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THE KOREAN WAR DANGER

Two months ago, a US government official made the following statement to William Beecher of the Boston Globe (6/29/75): "Post Vietnam there are two areas of the world where the possibilities of war breaking out are real: the Mideast and the Korean peninsula. If I were a betting man, I would bet against a war in either place; but I wouldn't bet very much in the case of Korea."

The bellicose attitude of President Ford and Defense Secretary Schlesinger give this remark a chilling tone. Both men have hinted recently that the US would use nuclear weapons should North Korea attack the South. Schlesinger even spelled it out, saying that in the event of such an attack "... it is necessary to go for the heart of the opponent's power; destroy his military forces ... more vigorous action ... than the Vietnam war." (Quoted in TRB, New Republic, 7/26/75).

Whence comes this new war danger? Does it come from the prospect of an attack by the North? On this question the Globe's Beecher reported (6/29/75): "Although White House, Defense officials and State Department officials are unwilling to rule out the possibility that North Korea will launch a full scale invasion any time soon, most analysts doubt this will happen." Early in May, the Far Eastern Economic Review (5/2/75) reported from Seoul that Western military intelligence doubted that North Korea planned an invasion, and that Western diplomats "believe the Park Government is deliberately exaggerating the dangers in an effort to justify the continued repression of liberal dissent in South Korea." Japan, like the US, has been heavily committed to South Korea; but government personalities in Tokyo have also expressed the belief that there was little danger of war from the North. Just over a year ago Japan's Foreign Minister Kikumaru flatly denied that South Korea faced a military threat from North Korea. (Korea Bulletin, 1/75). More recently, a member of Japan's ruling party's Asian-African Study Group, Rep. Tokuma Utsonomiya, declared his view that the North would not initiate a war, making the statement after a visit to North Korea. (Asia, 7/75).

The Sunday Mainichi, an independent Japanese newspaper that carried Utsonomiya's story, speculated on probable causes of a war in Korea. Pointing to the 38th parallel which divides North and South Korea, with 467,000 North Korean and 625,000 South Korean troops ranged on either side, the paper said: "There is a real possibility that a series of small conflicts along the border may escalate into a full-scale war at any moment. It is conceivable also that South Korea will advance North Korea across the border in order to involve the US and Japan in a war and to smash anti-government forces." This speculation carries us nearer to what appears to be one source of the war danger: the difficulties of the South Korean dictatorship in the post-Vietnam era.

(continued on page 2)
In 1974 President Park Chung Hee faced his worst economic and political crisis since he seized power 14 years ago; further, he was suffering growing diplomatic isolation as registered, for example, in UN votes adverse to South Korea. Relying on the US and Japan to absorb over 70% of the products of an export-oriented economy, South Korea faced a severe slump due to the recession occurring in the domestic economies of its two main trading partners. Under the impact of an inflation estimated at well over 40%, South Korean living standards plummeted. On the political field, domestic opposition grew to embrace nearly every sector of the Korean people. (Korea Bulletin, 1/75). In response, the dictatorship this year has meted out arrests, executions, and new draconian emergency decrees—all justified on the basis of the loudly proclaimed "menace from the North" and the need to put the South, consequently, on a war footing. There are many indications that, as the Tokyo paper suggests, Park would not be averse to a war "to smash the anti-government forces;" even now, the outstanding poet Kim Ch'ae remains under threat of death for criticizing the dictatorship.

On the basis of the foregoing, the Ford Administration's threat of nuclear bombing seems to be less a means of discouraging the North from presumed plans for war than a means of encouraging the South in its very evident policies of repression and belligerence. The Administration's purpose, which it claims to be pacific, seems, in fact, to be something else.

