CHICAGO OCCASIONAL PAPERS ON KOREA
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Introduction

Bruce Cumings

This collection of papers originated in the Seminar in Modern Korean History that I directed in 1989–1990 at the University of Chicago. They were of unusually high quality, but in the nature of seminar papers prepared over the period of two academic quarters, they did not embody the primary research and polished quality of articles done for an academic journal. Nonetheless I thought they might be of use to people interested in Korea, especially graduate students at this and other universities. Thus we decided to print this collection and make it available gratis. We gratefully acknowledge the support of the Committee on Korean Studies of the University of Chicago. We also wish to make clear that we may or may not publish a similar collection in the future; this is an “occasional” paper, but this also may be a singular occasion!

The papers were first presented to the seminar, with the usual back and forth critique by the other students. After the seminar ended the group prepared revised drafts, which were then criticized again, with suggestions for further editing and rewriting. Charles Armstrong organized this effort, and deserves thanks for the time and energy he put into the project. I left this process to the students, and have done no editing or commentary myself since the seminar ended.

The assignment in the seminar was to produce a substantial paper, utilizing primary sources to the extent that they were available, and hopefully to draw upon some body of theory in analyzing some aspect of modern Korean history. Joyce Park, a Mellon Fellow at the University, emphasized the second course, invoking Michel de Certeau and
various theories of imperialism to grasp the Japanese "Co-Prosperity Sphere" as a utopia, growing out of particular readings of East Asian and Western history by the Japanese, just as the critique and interment of this colonial effort by Western historians drew upon particular readings of Western liberalism, and generally ignored the history of Western imperialism. She concludes that the Western, particularly American, construction of Japanese imperialism is one-sided, and does not have the plurality of viewpoints associated with a mature understanding.

Daqing Yang, a graduate student from China who is now continuing his studies at Harvard, assays a significant but understudied period in Korea's most important foreign relationship, from a historical standpoint: that with China. The alpha of this period is the apparent end of any Chinese influence in 1910, and the omega is its dramatic reassertion in 1950, when China entered the Korean War. Yang finds a number of new sources on the Sino-Korean relationship in this period, and concludes that the Chinese never transcended a posture of paternalism and arrogance vis-a-vis Koreans, whether we speak of the Nationalists or the Communists.

Hatsue Shinohara, a student from Japan pursuing a doctorate in the history department, provides a valuable account of the spearhead of Japanese imperialism and industrial development on the Asian mainland, the railroads. Japanese planners focused their railbuilding efforts in Korea, seeing it both as a thoroughfare to Manchuria and China proper, and an economy where efficient rails would support Japanese development plans. Railways were thus highway and byway, and deeply implicated in the geopolitics of Japanese imperialism, which unlike other empires emphasized contiguous territories.

Henry Em, who researched his dissertation on the intellectual history of the late 1940s in Seoul on an SSRC fellowship in 1990–1991, prepared an analysis of the epistemology of American civil affairs training for Korea. He isolates several ideological positions that influenced training for military government, and explains how particular American perceptions of Korea and its politics affected the Occupation in the years 1945–50.

Ron Kim, a student working for the doctorate in international history, provides a comparative analysis of two occupations usually not linked together, but sharing a common fate in being direct objects of American-Soviet rivalry: those in Korea and Austria. He demonstrates some surprising commonalities, and one glaring difference: superpower compromise enabled Austria to reemerge as a united and flourishing nation, but the absence of compromise on Korea plunged it into war, and keeps it divided today.
Charles Armstrong began research for his dissertation on the origins of the North Korean state in Seoul in 1991 on a Fulbright fellowship. He contributed to the seminar a critique of some of the literature on North Korea, examined through the lenses of a longstanding and deeply resistant Western discourse on Asia, "Orientalism." He finds that the presumed real entity called North Korea is more a "constructed system" resting on imagined absences, the absences deriving from basic tenets of a Western liberalism (itself unexamined), which when found lacking, are inverted to place North Korea in the pale of irrationality, totalitarianism, and ultimately, criminality: the "renegade state" of contemporary, post-Gulf War discourse in the United States.

Namhee Lee, a student working on a doctorate in modern Korean history, but also a woman who has contributed her efforts for years to the movement for human rights in Korea, examines the student movement in South Korea in the 1980s. She finds that the movement, in part, is one founded in concepts: concepts that seek a usable past to guide present political activity, particularly the Tonghak Rebellion and student protests against Japanese imperialism. She accounts for the deepening and broadening of the student movement of the 1980s, when compared, say, to that of the 1960s, by reference to the leaders' conscious attempt to foreswear the privileges of students and link up with workers and common people. Making history themselves, the students also seek to root their movement in counter-histories that guide and sustain them.

We all hope that you find this collection useful.
There is a great deal of interest nowadays in the history of the Korean nationalist movement, which everyone agrees was born in some relationship to the colonial experience. But this colonial experience as a whole is ill-defined. There has been much description of Japanese goals, Korean suffering, Japanese war techniques, Korean resistance, Japanese capitalism, Korean social upheaval, and so on and so forth. But this is precisely the problem: this experience has devolved into two discrete discourses, both of which assume the other but only in a vague and distant way.

On another level, the empire as a system is little discussed in English. By and large, historians of Korean nationalism stick pretty closely to Korea, and those of Chinese or Indonesian or Burmese or Japanese nationalisms do the same. I have yet to see a really compelling comparative work on the various roles and problems of the empire’s parts.

I began the thinking for this paper assuming that I would write on Korean cultural nationalism; but the more I read on this topic, the less I understood precisely what Korean nationalists were struggling against, the less I was sure of the meanings of the Korean vocabulary of resistance. On the Japan side, I wondered how Japan justified its imperial desire, and by what epistemology it could possibly hope to bind an empire many times larger and more diverse than itself. On
a bigger scale, I became curious about the Japanese influence in areas outside my particular knowledge, how similar or dissimilar these experiences were to the Korean one, and how they were linked together. Finally, as I burrowed in the texts I began to wonder where America, and particularly American historians, fit into all this.

Here, then, is the model by which I hope to account for my questions. A few caveats in advance. This paper is not written from a “Korean viewpoint," nor does it discuss Korean issues. After I had thoroughly thought out the model, there was no room for examples; those will have to wait for the next installment. Second, some may be surprised by the importance I assign to post-war American historians in this account. I strongly contend that this subtext is part and parcel of the history of the empire, and that one cannot be understood without the other.

The Literatures

These discourses are not bodies floating ‘within’ an all-encompassing whole that can simply be called history (or even a ‘context’). They are historical because they are bound to operations and are defined by functions. Thus we cannot understand what they say independently of the practice from which they result . . . for this reason I mean by ‘history’ this practice (a discipline), its result (a discourse), or the relation of the two in the form of a ‘production’. To be sure, in current usage ‘history’ connotes both a science and that which it studies—the explication which is stated, and the reality of what has taken place or what takes place . . . by holding to the idea of discourse and to its fabrication, we can better apprehend the nature of the relations it holds with its other, the real. In this fashion, doesn’t language not so much implicate the status of the reality of which it speaks, as posit it as that which is other than itself?1

Soi-disait political historians quite laudably wish to begin on the surface. Their mistake is the belief that events or structures lie on the surface of such a history, and form its component parts. But the crust of politics, or human discourse, is language; and that of History is, ineluctably, history.

To write my history, then, I begin with these other histories. This is not, I hope, merely a territorial move; taking de Certeau seriously, we cannot hope that all the histories written will add up to one universal, real History, in which each historian assiduously tends his/her little plot. Rather I make such a move to acknowledge that what is written is not a history of a History, but a history of what has been read.

The nexus of phenomena which is popularly known as “Japanese imperialism” has produced (or was produced by) an amazing number of documents, both contemporaneous and ex post facto. These fall into

a spectrum of sorts. At one end are Americans writing to Americans; in the middle are Japanese writing to Americans; and at the other extreme are Japanese writing to themselves. Each of these three major subdiscourses operates by a particular language and logic, which is not necessarily meaningful to any of the others; each moves toward a particular political goal, which is probably inimical to the others.

The first category under perusal is that which American historians tend to describe as "The Literature": in other words, their own discourse. By and large, the American historiography of the empire has been rather exclusively political or economic up to this time. Sociological or cultural explanations of Japanese (or Korean, or Indonesian, or whatever) nationalisms do exist, but in general they fail to draw a convincing theoretical link between that phenomenon and the dynamics of the East Asian Sphere.

There are a great many general theories of imperialism which are applied to the case of Japanese aggression in East Asia. I am unaware of a model of Japanese imperialism, written by a western scholar, which does not proceed implicitly from one of these models. In general, these can be divided into those which focus on the internal dynamics of the imperialist nation; and those which focus on the international system as a whole.

Lenin, who is certainly one of the most influential theorists, posited that capitalists were the moving force within potentially-imperialist nations. When surplus capital garnered from industrial capitalism in their own countries became too abundant to encourage investment there, capitalists looked around for colonies in which to invest. Schumpeter, on the other hand, pinned the leading role upon landowning elites and their essentially pointless desire for expansion, expressed especially in the younger sons who so often comprised the young officers of peacetime militaries. Barrington Moore effected a compromise between these two positions when he wrote that it was precisely the combination of capitalists and aristocratic landowners, excluding the peasantry or working class, that produced right-wing, proto-expansionist societies, of which Prussia was the classic model. Finally, Wehler added a fillip to this line of thought when he proposed that imperialism was useful

2. This is a sort of shorthand for representatives of all the western imperialist nations; but in dealing with Japan in the postwar era, American interest really eclipses that of all the others.
3. It is a debatable point whether there was a specifically American to Japanese discourse.
4. This is ignoring for the moment the discourses of the colonized Asian nations.
5. See Pyle 1971.
to elites as a means of easing domestic malcontent on the part of the working classes of the metropole.

Internationalist theories begin with Langer, who proposed that competition between capitalist nations, the need to fend off one's economic fellows, led to the necessity of imperialism. Gallagher and Robinson divided imperial ventures into three stages, of increasing control (but not increasing returns): mercantilism, an informal empire based on the theory of free trade, and monopoly markets or colonialism. One thing that these scholars pointed out is that colonialism cannot be motivated strictly by profit concerns, as the cost/benefit ratio is much higher as control increases; which brings up the question, why would hegemonic powers want colonies which do not make economic sense? Immanuel Wallerstein's answer suggests that competition exists not merely among the high-capitalist nations, but between these countries and developing countries. More-advanced countries fiercely protect their markets and supplies, closing the ladder to those who come after. Colonialism, for a late-developer, is one way of breaking into the closed international market; and also of making sure that vertical ties are formed between colony and metropole which obviate the possibility of competing industries starting up from below. Marius Jansen offers a very different explanation, whereby colonialism is posited as the social norm of the late 19th century. With echoes of Social Darwinism and Weberian idealism, Jansen presents the acquisition of colonies as a visible sign of wealth and superiority, a social necessity in international society of the time as much as gloves and a top hat and membership in the right club were in domestic society. Past a certain point of development, potential gentlemen were expected to prove themselves by acquisition of the trappings of "civilisation"; it became a point of pride with late-developing nations, such as Germany and Japan, to do so.

My major criticism of these historiographies is summed up in Alisdair MacIntyre's title, "Whose Logic? Which Rationality?". The political and economic "sciences" have yet to deal adequately with the "culture problem". By depending so heavily upon presumptions of universal motivation and causation, they close off any possibility that the history of the East might be fundamentally different from that of the West, or the North from the South; or anyone from the European normative.

One sovereign exception to this line of criticism is Karl Polanyi. Though he was in no sense an "East Asia specialist", he grasped several important points that his presumably-more-expert colleagues continue to ignore. He is what the hardheaded politico-economic school could be but is not; and I use him as a kind of reverse example.

The thirteenth chapter of his famous book forcefully makes the essential point that economic and political life cannot be separated from the social and cultural. Unfortunately, this message has been taken to heart by almost no one. Yet, in his clear and concise formulation, it is simple enough to almost constitute common sense:

Some who would readily agree that life in a cultural void is no life at all nevertheless seem to expect that economic needs would automatically fill that void and make life appear livable under whatever conditions [for less advanced peoples, that is] . . . Nothing obscures our social vision as effectively as the economistic prejudice. So persistently has exploitation been put into the forefront of the colonial problem that the point deserves special attention . . . it is precisely this emphasis put on exploitation which tends to hide from our view the even greater issue of cultural degeneration.9

We can read this statement in several useful ways. As a bare theoretical statement, Polanyi makes the point that the material can only be apprehended and controlled by social epistemology—and that there is more than one logic available to this task. This leads to a critique of the current economic and political discourse, based as it is on simple connections between objects and a universal positivism.10 In other words, it is a very presumptuous thing for American politico-economic historians to assume that the Japanese empire is explicable in precisely the terms used to describe British industrialization; and it is an ignorant thing for these historians to praise or blame Japan (or anyone) solely in terms of the material benefits that were or were not conferred upon the so-called less-advanced countries.

On a historical level proper—by which I mean one of writing—Polanyi quite rightly points out the essential connection between the jargon of capitalism and the “economistic prejudice”, whereby economists serve to reify certain modes of production. “Economistic prejudice was the source both of the crude exploitation theory of early capitalism and of the no less crude, though more scholarly, misapprehension which later denied the existence of a social catastrophe . . . the materialistic fallacy in regard to the nature of social and cultural catastrophe thus bolstered the legend that all the ills of the time had been

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10. A rare imaginative economist once traced out the relationship between level of wages and honey production, thusly—high wages encourage marriage, leaving fewer spinsters, who keep fewer cats, who eat fewer bees, which results in more honey. When will scholars allow that the byways of relation in complex systems are at least as convoluted as this model? If social science continues to desire a physical-science paradigm on which to arrange itself, it should not choose physics, which seeks for general laws—but rather biology, which proceeds from a notion of complex nets of interdependence.
caused by our lapse from economic liberalism.”11 Between the liberal economic historian who sees Japan’s major crime as a desire to turn Asia into a captive market—and the Manchester textile-capitalist who proposed starvation as the answer to the labor problem—is there not a bond of basic logic?

Polanyi brings out another important point, though in reference to Nazi Germany.

A nation may be handicapped in its survival by the fact that its institutions, or some of them, belong to a type that happens to be on the downgrade—the gold standard in World War II was an instance of such an antiquated outfit. Countries, on the other hand, which for reasons of their own, are opposed to the status quo, would be quick to discover the weaknesses of the existing institutional order and to anticipate the creation of institutions better adapted to their interests. Such groups are pushing that which is falling and holding onto that which, under its own steam, is moving their way. It may then seem as if they had originated the process of social change, while actually they were merely its beneficiaries, and may be even perverting the trend to make it serve their own aims. Thus Germany, once defeated, was in the position to recognize the hidden shortcomings of the nineteenth century order, and to employ this knowledge to speed the destruction of that order. A kind of sinister intellectual superiority accrued to those of her statesmen in the 30’s who turned their minds to this task of disruption, which often extended to the development of new methods of finance, trade, war, and social organization, in the course of their attempt to force matters into the trend of their politics.12

Several important points come from this remark. First, as in the previous excerpt, Polanyi insists upon the possibility of alterity. He grants everyone the right to have an interest apart from that of the existing order; this in itself is a rare move. From this insight, we can begin to entertain the possibility that the Japanese and German imperial experiences need not have constituted the last perverted gasp of 19th century experience, with which they have so often been implicitly linked, but rather a sharp ending to that world—something new and fundamentally inimical to unchecked liberal capitalism. Finally, this suggests to us that perhaps Japan’s plan for an East Asian Co-Prosperity sphere did not emerge merely from a sweaty night’s dream of power, but from a pre-existing historical trend that it hoped to twist to its own end. Concretely, the end of western imperialism in Asia was written on the wall; perhaps Japan, knowing this, merely wished to become a rather firm prima inter pares—as it always claimed. We will return to all these points later.

12. Ibid., pp. 28–29.
An Evil Empire? 7

The second category consists of works written by Japanese but oriented primarily toward non-Japanese. These works seek to explain Japan's imperial maneuvers, both before and after the fact; they use methods familiar to western scholars, but come to conclusions that would not (for one reason or another) occur or appeal to the west. For comparative purposes, I will discuss a few example here. The three I propose to examine are Kuno Yoshi, an obscure professor; Takehashi Kamekichi, an economic historian; and Maruyama Masao, the famous intellectual historian.

Kuno Yoshi, the earliest of these, was but a foot-soldier in the paper war of the 20's and 30's. His book was brought out in English by an American publisher in 1921. The title page suggests that at the time Kuno was an assistant professor in the Oriental Department of the University of California at Berkeley.

The book was entitled *What Japan Wants*, and that is precisely what Kuno attempts to lay out. He was not a theoretician of Japanese imperialism. He set out his arguments in simple language that any shopkeeper, schoolboy, or senator could understand. He attempted no rhetorical flourishes or gross ideological indoctrination.

The techniques that Kuno utilized were simple. First, he appealed to a sense of fair play and compromise. For example, he emphasized that Japan had adhered strictly to the terms of the treaties she had signed, while suggesting that some of these treaties had been unfair or useless to Japan. This showed good faith and a willingness to take knocks like a man, for which Japan should be allowed to play ball on equal terms with America. Kuno is careful to phrase Japan's territorial ambitions in terms of "a fair share," which he assumes Japan deserves. Second, Kuno relies upon a certain common-sense calculus, whereby business is business is sacred. He attempts to separate Japan's business interests in China, Siberia, and the Pacific from its military interests (which he downplays except in the case of Korea), and to validate such business as good, normal, and necessary. Third, Kuno is quick to reassure his readers at every step that Japan does not desire to impinge upon the interests of the established powers, but merely to grow in the cracks, so to speak. He emphasizes that Japan only wants the empty barbaric parts of the world—Siberia, Manchuria, Korea. An interesting adjunct

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13. The stacks of research libraries are filled with more-or-less propagandistic books and pamphlets written in these years, which attempt to educate Americans about Japanese actions and motivation. From the numbers published by both sides, it seems to have been a fairly enthusiastic battle over the hearts and minds of the American people. By a highly unscientific method, I determined that Mr. Kuno's effort was more or less typical of the Japanese side.

to this train of thought is the suggestion that Japan is better able to
deal with the refractory peoples of Asia than the U.S., by virtue of long
historical association and knowledge of Asians.

As a document, this book recuperates American hegemony and
caters to it. The general message is that Japan is ready and willing
to be "reasonable" on the terms that America sets. Further, there is an
explicit claim that Japan is just like America, save for minor historical
accidents. Kuno makes statements such as "Japan regards the annexa-
tion of Korea as comparable to the annexation of Texas by the United
States" and "bear in mind the similarity of the relationship of Mexico
to the United States to that of China to Japan." The only proviso is
that "one cannot fairly judge the conduct of Japan as a great nation by
the same standards that may be rightly applied to the United States" because the former is slightly behind temporally. Kuno loses no op-
portunity to point out that the US took steps 50 years before that are
commensurate to those that Japan was taking at the time he wrote. He
assures his readers in a series of veiled threats that war can be avoided
if Japan is not hindered from her path of normal development. All in
all, what Japan wants, according to Kuno, is to become senior vice-
president in charge of East Asia in the company owned and run by the
Great Powers.

Takehashi comes to some of the same observations as Kuno, but with
a much more sophisticated analytic equipment and a critical edge. His
essay on Petty Imperialism was published in Japanese in 1927, and
made waves in the Japanese Marxist milieu on the edges of which he
floated. It is worth noting that Takehashi, unlike Kuno, was not writing
for an American audience. The opinions which he hoped to influence
were those of the Marxist community, international and domestic.

Takehashi's work is known as the theory of petty imperialism. It
emerges from a study of international economics—already a western
mode of arranging the world, though one that desires a universal appli-
cability. However, Takahashi takes this academic discipline and turns
it on its head, to yield a rationale for a particular practice.

Takehashi was one of the early expostulants of what is now a his-
torical truism: that the development of capitalism is not uniform, but
depends upon time, place, alliances, natural resources, population, and
other imponderables. Therefore, there is no one normative model of

15. Ibid, p. 52.
18. I depend upon the account in Germaine Hosten, Marxism and the Crisis of Development
in Prewar Japan (Princeton, 1986), chap. 4, and Takehashi's essay "Japan as Economic
Leader of Asia" in Joyce Lebra, ed., Japan's Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere in World
development; and Japanese development was qualitatively different from earlier capitalist nations. Then Takehashi makes a curious move, whereby he transfers Marx's class schema onto an international arena, to claim that Japan was a "petty bourgeois nation" and therefore her true interests lay with the "proletarian nations" of Asia. Thus, Japan taking these nations under her wing amounted to a kind of proletarian revolution on an international scale.

Takehashi used language and logic that would be easily understandable to the western proto-capitalist nations—but came to conclusions that would make the west choke. Here was the recurring nightmare for the "advanced" countries, still a potent image today—Japan Dangerous, subverting the order of things, taking the "gifts of civilization" and turning them into weapons. This can be seen as one method for the extra-European world to strike back, to insist that what Europe thought it knew of the other was wrong, to speak for itself. However, Takehashi's logic was still worlds away from the true utopian logic of the hegemonic Japanese order.

Maruyama Masao is my third example of what I term the Japanese-to-American subdiscourse. He differs from the other two in that he wrote in the decade immediately following the conclusion of the Pacific War. Further, his influence on the prevailing model of this history was enormous, both in Japan and in America.

In fact, Maruyama almost qualifies as an American Japanese historian. The method and message of his work and his peculiar concerns are more tuned-in to the American historical milieu than the heavily-Marxist Japanese one; and he is still read by every young American student of Japanese history, long after he ceased to be compelling to their Japanese counterparts. The things he finds—easily understandable and those he finds incomprehensible are quite similar to those of his American colleagues; and Kenneth Pyle even unthinkingly included Maruyama in an essay on American interpretations of Japanese nationalism.

However, Maruyama manages to reveal a Japanese political subjectivity nonetheless. His explanation of the dynamics of Japanese nationalism and imperialism was significantly different from the American explanations then current. The prevailing explanations depended upon an all-inclusive category of "the Japanese"—their national character, national problems, national beliefs, or whatever. A smaller sub-genre concentrated exclusively on the dynamics of "leading" groups, such as the bureaucracy or the military. Maruyama was the first to center his argument upon a non-Marxist view of class dynamics. Localizing and containing Japanese "fascism" in this way was a project that would be
politically important for a Japanese intellectual, and much less pressing for an American.

The scenario presented in one of his most famous essays lays the responsibility for Japanese fascism squarely on two groups: so-called "patriots" or "reactionaries," and so-called "pseudo-intellectuals." While I do not intend to recuperate his involved and essentialist argument, the capaciousness of his indictment is interesting. In the first group, comprising ultra-patriotic societies, we find: the military, which was "the driving force of the fascist movement," "new" bureaucrats, monopoly capital, the political parties, building contractors, labor unions, proletarian political parties and farmer's organizations. The second group, pseudo-intellectuals, is comprised of "small factory owners, building contractors [again!], proprietors of small retail shops, master carpenters, small landowners, independent farmers, school teachers (especially in primary schools), employees of village offices, low-grade officials, Buddhist and Shinto priests." Who does this leave out? Well, the Emperor (though not necessarily his Household). And a thin stratum of the highly educated—"men of culture, journalists, men in occupations demaning higher knowledge such as professors or lawyers, and university and college students."

This is an interesting argument—that every class of society except the intelligentsia was accountable for Japanese fascism, but especially the non-urban middle class, of soldiers and pseudo-intellectuals. Why were real intellectuals immune to fascist fever? Because, for all their talk about culture, they lacked any culture that could satisfy both intellectual and emotional needs. What about the membership of large numbers of intellectuals in patriotic societies of the most jingoistic sort? Maruyama contends that this number was "comparatively small", and strongly denies that these people were "positive advocates or the driving force of the fascist movement." How then does he explain the lack of protest of these intellectual leaders? "The fashion for 'culturalism'

20. Ibid., pp. 27-38 and pp. 57-58.
22. Ibid., p. 27.
23. Ibid., p. 31.
24. Ibid., pp. 37-46. However, he suggests elsewhere (p. 50) that the masses were basically passive and led by the nose to fascism by their leadership—in other words, that fascism was not a mass movement.
25. Ibid., p. 57.
26. Ibid., p. 58.
27. Ibid., p. 59.
28. Ibid., p. 58.
during the war may be considered an expression of passive resistance to fascism by the intelligentsia.”

