

May 6, 1957

Tibor Méray, 'The Truth about Germ Warfare'

Citation:

"Tibor Méray, 'The Truth about Germ Warfare'", May 6, 1957, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Franc-Tireur. Translated by Marlya Ridgwell.
<https://wilson-center.drivingcreative.com/document/123153>

Summary:

Articles by the Hungarian journalist Tibor Meray on his experiences in North Korea during the Korean War and the claims that the United States conducted biological warfare in Korea.

Original Language:

French

Contents:

Translation - English

Tibor Méray:

"The Truth about Germ Warfare"

[A series of twelve articles published by the Parisian daily Franc-Tireur between 6th and 19th May, 1957.]

[Translated from French by: Marlya Ridgwell, August 1988.]

1.

I must rid myself of a burden which for some years has been weighing upon my conscience. No compulsion from the outside, no menace or pleadings, no promises have obliged me to speak. It is my conscience which demands that I write these articles, so as to throw off this burden and thus find peace.

I do not wish to indulge in stylistic effects. I will try to be as matter of fact and as concise as I can. I will try to be as precise and objective as possible. Above all, I do not wish to give way to any passions. On the contrary, it is the calming of passions that I desire and wish to serve. And if anyone thinks that I am acting without indulgence, then I will tell him that my first thought has been not to be lenient towards myself.

In the fight which we have undertaken for the freedom of Hungary, our country, and for true progress, my colleagues and fellow writers and myself, have vowed to serve truth only. And today also I do seek nothing but the truth. No side glances either to the right or to the left. It is the bare truth only that I will consider.

On the 21st July 1951, at about two o'clock in the afternoon, the telephone rang in my office at the "Szabad Nép," central newspaper of the Hungarian Workers (Communist) Party. It was Márton Horváth, member of the Political Bureau, director of "Agitprop" of the Central Committee of the party. "What do you make of Gaesong [Kaesong]?" he asked me point-blank.

At first I did not understand what he meant.

"Of what?"

"Gaesong, surely."

I got the message. For the past few days, some armistice negotiations were taking place in that particular town in Korea.

"IMPORTANT, SURELY," I mumbled not quite discerning yet the drift of my caller.

"Well then," said Horvath, "you will take the first available plane to the Far East and you will go to Gaesong...You will send us reports on the armistice negotiations."

I caught my breath. Until then I had been editing the cultural column of "Szabad Nép." Why was I chosen rather than anyone else? Márton Horváth explained: "Well, we think you have good eyes and a way with your pen. Keep your eyes open and use

your pen with courage..."

A little later on Horváth came to see me at my office. I asked him if he had any instructions for me.

"No," he replied. "Nothing special."

He was that brand of intellectual who does not go in for flowery speech, at least not on informal occasions. But he changed his mind. Maybe he thought that he could. Not let me leave without some explanatory words, and so he added: "See to it that the Hungarian people get the feel, the growing hate for the Korean people and the growing hate towards the American invader..."

The days preceding my departure were spent in feverish activity. The excitement of my imminent departure and the honor which I had bestowed upon me (I was the first Hungarian journalist to leave for Korea or even to leave for the Far East) were making me quite dizzy. I must admit that I knew very little of the problems of war in Korea. I had learned, like everyone else in Hungary that THE AMERICANS HAD ATTACKED NORTH KOREA, THAT THE NOR. TH KOREANS HAD FOUGHT BACK, UPON WHICH THE AMERICANS HAD THROWN IMPORTANT FORCES INTO ACTION AND THEN THE CHINESE VOLUNTARY FORCES HAD REPELLED THIS NEW AGGRESSION...

On the eve of my departure, at the request of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, I paid a visit to the Korean Minister in Budapest. In the course of our conversation the latter confided to me that the First Secretary of the Hungarian Workers Party, Mátyás Rákosi, had informed him personally of my imminent departure. This revelation made me even more aware of the importance of my mission. He then talked to me about the situation in Korea: of the climate, the cuisine and especially of the difficulties which awaited me there.

"In our country," he said, referring to the sedentary nature of my journalism which was mainly concerned with artistic and literary matters, "it is not sufficient to know however thoroughly the Marxist-Leninist doctrines. You must also be brave. Your mission will most certainly not be a joy-ride."

He was thinking of American bombings. He was right. I was going to spend fourteen months in Korea without feeling for one single hour any sense of security. That surely was no pleasure trip. My jeep was peppered with bullets some twenty or thirty times. I have had to shelter in corn fields, in waterlogged rice fields, behind little piles of brick and put up with the air raids like everyone else. And yet the thought of shortening my stay had not crossed my mind. I had the feeling that I was serving a just cause and I put all I had into it. I sent back more than one hundred reports and wrote three books on Korea. I wrote about the fighting at the front and I wrote about the armistice negotiations. I wrote about the suffering of the Korean people, of the terror of air raids, about the heroism of simple people. I wrote about the prisoners of war, about international solidarity and the international conspiracy. And also about the germ warfare.

All this seemed to me quite clear and simple and backed by sufficient proof.

Suddenly, everything became blurred in my mind.

How did this start? In the autumn of 1953, there had been a great political trial in Pyongyang. During that trial Lion Hao [sic], one of the best known North Korean

poets, was condemned to death as an American agent, and so was Hi Kang Kock [sic], administrative director of the Hungarian hospital in Korea and Sol Chang Sik [sic], interpreter of the armistice Commission in Gaesong, a sensitive poet and the first to have translated Shakespeare into Korean.

I did not know the men of politics who were condemned at the same time. But I knew personally these three intellectuals and especially Sol Chang Sik, a gentle man with a sensitive soul, always absorbed by questions of conscience, and in whose company I had spent many long evenings engaged in intellectual discussions. He wrote tender, naive poems. One which had especially moved me was dedicated to Hungarian doctors in Korea. I was absolutely certain that this poet could not possibly be an "American agent."

And yet I read in the newspapers that he himself had ADMITTED HIS TREASON. What was I to think of this? Could I be wrong to such an extent? I simply did not understand. I definitely could not believe it.

A year later, I found myself again in the newspaper offices of "Szabad Nép." Suddenly a man walked into my office. He nearly stumbled. It was a friend for whom I had a very high regard. His face was twisted with emotion. In a strained voice and full of tears, he confided to me that he has not been able to sleep for days. He knew from a reliable source that the whole Rajk trial had been a pack of lies.

By curious thought association, I thought not so much of Laszlo Rajk as of Sol Chang Sik. His trial also could have been a pack of lies! The train of such thoughts cannot be stopped. If by chance one link in a gold chain is found to be made of common copper, then one is forced to examine carefully every link in the chain.

At the twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party, Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchev gave out a long list of Stalin's crimes: mass executions, infamous torture, forced labor camps, unscrupulous murders. Was it possible that the crimes of Stalin had never gone beyond the frontiers of the USSR? Had he been lying to his people only? Had he misled his people on internal political problems only? And what about foreign politics? Had he not marked that with his stamp? And that which was tormenting me most: the war in Korea? And what about the "germ warfare"?

2.

I was literally choking from the self-imposed silence and the doubt. For fourteen months, in articles and in books and stories, I had been informing the Hungarian public of the events in Korea. Come what may, it had now become necessary to let them know of my doubts if I were not to asphyxiate....

On the 27th June, 1956, during the eventful discussions of the Petofi Circle, the precursors of the revolution, I was one of the speakers. Before the meeting, I had informed my friends of my intention to refer, amongst other things, to the questions of the Korean War. I most certainly did not wish to put forward any definite opinions, because I had paid too dearly to learn that without thorough examination, without sufficient proof and a detailed analysis, one has no right to launch accusations but only to ask questions and, where necessary, request a reply.

My friends begged me to renounce this project:

Rákosi and his cohorts and enough of a concern for us with purely Hungarian

matters...By bringing up the Korean question you will just bring the Russians into this and so you will have done Rákosi a favor.

□I had understood that my friends from the Petröfi Circle were right. But they, for their part, had understood that total silence had become unbearable for me. I chose a roundabout way. Speaking about truth in journalism and citing the case of our own journalistic crimes against truth inspired by its distorted view, I evoked a war-time episode in Korea. I quote from memory:

"During the winter of 1952, I said, I met at Panmunjom, an area where armistice talks were taking place, a Yugoslav journalist. As a result, in one of my articles I referred to him as an "agent of the imperialist forces" ready to stop at nothing. Today, looking at it in retrospect, I ask myself: what was the truth? This Yugoslav journalist approached us who came from the North and started the conversation in a very cordial, friendly manner. He told us, amongst other things, that Korea was a wonderful country that its landscape resembled that of Serbia, and other generalities of this kind. We, on the other hand, were thinking: "We can read in your kind of game, you imperialist viper, your false friendliness will not deceive us." We listened to him for a moment, and then we lectured him with hard words. Naturally he did not remain without reacting. And he gave as good as he got. Now, at that time, to our eyes, it seemed to us that our attack was only a just and salutary lesson, whilst his response could be described as the aggression of the shamed ones."