The second source of the "war danger" in Korea is the converse of the first: the difficulties faced by the US after defeat in Vietnam. In addition to decline of the US imperial position in Asia, the Administration faces the uncertainties in Greece and Portugal, the balkiness of Congress to comply with continued aggressive policies, and the growing domestic dissatisfaction with those policies as well—all signs of an accumulating crisis. The show of force associated with the Mayaguez incident indicated the Administration's stance clearly. But the Mayaguez was obviously not enough, so the thoughts of statesmen turn to Korea. Let Schlesinger himself explain the matter (as quoted in the NY Times, 5/5/75): "The major issue, Mr. Schlesinger believes, is how far the American people will allow the international situation to deteriorate before they rouse themselves for a national effort. It may take, he said pessimistically, 'something like Korea' to alter present attitudes."

The extraordinary bombing ordered by the Ford Administration at the time of the Mayaguez incident bears a relation to the arrests, executions and emergency decrees in Korea this Spring; they both entail a fury born of desperation, a tendency to irrationality and over-reaction. A common mood affects the present rulers of the US and South Korea, causing both to flirt with the possibility of a new Korean war as a means of resolving their massive difficulties.

What makes the Korean situation so alarming and unique is the way all the combustible materials are piled together. First there is the possibility of an "Incident," like the Mayaguez or the Tonkin Gulf; many people knowledgeable about South Korea believe the Park regime capable of creating one. Yong Lee Wun, former South Korean Navy Chief of Staff, told a press conference in Tokyo last January that "Every alleged threatening act by the North, whether charged by Syngman Rhee or Park Chung Hee, was without exception a provocative act by the North, whether charged by Syngman Rhee or Park Chung Hee, was without exception a provocative act by the forces of South Korea." (Quoted in Korea Link, March/April, 1975). An American Maryknoll missionary, James Simott, was recently expelled after 15 years in Korea for speaking out against violations of civil liberties; in lobbying Congress, he has warned that we should be suspicious on hearing that a South Korean village has been raided by the North, with a resultant slaughter of men, women and children. It might just be, Fr. Simott warns, that South Korean troops dressed in North Korean uniforms did the raiding. (Personal communication from Fr. Simott).

Then there is the matter of US involvement. There are at present 42,000 US troops in South Korea.
Miners' Wildcat Ends in West Virginia

The wildcat strike by bituminous coal miners which began over a month ago and at its peak included two-thirds of the miners in the country, is now winding down. The rank and file led strike was directed against the United Mine Workers union (UMW) as well as the coal companies.

The strike was sparked by the slow and inefficient procedure for settling grievances. The December, 1974 contract, which ended a 24-day strike, included a new grievance Appeals Board to be established in each of the union's districts within two months. But seven months after the contract was signed, neither the coal operators nor the UMW had made any effort to appoint their representatives to the Appeals Board for many of the union's districts.

The grievance issue is of great concern to the miners as many grievances are filed to improve safety conditions. Miners face the highest rate of work-related accidents in the country. During last year's strike many miners opposed the new contract because it didn't grant the right to strike over local issues.

Wildcat strikes occur often in the mines, sometimes once of twice a week. This wildcat spread to seven states and 80,000 miners, however, when the coal company at the first mine struck in West Virginia went to court immediately to get an injunction against the strikers rather than meeting with them to work out a local settlement.

The injunction was granted on the basis of the 1970 Supreme Court "Boys Market" case which ruled that a no-strike clause exists whenever management has agreed to a binding arbitration and grievance process. As a result, management can automatically obtain a federal injunction when a local wildcat occurs over an "arbitrable" matter—which includes just about every issue involved in mining, according to the courts.

In response to the swift court injunction deeming the strike "illegal", the "right to strike" demand, brought out during the 1974 contract dispute was raised again and spread quickly. Miners held numerous rallies demanding the right to strike over local grievances during August and early September.

After shutting down mines in West Virginia, Virginia, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, Alabama, Illinois, and Indiana, the strike is now ending. Shortly after Labor Day, most miners except for some 30,000 in West Virginia began returning to work. The strike wound down after intense pressure was exerted by the Bituminous Coal Operators (continued on page 7)
Santa Fe Community Press

Started in August, 1973 by a small group of women, the Santa Fe Community Press was originally a feminist press. The initial idea was to act as a tool for raising women's consciousness and as a way for women to get their work published. Along with these goals went the idea of self-teaching.