This analysis, I would contend, is one that only a Japanese historian would find useful, and one that would fail to satisfy other Japanese for very long. It is on this ground that I consider Maruyama a Japanese speaking to non-Japanese. On almost all other grounds, his discourse is one with the non-Japanese.

There are several sub-themes of Maruyama’s argument that are useful for comparative purposes. The foremost of these is the strong antipathy that Maruyama sees between the material conditions of life in industrial Japan, and the ideologies by which it was made to function. He says: “The stress on ‘idealism’ and ‘spirituality’ as against materialism in the fascist ideology signifies in reality an attempt to divert the eyes of the people from the fundamental contradictions of the social structure; in place of real structural reforms, they aim at reforms within the minds of men, that is, reforms in the way of thinking.”

By “fundamental contradictions of the social structure”, Maruyama appeared to mean such things as the ideology of the family at a time when industrialism had destroyed the old social order; the stress on agrarianism and decentralization when both ideals were being swallowed by heavy industry and the massive new bureaucracy. The quote above reveals that Maruyama made a sharp distinction between real structures and social epistemology, and privileged the former over the latter. His inability to square these two during the “fascist” period led him to believe that the historical contradiction lay in some divergence of reality from ideology.

Actually, I believe that the contradiction lay in historicity: Maruyama, writing immediately after the war, did not realize that a discursive moment had come to an end. The ideology of the “fascist” moment was opaque to him, and he could not reconnect it with the fact of Japan industrial growth. Thus, he could not believe that during the crisis years these two apparently divergent trends had interacted without insuperable difficulty.

It is significant that the two main groups on which Maruyama lays the onus of fascism emerge directly out of this material-ideal, or modern-traditional, dichotomy. The “fanatical” young officers who are pin-pointed as the moving force behind this social upheaval came largely from rural villages—in other words, they were supernumerary farmers. The reactionary elements mixed with these soldiers in “patriotic organizations” were “deeply imbued with feudalism”—probably

29. Ibid., p. 59.
30. Ibid., p. 36.
31. Ibid., pp. 36-51.
32. Ibid., p. 27.
meaning they had ties to displaced samurai families. The pseudo-intellectuals who provided domestic stability were of the crucial class that had held together the social structure of the villages in earlier times. All of these groups could be considered “feudal remnants”—and the language of the ideology they championed appeared archaic and inimical to a modern nation-state. Therefore, Maruyama suggests, these discrete groups stood in the way of a general trend toward modernization, functioning as an anachronistic monkeywrench that caused the whole machine to take a wrong turn.

This general argument is enunciated very strongly, with one curious exception: the emancipation of Asia from the imperialist powers. Maruyama states: “this side-issue became more and more a mere decoration for imperialist war.” This implies, in a backhanded way, that at some point this type of sentiment was (in Maruyama’s unexplained judgment) sincere and real. He calls for further study on this topic.

Taken on balance, Maruyama’s enunciation may be the most ambiguous of the three I have described in this section. Kuno Yoshi was mildly subversive of the mundane logics used routinely by western peoples to know and control the backward nations. Takehashi, I have suggested, used a Marxist model of political dynamics, but to insist that western bourgeois knowledge of Asia was all wrong, and to attempt to speak for Japan in this discourse. Maruyama’s essay might profitably be read in one of two ways, or perhaps both—as an attempt to wrest responsibility for Japan away from the victorious Americans; or as a way of controlling the prevailing vision of what was dangerous in Japan. Both scenarios fit a certain gross political logic.

The third category of discourse is that of Japanese talking to and for Japanese. Here, the speakers do not care if they are intelligible to the “outside world”. In fact, this type of discourse admits to its own exclusionary principle—it functions as an identifying mechanism. Those who understand its logic are “in,” everyone else is “out.” In other words, this is a willfully self-referential discourse.

Unsurprisingly, no adequate reading of these documents has appeared in English. American responses to them tend to fall into two categories:

(1) To label these documents “propaganda.” The unspoken adjunct of this move is the assumption that propaganda must be read differently from non-propaganda. In practice, this means one of two approaches: either the historian decides not to include any propagandistic materials, for fear they will irreparably taint his/her work; or s/he strips them of all sincerity. This latter move is often marked by a phrase such as “this ideology veiled the true conditions.” These historians rarely explain

33. Ibid., p. 51.
how they are able to determine truth so easily. Perhaps "propaganda," or any strong performative statement, really should be read differently from other kinds of statements; but this is not the way, I think.

(2) To reduce the discourse to an expurgated "content." This involves reading only "non-ideologic" papers, such as military or industrial statistics; or dwelling on material plans and ignoring the logic by which they are justified. For example, Maruyama dismisses the "spiritual" language of "fascist" ideology as a feudal remnant, disastrously out of touch with the material conditions of the time.

I believe that material conditions cannot be separated from the social epistemologies that controlled them. Therefore, it would follow that the key to understanding this confused epoch is to be found precisely in the "propaganda" or ideology that previous historians have striven so hard to ignore. My reading of these documents will focus particularly on those rhetorics which most irritate, embarrass, and puzzle western historians: the categories of "feudal language" and "blatant racism."

Of course, I have no way of determining that millions of Japanese once really believed in the social logic I will be describing. I will make no claim that I can somehow resuscitate dead epistemologies to full life; or that the model I pick was the "right one." It is preferable to conceptualize this operation as a model by which I can make sense of the documents; one that I find both compelling and coherent. The basic model that I choose is that of the Utopia.

**Dangerous Utopias**

The Bible's claim to truth is not only far more urgent than Homer's, it is tyrannical—it excludes all other claims. The world of the Scripture stories is not satisfied with claiming to be a historically true reality—it insists that it is the only real world, it is destined for autocracy. All other scenes, issues, and ordinances have no right to appear independently of it, and it is promised that all of them, the history of all mankind, will be given their due place within its frame, will be subordinated to it. The Scripture stories do not, like Homer's court our favor, they do not flatter us that they may please us and enchant us—they seek to subject us, and if we refuse to be subjected we are rebels.34

The basic paradigm that I am suggesting for the Japanese empire is that of the utopia. This statement may appear strange to those who view the events of this time as largely or wholly malevolent in intent and harmful in consequence. The term "utopia" is generally used as a synonym for "ideal society," but I would contest this usage. Utopias are a genre of political philosophy, with identifiable features which I will attempt to describe.

The common-sense conception of a utopia entails a strong connotation of the fantastic or irreal, the pie-in-the-sky daydreamy never-happen-here. There is some truth to this—utopias are impossible, or rather unattainable, in that they are, in a sense, born, not made. The veritable utopia is designed to be unattainable by any amount of work, quite literally. This is because ultimately utopic character lies in something that cannot be bought, made, or found. Usually this utopic spark lies in some historical circumstance and/or individual essence: the first rationale for whole societies, the second for utopian communities within larger societies. In the Japanese case, the logic was typical, devolving upon a particular historical-national character peculiar to the Japanese.

This prerequisite leads immediately to certain consequences. First, not everyone could be eligible for any particular utopia. It is difficult to think of a truly global utopia—generally, they are small and exclusive. Second, by this exclusionary principle, utopias come to seem both unique (singular and sui generis) and authentic (reflecting a particular subjectivity with particular appropriateness).

Third, utopias desire to be nondiscursive or nonpolitical. In other words, the societal goals of a utopia cannot be debated, discussed, or argued. In fact, contestation at all levels must be reduced to a minimum for the utopia to perfect itself. Thus, the validity of actions cannot be established by logic or rational choice, but are deferred or displaced onto the capacious bed of original causality (national character), which leads to the profound difficulty of communication between utopias and non-utopias (or other utopias)—they cannot find a common discursive ground to stand on.

Because the societal goals of a utopia are fixed and nondiscursive, utopias are responsible to no one and nothing but themselves. A utopia promises the good, but it need not deliver, because as long as it lasts it is not accountable. For example, Ernest Callanbach’s Ecotopia is devoted the the idea of ecological balance: if it did not achieve this goal, it could not exist. If Jeremy Bentham ever designed an ideal society, it would be dedicated to the greatest (material) good for the greatest number; if it did not achieve this, it would have to change. But the utopic goal is not a verifiable or arguable good; it is simply an a priori assertion of goodness. In fact, it is difficult to pin down goals of utopias, outside of their own reproduction. Utopias do not exist for the purpose of making their residents healthy, wealthy, wise, or happy—rather, the residents simply exist to make the parts of the utopia articulate.

Thus, utopias do not come into being when certain goals are reached by a society through a process of work. The utopia is born first; the
work is necessary to perfect the utopia’s form, or to maintain its perfection. (There are both “perfected” or static utopias, such as Thomas More’s, and “imperfect” or growing utopias, such as the Japanese empire, but they are both utopic.) However, there is a radical disjuncture between the character of the work and the character of the utopia. In ordinary political logic, one assumes that forms are the result of the speech-acts that constitute them, and thus the former shares entirely the orientation of the latter. But in utopic logic, whatever actions are “necessary” could only lead to good ends, and the ends quite literally justify the means.

Utopias, thus described, are profoundly monologic systems; but how are they distinguished from mere autarky? Utopias avoid as much as possible demonstrations of brute political force, which they do not like to admit. They are held together by the imaginations and sympathies of their populations. Utopias deal not in the language of force, but in that of seduction. The desire for good is pushed to the limit and embroidered upon to produce the desire for an ultimate, unarguable good that is the hallmark of the true utopia.

From this description, I would classify the works of the Bible, Thomas More, and Hitler as utopias. Plato’s Republic probably is. Marx is ambiguous. George Orwell’s Animal Farm definitely is, but his 1984 may not be. The Chinese dynasty system probably is not. No state designed by Machiavelli could be. America was not designed to be a utopia.

This is how utopias work on a descriptive level, but on a discursive one we must not forget that utopias are made, not born. Utopias are created by those who write about them, validated by those who act in accordance to them, and serve political ends in between. They are dangerous because of this discrepancy between the writing and that which is written: on the former level, utopias are people-made, political, and power-oriented; on the latter, they presume to be none of these things.

The basic framework of the Japanese utopia was a particular reading of history. Nowadays, professional western historians tend to assume that History is a homogenous worldwide movement that is measured out in the coffee-spoons of a universal dating system. We would do well to recall how recent this phenomenon is, and in what power structures this practice is embedded. Up till the post-war period, much of the world was unaware of the notion of a singular History. Histories were plural and particular, and perhaps unavoidably exceptionalist. The practice in which this difference expressed itself was the multiplicity of dating systems, each self-referential, which abounded—time was accounted according to reign dates, zodiacal cycles, religious events, and so on. The rationalization of historical time was completely
installed only with the triumph of conventional western intellectual habits after World War II.

Before the war, history could have particular importance to the society which "owned" it, and thus could be turned to particular political ends with ease. The notion of a unique historical destiny, independent of the historical trends of the rest of the world, was still possible. Now, all history belongs to everyone or no one, and it becomes ever more difficult to conceive of a major historical movement as a localized phenomenon.

The particular history which formed the basis of the Japanese utopia located its beginning with Amaterasu Omikami; or rather with the assertion of this beginning. This deity "everlastingly manifestst Herself in the person of the Mikado, the August Ruler, the representative of the unbroken line of the Imperial Family." Amaterasu's descendant, the Jimmu Emperor,

built the first Imperial Palace in Kawasibara... and solemnly established the foundation of the state and the principle of Supreme Power. Since then the Imperial line has continued uninterruptedly for 124 generations and the foundations of the state have become stronger from year to year. The great cause of the Yamato people prospers from year to year under the fatherly guidance of the succeeding Emperors... Especially under the Emperor Meiji, who took upon himself the great task of guiding the people whose fame thunders over the entire globe—has the national spirit, long in a condition of latency, finally shown itself in all its activity and vital energy. The Imperial State... has become a great figure in the world.36

This unity of historical experience was presumed to have engendered a sort of national essence. Discursively speaking, the claim to a unitary history allowed for the claim to a unitary historical essence. This essence is described by Araki Sadao:

What is the fundamental distinguishing trait of Japan? This is nothing but the great ideal, represented by the three regalias of the Japanese dynasty: Jasper, a mirror, and a sword which were the presents of Amaterasu Omikami at the creation of the Japanese state. As every Japanese knows these three regalias are the symbols:

The mirror—of justice
The jasper—of mercy
The sword—of bravery

It is justice, mercy and bravery, represented by the regalias of the Japanese dynasty that are the fundamental ideals of the Japanese state, the way marked out by the Emperors. This is the so-called real "Impe-

rial Way.” Japanese history represents nothing but the realization of this course.37

The Japanese Ministry of Education best-seller, Kokutai no Hongi, follows a similar logic. The Imperial history of Japan and the national essence, or Imperial Way, are linked into a unique, authentic, and irremediable political behavior. This Way encompassed an over-riding filial piety to the person the the Emperor, the martial spirit of Bushido, and a self-effacing desire for the public good.38 The sort of individualistic interest-seeking so dear to the Western political tradition was, according to the Kokutai no Hongi, deeply inimical and injurious to the Imperial Way.39

How can we write a political history of this type of utterance? First, according to my model, I would suggest that this reading of national history and essence is the original rationale for the Japanese utopia; and the goal of the utopia, insofar as it could be said to have one, is the realization of the national essence, or Imperial Way. That is the content; but we cannot forget the form of the utterance. The roughest comparison of this language and logic with the examples of Japanese-nonJapanese discourse will prove that this Japanese-Japanese discourse is qualitatively different. Kuno Yoshi, Takehashi Kamekichi, and Maruyama Masao all wrote analytic prose that more or less conformed to the canons of Western rhetoric. Araki Sadao, the Ministry of Education, and others in this discursive net, write bare assertions of what Japan is: these seek to provoke not merely belief, but certain kinds of action. Western rhetoric conforms to the Enlightenment pretense that it is transparent, immediately accessible to every “rational” human equally; this Japanese utopic logic flaunts its self-referentiality, as a text it desires only a certain audience. Finally, in both form and content, it asserts fundamental difference from the rest of the world.

Of course, materially speaking Japan was caught up in capitalist development as much as any nation of the time. But this dichotomy between material sameness and ideological (assertions of) difference is not insuperable; for discursive purposes, it matter not so much that Japan (or Asia) was actually different, but that they represented themselves so strongly as being so. The Kokutai no Hongi gives us the first clue to our solution of this dilemma:

the foreign ideologies imported into our country are in the main ideologies of the Enlightenment... or extensions of them. The views of the world and of life that form the basis of these ideologies are a rationalism and

37. Ibid., p. 69.
39. Ibid., p. 47.
a positivism, lacking in historical views, which on the one hand lay the highest value on, and assert the liberty and equality of, individuals, and on the other hand lay value on a world by nature abstract, transcending nations and races... It is political, social, moral, and pedagogical theories based on such views of the world and of life, that have on the one hand made contributions to the various reforms seen in our country, and on the other have had deep and wide influence on our nation's primary ideology and culture.40

In other words, it is the task of this document to augment (or contest?) the abstract rationalism, positivism, and individualism of Western influence with history, race, and patriotism. This of course presumes that a western scientific materiality can co-exist with a specifically Japanese traditional epistemology. In fact, Araki Sadao thought that it was necessary to have this combination, because “the theory of materialism... does not recognize the spiritual functions of man, transforming him into a machine, robbing him of his ideals and freedom, transforming him into a public slave.”41 Maruyama Masao criticized this “spiritual” discourse for obscuring material reality; but the discourse itself sought to alleviate the alienation caused by pure capitalism, by recourse to the ideals of traditional culture.

Of course, the shrill documenting of what those ideals ought to be was a tacit admission of the fact that they had disappeared from the unconscious fabric of mundane life. The ideals that the Kokutai no Hongi preached were no longer “natural,” in that they were embedded in the traditional daily life of the village, the dominant pedagogical texts, and the social structures and cultural mores of the past. Instead, the discourse of essence had to create a whole list of ideals that were presumably inherent in the character of the Japanese; and to present the manifestation of these traits as the task and mark of all “true” Japanese.

Of course, there is no denying the usefulness of this particular fabrication of utopia. History is often presented as an inescapable nondiscursive, and one of its uses is precisely that of social control. However, to say that an ideology was useful is a very different thing from asserting that it is insincere or obscurantist, which has been the dominant strong-misreading by postwar historians. Maruyama Masao typifies this reaction, with his insistence that “spiritual” language was a feudal remnant that hid the lack of “real” material reform. A less accusatory approach is that which presumes that ideology is a simple one-to-one code between a euphemistic term and a harsh political reality. Thus, D. C. Holtom identifies Amaterasu Omikami with “the deification of

40. Ibid., pp. 46-47.
41. Araki, p. 70.
the political might of the military state." Finally, a few scholars are beginning to trace complex linkages between ideologies and the institutional realities in which they are embedded. In this spirit, I hope to have suggested that Western scientific rationality, the outmoding of traditional society, and the need for social cohesion under these circumstances might make comprehensible a discourse that is now regarded as "unbelievable" or anachronistic.

I believe that the notion of the insincerity of Japanese ideology derives mostly from the experience of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. It is felt that Japan somehow betrayed all the promises that she made to other Asian nations; and this leads historians to make bald statements, such as "in fact, Pan-Asian unity was a myth." I would contend, however, that most of the time Japan was quite frank about her desires and plans; and that her actions had a certain logical cohesiveness.

First and foremost, one must remember that, in the Japanese utopic discourse, the creation of an Asian union was a Japanese mission. It entailed the perfection of the form of their Utopia through the demonstration of the qualities fundamental to Japanese—in this case, justice and mercy; and the logical next step in their "glorious three-thousand-year history." "It is impossible to remain silent and lose sight of Japan which is the strongest state in Eastern Asia and which not only has the corresponding real force but also the historic mission to save a number of states of Eastern Asia. Japan must rise determinedly in the name of justice even if it really threatened the ruin of our homeland . . . It is the Japanese mission to struggle against all acts incompatible with Imperial virtue no matter what country is responsible for such acts. In this respect Japan cannot overlook a single instance of disorder springing up anywhere in East Asia." "The Japanese empire is a manifestation of morality and its special characteristic is the proliferation of the Imperial Way. It strives but for the achievement of Hakko Ichiu . . . to cause East Asia to return to its original form of independence and co-prosperity by shaking off the yoke of Europe and America, and to let its countries and peoples develop their respective abilities in peaceful cooperation and secure livelihood." That phrase, "to cause East Asia to return to its original form" leads me to speculate, albeit without much direct evidence, that the ultimate goal of Japanese expansion was not the creation of an Evil Empire, but

42. Holton, p. 55.
43. For example, Stefan Tanaka and Tak Fujitani.
a reprise of the Chinese world-arrangement. In other words, a central power which undertook to police the immediate area; the trading of materials and goods through this central power; a lingua franca (or should it be ‘sinica’?) understood throughout the union; the cultural leadership of the central power; and the general indifference and even disdain of this well-managed union to the rest of the (barbarian) world. I hope to show that the actions of Japan were not incompatible with this vision. Unfortunately, the language of the documents I read is not evocative of the Chinese empire; but the politics of the time would perhaps militate against this anyway. China was the biggest thorn in the side of the Japanese empire; and for decades Japanese intellectuals had been sneering at the “degradation” of China, making it a poor example.47

The “Asia for the Asiatics” plan had two dimensions: the assertion of difference between Asia and non-Asia; and the assertion of sameness within Asia. The former impulse found expression in the racist rhetoric which has proven so difficult for American historians to read. There are a couple of good theories for the ubiquity of Japanese anti-white fervor, among a lot of empty liberal condemnations. John Dower’s influential thesis proposes that conditions of conflict necessitated a dehumanized vision of the enemy.48 Benedict Anderson interprets anti-white vitriol as “essentially an attack on the myths of white racial superiority which had been so important to Western colonial rule, and thus an essential preliminary to any attempt to build up nonwhite colonial rule.”49 I agree with both these scholars that this move was necessary to establish difference: the vehemence of Japanese statements can be read as an attempt to control knowledge of the other, and more importantly to turn this knowledge into action. To this, I would like to add that the Japanese were also making a claim about authenticity. Other Asian nationalist movements had worked for independence and protested the rigors of colonialism—but it was Japan who forcefully insisted that Westerners had no right to act in Asia, that Asia in no sense belonged to the west. Further, anti-western rhetoric constituted a scathing indictment of western imperialism: not merely for exploitation, though that was documented ad infinitum; but chiefly for the hypocrisy of liberal dogma. “We Orientals know that such Western ideas as freedom, equality, democracy, etc. are based on the concept of racial and class differences. For example, the free societies of the British and French

47. However, see Okawa Shumei, “The Spiritual Basis of Asian Revolution and Unity,” p. 38 in Lebra.
white peoples are built on the foundation of the slavery of billions of colored people living in vast colonies and semi-colonies. It is like the democracy among the nobility of ancient Rome which was conjoined with use of slaves of many different race.\textsuperscript{50}

Though Japan was the only country making official and semi-official pronouncements of this sort, we must not jump to the conclusion that these concerns were foisted by Japan upon her more peaceful neighbors. Before the period of Japanese aggression, Japan was the only nation not muzzled by colonialism. The right to make inflammatory statements such as these is very much a perquisite of the power necessary to back them up. Therefore, while Japan did claim to speak for other Asian nations in the pre-war phase, this is not necessarily the mark of totalitarian impulses that it has been represented as. Any idea can be harmless without political power. The sentiment of Asian separatism had been expressed by others, such as Tagore\textsuperscript{51}; what was unique about Japan was the way this sentiment fit into the rest of her ideological universe, combined with the power necessary to make the idea dangerous.

The second part of the ideology was the assertion of sameness and collegiality among the Asian nations. This notion was advanced along two main lines. Some, such as Takehashi Kamekichi,\textsuperscript{52} and Arita Hachiro\textsuperscript{53} stressed the necessity and advantage of economic cooperation among the Asian nations, with Japan as the leader simply because she had achieved the furthest technological development. The other line was the assertion of a common cultural and historical development, centered on Confucianism and Buddhism. This strain of thought was often expressed in vague, romantic or even mystical terms,\textsuperscript{54} such as Okakura Tenshin's assertion that "the East is one,"\textsuperscript{55} or Ba Maw's dramatic statement "my Asiatic blood has always called to other Asians."\textsuperscript{56}

Japan has been relentlessly criticized for the schism between this rhetoric of Asian solidarity, and the poor treatment of other Asians so typical of Japanese occupied territories. Benedict Anderson, for example, writes: "Contempt for Southeast Asian 'natives', by contrast, while essential to the structure of Japanese colonialism, was not a deliberate

\textsuperscript{50} Miyazaki Antei, "East Asian Federation," pp. 7–8 in Lebra.
\textsuperscript{51} Quoted in Okawa, pp. 37–38 in Lebra.
\textsuperscript{52} Takehashi, pp. 48–54 in Lebra.
\textsuperscript{54} Very evocative of the so-called Orientalist discourse; see Edward Said, Orientalism.
\textsuperscript{55} Okakura Tenshin, The Ideals of the East (Dover), ch. 1.
\textsuperscript{56} Quoted in Dower, p. 6.
political device or tool but rather the inevitable sociopsychological distillation, largely unconscious, of the colonial enterprise itself.\textsuperscript{57} I agree with him that this behavior was not a deliberate political device or tool, on the grounds that the Japanese would have had much greater success without it; but doubt his immediate impulse to classify Japan as a colonial power. The colonial discourse, as an ideology, is invariably founded upon the strong assertion of alterity, which must be transformed into a comprehensible order through the exercise of power\textsuperscript{58}; but in Japanese colonialism, it was the countries most like Japan (Korea and China) that required the greatest use of force, and vice versa. The “contempt” pointed out by Anderson is not specific to colonialism, but inherent in all power structures. We can call it racism when it involves the collision of two “races”—though whether it does in the this case is doubtful—but precisely the same sorts of behaviors are discernable in the relations of American whites to American Blacks and Hispanics, Koreans from Seoul to those from Cholla-do, or Victorian ladies to the urban poor. All these relationships entail the mistreatment of the latter by the former, combined with solicitude for their welfare; both arising from the representation of the powerless as objects rather than subjects.

