manoeuvre to prolong the war been ended in disaster. The proposed truce line runs still, after three years, roughly along the 38th parallel. This is the territorial outcome of the first American adventure in conquest. For this, countless thousands have died, been maimed, imprisoned, rendered homeless. For this, millions have been impoverished, and all the material achievements of all the past generations of Koreans have been blown into ashes.

But not for this alone. The Korean war has reshaped the world and made it a better place for those who survived. It has helped to roll the plans of American world conquest in the dust of history. It has called forth a great international Peace Movement to plan the peace of mankind, where yesterday the American Government planned to lead the peoples towards war. It has helped forward the peoples, break-through from the bonds of imperialism towards national independence liberty and peace.

Now, the shooting has died down in Korea. The same Rhee and the same Dulles, who lit the fuse in 1950 manoeuvred desperately to prevent the cease-fire. They are doing and will do everything possible to sabotage the political negotiations and to get the war going again. The peace-loving peoples of the world owe a sacred debt to martyred, heroic Korea to see that the plotters of war are defeated and that peace shall prevail.