We certainly did not wish to lie. We were even convinced that we were writing the truth. Not a 'naturalist' truth, but something much more important. Truth as seen in a wider sense.

□It is not that we were writing the opposite of what we were seeing, that attitude can in no case be that of a self-respecting foreign correspondent. WHAT WAS HAPPENING WAS MUCH MORE TERRIBLE AND FATAL. It's that IN ANTICIPATION, we were already seeing the facts IN THE WAY IN WHICH WE WERE EXPECTED TO SEE THEM. In the way in which it was "JUST" to see them. WE HAD CEASED TO SEE WITH OUR OWN EYES, OR TO THINK WITH OUR OWN MIND.

That is what I said on that day to the Petröfi Circle. At that time, Rákosi and his followers, as well as Khrushchev and his comrades, already approached the Yugoslav question with great restraint. The episode which I had cited could not lend itself to criticism. The general public however, that is the 6,000 people present at the Petröfi Circle, understood only too well the question which I had wanted to raise.

I therefore made up my mind to speak at the very first opportunity with complete frankness of this affair, the affair of the Korean War and of the germ warfare, the memory of which gave me no peace.

When, after the crushing of the Hungarian revolution in 1956, I was fleeing from the danger of immediate arrest, I arrived in Vienna via Belgrade. I was called to the telephone on the very day of my arrival. It was an employee of the "Voice of America" who was asking me from Munich if I would give him an interview on bacteriological warfare. He was determined to make me declare that the whole of this affair had been a lie, that I had been duped and my good faith had been abused.

I replied that I had written from Korea a whole series of articles on the subject of germ warfare, in which I had reported on things which I had in effect seen. Could I now pretend that I had not seen anything? One thing only was possible, and this possibility has been tormenting me for a long time. And that is: that the explanation which I had been given on the spot had not been in line with the truth.

□

Since I am not a scientist, I did not have at my disposal the indispensable means of verification. But in order to get to the bottom of this question of discovering whether these explanations were valid or not, it was necessary above all for me to communicate that which I had seen to objective scientific experts, who had not been forewarned, and that I should seek their opinion. This involved me in long and careful research.

I had the feeling that the caller on the line was becoming impatient.

"You don't mean to tell me that you still believe in these extravagant stories?"

I replied in more or less these words:

"My dear sir, for many years I have allowed myself to proclaim things which were founded principally on belief. Please allow me not to talk any more about what I believe or do not believe; allow me to renounce all those conjectures. From now on I do not wish to put forward anything which I have not verified and inspected in person."

That day I made no statement. Could I have acted otherwise? In Korea I had not been forced by any threats to add credulity to germ warfare, or to accept the evidence which I was offered and to report these in the papers. My belief had been genuine. To go and say today that all I that had been a lie, without having reexamined the facts, would have been a worthless declaration.

I knew that only those in the know, the scientists, could assuage the doubts by which I was being overcome. Thus, as soon as I arrived in Paris, I set about trying to meet the best specialists in France in order to put before them what I had seen and so as to reach through their opinions some sort of idea which could appease my conscience. It was not as a result of the requests made by "Voice of America" that I was searching for an answer; I hoped simply to find the truth.

In the course of my research, I interrogated one after the other, and in that order: Jean Rostand, the eminent biologist; Prof. Fasquelle, Professor of bacteriology at the Faculty of Medicine in Paris; Professor Seguy, director of the Institute of Etymology in Paris; Dr. Gallut, of the Pasteur Institute and one of the greatest world authorities on cholera; Professor Trefouel, Director of the Pasteur Institute and finally, Professor Lepine, Director of the International Institute of Prevention of Epidemics.

□It is thanks to their patience and their good-will, that I am able today to put pen to paper. I thank them and am greatly indebted to them.

3.

The first information bulletin with regard to what is known as germ warfare was the work of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Pak Heon-yeong. This bulletin was dated 22nd February, 1952. If it is to be believed, as from the 28th January last, the American forces of intervention have been regularly dropping in large quantities from the air, germ bearing insects onto our military positions and the hinterland...bacteriological examinations have revealed that these insects are carriers of plague germs, of cholera germs and other infectious diseases."

By a curious and tragic irony, fate would have it that this same Pak Heon-yeong, expelled some months later from his ministerial post, moved progressively down the echelons of power, and finally finished by being condemned to death and executed. It was not, of course, for the above bulletin that he was held responsible. On the contrary, he was condemned for being, "an American imperialist agent."

□Forty eight hours after the bulletin of Pak Heon-yeong, Zhou Enlai, Minister of Foreign Affairs in Peking, reinforced this bulletin on behalf of the Chinese People's Republic: "I accuse, before the people of the whole world, the Government of the United States of using, in contravention of all humanitarian principles, and all international conventions, germ warfare in Korea in order to exterminate the peaceful civilians of that country as well as the soldiers."

□A few days later, I received a telegram from Szabad Nép in Budapest. I was invited to leave Panmunjom immediately, leaving there my reports on the armistice talks and I was told to go into the hinterland in order to describe "the germ war."

On 2nd of March, 1952, in the morning, I left Gaesong to go to the capital of Korea, Pyongyang in the company of a Polish journalist and a Korean journalist.

The cold was terrible. We were driving in an open jeep, buried under a heap of coats and blankets. The cold even made our eyes smart. A thick layer of snow covered the mountains and the rivers were frozen. We were progressing slowly and painfully on roads covered with black ice. It was the Korean winter still at its height.

In Pyongyang I had an interview with the Minister of Public Health for North Korea, Ri Byung-nam [Li Pyong Nam], who gave me detailed information on "facts and proof" of the bacterial attack. The gist of what he said is as follows:

"The first manifestations of germ warfare occurred on 28th January. Some Chinese soldiers reported having discovered here and there, insects of unusual appearance. Health squads were sent to these places forthwith. The insects were examined by bacteriologists who concluded that these were carriers of cholera and plague germs. The first attacks took place along the front in the Choson, Tsoson and Kumhwa areas, and along the Northern bank of the river Han. But later on the American army extended its attacks over the whole territory."

The minister showed me a map upon which the points attacked were marked by a red circle. There were twenty-two circles in all.

"The insects are dropped from the aeroplane," continued the Minister, "in containers and paper packages of different shapes. They are usually ejected above rivers and springs. It is a fact that the present temperature is nearly always below zero, and never above five degrees. It is therefore not conducive to the spreading of the insects or the multiplying of the germs. A certain number of insects is therefore, destroyed. Anyhow the cholera germ, for example, can survive on ice even after the insect is dead and becomes virulent only later. So that an epidemic could start in spring, in summer or later in the autumn. Several cases of illness had already been notified, and even some deaths. Amongst the germs experts have even discovered some varieties which could contaminate plants."

After this statement of a general nature, I was taken to a laboratory. There were a large number of jars and other containers in which I saw numerous insects. On each jar there was a label which indicated the place and date and the person by whom the

insects had been discovered. Generally the collectors of these insects were peasants, soldiers and members of village committees.

I was shown under the microscope various preparations. One was an internal sample of a flea; it was explained to me that the insect had been found near Choson, on the snow and that the microscope had revealed that it was a carrier of plague germs. Another sample, of fish this time, confirmed the presence of cholera microbes. The fish, according to witness, had been dropped from an American plane.

□ All this sensational evidence, these insects which were rather repulsive to a layman, these shriveled millipedes, these green spiders and other beasties, as well as the snow-written testimonies, made a deep and painful impression on a spectator like me. An impression compounded of revulsion and horror. It was difficult to avoid this impression. Nevertheless, I managed to express my wish to be present at such a germ attack and said that I could not base my reports upon just a visit to laboratories.

I received forthwith authorization for permission and a few days later I was taken to "the places."

□ We went to Sono-ri, a small village situated some 28 kms from the capital. The earth on its narrow streets was hard with frost except here and there where the sun rays had softened it.

□ The village inhabitants told me that a peasant had found on the ice on the river Daedong [Taedong] near the bank, eight stacks of flies. These flies were alive and in no time they spread over an area of several hundred meters. They were moving about slowly, but in the course of the morning as the temperature rose, they became capable of flying over a few meters. For four days the villagers tried to exterminate them by burning branches and sticks of corn.

"How did these flies get to be on the river ice?" I asked.

"Every night, a large number of American airplanes fly over our village. They did so during the night of the 27th to 28th February (the eight piles of flies were discovered on the 28th). Furthermore, on the 27th at dusk, four Americans planes circled round for about half an hour, just above the place where the insects were found the following morning. The planes did not drop any bombs and did not machine-gun the village. They came down very low without apparently doing anything."