The problem of Japanese treatment of the other Asian nations was present as an epistemological question before it was a question of beatings and rapes. We have already established that the foundation of an Asian sphere was presented in the light of a mission or duty of the Japanese. In other words, Japan wished to give freedom, prosperity, and other goods to her neighbors, to fulfill her own knowledge of her self and the world. This desire required nothing of the peoples in question—not even, ultimately, their acquiescence. The destiny of the utopia had a life apart from the lives of those concerned.

Of course this impulse can hardly be described as benevolent; but neither can it be fairly termed malevolent, in the sense that it planned harm. The irony and danger of this phenomenon is that a sincere but monologic desire for good can be ultimately harmful and oppressive in its effects, indistinguishable from an evil intentionality. This is well illustrated in the history of the Japanese empire; but it is equally so in the story of American aid efforts to the “Third World,” or in that of any powerful entity that has the hubris to believe it can determine and endow the good for those lower down. Historians need to give up the truism that harmful effects must be the result of harmful intentions.

Another discursive factor may help account for the dichotomy between Japanese plans for Asia and Japanese treatment of Asians. I have mentioned that a characteristic of utopian logic was that means

\textsuperscript{57} Anderson, p. 15.

\textsuperscript{58} See Said for the model vis-a-vis Britain and France in the Middle East.
and ends were disconnected; goals did not partake of the character of the speech-acts of which they were comprised. Any step necessary to reach the utopian goal was ipso facto validated as good. In this logic, it was not an insuperable contradiction for peace, cooperation, and prosperity to be achieved through war, oppression, and poverty. This is the logic used by the Bolsheviks in Russia, and the Americans in Vietnam. The Japanese, with their eyes on the prize, may have accepted the sacrifices necessary to change the world order; but it doesn’t seem to have occurred to them that for the rest of Asia, a rosy tomorrow wouldn’t make up for a bleak today. They attributed what was in fact a difference in social epistemology to an essential lack in the characters of the non-Japanese, and thought to instill the proper character through quite harsh exhortation and example.

Up till now, I have been speaking of the parts of the empire as a unit; but each nation was in somewhat different circumstances, and responded to Japan in different ways. No one has yet written a comparative history of the various nations of the Co-Prosperity Sphere, and I shall not be able to do so here; neither the space nor the erudition necessary are at my disposal. But I wish to sketch a few guidelines towards my vision of this history, according to my model of the Japanese ideology of utopia.

The Japanese organized the Co-Prosperity Sphere as a series of concentric circles around a center, somewhat like the Chinese world-map. This is Okawa Shumei’s description:

The Inner Sphere—the vital sphere for the empire—includes Japan, Manchuria, North China, the lower Yangtze Area and the Russian Maritime area. The Smaller Co-Prosperity Sphere—the smaller self-supplying sphere of East Asia—includes the inner sphere plus Eastern Siberia, China, Indo-China and the South Seas. The Greater Co-Prosperity Sphere—the larger self-supplying sphere of East Asia—includes the smaller co-prosperity sphere, plus Australia, India, and island groups in the Pacific.59

By this definition, the Greater Co-Prosperity Sphere never existed. I also exclude the Greater Co-Prosperity Sphere, with the possible exception of India, because the discourse was ineffectual in these areas. I tend to classify the Co-Prosperity Sphere nations slightly differently, into four areas according to condition of former colonialism: (I) Korea, Manchuria, Formosa (II) China (III) South-East Asia (Burma, Thailand, Indo-China, Malaysia, Indonesia) (IV) the Philippines. Group I had not been settled by western imperialists. Group III and IV nations had been colonized for generations by western powers. Group II is a sui generis case. My contention is that Japanese demands, techniques of

59. Okawa, p. 75.
introduction, and future plans can be arranged along these cleavages, with fruitful comparative results.

Korea is interesting for several reasons. First, she is the only true nation which had never experienced colonialism before the arrival of the Japanese, and her experience under the Japanese best suits the label of "colonialism" according to the eurocentric model. Also, Korea was the only country in which Japan mortally wounded a traditional culture, in pursuit of modern development (though it was America that delivered the coup de grace). Third, Korea received the ultimate "gift" from the Japanese point of view: she was deemed worthy of Japanification, and thus eligible for a high position in the Co-Prosperity Sphere. Of course, this also meant that Japan had no intention of furthering the cause of national independence here, as she claimed in other nations.

These material conditions are combined with the representation of Korea as the nation which most hated and resented the Japanese. One widespread historical theory is that economic tensions were at the heart of Korean antipathy toward Japan:

The strong competition offered by the Japanese ... under government protection may not have damaged the economy as a whole, but it disturbed settled practices and was seen by Koreans as a hindrance to their getting a livelihood. In these ways antagonism toward Japan was sustained and Korean nationalism was intensified. But ... in technology they offered a model for the Korean population to follow. It is certainly possible that the better standard of living enjoyed by the Japanese made the Koreans envious and inspired them to desire independence so as to seek the same advantages.61

I doubt that Japanese economic success spurred the Koreans into imitation, on the grounds that when the war was over, the mass of Koreans rushed to return to small-farming under a loose socialist aegis.62 Another prevalent theory is that "Koreans, particularly members of the elite, were proud of their ancient traditions, culture, and observance of Confucian propriety; in their view the Japanese civilization was somewhat inferior to their own."63 This view is perpetuated ad infinitum by every Korean, as if late-Yi Dynasty Koreans all spouted Confucian metaphysics and sneered at the barbarian Japanese.

I think it more correct to hypothesize that the most pressing concern

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60. Manchuria and Formosa were not exactly populated with self-conscious singular peoples; they functioned as immigration centers and didn't develop nationalist consciousnesses during this period to my knowledge.
for Korea would not be the lack of political autonomy (because Koreans searched for a powerful Big Brother to the bitter end, calling on China, Russia, Japan, and the US in turn\(^\text{64}\)), but the sudden end of a long traditional culture. Especially for the peasants, the end of old-style tenant-farming, village structure, and a very settled existence would be the problematics for which satisfying ideological structures must be found. Unfortunately, no one has yet produced an important work on the social disruption caused by the Japanese—in fact, until recently no one had even thought to count the number of dislocated Koreans.\(^\text{65}\) For the traditional elite, cultural and political questions would be more accessible; their interest in language and history might be read as a way of insisting on difference from the predominant Japanese historical ideology; or it might be that the change in material conditions troubled them little, if cultural hegemony could be maintained. The articulate Japanese-educated yangban class has had too much attention in the work on the Japanese occupation of Korea—they are voices, the peasants are merely statistics. Cultural nationalism, as a resistance move, is not an unproblematic model; we need a method to read the unwritten speech-acts of the people before we uncritically accept this. To write this history according to the expressed intentionality of articulate Koreans is absurd for a non-Korean.

The story of Korea under Japan should be turned away from discussions merely of economic exploitation and control by force; and probably also from vague discussions of cultural pride. Japan lavished more care and attention on Korea than on any other part of the Empire; but she caused the decay of a vibrant traditional culture. Koreans were always calling on more powerful nations to champion them, which Japan was happy to do: but where exactly did Japan cross the line into domination, and why? The basic narrative that I find most appropriate is one that anyone who has lived under a very dominant parent will understand: the difficulty of living with someone else’s expectations of one’s subjectivity. Korea was crushed under Japan’s dream of a future that was rosy by Japanese standards, and bewildering by Korean ones.

Korea is one extreme of the Co-Prosperity Sphere experience. The other extreme is probably Southeast Asia. A comparison between the two would be helpful for both sides.

Stated goals for relations between Japan and the so-called Southern area are often fairly close to those actually achieved. The Japanese plan:

We will liberate them from colonial status and try to raise their consciousness as peoples of Greater East Asia. We will expand the power of nationalities suitably as an important facet of the prosperity of Greater East


\(^{65}\) Cumings, ch. 1.
Asia. We will have them contribute to the building of the Southern Area. We will have them assume charge of part of the defence of the Southern Area. In fostering or leading them we will discipline ourselves to be generous and dignified and kind, not uncontrolled... We should avoid immediate Japanification. So long as it does not interfere with our control we will respect old customs and religion and the native language as much as possible. We will try to expand the Japanese language as the common language of Greater East Asia.

In the main, the Japanese kept these promises. They only "liberated" Indonesia, and Malaysia and Burma from Dutch and British colonial status; Thailand had always been independent, and Vietnam was nominally left under the control of Vichy France. The "consciousness as peoples of Greater East Asia" was certainly raised, whether with historical accuracy or not. There was a comprehensive economic plan to develop Southeast Asia, though there wasn't enough time to judge if it was implemented. Japanization was not pushed, in the main, though Japanese was taught. Though military regimes were set up in each new area, Japan liked to retain "existing governmental organizations," though perhaps not with so much "due respect for past organizational structure and native practices."

However, we ought to keep in mind that in these areas Japan was mainly concerned with fighting the Allied armies; the military governments were not set up to wage war on the natives, as some accounts come close to suggesting.

Though there is no overwhelming evidence that Japan meant to keep all the occupied areas as territories once cooperation had been established, they did violate a couple of their promises badly. While they promised national independence to the Indonesia, Burma, and Malaysia, they wished to defer this independence till the situation was no longer critical: as they put it, "premature encouragement of native independence movements shall be avoided." According to my model, this was so independence could be presented as a gift, with strings attached.

It is sometimes assumed that the idea of an Asian union was invented by Japan as a rationale to take over all of Asia. It is in Southeast Asia that this is, in my opinion, least true. First, the independence of the Southeast Asian nations was long overdue; probably Japan had read this on the wall, and knew she didn't have a hope of stopping this historical trend. However, she might have hoped to slow it

69. Ibid., p. 115.
down and channel it, so that she could benefit from being the liberating savior-nation. Economic ties would be established to Japan-as-industrial-consumer, not England or the Netherlands. Second, there is evidence that some Southeast Asians, particularly Burmese and Indonesians, hoped to use Japan to their own advantage.

The Burmese Independence Army (BIA) is probably the most important example of this, and one of the curious subtexts of the Japanese occupation. This small military force was founded by a Japanese, Colonel Keiji Suzuki (who took the Burmese name Bo Mogyo), who by all accounts was fiercely dedicated to the ideal of Burmese independence at the expense of his own country. It was he who taught the Burmese that they should take their fate into their own hands, through statements such as: “Independence is not the kind of thing you can get through begging for it from other people. You should proclaim it yourself. The Japanese refuse to give it? Very well... proclaim independence and set up your own government. If they start shooting, you just shoot back.”

This man seems to have inspired complete dedication in the Burmese whom he led, and fear and loathing in the Japanese whose orders he deliberately disobeyed. Needless to say, the BIA was disbanded by the Japanese six months after it was formed; but its members went on to lead the Burmese Revolution. As Dorothy Guyot puts it: “The postwar liberation movement, which brought Burma complete independence in 1948, built directly upon the BIA’s 1942 success. The groups excluded from or underrepresented in the BIA were likewise of small influence in the liberation movement and hence in the independent government. In fact, it was the success of the BIA in attracting peasants to its ranks that prepared the broad base which the postwar movement used to convince London that independence could not be postponed.”

Now, the BIA greatly increased Japanese prestige in Burma during the critical early months of 1942: “The BIA’s participation in the Japanese conquest of Burma transformed an exchange of masters... into a liberation campaign.” On the other hand, the BIA had their own purposes: that “the BIA would be able to grow in safety behind the Japanese armour and to move forward and gather the fruits of the Japanese victories, and to use them to win over the Burmese masses.”

Even if the two ideological rationales were entirely different, the Burmese and Japanese were able to meet for one moment on a ground of action. Unfortunately, Japanese “highhandedness
and brutality towards the Burmese," and their insistence on the priority of their own plans and methods caused the end of cooperation.

Ba Maw wrote in great bewilderment: "I could not detect any sign that they [the Japanese] were even aware that such a universal feeling existed; nor . . . did they seem to care."74 It is possible that all of the comparatively-lightly occupied Southeast Asian nations had groups comparable to the BIA, who were willing to cooperate with and use the Japanese at first, but were ultimately driven away by highhanded masters blinded to daily realities by their grandiose obsessions. In other words, Southeast Asians could contemplate favor-for-favor politics, but not a politics of monologism.

Obviously I have left out huge chunks of the history of Greater East Asia. The one thing I would like to insist on, however, is that this history no longer be considered just a contest between emerging countries. Nationalist (or nativist) histories from the Asian nations, and Western histories in sympathy with "development" and "democratisation" tend to castigate Japan as the worst kind of colonialist, mixing western material power with Asian lies. The narrative they choose is of heroic resistance against oppression, in the unending struggle to achieve independence and democracy. I would like to have suggested that what is at stake here is not merely competing nationalisms, but competing methods of ordering the workings of the world.

History Redux: The Jargon of Sincerity

Japan's defeat in the Pacific War ended this discursive moment. After 1945, no one proved willing or able to comprehend the logics of this history. A world under the sway of liberal America claimed to find the rhetoric of the empire inexplicable and probably pathological. The whole experience was subsumed under the model of the Evil Empire.

As historians began their work on this period, they were highly conscious of the recent end of the cataclysm, and determined that it should not happen again. At first, they were quite frank about the politics of their task. The introduction to Robert Ward's book confesses to the belief that Japan will someday make good on her promise to rise again. As the preface-writer, Laurence Salisbury, stated: "Japan's methods of conquest and occupation are planned not only for the present but for the remote future as well. It is for that reason that this book has a continuing significance."75 Maruyama Masao, contemplating the recent collapse of the fascist order, noted that "this by no means precludes the possibility that a fascist movement may arise in Japan in the future."76

74. Ibid., pp. 130-131.
Immediate after the war, knowledge of Japan was directly linked to the necessity of controlling her. It was only later that the notion of “pure” scholarship of Asia arose; but by then the pattern was set.

The narrative they devised was worthy of a Hollywood B-Western. Japan was the Villain; America the Hero. The Asian nations were relieved of any responsibility for their wartime thoughts and deeds—they were Helpless Victims.

The first thing that Japan was made to surrender was the notion that her history “belonged” to her. Whether this was perspicacity, vindictiveness, or mere accident of the part of American historians is anyone’s guess. But Japanese history was carefully detached from its roots in the day of Amaterasu Omikami, and inserted into the latest chapter of what became known as “Universal History.” Japan’s history could no longer be read as a unique history of anything—in the hands of modernization historians, it became merely an example of late development, a weak middle-class, the failure of liberal democracy, or whatever.

The second thing taken from Japan was her sincerity. All the ideals and plans so carefully nurtured by three generations of Japanese were flipped over to display their dark, maggotty undersides. The Imperial Way, Asia for the Asiatics, the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere—all were shown to be solely techniques of social control, and any who had believed in them were the merest dupes. The true, material, venal desires of Japan were quantified—industrial success, raw materials, cheap labor, strategic territory, and all the rest of it, bare and sordid. America went to war to “make the world safe for democracy”; Japan had no such saving motive.

The countries of Asia were “liberated”—in other words, handed back to the colonial powers from which they had been wrested. Their inhabitants were forgiven of the things they had been forced to do and say against their masters. A few were castigated as Quislings—the likes of Wang Ching-wei, whom John Dower in all innocence terms “a formerly respected nationalist leader”; or Ba Maw, the Burmese prime minister. These few were labelled “collaborator,” and thus marked for eternal ignominy. But by and large, if the entire Korean bureaucracy had served under the Japanese, if all the members of the Indonesian cabinet had held their positions under the Japanese—well, it was no fault of theirs.

I am not qualified to judge whether Chinese or Southeast Asians were collaborators or heroes, but here is Benedict Anderson’s account of this history, as written by and for Americans:

The history of Southeast Asia during World War II has too often simply been the saga of the trials and tribulations of the ‘whites’—their sufferings,

77. Dower, p. 6.
their bravery, their strategies, and their idealism. Southeast Asia itself has
 tended to be an obscure, exotic backdrop for one scene in the grandiose
world-drama of the Allied struggle against the powers of darkness. Even
the more detailed studies of Southeast Asian politics during the war years
have too often depicted the historical developments of that period as es-
sentially a struggle for hegemony between the Japanese and ourselves,
with the Southeast Asians assigned appropriately modest, subordinate
roles whether as ‘victims’, ‘resistance fighters’, ‘dupes’, or ‘collaborators’. 
These terms and categories are drawn from the wartime experience of
Western Europe, and there are reasons for doubting that they are really
very apt in the quite different environments of Hanoi, Rangoon, Djakarta,
and Bangkok.

The swift Japanese seizure of Southeast Asia was a devastating blow
to Western self-esteem, from which many of us are still far from being
liberated. The ignominious collapse of the Philippines, the humiliating
clientship imposed on Vietnam, the fall of Singapore, the surrender at
Kalijati, all have conditioned us to seeing the period of Japanese domi-
nation as a disastrous interregnum, producing a Pandora’s box of political
evils which have not ceased to plague ‘our’ Southeast Asia ever since.
The ‘natural’ evolution of Southeast Asia along Western and ‘democratic’
lines was thus rudely interrupted, and subsequent attempts, mainly by
the United States, to resume the good work of the older colonial pow-
ers in the tutelary task have been repeatedly undermined by the deadly
legacy of the war years.78

This picture is now changing a bit. Korean historians now reluctantly
admit the value of the industrial infrastructure that Japan brought.
Burmese admit that their Independence Army was not only aided by
the Japanese, but actually set up by a Japanese officer. Indonesians con-
fess that their post-independence government was staffed with those
who had been high officials under the Japanese. Still, Benedict An-
derson unhesitatingly describes Japan as a “colonial power” in terms
similar to the other colonial powers. John Dower unthinkingly de-
scribes the East Asian Sphere plan as a “myth.” The Evil Empire lives
on.

The dominant American theory, that Western encouragement of de-
pendence is done in “good faith,” while Japan’s mission toward these
ends was done in “bad faith,” is both stultifying and dull. The political
consequences of this American historical discourse are as yet uncon-
fessed. But if material reality can be controlled only by social goals,
what social goals are American historians striving toward when they
reach their conclusions concerning the material reality of the Greater
East Asian experience? Not to mince words, the attempt to explicate
by the universal logic of economic or political advantage and so-called

"rational choice" could be read as an effort to remake Japanese (and all other) experience in our own image, understandable only in our terms. This history has been coopted, so it can no longer serve what we perceive as dangerous and deviant political interests. The Asian peoples are squeezed into intentionalities that are not their own, but only truncated or perverted versions of Western logic. Viewed from this angle, the myth of the Japanese Evil Empire can be upheld; but whether we should continue to do so, and for what purpose, are doubtful questions. We criticize Japan for having been the most powerful state in Asia, crushing her neighbors under the weight of her vision of the good. Since the end of the Pacific War, we have done what we accused Japan of doing, on a discursive level and an economic one (though with failing success). We have fought monologism with monologism, and we have won that hollow victory for the moment.

Karl Marx believed that a certain cruel-to-be-kind treatment of the proletariat would encourage them to act for themselves; while a kind-to-be-cruel treatment would obscure the conditions of exploitation. If an observer viewed the effects of the Japanese occupation of Asia by this logic, without reading documents that explicate intentionality, s/he would probably think that Japan gambled her own liberty and prosperity to prepare the other Asian nations for independence. She threw her own body between the small Asian nations and the wrath of the western powers; freed them from colonialism; organized their defence; allowed native independence armies to exist, often giving them harsh but effective incentive; creating a competitive climate in which desires for nationalism and independence could flourish. After Japan was defeated, the western nations enslaved the Asian countries again, briefly, but they all were able to free themselves with the skills the Japanese had taught them, or allowed or encouraged them to develop. Only South Korea has not completed its revolution; it is occurring now. The important thing is that the Asian nations were able, through Japan's sacrifice, to fight for themselves, not to have their independence given them by any tutor. The Japanese could not have been more effective in inciting the people to take their fate into their own hands, if they had thought it out with both hands for a month.

Now, no one would agree with this diagnosis today. For one thing, we have documents stating that certain actions were taken for certain reasons, for the political benefit of the actors. Yet, there is a certain amount of logic in this appraisal, which privileges results over intentions. Many scenarios, like the one presented above, are not even within the plane of the possible, as dictated by the bounds of this discourse. I have yet to read a serious suggestion that the Japanese sincerely (acted as if they) believed in the Emperor-based history; that
Asians might have desired to secede from a Eurocentric world that had treated them so ill; that Japan might have wanted a sphere of influence in Asia, not an empire; that Korea desired a strong "protector," though she got more than she bargained for; that Indonesia and Burma were willing to barter cooperation for independence and economic help; or that the nations of Asia would have turned to Japan by themselves if they had been granted sovereignty after the First World War. I do not suggest these versions of history are more fair or evenhanded or complex than the current ones; only that pluralism is desirable for true discourse, and this plurality of political views is not allowed under the tightly controlled and politically tense American discourse on Asia.
Highway versus Development:
Railroads in Korea under Japanese
Colonial Rule

Hatsue Shinohara

Introduction

From around the turn of the century to 1945 the Japanese established a vast network of railroads in Korea. It was one of the chief characteristics of Japanese colonial rule in Korea, and its impact on the Korean economy and society was significant.¹

Although in Western scholarship on Japanese colonialism the railroad has often been touched upon, its implications for general colonial policy has not been fully discussed. Peter Duus wrote that the railroad was important as economic infrastructure and that it was funded by the Japanese government.² Mark Peattie also mentioned the railroad as a modern facility in the transportation network.³ Hilary Conroy treated the railroad as one Japanese economic activity in his detailed study of


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the Japanese seizure of Korea. In general, the economic nature of the railroad seems to have been emphasized in Western works.

The importance of the railroad in examining colonial rule has also been suggested in Japanese historiography on colonialism. Asada Kyōji, a leading scholar on Japanese colonialism, mentioned that the railroad was one of the three most important elements of colonial rule, in addition to Japan’s control over finance and land. However, Asada was critical of the fact that there have been few studies on the railroad in Korea, while there have been numerous works on the Southern Manchurian Railway. For further research, Asada suggested that we investigate the development of Korean railroads from the 1890’s to 1945 and draw the general picture of the railroad in Korea, because it is necessary to understand the characteristics of Japan’s railroad policy in terms of the general nature of Japanese rule over Korea.

In the last several years there have appeared several good studies on specific subjects of the railroad in Korea. However there has been no work that ventured to examine the whole picture of the railroad in Korea. The aim of my study, then, is to present a history of the railroad in Korea, tracing its development in such a way as to make clear its implications for the general framework of Japanese colonial rule in Korea. Along the way, I will consider how the Japanese controlled and managed this project.

Historical Development

Japanese interest in having a railroad in Korea dates back to the period when the Japanese started intruding into the peninsula. At that time some dreamt of the construction of a railroad in Korea which would connect Korea with railroads in China or Russia. For instance,

6. For example, a series of work by Inouye Yuichi treated the diplomatic negotiations about Korean railroads. His works were recently published as a volume, Higashi Ajia Tetsudo Kokusai Kanketsu-shi [International History of East Asian Railroad] (Tokyo: Keio Tsushin 1989). Also, Kitaoka Shin’ichi dealt with the Japanese Army and the railroad in Korea in the initial colonial period, see Kitaoka, Nihon Rikugun to Tairiku Seisaku [The Japanese Army and Continental Policy] (Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku shuppankai, 1978).
7. I use the term "(Korean) railroad(s)" to designate any railroad in Korea, while I reserve the term "Korean Railway" to denote the governmental umbrella organization which controlled the railroads in Korea.
Okuma Shigenobu wanted to build a railroad line from Korea to the continent because of its presumed economic profitability, and Maejima Hisoka wanted to connect a Korean railroad with the Siberian railroad. However, in order to actualize such plans Japan first had to settle outstanding diplomatic issues; Japan needed to acquire railroad concessions from Korea, which was not an easy task because of the international rivalry involved in trying to acquire similar concessions.

