

T H E K O R E A N W A R

After almost four months of quiescence, the release of the "International Scientific Commission's" voluminous and detailed brief on American bacterial crimes in North Korea and China has increased the volume of comment on BW to the highest level since the peak of the denunciatory campaign was reached late in March. Peking has, in addition, supplemented the reports with the statements of two more American fliers attesting to their participation in germ warfare.

The prodigious effort made to endow the ISC report with all the qualities of scientific restraint and objectivity, plus the fliers' stress upon the most minute details of their indoctrination and involvement in germ dissemination, suggests that the revival of the campaign at this time is meant to counter the skepticism which greeted the earlier charges and to provide a legalistic brief for a subsequent indictment of the BW perpetrators as war criminals. Although Moscow has broadcast summaries of the ISC report, it has not so far referred to the new confessions. Nor have the charges been related to the Asian Peace Conference, although the imminence of the meeting suggests another explanation for the present reinvigoration of the campaign.

Comment on the war divorced from the BW context is low in volume. There are conventional charges that the continued unilaterally imposed recesses are intended to hamstring and wreck the talks, and that mistreatment of POWs and the indiscriminate bombings are further evidences of U.S. bestiality and a distaste for peace.

Sensitivity to the increasing role and effectiveness of Republic of Korea forces seems indicated by the sustained effort to depreciate their military qualities, by appeals to the South Koreans to resist conscription and to "turn their guns" on their American mentors, and by the repeated references to the unfettered happy life led by their fellow countrymen in the north.

"Neutral" Scientists Document American Guilt: After almost four months of quiescence during which germ-warfare charges have served as a relatively minor element in the general denunciation of American bestiality, comment attendant on Peking's release of the voluminous and detailed report of an "International Scientific Commission" raises the level of comment on BW to the highest point since the peak of the campaign last March. Although such an investigatory commission had been called for by the World Peace Council executive meeting in Oslo late in March, there had been no propaganda indication that the Commission was at work or that its report was ready for publication. Supplementary to the release of the Commission's report, Peking has widely publicized the confessions of two more American fliers that they had knowingly participated in bacteriological warfare.

The Commission's report, complete with 46 appendices, runs to some 300,000 words. It is an amalgamation of esoteric technical data, close-knit argument, and scientific speculation, interlarded with admissions of previous errors in interpretation and translation, all of which seems designed to provide a veneer of scientific disinterestedness and objectivity, thus adding to the credibility of the charges. As such it seems intended to provide a firm legalistic basis for subsequent indictment of the germ-war perpetrators, rather than to appeal to the average uninformed listener. The wealth of detail concerning methods and verification of dissemination and the testimony of eyewitnesses is supplemented by reference to the confessions of the airmen, which provide in the most minute detail the entire history of the fliers' contact with BW.

The tremendous effort devoted to the task of documenting American guilt suggests also an attempt to counter the general skepticism that greeted the earlier charges and which motivated World Peace Committee Chairman Joliot-Curie to lament that the campaign had not elicited the desired response. It may also have been intended to counter reported Soviet displeasure with Peking's failure to make the charges more credible. Continued Soviet reluctance to commit itself fully to the charges may also be indicated by Moscow's failure, so far, to exploit the new prisoner confessions, although a summary of the ISC findings has been fairly widely disseminated.

Parallel to a revival of the BW charges, Peking reports that poison gas has again been used against Communist advanced positions. Broadcast statements also claim that as a result of American recourse to germ warfare, encephalitis spread through Japan and South Korea during July and August. The disease is one that has rarely been mentioned as among those disseminated by the Americans. It is perhaps pertinent that no attempt has been made to link the reinvigorated campaign to the Asian Peace Conference slated to convene in Peking on 28 September, although the imminence of the meeting suggests a possible motivation for the renewal of the charges at this time.

Additional POW "Releases" Threaten the Talks: Comment on the war divorced from the BW charges is meager. Peking continues to evidence considerable sensitivity to the U.N.'s "unilateral" reclassification of prisoners from military to civilian status and their subsequent release. The pending transfer of an additional 11,000 South Koreans to ROK jurisdiction is assailed as another patent attempt to make agreement at Panmunjom impossible and to wreck the talks. Peking describes this new violation as part of the general pattern of provocation in which POW mistreatment, repeated recesses, indiscriminate bombings of nonmilitary objectives and aerial invasions of the truce site play a part.

A possibly amenable note in the general framework of denunciation is General Nam Il's repeated insistence that the POW lists be rechecked to seek a basis for an equitable exchange of prisoners, but there are no certain indications that such a check will bring any relaxation of the Communist position that at least 116,000 prisoners be returned. In fact, Peking is now referring to the larger figure of approximately 144,000 issued last December rather than

to the 116,000 minimum total first mentioned during the executive sessions of April and May.

Chinese Share Rations With Bombing Victims: References to the bombing offensive have decreased (Moscow has never mentioned the bombings in broadcasts to Korea), but Peking claims that the Americans have suffered decisive defeats in the quickened tempo of the fighting at the front. The second major assault on the Suiho hydroelectric complex on 12 September was reported to the domestic audience on 17 September, but apparently not mentioned to Peking's international audience. The general line at present is that the Americans, beaten at the front, are desperately seeking areas where their prowess can best express itself without fear of quick retaliation.

Continued sensitivity to the Chinese inability to prevent the bombings may be indicated by the continuing campaign to convince the Koreans that the Chinese are their best friends. Among other testimonies of Chinese largesse, Peking reports that Chinese troops have in many cases contributed their rations to the victims of the bombings.

South Koreans Fill Gaps in U.N. Lines: Pyongyang, and to a lesser degree Peking, has demonstrated considerable concern regarding the increasing role and effectiveness of Republic of Korea forces in the present bitter fighting. An attempt to rationalize the greater role played by ROK troops seems indicated in the repeated allegation that the Americans, their ranks depleted by the sustained Communist attack, have been forced to accelerate their conscription of South Koreans. In addition, Pyongyang has stepped up the tempo of its fervent appeals to South Koreans to desert, to oppose conscription and to "turn their guns" on their American masters. Other comment dwells at length upon the happy life led by the North Koreans and the friendly ties joining them to the Chinese, perhaps in an attempt to counter South Korean opinion concerning Pyongyang's subservience to the Chinese.

N O R T H K O R E A

Progress Emphasized on DPRK Anniversary: The anniversary of the founding of Democratic People's Republic of Korea, 8 September, has received only scant attention from Pyongyang since the outbreak of the Korean war. This year's comment deals largely with past progress and makes no promises of tangible improvement in the future. The people are reminded of the progress made in industry, agriculture, education and culture before the war and their attention is called to the part the Americans have played in halting that progress. The peaceful assistance of the Soviet Union before the war receives due mention, but nothing is said of the wartime role of the USSR. The anniversary comment does, however, occasion reminders that defense of the Fatherland is the greatest duty and closer unity is urged to assure victory and "a hopeful future."

S O U T H K O R E A

New Conscription Enforced: Pusan has announced its new conscription plan, effective 1 September, providing the draft of personnel for both military and labor service. Comment stresses that there will be no discrimination in administration of the draft and that all will receive "fair and impersonal" treatment. The existence of certain "disagreeable" features in the administration of past drafts is acknowledged.