I went down to the river bank. Right near the edge, some three meters of the river were frozen. Upon this white expanse could be seen, like some funeral bands, traces of the fires which peasants had lit to destroy the insects. I inspected all the charred remnants; not a sign of life. By about the twentieth pile of faggots I suddenly saw black dots moving on the ice. I bent down to look. It was flies. Flies which crawled about on the ice. Their short-winged elongated bodies moved about awkwardly. In a hollow, the sun has melted the ice forming a puddle. On the surface of this dirty water, some six or eight insects could be seen floating. A little further away on the ice, hundreds more flies were moving about.

□ I had come ten days after the discovery of the first lot of flies which they had promptly set about exterminating. I interrogated some old peasants who confirmed that they had never seen this kind insect before in the village.

□ I had several of these flies taken to the central laboratory at Pyongyang. After examination, I was informed that they were carriers of cholera germs. After Sono-ri, the river Daedong flows towards the capital. The municipal water distribution service

is located between Sono-ri and Pyongyang. Consequently-it was said, if the water is polluted by cholera germs in Sono-ri then automatically so is the water of the capital.

□All this evidence seemed clear, logical and convincing. And in Pyongyang even more striking facts were put before me.

□I was taken to No.6 Second Street, in the central quarter Namnun-ri. As a precaution, just before going there, I was vaccinated against cholera. I was clad in a rubber outfit from toe to toe. This consisted of trousers which reached well above the waist and a hooded top with only slits for my eyes, black boots and long gloves. Over this outfit I was covered by a white overall and a mask, destined to filter the air, was put over my mouth.

□

The cluster of houses towards which we were heading was surrounded by ropes and was guarded by armed sentinels. It was a no-go area: it was strictly forbidden to enter or leave the area without a special permit.

□In this place, I was told, three people had died of cholera. An old man aged 68, and two of his grandsons: a little boy aged six and a two year old baby.

□Here is how the case was reported to me by a) the parents of the children, b) the doctor of the Pyongyang Municipal Hospital and c) the president of the commission for the prevention of epidemics:

"On 5th March, a Wednesday, at dawn, some American planes circled over the area. In the early morning the old man discovered three heaps of flies in the yard of his house. Near these heaps were found square envelopes and also some leaflets emanating from South Korea. The old man swept away the flies, made a stack of them threw in some fagots and, burned the lot. During that time, the children were playing nearby. The old man tried to make them go away but the children were under the impression that this was a game. Then the grandfather went to wash his hands and ate breakfast with the children."

"The following evening the disease emerged. It was the old man who was the first to complain. Then the six year old boy and finally the baby. Cholera was diagnosed forthwith, its symptoms developing along classic textbook lines. After the death of the three victims, the post-mortem examination entirely confirmed the diagnosis. The president of the commission for the prevention of epidemics added that the flies discovered in the neighborhood had been sent to the laboratory and had in part been found to be carriers of the cholera microbes. There was no doubt that the old man and the children had caught the disease whilst he was sweeping up and burning the flies. Yes, to be sure, he had washed his hands but maybe not very thoroughly. As for the children, no one knew whether they had washed their hands or not. It was during breakfast that the germs must have entered their bodies."

□This collection of facts was depressing, horrible. Added to this were certain aspects of an emotional nature which influenced the reporter in me at least as much as all the proofs and explanations.

In the village of Sono-ri, a 79 year old man came to find me. He was dressed all in white and his wrinkled face expressed a great bitterness. I can still recall his words:

"I've seen some things in my lifetime, but nothing to equal such vileness. If we were nothing but blind logs we would still see these atrocities" said he in his vivid language."

"If we were stones, still would we see these horrors which would make us shudder."

And right in the middle of Pyongyang, a young woman, the mother of the two children who had died of cholera exclaimed, her eyes dry from too much crying, her lips cracked:

"Why did they kill them? Punish those guilty of these crimes!"

□ This is what I had to state in order to convey the atmosphere which prevailed at that time in North Korea. To give some idea of the methods of persuasion used, and to show at the same time the facts which were put before us and the passions which were being let loose all around.

□ This is what I had to relate before analyzing the facts themselves. By disregarding all the emotional elements before revealing to the reader the answers and explanations which had been given me by Frenchmen of science to whom I imparted my personal experience.

4.

□ I reported in detail everything I had seen and heard to the scientists whom I consulted. The precision and scientific rigor of their answers was absolutely convincing. I cannot, of course, in most cases give a detailed account of our discussions which sometimes lasted for hours. I must also leave out in most cases the technical details which, though of utmost interest, could distract the unwary reader. Instead of quoting everything word for word, I have made a point of extracting the gist of my conversations with the scientists.

"Is it possible, in theory at least, that one should have wanted to pollute the water of Pyongyang by means of cholera germ bearing flies?"

The answer which M. Jean Rostand gave me may be summarized as follows:

"Is it scientifically possible for the old man and the two children to have caught cholera whilst the grandfather was sweeping the flies?"

"In itself, this cannot be excluded."

"So therefore," I continued, "the two sample cases which had been brought to my knowledge are not a complete nonsense in scientific terms?"

"It is not a question of nonsense," came the reply.

But all the scientists with whom I had this conversation said:

"Nonsense, maybe not. But where are the proofs?"

"I've just presented to you the case in detail..."

"And this is where the shoe pinches."

It was my turn to be showered with questions:

"How can one prove that the flies which you saw on the ice of the river Daedong were, in fact, carriers of cholera microbes?"

"What about the answer from the laboratory in Pyongyang..."

"You say that you yourself arranged for the flies to be taken to the laboratory. Alright. But were you present at the time of the examination under the microscope? Can you say that you have followed from the beginning to end the examination of the insects? Have you any expertise in this matter?..."

"None at all!"

"So, you could have been given any answer whatever. They could have talked to you about the plague as well as about cholera....You had no means of verifying either. Even comments with regard to the flies, which apparently were the origin of the cholera diagnosis in the old man and his grandchildren...it is not absolutely impossible...but they could have caught cholera in some other way. For example, through food which they had after the flies had been exterminated."

"Obviously, this is just an assumption...All I can say, and this is the crux of the matter, that nowhere has it been proved that the victims actually caught cholera from the flies."

...And Dr. Gallut, the eminent specialist on cholera at the Pasteur Institute, asked me:

"Can you confirm with absolute certainty that the cholera germs identified under the microscope had in fact, been obtained from the victims cited above as an example?"

"Of course, I had not been present at the autopsy of the victims nor at the laboratory tests."

"It's just that cholera germs," continued Dr. Gallut, "you can find them in quite a few laboratories all over the world. We've got some here at the Pasteur Institute. And other institutes have them too. One day we were asked for some from Bucharest for scientific research and we sent them a batch. They are not difficult to produce or to show. By that I do not mean to say that this is what had been done in the case which is of interest to you. I am only saying that the cholera germs which you were shown under the microscope do not in themselves constitute a proof."

□The answers which I gleaned during my investigation, call into doubt, of course, the evidence and information which had been given me on the spot in North Korea by physicians and scientists mobilized against the germ warfare. I must stress, that amongst these, there were some high-powered Chinese and North Korean scientists, some of whom had received honorary diplomas from Western Universities, Some of them had, by virtue of their activities in the war against Japan and the campaign in Burma, received distinguished American medals.

Can one suppose that such people would make statements which are not conforming to truth? That they have issued doubtful opinions which cannot be relied upon?

Judging by my experiences during the last few years, I am sorry to have to say that this is in fact quite possibly so.

To help the reader forming an opinion, let me cite just two examples:

The first of these is known to everyone. It is the affair of Soviet doctors, the so-called "assassins in white coats." A whole collection of brilliant Soviet scientists confirmed that the accusations made against Jewish doctors (assassination of Zhdanov, attempted assassination of Zhukov and other marshals) were well founded. When some time later the Soviet government admitted that these accusations had been unfounded and that the confessions made by the Jewish doctors had been extracted under duress, again eminent scientists were produced to support with their authority these new statements, which in that case by then were true.

The other example is not so well known. In the spring of 1955, when Mátyás Rákosi removed Imre Nagy (representative of the liberal branch of the Communist Party in Hungary) from the government, a medical report was issued to facilitate this removal. According to this report, Imre Nagy was so ill that he had not been able to participate in the meeting of the Central Committee held in March of that year. Altogether, the state of Nagy's health was such that it was not possible for him to engage in political discussions.

This communique was signed by the President of the Hungarian Academy of Science, a Professor of Medicine, whose scientific achievements cannot be doubted by anyone. A little later-a few days later-two members of the Hungarian Politburo and a Soviet delegate, M.A. Suslov, visited Nagy at his home to ask him to practice self-criticism. This visit had been immediately preceded by a second bulletin, signed by the same professor, which stated that due to a visible improvement in Imre Nagy's health, the latter was now able to engage in matters of politics.