Just after the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in 1894 there was a provisional plan to build a line between Pusan and Seoul due to military necessity, but the war ended too quickly for this plan to materialize. However, during the Sino-Japanese War the Japanese government forced the Korean Government to sign a provisional treaty between Japan and Korea on, August 20, 1894, which specified that the construction of the Seoul-Pusan Line and Seoul-Incheon Line would be done by the Japanese.

During the Sino-Japanese War, Yamagata Aritomo, a leading figure in the Japanese Army, explained the importance of the railroad in Korea in a document called “On Korean Policy.” He argued that there were two important policy aims with regard to Korea: one was to establish the railroad from Pusan through Seoul to Weiju (a border city along the Yalu river); the other was to have Japanese citizens emigrate north of Pyongyang to Weiju. According to Yamagata, the rationale for the Pusan-Weiju line was,

We should control transportation in Korea. Once something happens in the Far East, we should take this chance and should not lose the opportunity. In order to do this, the most important thing is the railway between Pusan and Weiju. Although we have a secret agreement over the concession of the Seoul-Pusan Line, if we cannot extend this line to Weiju, I cannot but feel depressed, because the line from Pusan to Weiju is the main route to the East Asian continent. . . . In the longer term, this line will make up for the expense and add value for Japan.

It would be a mistake to think that at that time Yamagata had any concrete ideas of continental expansion. However, it is important to note that although he might have been vague, the value of a Korean railroad was thought of in the reference to Japan’s future activities in China and Manchuria.

Although Yamagata strongly recommended the construction of a railroad in Korea, the Japanese government did not endorse his plan. Initiatives for the construction of the railroad came from private Japanese

businessmen in Seoul. They thought that the construction of a railroad in Korea would lead to greater Japanese influence in Korea, and tried to persuade the Japanese government of its benefit. However, the Japanese government was not so enthusiastic about the project as Prime Minister Ōtō Hirobumi and Foreign Minister Mutsu Munemitsu, who told the speculators that Japan was unable to finance such an expensive project, that Japan did not have experience in constructing railways in foreign countries and that it would cause diplomatic difficulties with Russia.10 The Japanese businessmen gathered other people who favored the construction of the railroad, so that in 1896 one hundred and fifty businessmen agreed to be promoters for the future Seoul-Pusan railroad company. The leader of the project was Shibusawa Eiichi, a leading businessman and also the founder of the Korean First Bank. In 1898, the union of the promoters for the Seoul-Pusan Railroad signed a contract with the Korean government.

Meanwhile in 1896, the Korean Government gave concessions on the Pusan-Incheon Line to an American businessman, James R. Morse. Around this time Japanese-Korean relations deteriorated because of the assassination of the Korean Queen Ming. The Japanese minister, Komura Jutaro, protested that granting a concession to an American was against the provisional treaty of 1894, but the Korean government defended its position by arguing that the agreement with Japan had only been “provisional.”11 Morse was planning to raise the necessary capital in the United States; however, in 1898 because of financial difficulties he approached the Japanese in an effort to sell the concession. In view of the difficulties with the Seoul-Pusan railroad and the rather modest expense of the Seoul-Incheon Line, Japanese businessmen raised the capital and bought the line from Morse.12

The contract between the Korean government and the union of promoters of the Seoul-Pusan Railway provided for the start of actual construction within the three years after the completion of the treaty. The promoters started raising the capital needed to establish the company, but it was difficult. The Japanese government was still reluctant to give financial support to the project because of the financial and diplomatic reasons discussed above. In 1900, the Finance Minister, Matsukata Masayoshi, wrote that the project was “not only an extremely difficult

11. SEDS vol. 16, p. 358.
task in terms of our financial situation, but we should also avoid direct involvement in this project on account of diplomatic considerations."\(^{13}\)

The Seoul-Pusan Railroad Company finally started construction in August 1901 just before the contract expired. In order to get the lacking capital, they considered the possibility of introducing foreign capital. Possibilities of obtaining credit from the Belgian syndicate (Compagnie Internationale d'Orient) and from Britain were discussed. However, both efforts failed to materialize. In both cases, there was strong opposition in Japan for fear that the introduction of foreign capital would end Japan's exclusive control over the railroad. The military, in particular, opposed the introduction of foreign capital, because from military considerations it wanted Japan's exclusive control over the railroad. One historian wrote that the obstacle to introducing foreign capital was that political and military considerations about the Seoul-Pusan Line were more important than economic incentives.\(^{14}\)

Most Japanese government officials acknowledged the value of the railroad, but they were divided about the extent the Japanese government should commit to it. Itô Hirobumi and Inouye Kaoru were reluctant to give financial support, while Yamagata and Komura Jutaro, the Foreign Minister from 1901 to 1906, strongly endorsed the early construction of the railroad.\(^{15}\) It is interesting to note that this cleavage over the construction of the Seoul-Pusan Line coincided with a difference in opinion over the Japan's future diplomatic position, i.e. over alliance with Russia or Britain. In fact, then, Japanese statesmen divided into two groups over this issue. Katô Takaaki advocated alliance with Britain and accepted the post of Foreign Minister in the Itô cabinet in 1900 on the condition that he would support the Seoul-Pusan railroad.\(^{16}\) In other words, the supporters of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance were pro-railroad, while Itô and Inouye advocated an alliance with Russia. The difference between an alliance with Britain and an alliance with Russia not only pertained to the choice of partner but also entailed a different view on Japan's future position in Manchuria. Alliance with Russia would have recognized the division of Manchuria and Korea into Russian and Japanese spheres of influence—Manchuria for Russia and Korea for Japan—based on the vision of a so-called "exchange of Manchuria and Korea," in which Russian superiority in

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Manchuria was specified. On the other hand, supporters of an Anglo-Japanese alliance sought an agreement with Britain, which not only would acknowledge Japanese superiority in Korea but also would secure the opportunity for future activities in Manchuria by acknowledging the Open Door principle in China. With this interpretation of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, Japan wanted to secure future possibilities in Manchuria within the Open Door principle, an option more favorable to Japan than the exchange of influence in Manchuria for Korea.

Thus, it may be assumed that those who were more concerned with future Japanese expansion into Manchuria and China were also supporters of construction of the Seoul-Pusan railroad. This hypothesis needs to be examined further, but here I will merely provide the example of Komura Jutaro, an advocate of alliance with Britain and of a positive policy toward China. Komura was interested from the very beginning in extending the railroad in Korea to Manchuria. In 1901 when Komura first became Foreign Minister he submitted to the cabinet a “ten-year plan on domestic and foreign policy” in which he suggested that Japan facilitate the early completion of the Seoul-Pusan railroad and then extend the line through Weiju to the Chinese Eastern Railroad. Also in 1901 Komura instructed the Japanese Minister in Seoul to negotiate with the Korean government over the concession of the Seoul-Weiju Line. He wrote that “the Seoul-Weiju Line is not only a central line in Korea, comparable to the Seoul-Pusan Line, but in the future, once it has been connected with the Manchurian Railway, it will become vital as a part of an Asian continental railroad.”

We can also see Komura’s strong interest in the Seoul-Weiju line two years later, when a rumor circulated that Russia was trying to get the concession of the Seoul-Weiju Line. Komura then suggested that Japan must prevent Russia from getting that concession, because “either the Seoul-Pusan line or Seoul-Weiju line can prove useful only in joint and mutual cooperation. If the Seoul-Weiju Line comes under foreign management, it is natural that the Seoul-Pusan Line will be maimed and useless.” Additionally, in negotiations with Russia to prevent a final breakdown of relations, Komura inserted a clause stating that Russia would not interfere with the extension of a Korean railroad to Yalu or in the future with the Chinese Eastern Railroad. Komura was not concerned with the railroad solely as a means for future activities in

17. Ohata, p. 11.
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China. Acquisition of this railroad concession also meant strengthening Japanese influence in Korea, with concomitant effects on the status of Japanese residents in Korea and on trade relations. It is apparent, however, that Komura continued thinking of a possible future connection of Korean railroads with Manchuria, as indicated by his later commitments both to negotiations with China over the Mukden-Anton (a Chinese border city by the Yalu) line after the Russo-Japanese War and to the abolishment of E. H. Harriman’s proposal for a joint venture on the Manchurian railroad.

In the meantime actual construction of the Seoul-Pusan line slowly progressed, but there arose a debate about which gauge the Korean Railroad should use. Because of the limited budget available, the narrow gauge (1,067 meters) had wide support, and the military endorsed this, because a narrow gauge was common to railroads in Japan and the military thought that a common gauge would be convenient for future connections between Korea and Japan. However, the chief engineer insisted that because in the future Korean railroads would be connected with Chinese railroads, they should adopt the wide gauge (1,435 meters), and his plan was approved. 22

In November, 1904, four months before the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War, only 30 li of the total length of 270 li had been completed, 90 li were under construction, and the remaining 150 li had not been started. 23 In anticipation of the Russo-Japanese War, on December 28, 1904, the Japanese government issued an urgent order for the quick completion of the Seoul-Pusan Line. The Japanese government issued subsidies, gave assurances of credit and after the war broke out sent experienced engineers and other personnel directly from the Japanese Department of Railways. The line was completed in January 1905.

The Seoul-Weiju Line was started after the war broke out as a military railroad based on the Japan-Korean protocol of 1904, and the railroad unit under the General Staff directly engaged in its construction. Because of urgent construction its plans were drawn up according to maps rather than by actual surveying. 24 Almost all the materials, rails and locomotives were imported from the United States. In spite of this rush to build, however, the two lines were completed too late for use in actual military operations. In the end, ships had to transport military personnel and war materials.

During the Russo-Japanese War Japan forced the Korean government to sign the protectorate treaty. An explicit plan of its future goals in

23. SEDS, vol. 16, p. 482.
24. Forty Years, p. 55.
Korea was formulated by a cabinet decision of May 3, 1904, which detailed Japan’s control of Korea’s defense, foreign relations and finances. But it also contained a portion which, I believe, can be termed the blueprint for future development of the railroad in Korea. This document noted that “control of transportation and communication is politically, militarily and economically important. Above all, the railroad project, viewed as transportation facilities, is the main point of rule over Korea.” Each line was described as follows:

1. The Seoul-Pusan line: this line runs through southern Korea and is the most important line.
2. The Seoul-Weiju line: this line goes through northern Korea along the Yellow Sea and upon connection with the Seoul-Pusan line it goes through the Korean peninsula. In the end it will connect with Chinese Eastern Railroad and become the continental main road.
3. The Seoul-Weonsan-Unggi Bay Line, this line connects the north-south line with the Japan sea and goes up to the Tuman River. This line is important for the defense of the northern border.
4. The Masan-Samnangjin Line. Masan is the best port in southern Korea. The connection of this port with the Seoul-Pusan line is important both militarily and economically.

The lines described in this cabinet decision traversed the peninsula to the Manchurian border. Also, the line to Unggi Bay seems to reflect military considerations, since during the war the Japanese Army built a short line around the Unggi Bay to move war materials to Manchuria.

In sum, it is possible to say that among Meiji Japanese leaders there was a tendency to regard the railroad in Korea as a route to China and Manchuria, as Yamagata Aritomo and Komura Jutarō had argued. And it was the situation in Manchuria, particularly the Russo-Japanese War, that quickened the building of the railroad.

After the Russo-Japanese War, the railroads in Korea had to be unified because the Seoul-Pusan Line was private but the Seoul-Weiju Line was under military control. This led the Japanese government to nationalize the Seoul-Pusan line in 1906. There was opposition, particularly from the Finance Ministry, which insisted that the Seoul-Weiju line should be managed by the Seoul-Pusan Railroad Company on account of Japan’s tight financial situation after the war. However, the concession of the Chinese Eastern Railway that Japan had gained from Russia

26. Ibid., pp. 226–7. My interpretation of this document is slightly different from that of Peter Duus, who interprets the planning of the railroad in this document as a reflection of Japanese intention to control the whole economic infrastructure. However, I think that strategic implications were stronger in this plan. See Peter Duus, “Economic Dimensions of Meiji Imperialism,” p. 140.
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and the Japanese protectorate over Korea added to the importance of the railroad and led the Japanese government to nationalize it.

Ito Hirobumi then became the Resident-General of Korea, but he was still not very enthusiastic about the railroad project,27 and it was not until Sone Arasuke succeeded Ito that construction of Seoul-Weonsan line and the Honam line (from Taejon of the Seoul-Pusan line to the port town of Mokpo) was agreed to. The construction of the Honam Line was not mentioned in the cabinet decision of 1904—this line ran through the economically wealthy region of south-western Korea where rice was the main product—but concern for rice and connection from another port to the Seoul-Pusan line seems to have led to the construction of this line.

During the period around official annexation, the Army proved to be important for the railroad in Korea, because: firstly, the Army adopted "the Guideline of Imperial Defense" in 1907, which noted the strategic importance of Korean railroads for future military operations in Manchuria; and secondly, Terauchi Masatake from the Army became the first Governor-General in Korea. The Guideline said that "Since transportation by the sea route over the Yellow Sea is beyond our control, the north-south railroad in Korea needs to be operative so that it will be ready as the main transportation route for the military."28 This policy set a precedent for the north-south railroad and would remain the fundamental policy for Korean railroads during the initial colonial period.

In June 1911, Yamagata strongly endorsed this policy in an opinion about the management of railroads in Manchuria and Korea. He explained in detail the Russian ability to mobilize in Manchuria and argued that Japan should establish an equivalent mobilization system on the railroad from Pusan to Mukden, and he suggested, for that purpose, that this line be double-tracked (one set of tracks for each direction) and equipped with sufficient cars and locomotives.29 Yamagata’s plans amounted to an ambitious vision to establish a railroad network in Korea and Manchuria. In particular, he recommended building a line to the Unggi Bay, a line from Kweinei (a town bordering on both Manchuria and Russia in north-east Korea) to Kirin (a town in the middle of Manchuria) and another line to the Manchurian border. On November 11, 1911 when the bridge over the Yalu was completed, Ya-

27. Forty Years, p. 82.
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magata and Terauchi exchanged poems to celebrate the completion of the bridge.\textsuperscript{30}

Terauchi, who took further steps to secure the Mukden-Pusan route,\textsuperscript{31} naturally gave it preference because it was compatible with the Army's interests and benefited the railroad. After the Russo-Japanese war the Korean Railway faced economic difficulties because it was not able to transport enough goods or people. First Terauchi tried to get a discounted tax from Chinese government on goods sent by railroad over the Yalu. He asked the Tokyo government to engage in the negotiations over tariff reduction in 1911, and after two years of negotiation in 1913 an agreement was completed.

At that time there were two trade routes between Manchuria and Japan: one was the sea-route from Dalian to Japan, and the other was the overland route from Mukden to Pusan. The South Manchurian Railway Company (hereafter cited as the SMRC) used the Dalian route, so most of the goods from or to Manchuria were carried by ship. The Korean Railway wanted these goods to travel via Korean railroads, and this was also compatible with the army's interest in securing railroad lines to Manchuria. On May 4, 1914, representatives from three lines (the SMRC, the Korean Railway, the National Railway in Japan) met in Tokyo to discuss the special discount rate on goods sent to and from Manchuria by railroad. As a result, twelve items received a discount rate of 30 percent.\textsuperscript{32}

While this discount rate contributed to a modest increase of freight on Korean railroads, it aroused strong opposition in the SMRC and among Japanese businessmen in Dalian because the policy undermined the priority placed on Dalian by the SMRC and damaged the trade of Japanese businessmen. With the support of the SMRC, Japanese businessmen in Dalian actively lobbied the Tokyo government, leading the discount rate used by the three lines to become a heated political issue and causing friction between the SMRC and the Korean Railway.\textsuperscript{33} Because Terauchi had been annoyed by pressure from the SMRC and had supported the unification of the Korean and South Manchurian railroad, when he became Prime Minister he resolved the issue. In

\textsuperscript{30} Kitaoka, p. 41.

\textsuperscript{31} The Mukden-Pusan route ran from Pusan to Weiju by Korean Railroad and then from Andong to Mukden on the Manchurian Railroad. The line from Mukden to Antong (a city by the Yalu) was originally a small, narrow gauged line for military transportation but from 1907 construction of a wide gauge started and was completed in November, 1911.

\textsuperscript{32} The twelve items were: hats, cotton cloth, cotton yarn, beer, lamps, manufactured cotton goods, fruit, sea weed, dried fish, china, jute bags and Korean rice.

1917, he decided to put management of the Korean Railway under the SMRC, although planning, financing and ownership of the railroad was left with the Government-General of Korea (hereafter cited as GGK).

Neither the discount rate nor management by the SMRC improved the low profit levels of Korean railroads, however, and some were of the opinion that all the lines in Korea should be bought by the SMRC. Meanwhile, the special discount rate for the three lines was abolished in January 1921, because of criticism that it violated the British and American Open Door principle and since the issue would likely have been brought up at the Washington Conference.

However, in spite of the low profitability of Korean railroads new lines were constructed during this period. The Seoul-Weonsan Line was completed in 1914. The construction of this line was difficult because of steep terrain and the lack of labor, so Chinese labor was introduced for its construction. Construction on the Hamkyong Line started from both Cheongjin and Weonsan in 1914. At the same time subsidiary lines from the Seoul-Weiju line to the mines at Taeri and to the port of Nampo were completed. In sum, from the annexation until the management takeover by the SMRC, the Army's influence, represented by Terauchi, was dominant and new construction continued.

In the meantime, colonial rule over Korea was changing character from Terauchi's militaristic rule to Saito Makoto's so-called "cultural rule." After the independence movement of 1919, the GGK changed its policy toward development in order to gain trust and stabilize its rule. A conference called Sangyo Chōsa linkai [Committee on development] was held in September 1921, for the purpose of Korean development. There were twenty participants from Japan and twenty-eight from Korea (including ten Koreans); they included officials, intellectuals, and businessmen. The conference discussed several aspects of development in Korea and included special attention on the railroad.

After this conference, the Japanese chamber of commerce in Korea decided to lobby the Japanese government for policies necessary for Korean development. In 1922, Japanese businessmen in Korea held a meeting of the united chamber of commerce in Korea and decided four important issues on which to lobby the Japanese government: the con-

34. For example, see Tokyo Keizai Zasshi, October 21, 1920.
struction of railroads, the abolishment of the import tax, the increase of rice production, and the development of fisheries. Since the import tax was abolished in 1923 and the rice policy became official, railroad construction eventually became the most important issue. Japanese businessmen from Korea lobbied for this issue, so that in 1926 the Committee for the Early Construction of Railroads in Korea was established in Tokyo.

In the meantime, some officials in the Korean Railway stressed the importance of railroads for Korean development. One official stated, “The Korean Railway does not consist of just the north-south line. Other lines have developed, and so we should reconsider Korean railroads in terms of rule in Korea in general. Particularly in order to develop production and guide private lines, the management of Korean railroads should be under the direct control of the Government-General.”

In 1925 SMRC management was abolished and in 1927 the Twelve Year Plan for Korean railroads was adopted. Five lines were specified in this plan: the Unggi-Onsong Line (to develop coal and lumber), the Kichu-Hyesanjin Line (to develop rich lumber resources), the Manpochin Lines (to develop iron ore and coal and to connect to the central part of Manchuria), the Tonhae Line (Anbyon-Pusan, for underdeveloped areas of the eastern coast), and the Cholla-Kyongchun Line (to facilitate better communications in the southern part of Korea, particularly communications among the big ports of Pusan, Yeosu, Moppo and Kunsan).

In Japanese Diet discussions about appropriations for this plan, there was an opinion that the double-track north-south line (Pusan to Weiju) was more important for the defense of the empire than this ambitious Twelve Year plan. One official replied that since two lines in the plan (the lines to Manpochin and Onsong) went to the border, even if either broke down, the other would be able to supplement the north-south line. For the GGK and Japanese businessmen in Korea, the Twelve Year Plan mainly concerned the development of Korea; however, the plan was not able to escape from the strategic preoccupations which prevailed in the government in Tokyo.

The Kirin-Kweinei (Hoeryeong) line, running from the north-eastern border of Korea to central Manchuria, had caused diplomatic difficulties between Japan and China and was important with regard to the

37. Forty Years, p. 97.
Manchurian Incident in 1931. The Japanese Army in particular was intent on using this line as a means to expand Japanese influence in Manchuria. The origin of this plan dated back to the period prior to annexation, when Komura considered it after the Russo-Japanese War,\(^{40}\) and it was also mentioned in Yamagata’s plan of 1911. The Korean sections of this line were constructed in sequence, with the line between Kweinei and Cheongjin completed in 1917 as a part of the Hamkyong line and the line from Kweinei to Onsong built as a private line. Also, the line from Onsong to the Unggi bay was included in the Twelve Year Plan and construction started in 1927. However, the Chinese sections had long been a diplomatic issue between Japan and China. In the Agreement of Chientao [Kanto] of 1907, the Chinese government promised to construct it in consultation with the government of Japan. Later in 1918 the Japanese government gave the Nishihara Loan for its construction. The Nishihara Loan, made when Terauchi was Prime Minister, was very political and tried to promote Japanese influence in Manchuria. Investigating the cause of the Manchurian Incident, the so-called Lytton Report of the League of Nations noted, “This particular railroad issue (the Kirin-Kweinei line) was not primarily a financial or commercial problem, but involved a conflict between the state policies of Japan and China.”\(^{41}\) The Chinese government feared that construction of the railroad from north Korea would be a menace to China. The point here is that there had been an incessant effort on the part of Japan to create a line between north-eastern Korea and Manchuria before the Manchurian Incident.

The de facto Japanese control of Manchuria through the creation of Manchukuo in March 1932 resolved this issue and the Korean Railway and the SMRC each constructed the lines from their respective sides. However, the SMRC, though based in southern Manchuria, took the initiative and began investigations for the development of a port in Korea which was to become the exit-port for the line. There were already two ports, Cheongjin and Unggi, but they were not considered big enough for the expected future increase in trade between Japan and Manchukuo. The SMRC decided to build a new port, Na’in, which at the time was just a small port town but was known to have been a good harbor, because during the Russo-Japanese War the Japanese Navy had

\(^{40}\) Komura Gaikō-shi, p. 334.

stayed there. Najin was a good example of how the colonial railroad changed a small town into a big port.

The famous contemporary journalist Yamamoto Sanehiko, who traveled the area at that time, wrote that Najin was to become the Manchester of the Far East and described how this border region was filled with promise.

The most pressing issue in northern Korea is that the time is coming when we will open a line to connect Japan and Manchuria economically and culturally. This connection was hitherto made by way of Dalian, Vladivostok, or Pusan. Now, one port in northern Korea, which will compete with Dalian and Vladivostok, is going to play an extremely important role. Just one port! Which will get the crown: Unggi or Cheongjin or Najin (about which attention has been suddenly paid)! Which will play the role of life-line between emerging Manchukuo and its friend Japan?

The completion of this route opened up another way to go to Manchuria from Japan: by way of the Japan Sea, to land at one of the four ports in northern Korea and by railroad to the capital of Manchukuo. By the fastest way possible then, it took twenty four hours from Japan to the capital of Manchukuo. The official history written by the GGK described the emergence of this new route to Manchuria as a “Great transformation in the East Asian transportation network.”

The fact that four new lines were built to cross the border into Manchuria around this period meant that northern Korea could be integrated with Manchuria more than before, and this region grew quickly. As Yamamoto Sanehiko had predicted, the railroad flourished with its extension from the Manchurian border to Unggi, which had been placed under the management of the SMRC in 1932. In 1938, it carried 3,084,000 tons of freight with an average profit per day of 82 yen. The corresponding figure of all the other national railroads was 68 yen and 13,923,898 tons.