After putting out the Santa Fe Women's Community Magazine however, some of the women favored a re-direction of these goals as a result of two factors: (1) There really wasn't much of a women's movement in Santa Fe; and (2) The press was too valuable a tool to be used exclusively for feminism, a particularly isolated cause in Santa Fe. A struggle ensued over this issue and those women with separatist views left the collective; the remaining members began making contact with many community organizations and encouraged new people, including men, to participate in the press.

The focus of this new enthusiasm soon became an alternative newspaper, and after many long hours the first (and only) issue of the Santa Fe Community News was put out in June, 1974. It was an attempt to fill in the gaps left by the conservative local papers and provided a positive experience in everything from writing to the final printing. But the time demanded for this project, along with little more than verbal support in return, again forced a re-evaluation of goals.

Confusion over the purposes of the press was coupled with problems in leadership and working collectively. As political direction was unfocused and good working relationships were unclear, much of the decision-making process fell to one person, not-so-incidentally the person who knew the most about the press, and who had the strongest sense of direction for it. Though other members were willing to assume more responsibility, this situation prevented the equal exchange of ideas and sharing of work.

Fortunately, by this time the press had accumulated an adequate amount of equipment through loans and grants, and thus optimism for the project was still high despite mounting frustrations. And frustrations did mount. The press had to be moved twice in two months as cheap or rent-free locations became hard to find. This made the mechanics of printing difficult. However, the work that was getting done was beginning to reach into the community --- posters for a local health clinic, a women's prison project newsletter, etc.

When a suitable place for the press was found in December, 1974, questions of responsibility and leadership were as yet unresolved. The vague understandings that held the group together were not adequate to complete the tasks of building a darkroom, establishing a rate schedule, and getting
the press rolling. But rent was due and stability became important enough for one member to come to a meeting with a plan for re-organization. Over time, this member assumed leadership and it became obvious that having a leader was not inherently a mistake. It was important, though, that this person be completely willing to share information needed for decision-making and learning about printing so that a truly collective consciousness could develop. In spite of the fact that the press was (and still is) unable to pay wages to anyone, this person took on the full-time responsibility of re-organization, including teaching others who were willing to learn about the press. Quickly, the newly-rented space became a good working space.

The next step was to let people know about the press through a political statement and rate schedule. Both required consensus from the collective and the results of these discussions unified members in more tangible goals for the press. Providing low-cost printing for the community became a priority. With fairly regular hours and an increasing number of skilled members, the press was better able to meet this goal. It was still difficult to offer rates below those of commercial printers, mainly because there was no initial paper stock and so paper had to be purchased at retail prices. A grant from RESIST has been given to help alleviate this problem, and other financial difficulties such as paying rent are easing with the increased volume of work. Personal finances of some members are still a problem, but the press is continuing to stabilize in the community.

The next question that arises is how the collective can go beyond serving other organizations and begin acting as a catalyst to raise issues in the area. With increased knowledge of printing and a concern for the particular struggles in Santa Fe, we are looking forward to moving in this direction.

Any support, suggestions, criticisms, information, money, or whatever, are welcome; please write to us in care of the Santa Fe Community Press, 137 Park Avenue, Santa Fe, N.M. 87501.

(continued on page 6)
"WELFARE", cont.

Finally a series of state actions took place around hearings on the cutbacks. On July 22, the high point of the resistance, 700 people took over the hearings, testifying for three to four hours while others picketed and performed skits outside.

Despite favorable press coverage and an outward softening of the position of Massachusetts governor Michael Dukakis and the Department of Human Resources, the legislature plowed ahead in implementing the cuts.

"People are going to have to prove that they're really sick," said Dorothy Brickman, referring to the new medicaid regulations. "Chronic illnesses or colds won't be treated...what it means is that eventually people will get more sick because a lot of disease in poor communities are chronic or mild to begin with--for example, heart trouble, anemia, chest colds."

And one member of a local tenants union welfare committee said, "What it means is that people are going to die at greater rates. Ambulance workers said a week ago that they will no longer take welfare people over five miles in emergencies. That means people will die. Shut-offs mean people will die."