There followed a dramatic sensation: NAGY REFUSED TO PRACTICE SELF-CRITICISM. It was quickly decided therefore at the "summit" that it was not sufficient to criticize him, but that it was necessary to exclude him from the Central Committee. AND SO, THE SAME PROFESSOR SIGNED A THIRD HEALTH BULLETIN: "THE STATE OF HEALTH OF THE PATIENT WAS SUCH THAT ALL POLITICAL ACTIVITIES WERE FORBIDDEN FOR HIM FOR THE NEXT FEW MONTHS." All these maneuvers enabled the preparing of accusations against Nagy, who was absent, and his condemnation in the course of the following session of the Central Committee in April 1955.

All this, obviously, does not relate closely to the bacteriological warfare. However, it is this sort of examples which have probed to me that in a Stalinist regime one can break, if not corrupt, a sizeable number of scientists of even the highest integrity. So much so, that they will sign every "scientific" statement presented to them by the government.

Such practices are profoundly tragic for all concerned. They are profoundly tragic too for science, because they demean both the scientists and science itself. Unfortunately such practices did exist. That is why, after -my personal experiences, I cannot accept as irrefutable the proofs offered me by the Chinese and North Korean scientists.

I have had to arrive at the following conclusion: If the things which I saw in Korea do not in themselves constitute nonsense, they do not, nevertheless constitute proof in the strictly scientific sense. From that point of view, it can even be said to be of no value at all.

Yet the opinion of French scientists whom I consulted, did not stop there. In fact it went much further.

5.

□ Professor Seguy is Director of the Etymological Laboratory in Paris. He has been studying the habits and behavior of flies for forty-five years. Without exaggerating, he can be considered the top specialist in this subject. The very fact that the International Scientific Commission for the "Investigation of Facts concerning Germ Warfare in Korea and China," which in a lengthy report, tried to justify germ warfare, invoked several times the authority of professor Seguy (pages 75, 140, 146, 152), confirms the importance with which he is regarded in the scientific world.

□ Now, this same professor Seguy exclaimed before me:

"A bacteriological attack unleashed by means of insects? I repeat, by means of insects! But that is sheer fantasy! You can't order insects about like soldiers! Yes, I know the commission report you are talking about. But I have not kept it in my library. Scientifically all this does not hold water."

As for the cases which I told him about, Professor Seguy said to me:

"The use of flies in germ warfare seems to me to be quite impossible, for the good reason that they are far from being a good means of transport. Because a fly, contrary to what is generally believed, is one of the cleanest insects in existence. Observe a fly. It is constantly cleaning itself. Its saliva has antiseptic properties. It, rapidly destroys the germs which it picks up; very quickly, in a matter of something like half an hour, for example."

"So the fly is not capable of spreading the cholera?"

"I did not say that. Where an epidemic is rampant, the flies may alight on victims' excrements and thus propagate the disease. Even then, however, they destroy the germs they carry in an astonishingly short time."

"So the flies carrying cholera germs which had been dropped from planes..."

"This strikes me as freakish, pure imagination. Whether they be packed in containers or in paper envelops, it is quite likely that they would be dead already on landing or else die soon after. In the conditions which you have described, they would probably die of boredom more likely!"

"And what do you think of the flies which I saw on the ice, and which, according to what I was told, had been there for some eight to ten days?"

"Very strange, to say the least!" replied Professor Seguy, lifting his arms towards the sky. In the room where we are now, the temperature is about 15° above zero and you don't see any flies. Everyone knows that flies do not like and cannot withstand the cold. All the more reason why they could not survive on ice for any length of time."

"When I was in Korea, I was told that the Americans were putting to use the "great Soviet scientific discovery" the Mitchourino-Lysenkoist method for obtaining flies able to withstand the cold."

"Here is another thing which I find surprising! I have never heard anything said about any positive results obtained on flies with the "Lysenko method," which even in the Soviet Union is unofficially said to be contested more and more."

"The oldest inhabitants of the Korean village of Sono-ri have anyway unanimously confirmed that it was a question of flies of a particular kind, the like of which had never been seen in the region..."

"What does that prove? In France alone you could count some fifteen thousand different kinds of flies...Quite simply, I repeat, it is not with flies that one can wage bacteriological war."

If, so far as flies are concerned, it could be said that all was now clear due to the explanations of one of the greatest etymologists in the world, not all aspects of this question were to my liking.

The theory of accusation still had an emergency door, so to speak. The reader may recall the pronouncement made by the Korean Health Minister, which stated that even though the cholera bearing insects died, the bacteria would survive, even in snow, and would become active so that an epidemic could be unleashed the following summer or autumn.

This final emergency door was barred by the formal statement made to me by Dr. Gallut, the eminent specialist on cholera.

"The cholera microbe is extremely fragile." He explained. "Let loose in "the open" it dies within a few hours. It fears the cold, and the temperature of ice is lethal to it. Thaw does not create more favorable environment for it either. It has generally been observed that winter puts a stop to the spread of a cholera epidemic. This phenomenon has even occurred in Egypt, a country with a warm climate, at the time of the 1947 epidemic. Naturally, it is possible to preserve cholera microbes in the cold. They are frozen by means of carbon dioxide snow at a temperature of 70° below zero. At that temperature they are dehydrated in a way and can be preserved for years in tubes."

"Is such preservation not possible in the case which I had seen?"

"To reactivate the microbe, it must stay for twenty four hours in a culture solution at 37° above zero. To throw back into the open deep-frozen microbes would be of no use. Such an idea could not even occur to anyone calling himself a scientist."

Thus, all the scientific and pseudo-scientific explanations which had been given me with regard to flies which were carriers of cholera germs, were refuted one by one bowed before the facts: IMPOSSIBLE TO START A BACTERIOLOGICAL ATTACK BY MEANS OF FLIES. It does not make sense to throw microbes on the ice and to say that they could be reactivated later on. I have also had to admit that you could not drop flies from airplanes, like parachute jumpers, and that it was highly likely that flies placed in containers or envelopes would die either before they dropped, or during the fall, or else immediately after they had been dropped.

One fact remained clear and undisputable: one question remains unanswered. How did these flies get on the ice? And not only there where I had seen them, but in a large number of other places where the local people had stacks of flies-not to mention other insects-where these local people, in a low temperature of between -10 and +10 degrees had found and sent thousands of specimens to the laboratory in Pyongyang. Sample accompanied by hundreds of handwritten statements.

The flies, which I had seen alive, crawling about on the ice of the river Daedong, where did they come from? Let me repeat word for word what I was told in the village of Sono-ri: "Every night, a large number of American aero-planes fly above the village. It was thus on the night of 27th/28th February.... Furthermore, on the 27th at dusk, four American bi-planes circled for about half an hour above the area where the insects were found the following morning. The planes did not drop any bombs and did not machine-gun the village. They came down very low, without apparently doing anything."

And what was the son of the dead old man and father of the two children who all died of cholera telling me in Pyongyang?

"On the eve of the day the flies were found, American planes were flying very low, flew round in circles over the area."

In these testimonies we can find a common element:

If one does not doubt the testimony of the people who had heard the planes, then it is also a fact that no one had seen the planes with his own eyes. They are solely auditory testimonies. I am quite willing to admit that the planes were American, but in every case nobody had actually seen them drop any containers, envelopes or flies. Only assumptions are put forward in this respect.

□

It is necessary however, to go a little further with this. I consulted the notes which I had taken during my stay in Korea. According to these, I had indeed enquired as to the manner in which these microbe attacks occurred: the insects had been dropped from the plane, in containers and paper sacks of varying shape. "We have not yet got a precise idea as to how they were dropped because up to now the raids have nearly always taken place at night or in cloudy weather."

The conversation which I had with the Korean Health Minister, from which the above quote was extracted, took place fifteen days after the statement made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, in which he announced the bacterial attack. If today I reflect upon this more carefully, the meaning is clear.

Fifteen days after the accusation against the aggressors had been expressed, the North Korean Health Minister did not yet possess any proof concerning the question: by whom and how were the insects sent? "At night and in cloudy weather." This means that nobody, absolutely nobody, had seen with his own eyes the attack taking place.

The reader could quite rightly ask, how come I had not noticed this flaw, this enormous flaw in the argument? The minister's statement which I had noted was published in the Hungarian press as well as in my book. Now, neither the editor, nor the editorial secretary nor the proof reader had brought this up. Why? The answer is simple. Right from the start I believed this entire story. And a believer is insensitive to slight contradictions, or even to the most obvious ones.

But as soon as the critical reason returns, the opinions which had been simply accepted, are put aside and the process of thinking returns to normal. So then a multitude of obvious arguments become open to doubt. For example, the opinion of the old people in the village regarding the unknown kind of fly, or the reference to Lysenko. On the other hand, some details which until now had seemed insignificant, and which my mind had rejected, suddenly takes on considerable importance. Thus, a certain detail came back to me. There was in Korea a Hungarian country hospital which had been given the name of Mátyás Rákosi. This hospital stayed in different Korean villages. In one of them the peasants found one fine morning flies wrapped in

sachets. Immediately it was concluded that this was a germ attack.