This great progress did not occur just in the lines in northern Korea. Increased communication between Japan, Korea and Manchuria and industrialization in Korea brought Korean railroads great prosperity.

44. Yamamoto Sanehiko, *Man San* [Manchuria and Korea] (Tokyo: Kaizo-sha, 1932), p. 110. Yamamoto was chief editor of the magazine, *Kaizo*, which was popular and influential among the educated at that time.
45. According to Yamamoto, the route through Najin to Sinking, the capital of Manchukuo, was shorter by 100 li than the one through Dalian. Yamamoto, p. 123.
46. *Twenty-five Years*, p. 813.
47. *Forty Years*, p. 484.
From around 1935 the volume of freight and the number of passengers increased both within Korea and throughout the whole region of Manchuria, Korea and Japan.\textsuperscript{48} There is an interesting comparison of the average distance ridden by passengers in different nations. In 1939 the figure for the Korean Railway was 71 kilometers, while in mainland Japan it was 26 kilometers and in Great Britain 26 kilometers, in the United States 77 kilometers, in Germany 29 kilometers, and in France 41 kilometers. This comparison shows that passengers using the Korean railroads in general traveled longer distances, in other words, traveled back and forth between Japan, Manchuria and Korea.\textsuperscript{49} Increased traffic after April 1934 between Korea and Manchuria across the bridge over the Yalu river, which had been a draw bridge, was forced it to remain open after April 1934.\textsuperscript{50}

The increased traffic led to Korea's being known as the "\textit{Tairiku ruto} [continental route]." Contemporary writings said,

The continental route is the main route in our economic block to connect Japan and continental economic areas. When we consider the continental route with regard to the so-called Yen Block—Manchuria, north China, and Mongolia—we cannot think of it without the Korean peninsula. In short the 'continental route' connecting continental economic areas of the Yen block and mainland Japan is above all the Korean peninsula itself.\textsuperscript{51}

This discussion of Korea as the continental route is also reflected in a remark by a GGK official. The Director of the Bureau of the Railway said, "Since the Korean Railway is situated between Manchuria and Japan, the quantity of communication between Japan, Manchuria, and North China depends upon the Korean Railway. In other words, we, the people of the Korean Railway, hold the key to transportation between Japan and the continent."\textsuperscript{52}

At the same time, the industrialization of Korea, which started around 1935, did increase the volume of freight within Korea and changed the content of the freight. The percentage of agricultural products carried was supplanted by mineral resources and machinery.\textsuperscript{53} This growth in shipment of mineral resources contributed to the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{48} See the charts in \textit{Forty Years}, p. 570 and p. 572.
\item \textsuperscript{49} \textit{Ch\text{"o}sen Keizai Nempo} [Economic Yearbook of Korea] 1941 and 1942 (Tokyo: Kaizo-sha, 1943), p. 183.
\item \textsuperscript{50} \textit{Twenty-five Years}, p. 815.
\item \textsuperscript{51} \textit{Ch\text{"o}sen Keizai Nempo} [Economic Yearbook of Korea] 1940, (Tokyo: Kaizo-sha, 1940), p. 111.
\item \textsuperscript{52} \textit{Forty Years}, pp. 106–7, speech by Director of the Department of the Railway on August 11, 1939.
\item \textsuperscript{53} Agricultural products decreased from 28 percent to 12 percent (1931–1939), while mineral products increased from 19 to 34 percent during the same period. \textit{Ch\text{"o}sen Keizai Nempo} 1941 and 1942, p. 184.
\end{itemize}
per day profit per kilometer on the Hamkyong line increasing almost sixfold from 1934 to 1942. In the meantime, private lines in northern Korea were built to develop mineral resources such as pig iron, coal and magnesite. The builders of these private lines were Japanese companies, particularly big companies called Zaibatsu. For example, Hokusen Takushoku Tetsudo (Northern Korea Development Railway) was built by a joint venture of Mitsubishi, and Nittesu (Japan Steel) in order to exploit iron ore. Also, people like Noguchi, who had founded the Korean Nitrogen Company in Hungnam, built several important lines in northern Korea.

As the Korean Railway came to carry more goods and people, whether for continental connection or industrialization, the GGK made efforts to increase the Korean Railway transportation capacity: particularly, in the Seoul-Pusan and the Seoul-Weiju Lines. Construction of the double-track Seoul-Pusan Line started in 1936 while that of the Seoul-Weiju line started in 1938. Importation of rails from Japan accordingly increased and the amount of imported rails quadrupled from 1931 to 1936. The ratio expense between construction and improvements on the national railroads, in which hitherto the cost of construction had always been more than that of improvement, reversed around 1936. However, this does not mean that the cost of new construction was reduced. Rather, both cost increased to a great degree.

After the outbreak of the Pacific War in December 1941, the transportation capacity of the Korean Railway was greatly increased, but the Seoul-Weonsan, the Hamkyong, the Manpochin and the Pyongyang-Weonsan lines were still unable to accommodate the increase in production of pig iron and coal in northern Korea. Because of the need for more capacity the GGK nationalized some important private lines necessary for developing mineral resources. At the same time, some narrow tracked private lines were double tracked for the purpose of increasing transportation capacity. The Pacific War intensified the need for those resources and led to the rapid and intensive development of the railroad in northern Korea.

Additional need for increased capacity on Korean railroads came from the situation caused by the Japanese deteriorating position in the Pacific War. From December 1942, important goods from Manchuria and North China to Japan, which ships had carried before, began to be carried by way of the Korean Peninsula on Korean railroads, because of

54. Hirai, p. 27.
56. Hirai, p. 28.
a shortage of ships and oil and danger from attack. The percentage of this "transfer freight" in the total transportation capacity of Korean railroads was 6.5 percent and 18 percent of total ton-kilometers in fiscal year 1943 (April 1943—March 1944). According to the plans for fiscal year 1944, these figures were 37 percent of the total transportation capacity and 59.6 percent of total ton-kilometers. The goods carried were pig iron, steel, salt, coal and soybeans.

Although Korea did export iron ore and other materials to Japan, people in Japan tended to regard the value of Korea as being in its role as a connection between Japan and China. For example, one Japanese official in the Ministry of Ammunition in Tokyo recalled,

At that time Korea was highly regarded not as having resources of its own but as a key point in the transportation network connecting the continent and Japan. Particularly during the last phase of the war, because large amount of goods from Manchuria and China were carried by the railroad through northern and southern Korea the role of Korea was reevaluated and considered more important.

This view of Korea as a base of transport led to the opinion that the Korean Railway should be under the SMRC in order to facilitate smooth communications. However, the GGK opposed this, saying, "the Korean Railway not only has a great role in transportation from the continent to Japan, but it also has to play the indispensable role of essential transportation for politics, production and economy in Korea." Some Japanese officials in the GGK tried to keep the railroads in their control in order to serve the interests of Korea, although their efforts were limited by the fact that they had to cooperate the Japanese war effort.


Almost all possible means to increase the capacity of transferring freight were taken. Passenger trains were reduced to 45 percent of the total in October 1942, 31 percent in January 1943, and finally to 16 percent in April 1944. And the direct express passenger train to Manchuria, "Tairiku [the Continent]," the symbol of the Korean Railroad, was abolished in February 1944. There was also increased control of passengers and regulation of ticket purchases. Passenger trains were slowed down as freight cars took precedence; sleeping cars were reduced and converted to passenger cars in order to increase the number of passengers on one train. Meanwhile a shortage of rails caused delay in the construction of doubled tracks for the Seoul-Pusan Line. The Japanese government under Tojo Hideki then decided to remove 220 kilometers of rails from the Mukden-Dalian line of the SMRC, which was double-tracked. Further the port capacity of Pusan, Masan, Moppo was expanded because of increased shipments to Japan, and 155 new locomotives and 2,000 new freight cars were ordered in 1945.

During the last stage of the war when attacks from the Allied countries made transit of the Korean strait dangerous, materials were sent to Japan from northern Korean ports to the Japan Sea side, to ports such as Niigata or Tsuruga. At the very end of the war, salt and food became more important for Japan than coal and steel. In June 1945, the Japanese government ordered that ships which carried goods from Korea to Japan should give precedence to food and salt. In particular, the serious shortage of salt was revealed in a shocking report of June 1945 that unless more salt could be had in a couple of months cattle would begin to die because of lack of salt, and soon afterwards the same thing would happen to people. This fact was said to have been one of the reasons that the Japanese surrendered. Ando stressed that from his own interview with former prime ministers and members of court circle, the shock from this was great enough to lead them to the final decision to surrender. In 1945 Japan had to import 300,000 tons of salt from North China and Manchuria, of which 230,000 tons was transferred by Korean railroads. Korean railroads literally became the lifeline for Japan.

We cannot deny that the railroad in Korea contributed greatly to the

63. Ibid., p. 151.
64. Tanaka, p. 645.
66. See Tanaka, p. 597.
Japanese war economy. This fact reminds me of Yamagata’s remark in 1894, that the railroad in Korea fit in the grand plan for future of the nation in spite of the great expense at the moment. However, I wonder to what extent this priority on the transportation of goods affected the circulation of goods within the Korean economy.

The Railroad as a Governmental Project

Financing

The building of the railroad was an expensive project. As mentioned above, Japanese businessmen had difficulty collecting sufficient capital for railroad construction during the initial period. After official Japanese annexation the Japanese government nationalized the main lines, and all matters connected with the railroad, such as planning, maintenance, etc., were incorporated into the GGK. Accordingly, financial responsibility fell into the hands of the GGK.

Before discussing the financing of the railroad, I would like to look at the structure of the Korean public account. The Korean general account was independent from that of Japan; however, it was under the control of the Finance Ministry, in that it was audited by the Finance Ministry and the Board of Audits. The annual budget also had to be discussed and approved by the Diet; every year the Director of the Department of Finance in the GGK submitted a budget to the Ministry of Finance and then he and the vice-Governor of General replied to questions in the Diet.67

The expenditures and revenues of the Korean Railway were incorporated into the general account of the GGK, listing the costs of construction and improvement under expenditures and profits under revenues. However, as recollected by Mizuta Naomasa, the Director of Bureau of the Finance in the GGK from 1939 to 1945, revenues from taxes and governmental production were not enough to support the railroad, and Korea had to depend on Japan for capital.68

In 1911, an Act of Public Loan in Korea was passed to facilitate the introduction of money from Japan to Korea. The act prescribed that the GGK would be able to ask for money from Japan for development in Korea. And this money was incorporated into the revenue part of the governmental accounts. On average, this public loan accounted for 20 percent of the fiscal budget. According to Mizuta, GGK’s official policy

on this public loan was: first, the money should be used for productive development in Korea, second, the GGK should ask for as much in public loans as possible and for this purpose budgetary technique was required; third, the money should be raised in the Japanese financial market.69

The Finance Ministry decided the amount of the public loan in Japan, after examining the budget made by the GGK, but this public loan was not issued separately just for Korea. The Ministry of Finance issued public loans in general in the Japanese finance market. From the total sum of money, the Finance Ministry allocated money to the GGK. In short, the GGK did not participate in the actual business of issuance, flotation, or redemption of these public loans. The money was not used exclusively for railroads. In addition to railroads, the GGK used it for the improvement of roads, ports, etc. However, the construction and the improvement of railroads was by far the largest part of the public loan, amounting to about seventy percent of the public loans.

Up to the middle of the 1930’s, the Korean Railway operated with a deficit. It could not even pay the interest on the public loans, and so the difference was compensated by other items from the fiscal budget,70 but this tendency changed around 1935 and in 1938 the ratio of profit against investment rose to 5.9 percent. Railroads were used in the general account.71 On the other hand, the GGK also financially supported the construction of private railroads. Although the GGK had a policy of national management of the railroads after official annexation, it thought that assisting the private railroads was necessary for the further development of Korea. The GGK controlled private lines by issuing permits for construction. It investigated economic activities in each region and gathered information about relations between these regional markets and both the main railroad lines and recommended the prospective lines.72 In 1926, an Act to Support Private Railroads in Korea was established, which prescribed governmental support if profits did not reach 8 percent of investment. Or, if the private railroad companies used debenture or loan capital for construction, then the government was obliged to support the interest up to 8 percent a year. In 1934, this law was changed to provide a governmental subsidiary which equaled 5 percent of construction expenses.73 When the private lines were nationalized those expenses were also supported by public

69. Ibid., p. 150.
70. Hirai, p. 17.
72. Forty Years, p. 466.
73. Ibid., p. 468.
loans: either by an Act of Public Loan or by a single act (which was exclusively for the purchase of a particular private line).

Mizuta recalled that the government in Korea was not able to be a "cheap government" like in Britain; on the contrary, it was an "expensive government," because it had to financially support several projects. Above all, the railroad project was the biggest governmental investment and the capital for this project was supported directly from Japan in the form of public loans. From 1911 on money from Japan constantly supported the construction and improvement of the railroad, and this investment continued in spite of the low profitability of the railroad. From this fact it can be said that there was a consensus in Japanese government that Japan should fund the railroad of Korea. At the same time, this meant that the railroad project was not able to escape control by the Japanese government.

Organization

Since the Department of the Railroad was in a branch of the GGK, top officials in the department had passed the civil service exam and were graduates of the imperial universities. In 1939, personell totaled about 42,300, with Koreans making up 30-40 percent. The ratio of Koreans in the upper echelon of the department increased from 3.9 percent of 1929 to 6.4 percent of 1939. However, it was still very low, compared to the total percentage of Koreans in the department.

The Mutual Benefit Union of Workers in the Railway [Tetsudō-kyoku Gengyoin Kyosai Kumiai] established in 1925 presents an interesting case. There were two types of the members in this union. Type-A consisted of employees from the lower echelons who were required to participate. The fee was 6 percent of the wages, of which 5 percent was subsidized by the GGK. Type-B consisted of voluntary participants from the upper echelon and this type did not enjoy the governmental support. In 1939 there were 31,700 members in the union, of which 13,600 were Korean. Since the total number of the Korean in the Department at this period was about 15,000, the percentage of the Korean participation was extremely high. The benefits of union membership were payment in the case of sickness, injury or other accidents.

Governmental factories were built in Pusan, Seoul, and Pyongyang to repair and build trains and cars. In the early years, locomotives had

74. Mizuta, "Chōsen no Zaisei," p. 112.
75. The figure for 1929 was calculated from the table in Ko Pyong-un, "Nihon Teikoku-shugi Chōsen Shokuminchika katei no Tetsudō Fusetu o meguru Mondai [On Railroad Construction under Colonization of Korea by Japanese Imperialism]," Rekishi Hyoron vol. 141 (1962), p. 42. The figure of 1939 was calculated from Naikaku Insatsu-kyoku ed., Shokuin-roku [Staff List] 1939 (Tokyo, 1939), pp. 582-590.
76. Forty Years, p. 213.
been mostly imported from the United States, from companies like Baldwin or the American Locomotive Company. However, after 1923 Japan started to produce locomotives, and the Korean Railway then imported them from Japan. Although governmental factories in Korea had produced locomotives since 1931, there were still only a limited number and most of the engines came from Japan. In sum, there was doubtful technological transfer to either personnel or factories in Korea.

The Symbol of Colonial Rule

Since the railroad was a government project, it was used also as an organ of colonial rule. The Department of the Railroad in the GGK itself tried to emphasize the importance of the Korean Railway in the Japanese empire and foster a “spirit of the Korean Railway.” This tendency strengthened after the Japanese invasion of Manchuria and China. Looking at the official song, which was written in 1936, it becomes obvious what the department meant by the “spirit of the Korean Railway.”

Our rails run through mountains and forests under the clear sky, the power of our nation extends to Asia, how important our Korean Railway is! Our rails develop the resources in the eight do [prefectures], the benefit of culture is extended all over the country, how important our Korean railroad is!77

At the same time, the architecture of the stations was another important characteristic of the Korean Railway. The department of the railroad put much emphasis on architecture.78 The design of the stations varied depending upon the region, reflecting weather or cultural heritage, but in general the Japanese preferred magnificent architecture, an example of which is the Seoul station. At that time the Seoul station was said to be the second largest station in the Far East. Considering that the Korean Railway was saddled with a deficit, it must be assumed that the Japanese intended to impress the Koreans with Japanese rule by their architecture.

Also, the textbook for Common School (for Koreans)79 edited by the GGK emphasized the railroad as an accomplishment of colonial rule. The national language (Japanese) textbook had a section entitled “The bridge over the Yalu.” This lesson began,

For years there had been no bridge over the Yalu. In 1909, when the Department of the Korean Railway started construction, many doubted

77. Ibid., p. 209.
78. Ibid., pp. 307–26. There are pictures of several major stations in this book.
79. At that time, there were two types of schools for elementary education. Those who understood Japanese went to Shogakkō [Primary School], and students whose native language was not Japanese went to Futsū Gakko [Common School].
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they would complete it. Some laughed it off, because of its boldness. However, when the bridge was completed in 1911, those who doubted and laughed also crossed the bridge. . . . It has been said that this was one of the three most difficult feats in the history of the Japanese railroad construction. I think it is quite true.

The lesson ended by glorifying how important this bridge was, because it connected Japan and China. The guidebook on geography for teachers stressed the need to educate the pupils about the rapid growth of the railroad after annexation. In sum, the GGK made use of the opportunity to educate the Korean people by using the railroad as an example of colonial accomplishments.

Conclusion

There were two different views of the role of the railroad in Korea during the colonial period. One regarded it as a thoroughfare to Manchuria and China. This view was more explicit in the military, particularly the Army in the initial colonial period. On the other hand, others viewed it as being important for the development of Korea. This view generally came from the GGK or those in Korea and not from Japan, as can be seen in the case of the Twelve Year Plan. However, these two views were not contradictory but rather complementary, in so far as both wanted the railroad built in Korea. So, the railroad in Korea played a dual role: a highway for expansion of the Japanese empire and a byway for the development of Korea. The network of railroads in Korea was the product of this dual function.

Although the railroad in Korea had this dual role, its aspect as a highway to Manchuria and China was peculiar to Korea and should be seen as significant in considerations of Japanese colonial rule in Korea. Meiji leaders had had the vision of connecting a railroad in Korea with China even before their annexation of Korea. There were five lines between Manchuria and Korea after the creation of Manchukuo, and during the Pacific War the north-south line was taken over to carry materials from China to Japan, with the result that the highway aspect of the railroad for the empire came first and was dominant in Korea. It is true that the railroad was required to contribute to the economic development of Korea, but this was carried out particularly by subsidiary and private lines in order to develop natural resources.


The role of developing the economy was approved of in so far as it was compatible with the railroad’s highway-like mission.

It was because the railroad in Korea played the role as a highway between Japan and Manchuria—and not merely because it would aid in the development of Korea—that large amounts of capital were introduced from Japan. This is clear if we compare it with the case of Taiwan, where the railroad as a highway was unnecessary. In Korea the railroad was by far the largest receiver of government investment (about 70 to 80 percent of government financed projects went to the railroad), while in Taiwan the largest amount of governmental investment went to support monopoly industries (sugar, rice etc., receiving 50 to 60 percent). In Taiwan government financing was geared more toward “economic development,” and more governmental capital was directly used in production industries than in developing the infrastructure. If I were to join in the debate over whether Japanese colonial rule was “development oriented” or “exploitative,” I would argue that the railroad in Korea was exploitative in so far as it used more governmental capital than would have been required simply for developmental purposes and this extra capital otherwise could have been invested in other industries. At the same time, the railroad can be thought of as developmental for the reason that, in addition to the subsidiary lines active in development, the main lines also served as infrastructure for the Korean economy.

In conclusion, I would like to address a problem that was raised by Asada Kyōji and discussed above in the introduction: what can we infer from this analysis of the development of the railroad about the general nature of Japanese rule over Korea. If the railroad in Korea had a dual character—of highway and byway—and the railroad as highway was peculiar to Korea, then what does this imply for the larger framework of Japanese colonial rule over Korea? I think my discussion will support and extend the argument that it was in the nature of Japanese imperialism that it involved contiguous territories, and that Japanese imperialism implied not only the acquisition of contiguous countries like Korea but that it also had an appetite for further expansion toward Manchuria and China. Expansion toward the continent was the major

82. Hirai Koichi, “Nihon Shokuminchi Zaisei no Tenkai to Kōzō [The Outline and Structure of Governmental Finance in Japanese Colonies],” Shakai Keizai Shigaku vol. 47 no. 6 (June 1982), p. 53, chart no. 2.
83. Ibid., p. 59.
theme in Japanese prewar history. The SMRC engaged in the development of railroads and mining in Manchuria, where the Kwantung Army was stationed, and constituted an informal Japanese empire. If Japan had not been interested in Manchuria, or if there had been no Japanese presence there, the railroad in Korea would have developed differently. Thus, Korea’s location between Japan and Manchuria did influence the development of the railroad in Korea.

To sum up, I believe that Korea’s location adjacent to Manchuria affected colonial rule. Korea as a colony was controlled and affected by Japan, but at the same time it was affected both by the relationship between Japan and Manchuria as well as by its own relationship with Manchuria. The term, “Nai-Sen [Japan and Korea],” denotes the close relationship between Japan and Korea, while the term, “Man-Sen [Manchuria and Korea],” was also often used, as exemplified by the title of Yamamoto Sanehiko’s book which I discussed above. It seems to me that there was an order existing between these three countries—Japan-Korea-Manchuria—in which Korea occupied the middle.87 This relationship of geographical proximity, I think, cannot be ignored. Some examples: the export of rice from Korea to Japan made possible the import of barley from Manchuria carried by the SMRC; the emergence of Manchukuo was one of the reasons for Korea’s take off toward industrialization.88 Japanese policy toward Korea was complicated and was affected by Korea’s central location in the Japanese empire; and the significance of the railroads in Korea reflected the geopolitical position which Korea occupied.

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87. It is interesting to note that before the creation of Manchukuo some Japanese officials in the GGK had this perception about the relationships between Japan, Korea and Manchuria. A textbook of calligraphy edited by the GGK for the Koreans had an example, “Naichi, Chosen, Manshu [Japan, Korea, Manchuria].” See, Chosen Sotoku-fu ed., Futsu Gakko Kakikata Tehon [Examples of Calligraphy of Common School] vol. 3 no. 2 (original prin, Seoul: 1924, reprint Tokyo: Ayumi Shuppan, 1985), pp. 23–4.


Daqing Yang

China and Korea belong to the same culture and same race. With a long history of being two brotherly countries, they depend upon each other like lips and teeth.

—Sun Yat-sen to Sin Kyu-sik, 1924

The Koreans will build a country on the basis of national essence while adopting many programs of the Three Principles of the People, in order to forever maintain the relationship of lips and teeth [with China].

—Kim Ku, Proposals to the KMT, 1940

Facts of history have told us that the survival of Korea is immediately related to the security of China. When the lips are gone, the teeth will feel the chill; if the windows are broken, the rooms are in danger. The Chinese people’s support of Korean people’s war of resistance against America is not just a moral responsibility, but also closely tied to the vital interests of all people in our country.

—A Joint Declaration of All [China] Democratic Parties, 1950

China and Korea as lips and teeth.

—Calligraphy by Syngman Rhee to Ambassador of the Republic of China, 1953

In the history of modern Chinese-Korean relations 1910 and 1950 are years of special significance. The dwindling Chinese influence in Korea hit rock bottom in 1910, when her former tributary became part of
the Japanese Empire. In 1950 the pendulum of history swayed to the other end. It was the dramatic entry of the Chinese People’s Volunteers’ Army that changed the course of the Korean War and the political map of Korea thereafter. Understandably, these two major events have drawn much interest from students of modern Chinese-Korean relations. Between these two relatively well-trodden fields lies an area yet to be fully explored—the interregnum between 1910 and 1950 has been largely overlooked or treated in passing by those writing on overseas Korean independence or Communist movements. One wonders: were 1910 and 1950 completely unrelated, or was there any historical logic that links 1910 and 1950? If so, how did the pendulum of history actually work?