"Also, more and more younger people may begin to cheat," he continued. "In other words, they'll take under the table jobs, just in order to live. And it's right that they do it. But consequently the government is beginning to hand out prison sentences for welfare fraud, to set examples. In effect, we're beginning to see a debtor's prison."

Other consequences expected from the welfare cuts will be a general lowering of the wage scale and working conditions as people are pushed to take whatever jobs they can get. One East Boston woman's experience at the Division of Employment Security (DES) is becoming increasingly common. After being laid off her $2.75 per hour cleaning job at Logan airport, she was told by DES that she had to take a job at a bakery paying $1.80 per hour. When she refused, she was told that she had disqualified herself and did not get her next check.

The elimination of general relief will also make it more difficult for unions since strikers will no longer be eligible to receive benefits and people forced off the roles may be more ready to scab. "It's important to get working people to realize how these welfare cuts will undermine them," said Etheridge. "Welfare is something to fall back on. When that's no longer there, and there's 9 million unemployed, you're not going to have too much to say while you're scraping at that job."

"It's been awful frustrating," said Ray Etheridge of the People's Rights Group. "For so long there was never anything definite we were fighting against. The state kept on saying we might do this, we might do that. The Deficit figures always changed..."

"The establishment used lots of tactics to push these [cuts] through—not giving out dates of the hearings, and then changing the dates. Definitely from the outset, Dukakis knew what his cuts were going to be."

"A welfare advisory board was supposed to give recommendations to Dukakis," Etheridge continued. "But, within a matter of days he came out with his proposal. He took no time to even consider the recommendations."

What The Cuts Will Mean

Specifically the cuts will eliminate general relief, initial needs and hardship benefits, and will restrict eligibility for medicaid and emergency assistance.

General Relief covers people who are ineligible for other welfare benefits, people whose unemployment compensation has run out, single people and strikers.
Association. The operators sought injunctions against the miners in each mine that was struck. By August 22, less than two weeks after the strike began, the courts had issued injunctions ordering the miners back to work and prohibiting picketing at thirty-eight West Virginia UM & W locals, leveling fines up to $9,000 against some.

As soon as a mine went out, the workers were hit with injunctions declaring their strike illegal. The courts used the injunctions to round up the rank and file leaders, cite them with contempt of court, fine them and put them in jail.

On August 27, U.S. District Court Judge K.K. Hall slapped fines of $500 each on four striking miners, Adam Brumfield, Robbie Campbell, Thomas Bailey, and James Osborne. A week later, two leaders of the right to strike movement, Bruce Miller and Lewis (Skip) Delano, were fined $500 each and given maximum six month jail sentences by Judge Hall for violations of injunctions and participating in strike rallies.

Two reporters for the Charleston Gazette, Andrew Gallagher and Rick Steelhammer, were also jailed for up to six months after refusing to testify on articles they wrote about the rallies in which Miller and Delano allegedly participated.

The only demand that the strikers made any progress with was the implementation of the promised "streamlined" grievance procedure. After three weeks of the strike the companies and the UM & W finally began to set up the grievance Appeals Board in West Virginia's District 17 where the strike began. The board has begun to process the hundreds of backlogged grievances.

As for the demands to stop the court injunctions and permit the right to strike over local issues, the miners may have lost more than they gained. On these issues the rank and file seem to be fighting the reform leadership of their union as well as the companies. By the end of August the UM & W Executive Board voted to order all miners back to work. On September 5, 250 elected officials of District 17 met and agreed to return to work and called for the punishment of the strike leaders.

Then on September 8, the UM & W's Executive Board passed a tough resolution aimed at halting wide-ranging strikes in the future. The Executive Board's action "seemed to approach the action many industry officials have been urging the union to take to stop the unauthorized strikes," according to the Wall Street Journal.

The UM & W resolution provides that in "emergency instances" the Executive Board has the right to "try charges against members who by their actions seriously jeopardize the integrity of the union." Thus, in future wildcat strikes, punitive action may be taken against the miners, not only by the companies and the courts, but by their own union.