A little later in the day, one of the Hungarian doctors who himself believed in the bacteriological war, or at least, he appeared to believe in it firmly, told me indignantly: "Some peasants claim that these sachets have not been dropped from planes, but that they have been brought there by Chinese soldiers."We shrugged our shoulders. These stories seemed to us to belong to enemy propaganda, or at best to belong in the realm of the imagination. BUT TODAY, I AM ASSURED BY THE GREATEST SCIENTISTS IN FRANCE THAT THIS BUSINESS OF PARACHUTING FLIES IS, IN THEIR EYES, PURE FANTASY.

Now, somehow or other these flies must have been brought there. And since four days had been spent exterminating them on the ice of the river Daedong, where they could only have survived very briefly, new ones must have been brought there every night. In that case, the work must have been carried out by a large network covering the whole of North Korea and must have been present in each of the "22 red circles" whence the thousands or specimens were being sent to the central laboratory.

I did not see with my own eyes, as I had seen the flies, those who dropped or put these flies on the ice. I have no definite proof there.

I must not, however, avoid mentioning one last detail which, at the time, did not strike me as of any importance, but which I now view in a different light. Looking through my notebook I noticed the following entry:

On the 6th March, the Korean Deputy Health Minister- in fact a charming man who, I later heard had apparently been executed as an American agent- told me word for word the following: "As already stated in the note from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, we had in the first instance been notified of the germ attack through REPORTS FROM CHINESE VOLUNTEERS, who claimed to have found some insects of unusual form." Three days later, on 9th March, I had another conversation with the Minister himself this time. He asked me casually that I should not use the term "Chinese Volunteers" in my future articles but instead to call them "front-line fighter."

He gave me no explanation. Even so, he must have had some reason from making this remark which might have benefited from an explanation.

7.

One can be wrong, especially if one is not an expert. But I am riot the only one to have testified on germ warfare. A certain number of American pilots have "confessed" to having taken part in the dropping of cholera, plague bearing flies, fleas and spiders. And on the other hand, legal and scientific commissions, comprising men and women some of whom of notorious reputation, also testified.

It is unnecessary, I think, to dwell too much on the confessions of the American pilots. Once back in their country they all retracted their statements and denounced the methods by which these confessions had been extracted. Should one believe their retracted statements rather than the confessions? The fact which inclines me to believe the former is the fact that the methods of extortion described by the pilots resemble quite amazingly those which had been obtained from certain political prisoners freed from Rákosi's jails, and solemnly rehabilitated by the Hungarian Communist Party.

To cite and compare the statements made by these two different kinds of witnesses could, I believe, produce a startling if facile effect. I won't attempt to include it in

these articles.

And what about the reports of the different international commissions?

Without wishing for one moment to doubt the personal integrity of the investigators, many of whom must have followed the same path as I, I have tried during my present investigation to do that which at the time seemed superfluous, seeing that I myself had been a witness. I thus studied their reports very carefully. Naturally I will not carry the controversy into the technical ground. But since these commissions often saw the same "proofs" as me, I was allowed to confront our respective experiences. Maybe, I wondered, the commissions had had at their disposal more solid proof than I?

Well, as I read the long dissertations of the apparently competent authorities-and no doubt they were competent-more than once I felt myself to be like one of those punching-bags at the fair, put there to absorb the ever stronger punches. Let me just give you two examples:

The commission of Association of Democratic Lawyers visited, amongst other places, the same village of Sono-ri which I had visited. I had seen there with my own eyes: flies. Now, the commission of Lawyers confirmed the presence in that village of Sono-ri, and after the same "attack" on February 28th, the presence of ant-like insects.

I am not an etymologist, and especially I do not always trust my senses any more. But even so, I am still able to tell the difference between a fly and an ant! It is true that ants had vaguely been mentioned to me also. Had the members of the commission of Lawyers seen these? Or where their findings based on such vague remarks? And why did the commission not say anything about the flies which I had seen, had described and even picked up? First punch on the chin.

More striking hit coming up. In answer to my consignment of flies, the laboratory in Pyongyang had replied saying that they were infested with cholera germs. Now, the Commission of Lawyers, when talking about the same case, refers to "bacteria which caused a disease of the intestine." Even a simple journalist can see that there is some serious divergence there.

The report made by the International Scientific Commission, which included among its members many doctors, parasitologists, bacteriologists etc., should have carried more weight. It is a work that is 600 pages long, packed with photographs, verbal proceedings, expert appraisals and all kind of documents. Just flicking through it, the layman becomes dizzy. Maybe that was the purpose of the exercise. Now, it so happens that in some of the cases I had been faced with the same examples as the Commission. Thus, for example, it refers at length (pages 37, 38 and annex 455 and 468 in the English edition) to "the Dai-Dong incident (cholera), in which a Korean peasant woman brought home some shell fish which she and her husband ate. On the following evening, they both died of cholera. The enquiry concluded that the shell-fish had been parachuted from an American plane.

Now from the Commission's detailed report, as indeed from my own notes, the following facts emerge:

1. Nobody saw the planes from which the shell fish had allegedly been dropped.
2. Neither the members of the Commission nor I had seen the said shell fish with our own eyes. Nor were there any others which might have been found in the area. On all

this there are only Korean and Chinese reports.

3. Neither the members of the Commission, nor I saw any of the victims, but we nonetheless accepted as an established fact that they had died from cholera.

And so, the most important links in the scientific chain remain missing. Unfortunately this is not an exception but the rule. Besides, the Commission recognizes this as well. Right at the beginning of its report-another punch on the jaw-it says: Naturally this complete chain of proofs ("ideal" series) can only be found very rarely or never. (My underlining.)

8.

It is a fact that at no time has the Scientific Commission been able to follow from beginning to end any case of bacterial attack! No more, in fact, than the Hungarian bacteriologist who was sent to Korea from Budapest in order to participate in the defense against germ warfare. He must have concluded fairly quickly that he was not being shown any more than were the journalists and the lawyers. So, instead of fighting on the "germ front," he ended up working (he wanted to be useful after all) in the Hungarian hospital pharmacy near Pyongyang.

At the time, we put our host's mistrust down to a need for vigilance in time of war and to the naturally "suspicious" temperament of the Chinese. Today, I wonder whether the truth was not much simpler than that. In these conditions, how can it be that highly qualified scientists should be directed their efforts into proving scientifically the existence of germ warfare? A statement made by one of the European members of the Commission (whose name I will not mention this time) throws some light on this question.

He says: "We were so convinced of the integrity of our hosts, that we believed all the statements they had made to us with regard to the American use of bacteria in the war. The "scientific" work undertaken by the Commission was founded on the implicit belief in the accusations made and evidence produced by the Chinese and North Koreans."

Implicit beliefs...a bit like me. They believed because they wished to believe. They wanted to prove the accusations in which they believed right from the start.

But belief is not enough to bring about scientific proof. And not one of the French scientists whom I considered the report made by the International Scientific Commission, Professor Trefouel, Director of the Pasteur Institute, told us: "This report proves nothing. These assertions are not substantiated by any (peremptory) arguments. Therefore, I give it no credit. In any case, as far as I know, all the experiments in the world which could have been carried out on germ warfare, have been of a defensive nature. In order to start a bacteriological offensive, one would have to be familiar with the 'spirit of epidemics;' that is, the trigger mechanism of an epidemic. And that is not the case. The state of our knowledge is such that at best one could, without danger to the aggressor, contaminate a restricted community, such as, say, Staff Headquarters. And, even then..."

Thus, so far as the value of the International Scientific Commission is concerned, the opinion of one of the best of France's scientists is absolute. Just as absolute is the opinion of Professor Lepine, whose work is most highly regarded in the whole of Eastern Europe too. Professor Lepine refuses to consider this report as scientific work. It contains so many gaps. The connection between cause and effect are so slight that the work does not hold water.

With regard to the spiders which are so often referred to in the International Scientific Commission's report, Professor Lepine has highlighted a most curious fact. It is something that happened at the beginning of the Korean War. The American Medical Authorities were, indeed afraid of a plague epidemic, because in neighboring Manchuria a number of cases had been notified. A scientist of high repute, Dr. Smadell, who was at the time working for the army, asked to be allowed to go with a few colleagues to Madagascar, one of the French, overseas territories, where some cases of plague had also been notified. He was interested in Madagascar for two reasons. First, because the climatic conditions of the area where the disease had broken out were similar to those in Korea. Secondly, because some new antibiotics had just been tried in Madagascar.

Having obtained the necessary authorization, the mission got on with the work. One member of the party was an etymologist, who in his spare time had been collecting spiders for many years. In spite of the discreetness observed by the mission, rumor spread that there was a "secret" American mission on the island. That it was studying the plague...that it was collecting spiders- obviously with the intention of spreading the plague. Of course, no proven connection exists between the rumors abounding on the mission in Madagascar and the report of the International Scientific Commission. But, what is certain, is that the plague is not spread by spiders.