Before we jump to any quick answers, it is necessary to take a closer look at these seemingly uneventful decades in light of some newly published materials. I present this paper to suggest that to fully understand 1950 one indeed has to go back to 1910. At a general level, this paper tries to characterize the modern transformation of the age-old relations between the China and Korea; more specifically, it seeks to explore how ideals and interests affected their cooperation and conflict during the 1930s and the 1940s.

**The Setting**

In the Chinese vocabulary of international affairs, the close relationship between China and Korea has been historically compared to that between lips and teeth. When the lips are gone, the old saying goes, the teeth will feel the chill. In addition to the common geopolitical interest, the metaphor of lips and teeth conveys a perceived cultural and psychological affinity that had developed between the two countries since ancient times. It is therefore the historical legacy, which continued to be felt in modern times, that we shall first turn to.

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Legacies of History

The Chinese and the Koreans have had a long history of interactions with each other, dating back at least over several thousand years. Traditional histories have always attributed the beginning of Sino-Korean relations to the work of Ji Zi (Kija in Korean), a legendary figure who went to Chaoxian (Choson) sometime during the 12th century B.C. He allegedly taught the natives the skills of farming and weaving, and established order through the promulgation of the “Eight Laws” defining proper relationships among a previously “uncivilized” people. Whether or not it is historical fabrication, the story of Ji Zi has been widely accepted until modern times in both China and Korea, reflecting a common view of the relations between the two countries. In this asymmetrical relationship, China was the benefactor, the teacher, the Big Brother, the center; Korea was the beneficiary, the pupil, the younger sibling, the periphery.

Since the Han Chinese were viewed as the culturally most advanced people, Han China therefore was a model for Korea. The cradle of Chinese civilization was relatively close and accessible to Korea, separated only by rivers and a narrow sea. The influx of Chinese culture reached a zenith during the 7th century, when the Kingdom of Silla, which had just unified the Korean peninsula, adopted Chinese dress and the political systems of the Tang Dynasty. Confucianism was vigorously introduced and institutionalized by the establishment of the National Academy and civil examinations. A second wave of cultural borrowing from China took place after the 13th century, during which Neo-Confucianism finally replaced Buddhism as the dominant ideology in Korea. The dichotomy of China (hua) versus barbarians (yi) was also deeply imbedded in the minds of Korean intellectuals, so deeply that they would regard Korea as the true center of Chinese culture when China proper came under the rule of barbarians.

Politically and militarily, this relationship was institutionalized in the so-called tributary system. China had never succeeded in subduing the entire Korean peninsula, but her obvious preponderance led to Korea’s practice described as sadae, which meant “service to the great.” Consisting of a formal use of the “year period” and in the periodical dispatch of tribute missions as a gesture of vassalage, sadae diplomacy was justified as a Confucian virtue guiding the conduct of human rela-

tions, now applied to international intercourse between the weak and the strong. However, *sadae* relations were also of military importance to both countries, since China was obliged to protect Korea, just as Korea was obliged to offer China military service in time of emergency.

Sino-Korean relations were often influenced by the presence of a third power. Competition with "barbarian" states in Manchuria, and later Japan, for primacy in the Korean peninsula was a perennial concern for China. Alliances with Korea often became a necessity, and quite naturally Korea needed to balance the competing influences or to simply to lean to the more powerful neighbor. This was in contrast to China's relations with Vietnam, where having no competitors to its southeast China was more tempted to resort to open force, while the degree of Vietnam's independence could only be achieved by its own resistance to China. Indeed, cooperation rather than conflict characterized much of Chinese-Korean relations. The expulsion of Tang troops by Silla in 676 was the last major skirmish between Korea and a Han Chinese state. In addition to the well-known seven years' war to expel Hideyoshi's army from Korea during the late 16th century, Chinese and Korean forces fought together against the rising Manchus and the Russians in the 17th century, and against the Tonghak uprising and the Japanese in the late 19th century. Thus, ideological ties and geopolitical interests helped to strengthen each other, making Chinese-Korean relations as that between lips and teeth.6

Thus, by late traditional times, Korea had become China's model tributary state and a most faithful student/guardian of the Confucian culture, which in turn provided the ideological context of Chinese-Korean relations. The last several centuries of this unequal but mostly cordial, peaceful relationship, was held to be an ideal in imperial China's external relations. Seen in this light, the function of Korea as China's protectorate was vital to the maintenance of the Chinese world order, just as a culturally dependent Korea would help to reinforce the Sinocentric world view.

**Modern Transformations**

The traditional East Asian world order became eroded after the coming of the West in the mid-19th century, but the total disruption of Sino-Korean relationship was a direct result of the rise of Japan. Following a brief period of China's own proximation of imperialism in the peninsula, Korea severed its vassalage ties with China and declared itself an empire. Statesmen of the Qing Empire attempted but failed to translate the traditional tributary relationship into terms more suitable

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to the new age while still preserving the traditional (and real) structure of superior-inferior relations. Meanwhile, foreign encroachment, which also included that from China, contributed to the rise of modern Korean nationalism from the late 19th century onward. Traditional Korea’s *sadae* relationship with China in particular came under criticism among Korean intellectuals seeking to assert indigenous Korean culture. The formerly neutral term, as Michael Robinson notes, thus took on an increasingly pejorative tone and became synonymous with dependence, subservience, or toadyism in the eyes of Korean nationalists.

Japan’s formal annexation of Korea in 1910 not only completed this structural change but also accelerated the ideological ferment. Although the Qing Dynasty itself was overthrown and almost overnight China became the first republic in the Far East, China’s emotional reaction to Korea’s loss of independence had an unmistakably traditional tone. The prevalent grief, as evidenced by the extensive use of “mourning” (*ai* in Chinese), had several causes. Most educated Chinese, regardless of their political affiliations, would share the pity and sorrow that “a three-thousand-year old ancient country, with the heritage of Ji Zi”, should have vanished from the family of nations. Such feelings of sympathy and compassion was derived from the Confucian moral tradition, similar to what the Master himself had felt for the vanquished when principalities conquered one another in his own times.

Many Chinese also mourned for China. Humiliated that the big brother was unable to protect his younger sibling, they warned of the imminent danger that China herself might soon tread the path of Korea. They already saw many historical similarities between China and Korea. In explaining Korea’s fall, one Chinese writer invoked lessons from China’s past. He cited such well-known Chinese examples as domination by the empress’ family in the Former Han Dynasty, factional purges of the Ming, and the dereliction of duty because of women in the Tang. Korean politicians were preoccupied with personal gain and engaged in factional struggle, another Chinese commentary pointed out, while the people did not care about national independence. The author then cautioned his fellow Chinese to use Korea as a mirror, for China would soon become a second Korea if the Chinese did not

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11. TDB (September 28, 1910).
improve themselves and strengthen their country.\textsuperscript{12} Few at the time would expect that Korea could again restore its independence in the near future. Pessimism and helplessness seemed to prevail in the Chinese's reactions in 1910. Their sympathy for Koreans who had lost their sovereignty was sincere, though often with a hierarchical and condescending edge, treating Korea as a dependent of China. Moreover, such compassion was mostly confined to the educated Chinese elites, who used the language of Confucian morality and ethics and were informed about events beyond China.

An inherent danger in the generalizations about traditional Chinese-Korean relations so far is that this relationship was nothing more than ties between small numbers of elites in both societies. Ordinary people, whether a Chinese artisan or Korean farmer, had little to do with maintaining the brotherly relations between the two countries. With drastic social changes taking place on both societies in modern times, it is necessary to descend from high diplomacy in order to fully understand the relations between the Chinese and Korean peoples.

\textit{Koreans in China}

One of the most important characteristics of Chinese-Korean relations in the early 20th century was the presence of a large number of Koreans in a turbulent, disunified China. While migration between China and Korea was common throughout history, over 40,000 Chinese migrants in Korea in the mid-twenties were small in number when compared with the more than half a million Korean peasants who had crossed the Yalu and the Tumen Rivers and settled in Manchuria by 1931.\textsuperscript{13} In eastern Manchuria adjacent to Korea known as the Jiandao area, Koreans far outnumbered Chinese residents.\textsuperscript{14} In general, Korean immigrants were categorized by the contemporary Chinese media into three types: law-abiding farmers or peasants; bullies who counted on the Japanese protection; and nationalists who attempted to overthrow the Japanese rule or radicals under the temptation of Soviet Russia.\textsuperscript{15} As the largest foreign immigrant body in China, each of these Korean groups as well as the different Chinese attitudes toward them, helped to shape the modern Chinese-Korean relations.

Korean farmers were initially welcomed in the then under-populated Manchuria, as they led a simple lifestyle and were able to grow paddy rice, outperforming their Chinese counterparts. The Qing Government

\textsuperscript{12} TDB July, 23, 1910; June 13, 1912.
\textsuperscript{13} For a contemporary survey, see Huang Yanpei, \textit{Chaoxian} [Korea]. Shanghai: Shangwu Yinshuguan, 1929. pp. 318-325.
\textsuperscript{15} TDB (December 19, 1927).
had granted Korean farmers rights to own land, on the condition that they accept the Chinese jurisdiction. After Japan’s annexation of Korea in 1910, however, all Koreans theoretically became Japanese subjects and their presence in Manchuria increasingly caused concern for the Chinese authorities. Meanwhile, frictions between Chinese and Korean farmers over farmland became increasingly common in Manchuria during the 1920's, largely as a result of the constant influx of millions of Chinese from war-ridden north China. The tension between the Chinese and the Koreans, intensified by the often high-handed policies of both Chinese local authorities and Japanese consular officials, finally escalated into a tragedy of the Wanbaoshan Incident in 1927. A local skirmish between Chinese and Korean farmers over a land dispute, fanned by inaccurate reports, led to massive attacks of Chinese residents in Korea by angry Korean mobs, inflicting considerable damage of property and causing the death of hundreds of Chinese. When the news reached China, however, most Chinese would not believe that the Koreans could have done this alone, and many newspapers put the blame on Japanese authorities instead for causing frictions between Chinese and Koreans, and for their slow response to stop the harassment of Chinese residents in Korea.

Although the Wanbaoshan Incident might to some extent have stimulated Korean nationalist sentiment, it no doubt contributed to the already unfavorable impression of Koreans among ordinary Chinese. Although Korea had been regarded by many as a civilized country, according to Chinese standard of course, the Chinese often did not hold very high opinion of ordinary Koreans. While Korean women were hard-working, wrote one popular Chinese geography book, many Korean men would spend most of their time just wandering around in white clothes. The book also cited superstition, child marriage, and unhealthy living conditions as indications of Korea’s backwardness. Even when an inquisitive Chinese educator travelled in Korea during the twenties, while noting many technological advancements, he also suggested that the Koreans were good at imitation but lacked originality. Until the late 1940’s, it was not uncommon for the Chinese newspapers to use the derogative term “Gaoli bangzi” [ruffians of Koryo], to describe Koreans caught smuggling or drug-trafficking in China.

16. According to one report, Chinese authorities in Jilin had ordered that Korean immigrants must wear Chinese dress and obtain permission from local authorities before any movement. Korean fraternity societies were also prohibited. TDB December 20, 1927.
addition, not a few Koreans collaborated with the Japanese authorities in Manchuria and naturally drew much resentment from the Chinese population till the end of the war.

The essentially benign or even unfavorable Chinese views of Koreans was to be changed largely by the Korean independence activists. Because historically it had been regarded as the birthplace of the Korean people and due to its concentration of Korean population, Manchuria was the center of anti-Japanese activities before the 1940s. Local Chinese authorities, initially sympathetic to the Koreans, turned hostile after the mid-twenties due to pressure from Japan. After the Manchurian Incident in 1931, many Korean groups merged with the Chinese anti-Japanese forces to fight their common enemy. Following the March 1 Movement which was suppressed by the Japan’s Governor-General in Korea, Shanghai, with its many foreign concessions as safe havens, became the center for Koreans nationalists from Korea, Manchuria, Soviet Far East, and America. In 1919, the Korean Provisional Government (KPG) was formally inaugurated. In the next 26 years, China became the major base of overseas Korean independence movement.

During the early twentieth century, support for Korean independence activists came from individuals across the political spectrum in China. For instance, conservative reformer Kang Youwei had provided help to Pak Un-sik, a well-known Korean nationalist who once studied with Kang. Soon after Japan’s annexation, some Koreans solicited assistance from Yuan Shikai, then President of the new Chinese republic, who once was the Manchu representative in Yi Korea. Yunnan warlord Tang Jiyao not only provided money and enrolled about fifty Korean students in his military academy. Yo Un-hyong who had also studied in China, had the support from another Beiyang warlord Wu Peifu and the warlord in Shanxi, Yan Xishan. In the wake of the March First Movement, popular organizations such as “The Sino-Korean Society” and “China-Korea Mutual Assistance Society” were established in Guangzhou, Chongqing, Wuhan, Changsha, and other major Chinese cities. These groups, often composed of prominent Chinese and Koreans, helped in no small measure to voice Koreans’ aspiration for independence.

Support also came from the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT), the

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ascending political force in China. The 1911 Revolution, seeking to "revive China", introduced the ideology of nationalism as part of Sun Yat-sen's "Three Principles of the People." Originally aiming at the overthrow of the alien Manchu rule, it also took on an increasingly anti-imperialist tone, seeking to rid China off the yoke of unequal treaties. A corollary was to foster [fu-zhi] other "weak and small" Asian nations in their anti-imperialist, national independence movements. Despite its somewhat paternalistic tone, Sun's program of fostering national liberation from imperialist rule was a revolutionary idea, qualitatively different from the traditional goal of restoring a traditional world order.

In 1924 Sin Kyu-sik, on behalf of the Korean Provisional Government, presented his credentials to Sun and asked for China's formal recognition and other assistance, including the lease of land to a Korean Independence Army. Sun told him that domestic problems in China made it impossible to provide massive assistance to the Korean Provisional Government at that time but promised help after the completion of the Northern Expedition.23

Sun's idealism was shared by many of the early Chinese Nationalists. In the 1920's prominent KMT figures such as Song Jiaoren, Chen Qimei and his cousin Chen Guofu, Hu Hanmin, Dai Jitao, to name a few, joined the Mutual Assistance Association (Tonhjheo), which had been set up by Korean nationalists in Shanghai.24 The aforementioned Chinese-Korean Association in Guangzhou was organized by Wang Jinwei, Zou Lu, Sun Ke (son of Sun Yat-sen), all well-known KMT figures. When the Whampoa Academy was established in 1924, Chen Guofu helped enrolled over sixty Korean students in its third and fourth classes, many of whom either entered the Chinese Nationalist Revolutionary Army, or went to Manchuria to organize anti-Japanese guerrillas.25

To both the KMT and Korean nationalists, the personal connections cultivated during this period would be of considerable significance in the years to come. Close personal ties among leaders of two countries no doubt could reduce the psychological distance between them and contribute to their cooperation, but as the following episodes will show, personal factors could be detrimental under certain circumstances.

Coalition and Competition

Prewar KMT Assistance

As Chinese-Japanese relations increasingly deteriorated after the Manchurian Incident in 1931, a final showdown between China and Japan seemed inevitable. The KPG, now headed by Kim Ku, was aware of the new opportunities and stepped up terrorist activities against the Japanese. On January 8, 1932 a Korean attempted to assassinate Emperor Hirohito in Tokyo but failed. The already intense anti-Japanese feeling in China was reflected in the KMT-controlled newspapers which carried the headline "A Korean, Yi Pong-ch'ang, sniped at the Japanese Emperor, but unfortunately missed." Three months later, Kim Ku staged another assassination, which killed and wounded several Japanese dignitaries in a military celebration in Shanghai. The negative feelings among Chinese people for Koreans since the Wanbaoshan were rapidly reversed.

If the element of idealism was more manifest in China's support for the Korean independence initially, enlisting the Koreans in its preparation for war against Japan now became a matter of necessity for the Chinese Government. Meanwhile, many Korean nationalist reasoned that Korea would regain independence if Japan could be defeated, and thus were eager to join hands with the Chinese. More than anything else, common interests thus brought together the Chinese and the Korean independence movement into an actual united front, where institutional ties were established.

Kim Yak-san (Won-bong) was one of the Korean leaders cooperating with the Nationalist Government. By the early 1930s Kim was already a veteran leader of the "Righteous Fighters Corps" (Uiyoldan), and more importantly he also had built up personal ties with the Chinese military at the Whampoa Academy where he was a student in 1925. It was not clear what he did immediately after graduation, but in any case he and several of his comrades converged in Nanjing in 1932 after a brief period of revolutionary activities in Beijing. Through the Whampoa Alumni Association and the Society for the Practice of Three Principles of the People, he was able to win the support of several well-placed officials in the Nationalist Government.

In July of 1932, a class of Korean Revolutionary Cadres began outside Nanjing, under the auspices of the Nationalist Military Commis-
The beginning class of 90 Korean students received education in political ideology and training in military skills, taught mostly by Korean instructors. Although only a few completed the first course, three other classes were organized and completed, graduating a total of over 120 students. Subjects such as the materialist view of history, the Three Principles of the People, history of the "Righteous Fighters Corps", and history of revolutions were added to their curriculum. In 1934 and 1935, over 60 Korean students entered the regular Nationalist Central School of Cadets in Nanjing. When the war finally broke out between China and Japan in July 1937, an additional 84 Koreans were in the final stage of the three-year "special training" in military schools located in the rear. Hence, no less than 260 Koreans had completed military training under the joint sponsorship of Kim Yak-san and his Chinese sponsors.28

On the other side, Chen Guofu, a KMT old guard heading its Organization Department, established another channel. Through the good offices of Chen Guofu and a Korean member of KMT, Kim Ku received a formal invitation from Chiang Kai-shek for a meeting in Nanjing, which took place in early 1933. Kim asked Chiang for assistance of 2 million yuan, promising to effect uprisings in Japan, Korea, and Manchuria within two years. Chiang and Chen offered to provide training of Korean officers instead, which Kim happily accepted. Under Chen's arrangement, 92 Koreans enrolled at the Loyang Military Academy in north China. Yi Chong-chon and Yi Pom-sok, two Korean guerrilla leaders from Manchuria, were put in charge. In 1935 another 28 Koreans received military training in Nanjing, but, due to pressure from the Japanese Government, both programs were discontinued.29

It is noteworthy that training of Korean youth characterized this phase of Chinese assistance to the Korean independence movement. It was in fact part of a larger trend that many Koreans had pursued their education in schools and universities throughout China during the early 20th century. To the Chinese, before the outbreak of Sino-Japanese conflict, overt military and financial support would be too provocative to Japan, while covert training of Koreans, many of them under Chinese names, was beneficial to both parties. Naturally, it enabled the Chinese to exert their influence on the Korean independence movement, and the Koreans were not unaware of this danger. For instance, before coming to Nanjing in 1933, Kim Ku had feared that the Chinese Government might put some demands on him, and he was not wrong.30 At the beginning of his meeting with Chiang, Kim Ku

30. Ibid., p. 181.
was reminded subtly by Chiang that it was appropriate for the Oriental peoples to accept Sun Yat-sen’s Three Principles of the People. Whether they had given inspiration to Kim Ku’s Three Principles of Equality is hard to determine, but we know at least that they also become part of Kim Yak-san’s training course. Again, the Chinese were sure that they had the true message to teach.31

The KMT’s Wartime Korea Policy: Some Case Studies

The separate sponsorship of these training programs before 1937 was indicative of the problem that paralyzed the Korean independence movement in China during the eight years’ war. It was also the first sign of a Chinese policy that was often schizophrenic. The inter-factional struggle among Koreans has been given much scholarly attention, notably in Chong-sik Lee’s works on Korean nationalism and Communism, which put the final blame on Chinese Communists.32 The formation and the impact of Chinese Nationalist policies, on the other hand, remain understudied.33 Consequently, the nature of relations between the Nationalist Government and various Korean independence groups is often over-simplified.

By 1937, after several temporary coalitions and dissolutions, most Korean groups fell into one of the two major camps: the Korean National Revolutionary Party (KNRP), headed by Kim Kyu-sik and Kim Yak-san, and the coalition of three conservative parties under Kim Ku, who was also in actual control of the Provisional Government.34 There were other smaller groups that were either openly Communist or anarchist. Promotion of unification was the high on the agenda of Zhu Jiahua, the new director of KMT’s Organization Department who was put in charge of Korean affairs after late 1938. Zhu had met Korean students while he studied in Europe and later when he taught at Chinese universities, but seemed to have no close ties with any particular Korean groups in China.35 Soon, he called a meeting of leaders of major Korean groups and urged them to unify, and the same message was delivered by Chiang Kai-shek himself in separate meetings with Kim

31. Ibid., p. 188.
32. The Chinese Communist policy, Lee maintains, was to “perpetuate the bi-polarization of the Korean revolutionaries, whose divided condition they exploited to the maximum.” The Politics of Korean Nationalism, p. 214. See also p. 233.
33. A notable exception is Hu Chunhui’s Hanguo Duli Yundong zai Zhongguo [The Korean Independence Movement in China], which was published in Taiwan in the mid-1970s. Having made extensive use of unpublished documents and offered many insightful observations, he was evasive on the issue of factional rivalry within the KMT.
Ku and Kim Yak-san in early 1939. After Wang Jing-wei left Chongqing to negotiate a separate peace with Japan, the Nationalist Government tried desperately to strengthen its war effort against the Japanese, and a united Korean independence movement on its side would be of no small help.

Largely due to Chinese pressure, the two Kims made a joint declaration calling for unification, and after several months' organization, a seven-party unification meeting finally convened in mid-1939. Because of the differences over forms of unification and political platforms, however, the meeting ended without any success. Frustration began to grow among the KMT officials, as one internal memo pessimistically attributed the failure to the lack of spirit of solidarity in the Korean national character, absence of a great leader, lack of a central theme, and deep-rooted mutual distrust. Nonetheless, the effort continued.

Until 1939 Kim Yak-san still enjoyed much Chinese support. He headed the Korean Volunteers' Corps (KVC), which he organized in Wuhan two years ago and belonged to the Political Department of the Chinese Military Committee. The latter's secretary-general, He Hanzhong, was also a Whampoa graduate. In 1940 the KVC had over 300 members, many with excellent educational background. Among its forty or so cadres, 18 had attended Chinese military academies or received political and military training between 1932 and 1937, 10 had studied at Chinese schools or universities, and three were graduates of prominent Japanese universities. Their average age was in the mid-thirties. Of those whose political affiliation we know, 15 were members of Kim Yak-san's KNRP, 10 others belonged to four smaller groups.

In Wuhan, Kim wore the officer's uniform of the Nationalist Army, and busily organized an international column for China. In addition to its headquarter later moved to Chongqing, the KVC were sub-divided into three units, which were assigned to several Nationalist combat zones and participated in the intelligence and propaganda work against the Japanese. Funding for its operations came from both the Military Committee under Ho Yingqin as well the Institute of International Studies, an intelligence agency under Wang Pengshen. By all accounts, the KVC had become an actual ally of the Chinese military.

Although initially lacking strong Chinese support, Kim Ku also had his cards to play. According to his memoir, after he and his followers

moved to Chongqing, the Nationalist Government arranged accommodations for them but was not responsive to their request for assistance to the Provisional Government. Then Kim had let it known that he intended to go to the United States to get American support, and before long the Chinese Government approached him. Xu Enzen, vice director of the KMT intelligence organ, Statistics and Investigation Bureau (Zhongtong), asked Kim to present a plan so that he could eventually leave some accomplishments behind in China, where he had been living for so long. Kim proposed the establishment of a Korean Restoration Army. In early 1940 Xu Enzen presented to Zhu Kim’s proposal of a Restoration Army intelligence network among ethnic Korean soldiers in North China. Zhu submitted it to Chiang Kai-shek, who granted permission and referred him to Ho Yingqing, then the General Chief-of-Staff in actual charge of the Military Commission.

By early 1940, when the unification was still up in the air, and Zhu Jiahua was running short of patience and even threatened to quit, a new problem of bi-polarization was being created. But Kim Ku’s tactics of turning to America worked, and the balance began to tilt in his favor. Obviously, the Chinese did not want to lose its influence on the KPG, despite its ineffectiveness. Increasingly what mattered was not actual participation in the war effort but the ideological position, as anti-Communist tendencies again started to grow within the KMT regime.