The resolution intends to restrict the ability of wildcats to spread quickly by nullifying the coal field tradition that when miners on one shift strike, the miners on the following two shifts go out. In addition, funds from the international union or from the UM & W districts can not be used to defend miners charged with picketing at mines other than their own or to pay fines resulting from strikes.

As the miners return to work, many still face threats to their job security and working conditions. Impending cutbacks in mine operations are still unresolved.

When the Amherst Coal Company in Logan County, West Virginia announced that it intended to shut down two of its deep mines and open a far smaller staffed strip mine, the workers at Amherst's Lundale mine began to organize against the threat to their jobs. One woman in Logan County explained, "Six men and about three pieces of machinery can run a strip mine. It's cheaper coal—it's not as good—but they can do it a lot quicker and a lot more profitably."

One of the Lundale mine leaders, Roger Thompson, was suspended on August 4 for "interfering with mine operations," Thompson reportedly told the union local that either all miners would work or none would. His local walked out the next day, beginning the month long, 80,000 strong wildcat strike.
"KOREAN WAR DANGER"

Korea. As I.F. Stone wrote in the NY Times (6/2/75): "Present deployment puts the bulk of our troops right at the 38th parallel, where even a small scale border clash would involve United States troops immediately... our military deployment in Korea... would make United States involvement automatic and inescapable."

These 42,000 US troops now in South Korea are a hangover, of course, from US participation in the Korean War of 1950-53. In his Hidden History of the Korean War (p.44), Stone says that it is not impossible that that war may have been touched off by a South Korean provocation; which fits in well with the point made by Joyce and Gabriel Kolko in The Limits of Power, that the Truman Administration unhesitatingly embraced the first Korean war as a way out of the domestic and international difficulties that plagued US cold war policies just after World War II. The embrace, of course, did not serve the Korean people; Gen. Emmett O'Donnell, Jr., in charge of US Air Force saturation bombing in the early months of the first Korean war, told Congress that "almost the entire Korean peninsula is just a terrible mess. Everything is destroyed. There is nothing standing worthy of the name..." And the hardened militarist MacArthur said he threw up at the sight of the carnage of women and children. There were 4.5 million casualties then; now Schlesinger proposes the atom bomb... (On O'Donnell and MacArthur, see Stone, Hidden History... pp.44, 312).

One big difference between 1950 and the present is the change in popular consciousness brought on by the Vietnam War, and the struggle against it. This could be the undoing of those in power who now contemplate a new Korean war and nuclear bombing. As is its policy generally, the Ford Administration's attitude to Korea is geared to the interests of big business. US multinationals now have an investment of $185 million in South Korea, where profits are high, wages low, and strikes forbidden. Gulf, Shell and Texaco all explore for oil off the South Korean coast with the encouragement of Seoul; encouraged particularly because of a Gulf $4 million slush fund for Park, as recently reported by the Far Eastern Economic Review (8/1/75). But the stakes are even higher than simply protecting US "interests" in South Korea. The Ford Administration evidently toys with the idea of another Korean war, nuclear bombs and all, as a means of reversing the post-Vietnam tide that has begun to run strongly against the US multinational empire, not just in Korea, but also at home, and indeed everywhere.

If the Harris poll (NY Evening Post, 8/1/75) is any indication, resistance to the adventurist policies in Korea of the Ford Administration will be supported by a majority of the American people. According to this poll, 52% (a clear majority) oppose the use of tactical nuclear weapons in Korea, as opposed to 33% who support such use, while a plurality of 46% oppose using US troops, air power, and naval power to defend South Korea, as against 37% who support such use.

(North Korean leader Kim Il Sung)

(In the last days of August, since the above was written, Secretary of Defense Schlesinger visited Seoul where he reviewed South Korean defenses, renewed the US commitment to South Korea, and again warned of "the effectiveness of the military response" in case of a new war, Boston Globe 8/26/75.)

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p.s.

"It's good to see Richard Nixon up and around — walking on the beach, taking in the sun, throwing reels of recording tape into the water..."