Professor Lepine had pointed out another interesting fact. The International Scientific Commission had invited a well-known Danish scientist named Henri Lassen, whose ideas were moreover quite progressive, to participate in their work. He went to the relevant areas, studied the question of germ warfare for a month, but returned from the Far East without having signed a single report. He was of the opinion that he knew no more after he came back than he did before he left.

Let's compare this attitude with that adopted by the only bacteriologist on the International Scientific Commission, N.N Zhukov-Verezhnikov, member of the Soviet Academy of Medicine. The latter, in fact made the following statement: "The American imperialists have perpetrated a new kind of crime. They have carried out a bacterial attack against Korea and the People's Republic of China." What is interesting in this statement is not its content, but the fact that the Soviet scientist had made it some three months before the Commission's conclusions, of which he was a member, had been reached!

According to a definition borrowed from Stalinist terminology, there exist actually two sorts of science: "bourgeois" science and "socialist" science. But from my personal experience, I cannot believe that there can exist an imperialist bacteriology or a proletarian bacteriology. This is not where the difference lies. Nor does it lie in the extent of knowledge, since Soviet scientific knowledge is well recognized. The difference lies more in the individual attitude which is adopted by a scientist and, even more, in the circumstances which determine whether the stance adopted is that of a Lassen or a Zhukov.

9.

I must add something with regard to the International Scientific Commission, which may appear to be something of a digression, but which is, in fact, the shortest way to get back to my subject.

This was something which took place in November 1955 in Budapest. There was a general assembly of the Communist members of the Hungarian Writers' Association. As early as that time, the majority of Hungarian Communist writers could see that Rákosi's policies were leading the country towards disaster. Which is what we were discussing with passion, my colleagues and I, during that meeting. One of the first speakers to address the meeting was Tibor Déry, whom I consider to be our leading

contemporary Hungarian novelist. He made an impassioned plea for freedom in literature, referring to the ignorance and ill-will of the "Ubureaux." This old militant, who had spent his whole life in the service of socialism came to the bitter conclusion that the regime which called itself socialist, allotted to writers nothing but the role of "court jester."

Márton Horváth, the spokesman for the official line, replied Dery in outrageously violent terms, interspersing his attack with personal allusions.

Taking my turn to speak, I tried to prove that Déry had been quite justified in his defense of the writer's rights, but that perhaps his comparison to the "court jesters" was a little "exaggerated."

Why should I now be recounting these things? It's because after my conversations with the French scientists and the patient study of the international "scientific" reports, the Déry form of words keeps coming back to mind.

The readers of this series of articles, may perhaps remember the description I gave of my arrival at Pyongyang into the central quarter of Namnun-ri, where an old man and his two grandsons had just died of cholera. As a precaution I had been vaccinated against cholera, then I was made to put on a rubber outfit consisting of trousers which reached high above the waist, a hooded top which allowed only my eyes to be exposed, black boots and long gloves, as well as a white overall on top. My mouth had been covered with a mask destined to filter the air.

Well now, in the course of my conversations with the French scientists, I learned some interesting things. Against cholera, you do not need one, but two vaccines, which have to be given at an interval of seven days. You are first given four billion units, and then eight billion units. Immunity is not acquired until a few days later. The injection which I had been given half an hour before going to the area was therefore not worth anything.

I couldn't believe my ears. What kind of gruesome comedy had I been made part of? After all, if the danger of infection did exist, then this injection would have been of no help to me. So this was just a stage set. And if the danger did not exist then why bother to vaccinate me at all? Again, just a staging of a fake performance.

And I who had allowed myself to criticize Déry's turn of phrase. "In a Stalinist system, the writer is a court jester!" Bitterness fills my heart. Yes indeed, I had been a court jester, a clown. With a cap: a mask to filter the air; with pointed shoes; rubber boots. And after me, how many more had been made fools in the same way? Writers, lawyers, scientists!

I have not told everything yet. I have just examined in detail the report of the commission of lawyers. On page 8 (English text), I find the following quote: "in the town of Pyongyang-mentioned later-two people became ill on 6th March, and another person on the 8th. Two of them died on the 8th March. That area of the city of isolated." The report says nothing more. Now, this is precisely the case which I had reported in my third article. I described it at length in my reports and in my book. That is, an old man and two of his grand-sons had died from cholera. That they had been struck down after the grand-father had swept some germ-carrying flies which had been dropped from an American plane.

No, really, so much cynicism is too much. The death of three people had been described to me in detail. The commission of Lawyers which arrived there after me, had only two deaths to record. The opposite might have been conceivable. But that one of the deceased could have risen from the dead is not. Which of the three did not

die? The grandfather, the six year old boy or the two year old baby? Once you start in the direction of doubt, can one not ask oneself: had there been a single death from cholera on the 8th March in Pyongyang?

I remember the turmoil which this triple decease had caused me. What curses had I not made against the aggressors of germ warfare! Today, I am reluctant to quote from my own writings, but it must be done.

"At Pyongyang the bacterial aggression has claimed three dead. An old man aged 68 and two little boys. It is against them that this germ war is waged. It is they--who are killed by American forces. They, the defenseless, the old and the children. Thousands of flies, epidemics are let loose upon them. What a dreadful deed! Can humanity tolerate such crimes?"

"The grave of the old mason, builder of the house, and of the two children, for whom the death-carrying flies had been a sort of game, is outside the town. It is an anonymous grave. Only their ashes rest there, buried two meters below the ground. Even the parents do not know the exact spot. Nobody ever takes flowers there. Never will their brother, their son or their mother visit the grave. It stands there silent amongst the silent mountains."

"But humanity will not forget this grave. Billions of people will surround it with weeping eyes, and will say goodbye to the old mason and to the two little boys. And millions will brandish their fist and will cry out, just as the Korean mother had done: 'Punish the criminals!'"

Whom did I mourn so much? In whose name had I uttered these emotional curses? Who today can give me the answer? The court jester went on and wept. That was his role. Many simple honest people went on and wept. But somebody was laughing someone must have been laughing with an infernal laughter at such a farce.

10.

Why the need for all this staging? Why the need for all these accusations, these gruesome efforts, this comedy?

The first reason seems to me to come from the source. Let me refer to Orwell's 1984, which throws a cruel light upon the ways of a Stalin-like regime, and whose small number of copies which found their way into Eastern Europe have enjoyed an almost exaggerated reputation amongst clandestine readers. Orwell's formula is as follows. "Two minutes of hate", means that every day, the propaganda machinery devotes two minutes to stirring up hate in the citizens' hearts. Well now, at the time of the "germ war", which was a period of extreme tension, the daily dose of hatred was assured by the accusations made against the instigators of germ warfare.

It was one of the best orchestrated, the most powerful campaigns in history. Perfect, from the point of view of organization. Nothing was forgotten. From the meeting of the inhabitants in a block of flats, to a world congress.

Hundreds of thousands of protests were sent. From Peking to Vienna, in a whole series of capital cities, exhibitions were organized with germ warfare as the theme. An impressive number of U.N.O sessions were devoted to indictments and to moving speeches. I know that in the West these accusations were not met with little credulity. But the countries at which this propaganda was aimed were not of the Old or of the

New World. They were the countries of Asia. One can moreover understand why this was so. The first atom bomb was destined for Asia. It was in Asia that the napalm bombing undoubtedly caused the greatest ravages. The people of Asia have therefore good reason for being receptive to accusations made against foreigners and whites. I was present in 1952 at the World Peace Congress in Peking, and I was able to witness the unanimous hatred with which Indians of the Congress, Burmese priests and Trotskyites from Ceylon condemned the "bacteriological warfare."

Obviously, one could describe all these delegates as "sympathizers" or "fellow travelers." But it will be remembered that in July 1952, the Pakistani delegate abstained from voting on the question of germ war in the U.N.O resolution. Now, everyone knows that Pakistani politics is much closer to that of the USA than to that of the USSR who represented the accusers. Even so, the Pakistani delegate was content to call for a thorough investigation into mater instead of refuting the accusation, because "if these accusations are well founded," he said, "then the people of Asia are victims of the most horrible weaponry that humans could use." He then added: "It is true, that if these accusations were unfounded, then these same people were taken in by a cruel farce." "In either case," he continued, "they will have suffered terribly."

I cannot speak of this hate campaign as someone who is a complete stranger to it or a mere spectator. When I read again what I had written at the time, I am overwhelmed by burning shame. My articles were like oil poured over fire. And I cannot even say in my defense that I had distributed the oil sparingly. I cannot ask for my acquittal on the grounds of having myself been taken in and that I did not know what I was doing. These excuses were used by the Nazis. I consider them unworthy of me and of carrying little weight. Whatever the arguments which I may put forward in my defense, facts remain facts. I have contributed to the propaganda campaign surrounding the germ war. Due to my position and as a result of the role I played, I must be held accountable. My only excuse could be that of having recognized the truth and not to have hesitated to tell it. I don't have to settle the question in order to know if my present attitude can offset my past liabilities.