Although the United Front was still in existence in China, enmity toward the Communists had been building within the KMT since 1938. A policy of “dissolving” the Chinese Communists [rong-gong] was formally adopted at KMT’s Fifth Plenum of the Fifth Congress in January of 1939. The change in China’s political climate could not but have implications for the Chinese policy toward Korean groups. When meeting with the Chinese officials, while Kim Yak-san criticized the Provisional Government as unrepresentative, inefficient and an obstacle to the unification, Kim Ku in turn accused Kim Yak-san and his KNRP of being communist. As ideological orientation now received added weight, Zhu also began to talk about the exclusion of communist elements

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39. Kim Ku, op. cit., pp. 200–1. From what follows, however, it seemed likely that what he originally proposed was less than a full-fledged army.
from the Korean united front. As a transition, Zhu ceased to press-
ure for prompt unification and decided to allow Kim Ku’s Restoration
Coalition and Kim Yak-san’s Nationalist Coalition to co-exist but oper-
ate separately for the time being. All this time, Kim Ku kept up his
effort of playing on the Red scare in the minds of Zhu Jiahua and his
colleagues. In June 1940 Zhu reiterated Kim Ku’s demand that Kim
Yak-san had to denounce communism as a precondition for unification,
but the latter refused on the ground that the KNRP had never had any
leftist tendencies. It is not surprising to note that Kang, a Whampoa
graduate, seemed to be backing Kim Won-bong’s objection.

However, it was not long before Kim Ku’s efforts bore fruit. After
meeting with Kim Ku, Wang Rongshen, a Zhongtong official under Xu
Enzen, produced a detailed report of various Korean parties in late
October 1941, which set the tone of KMT policies. Wang noted that
although Kim Ku’s Independence Party had so far few actual achieve-
ments, it nonetheless had kept up its revolutionary spirit. Kim Ku
apparently had told him that the Restoration Army had 700 men and
was planning an “astonishing event” to draw attention, but Wang made
his own estimate of only 200. The Provisional Government, Wang con-
cluded, was far below the standard of other governments but still had
considerable reputation among Korean revolutionaries in China and
overseas. He then reported that two communist groups had sent their
men to Yenan to contact the Chinese communists, and went on to call
Kim Yak-san’s KNRP and KVC “the most regretful case”. Wang ac-
nowledged that the KNRP had made quite a few achievements, but
its membership had always been diverse and several of their leaders
had gone to Yenan, where a Korean by the name of Wu Ting (Mu
Chong) was the head of the Eighth Route Army Artillery Regiment.
He thought it very unwise for them to collude with the Chinese Com-
munists while they had been receiving 16,000 yuan each month from
the Political Department of the Military Commission. Wang had also
indicated that although not all the charges against the KNRP were
well-founded, he believed that they were not fabrications.

In an attached memo, Xu Enzen added his comment that Kim Ku’s
KIP was most hopeful choice. “Its many aged members would provide
poor leadership for the young,” he noted, “but from the standpoint of

44. Zhu Jiahua to Kang Ze, Xu Enzen, and Li Chaoying, January 25, 1940, Shiliao, pp. 56–
57.
46. Kim Ku to Xu Enzen, January 26, 1940; Kim Ku to Zhu Jiahua, September(?), 1940.
Kim also met with Zhu during September. Shiliao, pp. 65–68, 103, 244.
47. Zhu to Kang, June 3, 1940; Kang to Zhu, June 9, 1940, Shiliao, pp. 83–85.
our Party, it is most appropriate to support Kim Ku's group." He also suggested that Kim Ku should be advised to absorb those "reliable elements" in Kim Won-bong’s KVC, which in turn was to be reorganized after consultation with the Political Department. After a careful reading of the report, Zhu indicated his total agreement with Xu Enzen, adding that he had long acted according to such views.

Thus, at least by late 1941, Zhu and Chiang had already leaned toward Kim Ku's side. In July, Chiang Kai-shek met with Kim Ku and several other Korean leaders. Three months later Chiang ordered the KVC to be merged with the KRA and be placed under direct control of the Military Commission. Kim Yak-san at first refused, but later proposed the name of "Korean National Revolution Army" for the merged army without success. Disgruntled, Kim Yak-san finally had to accept a position second to Yi Chong-chon who had been associated with Kim Ku.

On several later occasions, Zhu was to explain the reason for his "leaning-to-one-side" policy. In a telegram to T.V. Soong in 1942, he told Soong that:

the KIP was the strongest and had the longest revolutionary history among all Korean parties... It can be called a pro-China faction. Its major figures include members of our former Tongmeng Hui, and is really an orthodox party. Other parties have no basis and are in cooperation with the KIP. The rest are complicated in their ideologies, few in number, and are either left-wing or communist, related to the Soviet Union.

In a report submitted to Chiang around the same time, Zhu again emphasized the close ties between Kim Ku's KIP and the KMT in their ideology and membership, while reiterating the charge that Kim Won-bong's KNRP subscribed to an "internationalist" line and had contacts with the Chinese Communists in Yenan. Meanwhile, Zhu suggested that assistance to the KRA should strengthen Yi Chong-chon while leaving former KVC members to the discretion of Kim Ku’s Provisional Government.

Obviously Kim Ku had by now scored a major victory over Kim Won-bong, with the help of people like Zhu. Two months after the merger, Kim Yak-san expressed willingness to join the Provisional Government. However, as Kim Ku soon would find out, old personal network would not break easily and affairs with regards to the Korean independence

49. Xu Enzen to Zhu Jiahua, November 1, 1941. Ibid., pp. 107-110.
movement were still handled by several departments simultaneously, often lacking coordination. Meanwhile, Kim Yak-san and his KNRP still seemed to enjoy the support of some Chinese officials. For instance, Wang Pingyi, a Chinese who was appointed the chief of the Political Training Division of the KRA, resigned because the job was too difficult for him. He complained to Zhu that the person in actual charge of the KRA matters in the Military Commission was intentionally nurturing two separate systems within the KRA, ignoring the importance of the KMT-KIP ties.54

This problem was well demonstrated in a major dispute which took place between the KNRP and members of KIP including Kim Ku in the middle of 1943. The first part of the episode was mostly confined to Korean groups, when Choe Wan-ku of the KIP started a witch-hunt accusing members of the KNRP of attempting to assassinate Kim Ku and other prominent KIP leaders. Furthermore, the KNRP charged that Kim Ku had embezzled funds received from the Chinese Government. After joining the Provisional Government, the KNRP had been receiving Chinese assistance through Kim Ku, who was its chairman. Due to the wartime inflation in Chongqing, the Nationalist Government had made increases in its financial aid to the Koreans through Zhu's Department. However, Kim Ku denied any increase when asked by the KNRP. A month later, not seeing any increase in the funding, Kim Won-bong and Kim Kyu-sik appealed to Wu Tiecheng, Zhu Jiahua, and He Yinqing, three Chinese responsible for assisting Koreans. What was damaging to Kim Ku was the inclusion of an earlier letter from Wu which revealed the amount and source of the increase.55 Zhu was now in an embarrassing situation as Kim Ku asked him to clarify on his behalf, while letters from He Yinqing and Wu Tiecheng asked him to urge Kim Ku to amend his mistake.56 Remarkably, Zhu managed to do both, finding an excuse for Kim Ku but also telling him to be magnanimous and give out the money.57 What was not known to others, however, was the fact that Kim Ku indeed had been receiving a "secret

55. For a complete text of KNRP appeal about these two incidents, see "The Truth About the Embezzlement and Fabrication of 'Murder of Kim Ku' by Pak, Choe and other Anti-Unification Faction" in Shiliao, pp. 149-165.
56. Zhu's secretary, Sha Menghai, noted in a memo dated August 10, 1943 that it was inappropriate for Kim Ku to deny the charges, but also inconsiderate for Wu to disclose such secret to Kim Kyu-sik. Also see Wu Tiecheng to Zhu Jiahua, November 10, 1943; He Yinqing to Zhu Jiahua, November 30, 1940. Ibid., pp. 495, 492, 498-500.
57. Zhu Jiahua to Kim Ku, August 10, 1940; November 30, 1940; December 8, 1940; Zhu Jiahua to He Yinqing, August 11, 1940; Zhu Jiahua to Wu Tiecheng, December 1, 1940; December 7, 1940; Ibid., pp. 496, 502, 509, 497, 503, 508.
fund" of 100,000 yuan from Zhu for some time and continued to do so until he left China in 1945.\textsuperscript{58}

As can be seen from above, the wartime KMT policy of assisting the Korean independence movement took shape in the domestic context of the precarious alliance between the KMT and the communists. Individuals and bureaucracies that formulated and implemented policies also played their roles. However, neither personal nor factional differences should be exaggerated. Chinese policy was also influenced by the Nationalist Government’s assessment of changing international circumstances. On the question of recognition of the Korean Provisional Government, national interest, together with political and individual considerations, were all co-determinants on the final outcome.

Several times during the war recognition was considered and then dropped by the Nationalist Government. Just days before Pearl Harbor, Syngman Rhee in Washington sent a cablegram to the Chinese Foreign Minister, urging him to declare formal recognition of the Korean Republic immediately. “America, Britain and Russia,” Rhee assured, “under treaty obligation to assist Korea, will follow suit, which will automatically include Korea in lend-lease.”\textsuperscript{59} Rhee’s request was referred to Zhu, whose subordinate Xu Enzen favored early recognition.\textsuperscript{60} The following January Kim Ku also presented a similar memorandum to Zhu, in which Kim underplayed the factionalism among the Koreans, and reassured Zhu that recognition indeed would help unifying various groups.\textsuperscript{61} In August 1942, the KMT appointed seven members of its Executive Committee to discuss the Korean issue. Zhu confided to T. V. Soong that it had been decided that the recognition would be granted on China’s National Day in October and already had Chiang’s approval, but due to the stubborn objection of He Yinqing, who “[had] no interest in weaker nations,” recognition was postponed till after the outbreak of war between the Soviet Union and Japan. Chiang’s hesitation, Zhu explained to Song, was due to the opposition of the Political Department under Chen Cheng, which was under the influence of Korean Communists.\textsuperscript{62} It would seem that personal entanglements again were the main deciding factor, but the truth is, as Zhu had commented

\textsuperscript{58} Zhu Jiahua to Chen Guofu, August 11, 1944, \textit{Shiliao}, p. 547.
\textsuperscript{60} Guo Taiqi to Zhu Jiahua, December 1, 1941; Xu Enzen to Zhu Jiahua, December 11, 1941; \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 560, 562–564.
on Xu Enzen's recommendation in late 1941, "if America could recognize [the Provisional Government], we certainly can bring it about." 63

Thus, there seemed to be an inherent contradiction in the KMT's policy toward recognition, for Chiang had previously instructed that China should recognize Korea "ahead of other countries." 64 Obviously such a policy should be understood in the context of the historically close relations between China and Korea. However, China in the 1940s lacked the strength to back up even this largely symbolic claim of being the "first among equals." As the war progressed, the Nationalist Government became increasingly dependent on the United States for assistance. The US, for its part, held the view that the Provisional Government in Chongqing did not have popular base within Korea and therefore would not extend formal recognition to it. When Kim Ku in mid-1944 again urged recognition of the Provisional Government, which now did include the KNRP, top Chinese decision-makers including Zhu Jiahua had come to the agreement with the Foreign Ministry that China should act in unison with both America and Britain on this matter. 65 By then, recognition was certainly out of the question.

Despite all these up-and-downs, the Chongqing years saw the development of close working relations between the Chinese Nationalist Government and various Korean groups under its patronage. People like Zhu Jiahua was mostly attentive to the needs of Koreans, as the frequent correspondence between Zhu and Kim Ku could testify, although seldom were Koreans' requests for assistance granted in full. Support for the Koreans living in Chongqing included regular funding, special aid in case of emergency such as fire, and medicine or food at reduced prices. Although the planned Korean Independence Army never really got on its foot, the Chinese Government continued to provide support. As one Chinese memorandum revealed, assistance to the Koreans "would solidify their confidence in us and improve our chances of controlling and using them." 66 The Koreans, initially, would frequently emphasize their ideological affinity or organizational ties with the KMT, in expectation that they would somehow translate into more assistance from the Chinese. For instance, Kim Ku once renamed his party the Korean Nationalist Party and urged close cooperation between it and the Chinese Nationalist Party. In particular, he stressed that his party would adopt much of the Three Principles of the Peo-

63. Ibid., p. 564.
64. Wu Tiecheng to Zhu Jiahua, July, 31, 1944, ibid, p. 619; Shao Yulin, op. cit., pp. 31-32.
people in its party platform. To strengthen personal ties, he hired Shao Yulin, an official in the Nationalist Government, as the Chinese advisor to the KPG. On the other side, during the critical months in late 1941, the KNRP under Kim Yak-san presented the KMT with a Korean translation of Sun Yat-sen’s Three Principles of the People, and asked for assistance for its publication, “so as to enable the Korean masses to understand and believe its true essence.” Here, high ideals did well to serve self-interests for both parties.

As international relations are also intercultural relations, Chinese-Korean relations offer an interesting case. Theirs is a relationship heavily saturated in cultural terms, “lips and teeth” being the ultimate metaphor despite its sometimes ambiguous connotations. The residue of their traditional “intra-cultural” relationship was obvious, although the old world that had produced and sustained such relationship was long gone. Whether the claim of cultural affinity was sincere or not, certain cultural legacies had provided useful means of communication for both parties (i.e. written Chinese being the medium) and helped in no small measure to foster a feeling of closeness (i.e. the use of traditional forms of address in correspondence) that was often absent in other bilateral relations. Of course, the other side of the coin was cultural differences, which both the Koreans and the Chinese became increasingly aware. At the establishment of the Korean Independence Army, the Chinese laid out the so-called “Nine Yardsticks of the KRA Activities,” which the Koreans first accepted without much dissent. As the national consciousness of the Koreans became more manifest after the outbreak of the Pacific War, they demanded the abolition of these somewhat humiliating restrictions that had been imposed by the Chinese. Earlier acquiescence among the Koreans were criticized as an indication of the old sadae diplomacy. Whereas the Koreans had initially emphasized their organizational ties to the Chinese Government, toward the end of the war they wanted to see the KRA sever its subordinate relations with the Chinese Military Commission and be placed solely under the Korean Provisional Government. Belatedly, the Nationalist Government abolished those rules and even signed several agreements with the KPG, as a gesture of placing it on more equal ground if only nominally. Privately, Kim Ku and other Koreans made a special point when they gave calligraphy as presents to their Chinese

68. KMT Secretariat to Zhu Jia-hua, October 13, 1941, Shiliao, pp. 105-106.
friends. They wrote them in Korean han’gul, with Chinese translations.70

The Chinese and Korean Communists

The story of the wartime Chinese-Korean relations would be incomplete without mentioning the ties between the Chinese and Korean communists. During the early 20th century, many latter-day Chinese communists shared the sympathy and concern for Korea, then prevalent at least among the educated population. Mao Zedong himself, then known as an “educator from Hunan,” was the Chinese director of the Communication Department in the Changsha “China-Korea Mutual Assistance Society” during the early 1920’s.71 During the first Nationalist-Communist alliance in the mid-1920’s, prominent Chinese leaders such as Zhou Enlai and Yun Daiyin were instructors at the Whampoa Academy, where more than sixty Korean students had enrolled. Korean students attending Chinese universities would also have contact with Marxist-oriented professors. Immediately after Chiang Kai-shek’s purge of Communists in 1927, as many as several hundred Koreans fought along with the Chinese Communists in the uprisings in Canton, most of whom gave their lives in the Chinese revolution.72

Following a Comintern decision, Korean communists in China were merged with the Chinese Communist Party. As with the Nationalists, Manchuria was of major importance.73 During the 1930s, Chinese and Korean Communists were active organizing anti-Japanese partisans in Manchuria. The famous Northeast Anti-Japanese United Army had numerous Koreans members, many attaining high positions. Yi Hong-kwang was probably its most well-known Korean founder, and after he died in battle, a guerrilla unit was named after him.74

Outside Manchuria, contact seemed to be limited initially. The experience of two Koreans communists provide a glimpse of prewar connections between the Chinese and Korean communists. Born in Korea, Yang Lin (Korean name Kim Hun) went to Manchuria in 1920 and graduated from Tang Jiyao’s military academy in Yunnan in 1924. While teaching at the Whampoa Academy, he joined the Chinese Communist Party in late 1925, and was promoted to a battalion commander under

70. The use of han’gul, as Michael Robinson notes, had been taken up by nationalists in Korea as an affirmation of Korean cultural identity. Robinson, op. cit., p. 34.
72. Kim San and Nym Wales, Song of Ariran. “We lost the flower of the Korean Revolution and the nucleus of our whole party membership in the Commune disaster,” wrote Kim (p. 129).
74. Chong-sik Lee and Dae-sook Suh have written extensively on this subject. See also Dongbei Kang-Ri Lieshi Zhuan, 3 Volumes.
the Communist general Ye Ting. After the 1927 coup he was sent by the CCP to study in the Soviet Union for three years, and upon his return, worked in east Manchuria in the Chinese Communist Party. Yang went to the Jiangxi Soviet in autumn of 1932, and joined the Long March as a Red Army divisional commander. He died in 1936 during a battle in North China. Kim Muchong (better known as Mu Chong) had a similar experience and was born in Korea. After graduating from a Chinese military academy with specialization in artillery, he was a First Lieutenant in warlord Yan Xishan’s army before joining the Jiangxi Soviet in 1931. Like Yang Lin he also finished the Long March, and became artillery commander in the Red Army (later the Eighth Route Army) at the outbreak of the war with Japan.

After the 1927 split the communist movement was at a low ebb in China, and many left-wing Koreans chose to work with the Nationalist Government. Things changed again after the establishment of the second Nationalist-Communist united front in late 1936. Disillusioned with the Nationalist Government, many young men and women from the Nationalist areas went to Yenan, where the newly legalized Chinese Communist Party had established their new headquarters. Some Koreans went were among them. After the fall of Wuhan in late 1938, many members of Kim Yak-san’s KVC also left for the Communist-controlled area in North China, apparently reducing his strength. The causes of the exodus of the KVC units have been somewhat controversial among scholars, but it appears likely that both internal and external factors were at work. Although the influence of Chinese communists was an important factor in the unit’s decision to go north, apparently it was the Koreans that first approached the 129th Division of the Eighth Route Army. According to one Chinese account, the agent sent by the Koreans was even immediately apprehended by the 129th Division due to lack of understanding. Koreans already in the communist area were contacted by telegram for clarification, while the KVC unit waited anxiously. It was only after all doubts were removed that the KVC unit was welcomed by the Eighth Route Army. Previous Chinese planning

77. Chong-sik Lee, relying solely on the accounts of a Chinese communist defector, concluded that it was a plot of the Chinese communists. See especially his “The Korean Communists and Yenan.” Dae-sook Suk, on the other hand, down-played such planning and emphasized internal difference within the KVC. The Korean Communist Movement, 1918-1948, pp. 221-223.
would have made all this unnecessary. Soon afterwards, these Koreans made secret contacts with another KVC unit in the Nationalist-held area of Loyang and brought it to join the Eighth Route Army as well.  

Whereas the Chinese Communists might not have had grand policy designs for a future Korea, they certainly had an interest in winning the Koreans as their allies. Koreans who reached Yenan were enrolled at the Anti-Japanese Military and Political University. A School of Korean Revolutionaries, headed by the renowned Korean linguist Kim Tu-bong, was also set up, with enrollment in the hundreds. In North China, Koreans in the Eighth Route Army, now strengthened by the newly arriving KVC units, founded the Korean Volunteer Army and their own political organ, the Korean Liberation League, in the Taihang Mountains. Quite a few Koreans died in battle when the Japanese launched their mopping-up campaigns in 1942, and the Chinese hailed them as martyrs of proletariat internationalism. In one instance a new Japanese machine gun was presented to the Korean unit by the Chinese, with following words written on it: “For our common ideals, we stand together forever.”

From Proteges to Allies

On a Sunday in late 1945, a farewell party was arranged by the Shandong Provincial People’s Government and the Shandong Military District, both set up by the Chinese Communists, for their departing Korean comrades. The traditional Korean t’aeguk flag was flown next to the Chinese colors. Upon seeing their national flag flying for the first time in their lives, one Chinese recalled, some Koreans burst into tears. However, this was probably one of the last occasions where the Chinese and Korean Communists paid symbolic allegiance to the old regimes, which they would soon embark on destroying in their respective countries. Their mutual assistance in these similar endeavors was to add a new chapter to an age-old heritage.

78. Zhang Xiangshan, op. cit., pp. 82-83.
The Old Regimes

Ostensibly one of the Big Four powers, Nationalist China had its own designs for the postwar Asia. Now that Japan had been driven out of Korea, the Chinese influence was to be restored. Shortly after the end of the war, Chiang Kai-shek declared the independence of Korea to be one of the three "most important and pressing goals of our national revolution," together with the recovery of Manchuria and Taiwan. An instruction from Chiang in December 1945, issued to both the Party and the Foreign Ministry, outlined China's grand policy vis-a-vis its former protege, Korea. It called for maintaining the same contact with both Soviet and American occupation authorities in Korea, "so that diplomatically we can take an aloof position and serve as a bridge between them, and even make use of their bilateral relations." In addition, it specified that

[we should] gradually nurture pro-China elements, and unite all Korean groups. In addition to assisting the Korean Provisional Government to the full, we should take control of the three million Koreans currently in the Northeast, North China, and Taiwan, which would be the capital for our future diplomacy with Korea.

Based on pure self-interest, these were ambitious goals which the Nationalist Government had little chance of attaining. Given the rapidly deteriorating condition inside China, it was not surprising that its influence on Soviet and American policies in postwar Korea was negligible. Although Nationalist China had entertained hopes of recovering China's paramount influence in Korea, it was helpless to do so. The personal agony of Shao Yulin, once an advisor to Kim Ku and an expert on Korea in the Nationalist Government, best illustrates China's almost pitiful incapacity in this regard.

In November 1945 Shao was appointed Chinese military representative to the American Military Government in Korea, and was to accompany Kim Ku to return to Seoul. However, the appointment was soon canceled due to what seemed to be a personal and bureaucratic squabble. Several months later, Shao was renamed representative of the Foreign Ministry in Korea, but General MacArthur objected to any appointees with military affiliations to be stationed in south Korea. By late 1946, when the United States indicated willingness to accept a Consul-General from China, an old acquaintance of the Minister of Foreign Affairs was given the position instead, despite his relative in-

83. Shao Yulin, op. cit., p. 72.
84. The full text can be found in Shao Yulin, op. cit., p. 75.
85. Ibid., pp. 76–77.
experience in international diplomacy. After Shao was named China's first ambassador to Korea in early 1949, acceptance was not announced by the south Korean Government until six months later, when a desperate Shao appealed to both Chiang Kai-shek and Syngman Rhee. The objective of nurturing pro-China groups in Korea produced dubious results. Due to America's insistence that the members of the Provisional Government must return to Korea as individuals, Nationalist China's dream of installing a government long under its patronage evaporated. When in November 1945 the Provisional Government formally disbanded after 26 years of arduous existence in China, so did the Korean Restoration Army under its control. Before leaving China, Kim Ku was secretly given $200,000 by Chiang Kai-shek as activity fee. More than once Kim Ku asked Shao Yulin to accompany him back to Korea, apparently as a gesture of China's support, but Shao was not able to do so due to other official duties. No one had expected that shortly after Shao's ambassadorial appointment was announced, Kim Ku would be assassinated in Seoul. Thus, when Shao finally arrived in Seoul a month later, the man that had enjoyed the most Chinese support was already gone. Many high-ranking officials in the prewar south Korean Government, whose Prime Minister Yi Bom-sok had been the former KRA Chief of Staff, had been associated with the KPG in China. Even Syngman Rhee, though a longtime rival of Kim Ku, also turned to Chiang Kai-shek for help when he was stranded in Washington in early 1947. Rhee apparently had run afoul of General Hodge, and the American military cancelled Rhee's original return flight to Korea. Chiang Kai-shek did Rhee no small a favor by inviting him to visit China and arranging his return to Seoul on a Chinese airplane. Meanwhile, Rhee asked Chiang to let him share the $200,000 Kim Ku received before he left China.