Over and above the campaign of hatred, the accusations of "germ warfare" had yet another objective. One of the greatest hate campaigns went on hand in hand with another, not less important campaign. That of public health.

If, at the time, there were sporadic reports of outbreaks of contagious diseases in Korea, I was not aware- even though I was there- of a single real epidemic. For an epidemic to start, and here all the scientists I consulted are in agreement, germs alone are not enough. You need favorable conditions of a special kind. A country devastated by war, whose inhabitants are under-nourished, do, of course, provide the sort of conditions in which an epidemic can spread more easily than in time of peace. Furthermore, Manchuria, neighboring on Korea, had at that time had several outbursts of epidemics.

Now, the Chinese forces of intervention were largely composed Manchurian soldiers. It was perfectly possible that they spread all kinds of disease. And yet, except in isolated cases, real epidemics had never had to be faced. Why? This was explained to us by arguing the efficiency of the defensive measures taken against the "bacteriological aggressor." The "infamous aggression" had failed, thanks to a prompt show of strength.

Facts are facts. It is a fact that the Korean and Chinese authorities were at the same time launching a campaign against the "supporters of germ warfare" thus spurring on an unprecedented campaign of public health, quite unknown till then.

A large number of hospitals were established against epidemics. The whole North

Korean population was vaccinated against a number of diseases. Each person had to carry their certificate of vaccination. It was impossible to enter a public building or be allowed into a theatre without showing credentials.

Each time we left Pyongyang by car and each time we returned there, our vehicle was disinfected. Around the capital a whole network of first-aid posts filtered the traffic. Everywhere, there were barriers and check-points.

Corpses had to be burned and their ashes buried deep in the ground. Existing public lavatories were condemned, and new ones had to be built at a prescribed distance from dwellings. The well-holes were regularly cleaned. They had to be closed, and the more important ones were guarded by soldiers. The drains were constantly disinfected. Stagnant water was systematically drained. New stables were erected at a given distance away from human dwellings. There were strict orders specifying that it was forbidden to drink water which had not been boiled.

In the name of defense against germ warfare, the whole country was swept by a wave of cleanliness. Everywhere people were spring-cleaning. Floors and pavements were washed. Walls were whitewashed, domestic rubbish was burned, and dishes were boiled. This campaign spread to neighboring China. Travelers who like me visited that country at the time, in answer to questions, found themselves saying: "Our pig output has doubled, we produced 20% increase in rice, 12% more kaolin, and in addition, we exterminated 424,352 flies!" Except for the figures, the answers were all very much the same. You may laugh, nonetheless, it was true.

What an infernal paradox! A hatred campaign used, when all is said and done, in order to promote public health!

Those who, like me have witnessed these events, who have gone all the way, cannot help but ask themselves with bitterness: Given a little more effort and care, could not the same results have been achieved by other means? Is there no honest path which leads to honest aims?

11.

How could I have believed it? This is the question which I keep asking myself. "How could you have really believed it?" is what others keep asking me. What struck me most during my enquiry, is that the scientists to whom I spoke, were not particularly surprised that I should have been taken in. Whilst I was telling M. Jean Rostand in detail what I had seen, he interrupted me smilingly at one point and said: "For heaven's sake, if you continue like this, I will end up by believing it myself..."

Others concluded:

All this fabrication can seem perfectly logical and convincing to the layman. So it seems that to have believed in this affair was quite natural for a layman. Even so, I still need to ask: "How, even as a layman could one have believed this? Well, I think that it is because in addition to the clever "construction" and its spectacular effect, there were other reasons which-if I may say so-added weight to my credulity. Reasons which made me receptive, which turned me into a "suitable subject," a malleable subject.

To start with, I was a sort of believer. I believed righteousness unreservedly in the absolute correctness of the USSR cause. Especially because of the role it had played

during the Second World War. I believed in the infallibility of Stalin, in the Hungarian Party, in Rákosi.

I remember the first evening I spent in Moscow. A car drove me from the airport to my hotel, and on the way we passed the length of the Kremlin wall. I was moved to tears at the mere thought that somewhere there behind a window, no more than some one hundred meters away, may be Stalin!...

It's a tragedy that a whole generation brought up on the skepticism nourished by Voltaire, and who came to the Communist Party of their own free will, should have turned into a generation of believers-and thoroughly fanatical believers at that-once they were within the Party. When Marx was asked by his daughters which was his favorite proverb, he answered; "de omnibus dubitandum" (we must question everything). Half a century later, the most militant advocates of Marxism-Leninism could easily have chosen their motto: "credo quia absurdum" (I believe because it is absurd).

Apart from the general fanaticism, which I am not trying to minimize, I had had experience of certain things in North Korea which prepared me to accept straight away the accusations made of American germ warfare.

At the time when this accusation was being made, I had already been in North Korea for nearly six months. I was staying in the area where the armistice negotiations were taking place. But I also visited the front line and the hinterland. Today, when I am forced to admit the

inanity of these germ war accusations(and I admit it without hesitation), I must not refrain from mentioning a whole series of actions taken by the American forces, and especially by the American Air Force, some of whose methods of fighting exceeded those normally acceptable in war and which provoked horror within the onlooker.

I refer in the first instance to what is called "air terror". The American Airforce as good as reigned supreme in the sky. Thanks to that supremacy, it inflicts such destruction that few houses remained unscathed in North Korea. From one day to the next I witnessed the disappearance of insignificant villages. I saw along the roads hundreds of corpses of peasants all dressed in white. I saw towns of 150 to 200,000 inhabitants reduced within two years of war to wasteland upon which you could grow corn. I saw with my own eyes hundreds of women and children affected by this most inhuman of weapons, napalm. I am familiar with all the objections: the Communists did not declare "open" their towns....Chinese soldiers were camping in the villages...psychological resistance in North Korea had to be overcome.

Of course, I can today understand the crushing responsibility of the North Korean government, to whom human life came cheap. It -is true that urban conurbations were not declared open cities. It is a fact that Chinese units were often stationed in the villages. And then, I know also, that "war is war" and there are always a great many innocent victims.

Even so, the simple peasants were in no way responsible for the stationing of the Chinese. The workmen, small shopkeepers and artisans in the towns could not by themselves declare their city as "open" And what about all those villages which had been razed to the ground, without there ever having been a single Chinese. And the city areas, which had been obliterated, even though they were nowhere near any military objective.

Another thing. I had the about the worst possible information about the regime of Syngman Rhee. I am not talking about information from Communist sources. It was in "The Daily Mirror" in which I read: "Syngman Rhee is a vain and savage dictator,

whose long and sinister past stinks of corruption, intrigue and violence." It was a Member of the Labour Party who had declared in The House of Commons: "All England is anxiously following the overtures of the double dealing South Korean assassin."

Today, I am well aware the North Korean Government was composed of Stalinist puppets, all just as murderous, whose hands were just as stained with blood as those of Rákosi in Hungary. But that does not mean that I see in Syngman Rhee's men the ideal leaders of future Korea. Far from it.

Let me continue. I will now move on to China. I went there three times. In 1951, in 1952 and in 1953. In my experience, which is shared by many Western, non-Communist observers, the immense mass of the Chinese people has taken much more favorably to the policies of Mao than to those of Jiang Jieshi. I do not know whether the feelings of the Chinese towards Mao and his followers have changed. All I know is that the countries from the, so called, "Socialist block" whose conditions of life had been able to observe, it seemed that the longer the Party had been in power, the greater the increase in the number of people deceived. But I repeat, I do not know the present feelings in China.

Yet, in spite of all the negative phenomena which I had mentioned with regard to the role played by official China in the bacterial war, I must express the opinion that a more tolerant and understanding attitude towards Chinese problems would be a better policy than the rigidity and intransigence which is now shown to it by certain Western Powers.

As to the simple Chinese soldiers whom I met in Korea, I must say that their relations with the civilian population-not a negligible factor-were extraordinarily good. These soldiers were so willing to help the poor villagers in every way, that these poor people often preferred them to their own soldiers. And if what I had heard said in the village, where the Hungarian hospital stayed about the insects brought in by Chinese soldiers, were true, then these must have referred to some special teams under order from higher up.

One final factor could have contributed to my believing in the accusations thrown at the "perpetrators of germ warfare." The leaders and the United States press had never denied that there had been in their country a research connected with germ warfare. During the discussions at the United Nations, Mr. Cohen, the American representative, whilst stressing the defensive nature of this research, did nevertheless admit them. At the same time, it is also a fact that the Government of the United States had indeed signed the 1925 Geneva Convention prohibiting the use of bacteriological weapons, but this signature had never been ratified.

I had to go into all these details. I think I have been a biased political supporter long enough to know that I must be content with nothing but the whole truth, or at least the truth such as I see it. I have already said at the beginning of this series of articles how I was overtaken, little by little, by doubt. And how I had to acknowledge the crimes of Stalinism. I must add a fact which I had only discovered recently. I must admit that it was this fact which caused my cup to overflow.

Here it is. The first person to have made an accusation concerning the criminal use of germs was none other than Joseph V. Stalin. On 7th January, 1933, during a meeting of an extended Central Committee and of the Central Commission of Control over the Communist Bolshevik Party of the Soviet Union, Stalin, whilst speaking about "criminal activity" of certain Soviet citizens, said " that they deploy a method of

sabotage in the State farms and kolkhozes, and that a few amongst them, including certain academics, manifest such zeal for sabotage that they inject plague and anthrax germs into the cattle at collective farms. And that they favor meningitis germs for horses, etc....."

During the great trials of 1937-38, trials which we know now had a variety of accusations gorged to suit the cause, two defendants mentioned similar facts. One admitted "that he had cultivated virulent germs in three different establishments in order to kill some herds of Soviet pigs." The other one admitted "that he plotted with Japanese spies to release, in case of war, some particularly virulent microbes amidst the Red Army!"

The chief prosecutor in these fabricated trials was A. Vyshinsky. The same Vyshinsky who has since been delicately disowned by Soviet Lawyers. The same Vyshinsky who, whilst he was Minister of Foreign Affairs in Stalin's day and let the Soviet Delegation at the United Nations, lodged the most terrible accusations with regard to "germ warfare" in Korea!

12.

I have come to the end of my investigation. This is all I have to say. I know that for some I will have said too little. And for others, I will have said too much. Some people during my investigation showed interest in this work but, they added:

Of course, the -thing would be quite "open" if you could explain exactly how the preparation of the bacterial campaign was hatched behind the scene in the Politburo. If you could show the exact role played by the Russians and the Chinese, etc....

It would obviously have been more of a sensation to have started my account something like that: "I know from a reliable source, from the mouth of a Chinese Minister himself, that one day Stalin called in Beria and Molotov and told them: "Listen guys..." It is possible that this is just what had been the case. But it is also possible that the truth was quite different. I don't know, and I will refrain from giving details which I do not know.

For others, to have even put forward facts verified by me personally was still too much. They believe that ultimately a lie can be tolerated, but that its exposure is treason.

And without going into the details which could bring them face to face with a painful truth, they prefer to ask: "What's the point of it?" I won't say that this question makes no sense. On the contrary, I won't avoid the answer. It is evident that those who will benefit from my testimony are those who were accused of having started a germ war. And those who will suffer from it are the ones who had drawn up this accusation. But if anyone was accused wrongly, is it not a duty for those who are aware of this false accusation to speak out?

So then, some sanctimonious rogues may say, all this will benefit "the American Imperialists and capitalists". This comment we have already heard at the time of our struggle against Rákosi's regime. I can remember one day, in the corridors of the Hungarian Parliament, Rákosi himself put the question before some colleagues and me: "Why tell everybody that the Hungarian worker does not live well? You will sow doubt in the hearts of French and Italian workers who are convinced that our workers have a good life. This way you would only serve the exploiters of the working class."

In Rákosi's eyes, the worry was not so much the fact that the workers' standard of

living was low, but that this fact should be known. And since everything we might say-we, the Hungarian intellectuals-would not cross beyond the border of our country, the Hungarian revolution, by suddenly allowing truth to erupt before the world, may have stunned many a well-meaning Western worker and intellectual.

My intention is not to indulge in a comparative analysis of the imperialist states which exist in the world. Nor do I wish to ask the question: Who is the greater oppressor of the people? Who exploits them more? I will simply say: If, as we are taught by Marxism-Leninism, American imperialism was full of lies and contradictions, why not simply denounce these contradictions and lies? Why is it necessary to invent new ones?

I most certainly wouldn't wish the bricks extracted from one wall of lies to serve in the construction of a pile of prejudice, hypocrisy and arrogance. If I have written these articles it is not so as to contribute in whatever form to the lowering of even one worker's wages. To contribute to the taking away of land from the Hungarian or Chinese peasant. It is not so that a descendant of a Czar should return to the throne of Russia or a descendant of Li, to the throne of Korea.

It is not out of the question to suppose that my testimony doesn't pass almost unnoticed, that someone makes use of it directly or indirectly to ends of which I do not approve. I am not afraid of this, because I am convinced that my testimony is more likely to serve those who believed in the accusations, that the accused themselves. It will perhaps contribute to the dispersing of the fog and the darkness which at present extend from the Danube to the Yellow sea. And with my scant means I will have helped truth to emerge. Why should this be of less interest to the Russian worker, the Chinese peasant, the Korean fisherman than of interest to anyone else? I believe that it is precisely for them that this is most important.

Some people will say-and I can hear them already-that there exists another fog and other lies, in the United States, for instance. That is true, no doubt. Great American writers-not to mention French and English ones-often denounce the inconsistencies and social ills of their society. They will continue to do, I imagine. Without wishing to lecture anyone and by simply following my own course and that of so many Hungarian writers, I can say that the best a writer can do is to sweep his own doorstep. If, for example, Soviet writers had done less "exposing" of the West, and instead had shown, however discreetly, more of Stalin's crimes (pure wishful thinking, I know), then the world would be better for it, and so would certainly be Soviet literature.

Several people have asked me if I was not afraid that people might say: "Here is a witness who said 'yes' in the past and who is saying 'no' today. Had I thought of that?" Yes, I had. And this is precisely what was tormenting me. But just because I had been mixed up in a lie, through both the fault of others as well as my own, must I remain with it to the rest of my days?

A great many Hungarian writers and journalists have had to face the same question: "You're a good one to talk about the crimes committed by Stalin and Rakosi." Poets were told. "You who had written odes to them!" "You're a good one to talk about troubles of the peasants and the hardship of the workers, you who had written a poem entitled: "A victory each day!" We had the personal experience of passing under the whips and it was the crimes, the mistakes and the errors of the past which were hitting us.

And yet this path had to be taken. Quite simply because there was no other way. Happy, and to be envied are those who have never erred. Those who have no amends to make. I am not one of them.

To all that, I will add a series of paradoxical events. I've already said that the Korean Foreign Minister who had thrown the germ accusations had been executed and that the Deputy Health Minister disappeared without trace. On the other hand, the journalist who at that time when I was sending my reports from Korea, was editor of the Foreign Affairs Section on the Szabad Nép (central paper of the Hungarian Workers Party) as well as his colleague who had been the proof reader of my Korean book before its publication, were both thrown into prison in Hungary for having taken part in the revolution.

The other day, there was a knock on the door of my modest room in Paris where I am now a refugee. It was the ex-editor of "Szabad Nép," the same who had signed the telegram sending me from Gaesong to the "germ war" area. At the time, he believed in it firmly. Since then, he has had to leave Hungary for also having taken part in the revolution.

The Hungarian revolution was the revolution of people who had been duped, of "nation deceived. Of workers who had been told lies and told that they had become the owners of their factories. Of peasants who had been given land to appease them but which was now being taken away from them. Of intellectuals who had been deprived of their sole treasure: reflection.

If there had not been such flagrant differences between the facts and the words, if there had not been an abyss between the propaganda and reality, perhaps the revolution would not have broken out.

"What's the point of all that?," the author of these articles has been asked. Well, what was the point of all the lies, deceptions, the cheating in Korea, in Hungary and elsewhere?

To end, I should like to say a few words to those who, with me, took part in the propaganda surrounding the bacteriological warfare, and who lent credence to it with their name and authority. I beg them to think once again about what they had seen in Korea. That they reconsider all that in the light of Khrushchev's revelations; in the light of the affair of the doctors and the events in Hungary. If they have any doubts, let them be made public, just as at the time, their evidence had been made public.

I should also like to turn towards the Chinese Peoples Republic. Various Communist individuals, Poles, Yugoslavs, who have recently spent some time in China, have informed me that some Chinese leaders in the course of friendly conversations, stated that they considered the whole Korean War to have been a mistake into which they had been pushed by Stalin. And that they believed the accusations made about germ warfare to have been without foundation. If that is so, and I do not doubt it, then it is not enough to exchange such confidences in small gatherings and in cozy chats during a nice dinner. It is certain that if the Chinese leaders were today telling the truth on the war in Korea in general and on germ warfare in particular, this could contribute towards an international lessening of tension and generally improve the international situation of the People's Republic of China. They would thus make a bigger step towards reconciliation and towards peace than a dozen Peace Congresses and the releasing of thousands of white doves.

After so many tragedies and national catastrophes, having come from a country which has seen so many ruins and so much sorrow, and as stateless that I now am, I nevertheless retain the hope that the world will one day find a way to progress in

peace without either 'A' bombs or 'H' bombs. I trust in man who, though fallible, weak and responsible for many faults, in man who can be deceived once, twice, a hundred times, but who continues to thirst for truth and who, in spite of everything, ends by finding it-or at least come near it. That is why I undertook the painful task of examining my past.

I am happy to have done so.

I don't know whether complete freedom and peace are possible in this world. However, I now feel more free and more at peace than before.

END