When the Nationalists were driven out of the mainland in 1949, south Korea and Nationalist China established diplomatic relations. For Chiang, largely abandoned by America, Rhee's south Korea was the only straw for life for which he could grasp. Although Chiang's proposal for a Far Eastern Anti-Communist Alliance was not realized, it was the war in Korea that ultimately saved him and his regime. While Nationalist China failed to project its influence into postwar Korea, it did even worse with the aforementioned three million Kore-

86. Ibid., p. 82.
87. Ibid., pp. 93–102. Shao seemed to suggest that his previous association with Kim Ku had displeased Rhee, who delayed his acceptance.
88. Interestingly, Shao chose to live in the residence where Kim Ku was assassinated until the outbreak of the Korean War. Shao, op. cit., pp. 124–5.
89. Ibid., pp. 88–89.
ans under Chinese jurisdiction. Instead of becoming a diplomatic asset, these Koreans became a liability for the Nationalist Government, to a considerable extent by its own doing. This failure was no less significant than a major diplomatic blunder. By early 1946, most Koreans in North China were awaiting repatriation. Due to Japan’s wartime differential policy and the collusion between some Koreans and the Japanese authorities, Chinese hostility toward Koreans was riding high, particularly in North China. Many restaurants displayed signs that Koreans were not welcome. The often insensitive policies of the Nationalist Government simply aggravated the situation. When newspapers reported that all Koreans in Shanghai were ordered by the Nationalist Government to leave within three days, it created a panic among the 5,000 Korean there. In the winter of 1946, the Nationalist military authorities in Beijing ordered the 20,000 Koreans in the city, half of whom were regarded as Japanese collaborators, to be assembled on two temple grounds, where they would be screened, and if found guilty, punished. The Koreans had much to object to the proposed concentration. The accommodations were insufficient and the promised supplies of food and fuel were late. Many complained that the real criminal elements had long escaped, leaving many women and children and the poor to endure the freezing weather and the often harsh treatment by the Chinese authorities. Naturally, those Koreans under detention often proved to be uncooperative and restive. According to the Nationalist decree, the Koreans, like the Taiwanese, were to receive the same treatment as the Japanese, despite the fundamental differences between them. Not only was their property confiscated, Koreans’ private possessions were often expropriated, to be returned to only those who could prove their innocence.

The situation of Koreans in the Northeast, formerly Manchukuo, was no better. There they were caught in the cross-fire between the battling Nationalist and Communist forces. When a Chinese writer visited the area in 1946, a Korean general in the communist force, Kim Kwang-hyop, told him of many instances of atrocities against Korean civilians committed by the bandits allied with the Nationalists. Kim noticed that those Koreans who helped the communists were victimized even more than those who had previously worked for the Japanese. Even

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90. Ibid., p. 79.
91. Ibid.
92. TDB December 2, 6, 8, 18, 1945; January 22, 1946.
93. TDB May 7, 1946.
94. TDB January 15, 1946.
allowing for some exaggeration for propaganda purposes, there is little
doubt that KMT policy alienated the majority of Koreans in China,
which explains why they almost invariably joined the communist side
during the Chinese civil war.

Communist China’s North Korean Connection

Following the Soviet declaration of war on Japan on August 9, Zhu
De, Commander-in-Chief of the Chinese Communist forces, issued the
following order to Mu Chong, Pak Hyo-sam, Pak I-ru, and other lead-
ers of the Korean Volunteers’ Army in north China. They were to
proceed to Manchuria with the Eighth Route Army and former North-
eastern forces, to organize the Koreans in Manchuria for the liberation
of Korea. Most important Korean Communist leaders, including Mu
Chong and Kim Tu-bong, went back to North Korea in late 1945, and
their troops were disbanded before being allowed into the country. Al-
though these so-called “Yenan faction” leaders played important roles
in consolidating the North Korean regime after the withdrawal of the
Soviet troops in 1948, their political fortune was by no means guar-
anteed. Despite the fact that most of them were purged in the early
1950s, the influence of Chinese communists remained conspicuous in
the ideology of Kim Il Sung. On another level, many middle-echelon
Korean officers had not only studied in the political-military schools in
China, but also participated in various ideological “movements” in the
communist base area during the war.

Eager as they were to return to liberate their homeland in 1945, quite
a few Korean Communists stayed in north China until after the out-
break of the Korean War, upon the request of the Eighth Route Army,
to help bring about the surrender of Japanese troops in that area. This
was but the first instance of comradely assistance the Chinese Commu-
nists received from their Korean allies after the war with Japan. During
the next four years, the Korean connection proved to be an important
factor in the Chinese communist victory in the civil war against the
eight million strong Nationalist forces. Here lies a “hidden history,”
the full significance of which is yet to be assessed.

According to Chinese communist sources, as many as one million

96. Pak Tu-bok, Zhonggong Canjia Hanzhan Yuanyin zhi Yanjiu [A Study of the Causes of
Chinese Communist’s Participation in the Korean War], Taibei: Lirnin Wenhua Shiye,

97. For an in-depth analysis, see Bruce Cumings’ “North Korea’s China Connection”,
chapter 11 in the second volume of The Origins of the Korean War.

98. For example, Yi Myong [Li Ming in Chinese], who headed both the Korean Military
and Political School and the Shandong branch of the Korean Independence League, was
known to be studying the Chinese experience and comparing the two societies between

Koreans remained in China after the war, over 50,000 of them fighting as soldiers of the Peoples Liberation Army (PLA). Most likely this figure did not include North Korean troops that were secretly dispatched by Kim Il Sung. Overall, it was likely that more than 100,000 Koreans had fought in the Chinese civil war on the Communist side. This directly contributed to the numerical superiority of the communist forces enjoyed after 1947 in Manchuria. Even as late as 1949, when the main battle front had moved south, the Chinese Communists were reluctant to release the over 20,000 Koreans in Jilin Province, as pockets of Nationalist resistance still existed.

Probably equally important to the Chinese communists was the strategic and logistic support which North Korea had provided during the struggle for northeast China. The clandestine ties between North Korea and the Chinese communists in the Northeast were of critical importance to the latter, especially before the communists' decisive victory over the Nationalist forces in 1948. Although there were much speculations at the time, when the Nationalist Government called it the "international communist conspiracy" against China, it was only recently that such a connection was confirmed in mainland Chinese publications.

Soon after the end of the war, the Nationalist crack troops were quickly transported to the Northeast to occupy major cities along the railways, cutting the communist forces in half. To keep open the vital communication between the Northeast and China proper and between north and south Manchuria, the Northeast Bureau of the CCP in June 1946 reached the decision to use North Korea as the rear-area. A CCP Northeast Bureau North Korea Office was set up in P'yongyang, with branch offices in four major transportation nexus and port cities. Sinuiju and Manpo, both on the Chinese-Korean border, primarily en-

100. Chen Ming, "Zhongguo dongbei jingnei de Chaoxian minzu" [Korean People in China's Northeast] in Remmin Zhoubao December 17, 1950. p. 27. Contemporary American estimate was 1,400,000 Koreans in Manchuria alone. See Foreign Relations of the United States 1947 VII.
101. The details of these troops are not all clear but some of them were apparently mixed into PLA units. See, Gu Jiaxi, op. cit.
102. Bruce Cumings, op. cit. p. 835.
103. A Nationalist Ministry of Defense report in mid-1947 put the Communist strength in Manchuria at 390,000, which included 100,000 Koreans, 35,000 Mongols, 15,000 Japanese. The Nationalist force was only 167,000. FRUS 1947 VII, p. 249.
105. The following discussion is based on "Huiyi dongbei jiefang zhanzhen shiqi dongbei ju zhu-Chaoxian banshichu" [Recollections of the Northeast Bureau Office in Korea during the War of Liberation in the Northeast], Zhonggong Dangshi Ziliao 17 (1986), pp. 197-210.
gaged in transportation of wounded soldiers and strategic materials, and the port city of Nampo served to connect Manchuria and China proper. Najin on the east coast, had 500 employees to take care of shipments of non-military goods and personnel movements.

Its contribution was impressive: when the Nationalists mounted their major offensive in late 1946, 18,000 Chinese including, thousands of wounded soldiers, retreated into Korea, many living with and taken care of by Korean families. 85 percent of the PLA’s strategic materials, 20,000 tons in all, were stored in north Korea, most of which transported by Korean labor. Movements of troops and goods between northern Manchuria under Communist control, and the battle area in southern Manchuria, became easy and made possible the survival of the Communist base in the north and the military victory in the south. North Korea’s contribution of military material ranging from dynamite to rubber shoes, mostly left by the Japanese army, exceeded 2,000 railroad cars. Some of them were in exchange for food stuff from Manchuria, others were given to the Chinese for free.

Due to the existence of the American-Russian Committee in Korea and the restrictions of the Yalta Agreement, the Chinese operated under the name of “P’yongyang Limm[ benefit-the-people” Company”. Such a large operation was made possible by close cooperation between the Chinese and Koreans. Apparently, the Russian occupation army and Russian advisors were also involved, as Russian language interpreters from China were attached to these offices. The North Korean government was most cooperative, recalled some Chinese who had worked there, with the Minister of Interior put in charge. It was an all-out effort on the part of north Korea, as domestic transportation often had to stop so that the Chinese transports could go through. Top North Korean leaders were often approached directly by the Chinese representing different departments, causing quite some confusion, before the Northeast Bureau managed to coordinate them. However, Kim Il Sung promised the Chinese assistance in the full, saying that “China’s matters are our own matters.”

What are the implications of this previously little known story? Most of all, it demonstrates the close ties between communist China and North Korea under Kim Il Sung. Obviously, Kim understood well that, if Manchuria were lost to the Chinese Nationalist, North Korea would be sandwiched between two hostile regimes. Moreover, the tens of thousands of Korean soldiers fighting in China’s Civil War were gaining valuable battle experience for their later missions in Korea. But the fact that the North Korean leaders went beyond the call of duty to provide massive assistance to the Chinese communists also has im-

106. Ibid., p. 208.
portant impact on Chinese-Korean relations in the years to come. By offering such relentless support, as Bruce Cumings has put it, "Kim II Sung could invoke both the traditional reciprocity of the Chinese world order, and this recent experience, as a hold card against the chance of American entry into the Korean civil war."107 Hence, when he dispatched General Kim Kwang-hyop, who had served in the Chinese communist forces, to China in early 1950 and asked to have some 14,000 ethnic Korean soldiers released from duty in the PLA in order to join the North Korean army, the Chinese not only complied but provided weaponry as well.108 This, of course, was but one of the many groups of Koreans who returned to North Korea before the Korean War. Inevitably, one wants to know how important this obligation of reciprocity actually weighed in China's decision to join the Korean War. Like the alleged mutual defense treaty between communist China and North Korea, this question must await further information before any definitive answers can be given. Recent Chinese revelations seemed to suggest that among the top Chinese leadership it was largely Mao who made the critical decision to send Chinese troops into Korea. Gao Gang, the chairman of the Northeastern People's Government, appeared to be a staunch supporter of this decision and deserves further investigation. The subject of Gao's role in 1950 has been taboo in China since his alleged suicide several years later.109

In a complicated event like this, personal considerations may play an important role. By 1947 Kim II Sung was already known in China as an anti-Japanese hero, with popular support among north Korean people.110 Kim II Sung's enthusiastic support for the Chinese communists, in addition to his earlier guerrilla activities in China, must have made him a true ally of China in the eyes of Chinese communist leaders when he faced rivalry from Korean communists returning from Yenan. This could be an important reason why he could still retain Chinese support while purging the so-called Yenan faction in the 1950s.111 It is significant that just a few years later that Gao Gang, who allegedly intended to build his "independent kingdom" in Manchuria with Rus-

111. This question was first raised and discussed in Robert Simmons, *op. cit.*, pp. 185–187.
sians’ blessings, was purged in China by Mao. Kim II Sung was to continue his assiduous cultivation of close personal relations with the Chinese communist leaders, especially Mao.\textsuperscript{112}

Conclusions

The four decades after 1910 belong to a distinctive phase in the annals of Chinese-Korean relations. Foreign colonization and invasion, civil wars and internal revolution which took place in both societies provided the new context for relations between the two peoples. To write a narrow diplomatic history would do injustice to the broad scope and the complexities of their societal interactions.

Chinese policies toward Korea have been shaped by both idealism and self-interests. Idealism, defined as commitment to a certain standard of conduct worthy of achievement by virtue of its universal moral value,\textsuperscript{113} is of paramount significance in the traditional Chinese world. Phrases such as “assist the weak and help the poor,” “continue the exterminated and restore the fallen,” often taken from Confucian and other classic texts, were used repeatedly to justify China’s support of Korean independence. Traditional ideals were supplemented by modern ideologies such as the Three Principles of the People and proletariat internationalism, which called for resistance against imperialist domination and struggle against exploiting classes. No doubt, the repertoire of images of a long history of peaceful and close Chinese-Korean ties made it easier for the Chinese and Koreans to find the so-called “alliance ideology” to strengthen their new ties, especially during the war with Japan.

Although idealism may help explain the Chinese support for Korea’s independence or the sacrifice many Koreans had given in the name of Chinese revolution, all that lies behind assistance is not altruism. Whether as nations fighting for their independence or territorial integrity, or political groups for their survival or aggrandizement, Chinese and Koreans, Nationalists and communists, all had their self-interests that were often in conflict with the dictates of ideals. While self-defense had been China’s primary objective, China had also attempted to project its influence beyond its borders and to restore its traditional influence over Korea. The self-interest of rivaling political groups or individuals, too, had its role to play. But ultimately ide-

\textsuperscript{112} One example was that soon after the Korean War, Kim sent 24 boxes of Korean apples to Mao Zedong as a present, each of them bearing the Chinese characters, “Long life Chairman Mao.” See the reminiscences of Mao’s former body-guard, Quan Yanchi, “Zhoushia shentan de Mao Zedong” [Mao Zedong who has stepped down from the pantheon], Shiyou 1989. 3. pp. 3–64.

als and self-interest operate together and the distinction between the two is a blurry one. Even national prestige—including such factors as honor, reputation for virtue and moral excellence—is, according to Os-good, a sublimated form of national interest, which must be sustained, at least in part, by genuine idealism. Nationalist China’s assistance to the Korean independence movement fits this description well. Even in the cliche about lips and teeth, both elements are present, for it not only describes a necessity based on calculated interests but also invokes a historical, emotional bond that makes relations between China and Korea distinctive.

There was a striking parallel that by 1950 both China and Korea had not only changed from monarchies to republics, but both were also were divided along similar ideological lines. These four decades reveal the similarities and differences between Chinese Nationalist and Chinese Communists in their relations with the Korean independence movement.

There were many reasons that the Nationalist Government failed to achieve its objectives with regards to the Korea, such as building a strong Korean independence movement in China or winning over the majority of Korean immigrants. Some of them were beyond its control, but it was largely responsible for the failure. Due to its traditionalist tendency and organizational style KMT was not able to reach beyond a few old and ineffective Korean celebrities in the Provisional Government. KMT’s conservative ideological orientation alienated one of the most promising groups in the Korean independence movement, and its own factional simply made it impossible to unify the Koreans. In a way, here was a “lost chance” for the Chinese Nationalists. Generally speaking, the Korean groups associated with the KPG were more sensitive to dependence on the Chinese, which often became the cause of accusation against each other. The Chinese communists, on the other hand, had to mobilize whatever political forces, including the Koreans in China, so as to challenge an established regime. With its legendary grass-roots organization and indoctrination, the Chinese and Korean communists were much more integrated horizontally. A more egalitarian party, the Chinese communists also demonstrated a better appreciation of the talents of their Korean comrades. For example, the famous March of the PLA was composed by a Korean. While the Nationalists had little beyond reiterating traditional Chinese-Korean amity, the Communists were able to add to their vocabulary the “revolutionary tradition” forged in the blood they had shed together.

The overall Chinese-Korean relationship on both fronts during much of the four decades under study did not transcend that between patrons

114. Ibid., p. 6.
and protégés. Chinese attitudes toward Korea combined paternalism and benevolence with a strong dose of arrogance and cultural condescension stemming from the conviction that it was China that lifted Koreans from their previous state of barbarianism. To China, Korea had provided an example of following the proper patterns of behaviors laid down by the sages of the past. Perhaps more relevant was the new tradition that came into being during these four decades, when China and Korea again resumed close ties, whether between the KMT and the KPG, or the Chinese and Korean communists. This combination of traditions, both old and new, in turn provided the intellectual assumptions and emotional predispositions that became the perceptual structures through which the Chinese and the Koreans viewed each other.

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Civil Affairs Training and the U.S. Military Government in Korea

Henry H. Em

Introduction
The American occupation of southern Korea after World War II can be characterized in several ways: as imperialist, racist, or simply, liberal. Indeed it was all these things—imperialist and liberal in the sense that it sought to forcibly incorporate Korea (or at least southern Korea) into a new world system dominated by the United States, a system whose ostensible purpose was to bring progress and peace to the poor of this world by subjecting them to controls that would guarantee stability. It was racist in the sense that it assumed the superiority of American ways, and that Koreans required American tutelage before they could satisfactorily run their own affairs.

I note these things to indicate the ideological nature of the American intervention in Korea. Because certain ideological commitments limited the range of what the U.S. thought was possible and/or good, General Hodge\(^1\) and his State Department advisors early on committed the U.S. forces in Korea to a cold-war confrontation with the U.S.S.R. and the suppression of the Korean Left. This course of action solidified the division of Korea, created separate regimes in the north and south, and produced the conditions for the outbreak of the Korean War.

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1. Commander of the XXIV corps which occupied southern Korea.
These events have been interpreted by many historians within the framework of a global movement toward a cold-war confrontation. But what prompted the U.S. to take a cold-war stance in Korea? To answer this question, I focus on the epistemology of Military Government to reveal some of the root ideas which structured American perceptions of Korea. By epistemology I mean ways of knowing, ways of perceiving the Other, in a certain field of power. I try to reconstruct the “epistemological coordinates” with which the occupation authorities read the native terrain, and the dialectic that was established between American perceptions and the array of political forces competing for power in Korea.

In order to argue that the tragedy of division, war, and the deaths of millions need not have taken place, I examine America’s post-war planning to get a glimpse of what might have been. In planning for the post-war world, there were two competing world views—what Franz Schurmann calls “internationalist” and “nationalist” world views. While both sought American hegemony in the post-1945 world order, they differed radically in the means they would employ. Bruce Cumings’ work suggests that, had the internationalist approach been pursued, Korea might not have been divided or occupied, and the United States might have found ways to accommodate a socialist Korea into its world system.

In part two of this paper, I examine how the U.S. prepared for the occupation of enemy territories during World War II, how the concept of military government was formulated and re-formulated, and how the civil affairs officers who ran the military government in Korea were selected and trained. I try to isolate several ideological positions around which the idea of military government came to be structured. It would seem that, here too, there were internationalist and nationalist arguments concerning the role that the U.S. should assume in the post-war world. But here, in this space dominated by the military, the nationalist approach clearly established its primacy. It is here, then, in the articulation of the concept of military government, that I locate the epistemological basis for the nationalist approach taken by the occupation authorities in Korea.

In the third part of the paper I turn to the occupation itself, and the dialectic that comes to be established between American perceptions and the tide of political forces unleashed in Korea by Japan’s capitulation. I examine the various political decisions taken by the occupa-

tion authorities in the light of our analysis of post-war planning and military government preparations. I focus on not just policies implemented, but also on specific (symbolic) actions taken. I examine such actions as texts, expressive of certain assumptions and intentionality, and trace these to how the concept of military government came to be formulated during World War II.

My key argument, then, rests on the analysis made in part two, “Preparation for Military Government,” and it therefore constitutes the bulk of this paper. This is essentially an intellectual history of the military government training program set up by the War Department at the start of World War II. Here, I focus on ideas, because ideas as articulated in the training program gave rise to a certain practice, the practice of governing subject peoples. Marx saw ideas as constituting a material force in history, and in that sense, the ideas articulated in the training program produced a new science and new actors in history, a method of domination and a body of men which, at one point, impacted the lives of 350 million people.4

That this method did not become a permanent fixture of American foreign policy is not relevant to this paper.5 What is important is that military government constituted a set of ideas, ideas which shaped American perceptions and influenced a series of decisions that, in Korea, lead to the formation of separate regimes and eventually the Korean War. Thus, post-war planning for Korea (at the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee level), is not the primary object of my analysis. The central argument of this paper would not “work,” however, without the interpretive framework which I outline in the following section on “Post-War Planning.”

As for part three, “U.S. Occupation of Korea,” the analysis offered there is intended as the proof of my argument. The “proof” cannot be conclusive, but I hope that taken as a whole, this paper might indicate a new approach to interpreting the dynamics of U.S. actions taken in post-1945 Korea.

Post-War Planning

In The Logic of World Power, Franz Schurmann took up Karl Polanyi’s thesis that the two world wars were the inevitable consequence of the

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4. The training program established by the War Department produced over 6,000 civil affairs officers for military government duties. In 1946, these civil affairs officers were administering military governments which, taken together, were responsible for the welfare of over 350 million people. See Conference of Scholars on the Administration of Occupied Areas, 1943-1955, Donald R. McCoy (discussion leader), Harry S. Truman Library Institute for National and International Affairs, April 10-11, 1970.

5. The Civil Affairs Division established within the War Department during World War II no longer exists.
collapse of the world market system. The collapse of free trade, the rise of fascism, and the calamity of a second world war convinced Americans at the highest levels that the United States would have to take on a new role in the world. President Roosevelt became convinced that only a new world order integrated and bound by international systems could insure prosperity for all, and lasting peace. According to Schurmann, what F.D.R. wanted was to repeat on a world scale what the Americans had done for themselves, i.e. to create one out of many.

Roosevelt’s vision of “one world” was given various names: internationalism, Pax Americana, “a grand design,” or simply, imperialism. Schurmann notes that this vision was put forth against the opposition of a major part of the American business class. These businessmen opposed F.D.R.’s brand of imperialism because they knew that they would have to pay for the new schemes. Why should a company be made to pay huge corporate taxes so that the federal government could give aid to foreign countries to generate economic recovery abroad, a recovery which would benefit the U.S. generally, but not necessarily benefit that particular company or industry?

Pursuing this line of thought, Thomas Ferguson found that those companies and industries which opposed F.D.R.’s brand of imperialism were also opposed to the New Deal. Such companies all shared a common characteristic in that they were labor-intensive, and thus, vulnerable to labor and vulnerable to foreign competition. For these reasons, these companies (steel, textiles, coal) were “paladins of laissez-faire social policy,” champions too of high-tariffs and non-involvement in European affairs. In this sense, this economic group constituted a political bloc, calling for a “nationalist” approach to foreign policy.

On the other hand, there was also an “internationalist” bloc within the American business community which supported the New Deal and American leadership of a post-war world system. Ferguson identified these businesses as capital-intensive firms—oil companies like the Standard Oil of New Jersey and “high tech” firms like General Electric. Since these firms were under far less pressure from labor, they could afford to conciliate rather than repress labor, and they constituted an important part of the New Deal coalition. Since these firms also tended to be world leaders in their product lines, they did not fear foreign competition. They favored lower tariffs and efforts to rebuild

8. Ibid., p. 27.
10. Ibid., p. 63.
war-torn Europe, which for many of them represented important markets. Joining these businesses were the international banks. They too favored lower tariffs, since this would help Europe earn U.S. dollars by exporting goods to the U.S., dollars which would then be used to repay Europe's debts to these banks.¹¹

The business community, then, had different notions of what America's role in the post-war world should be. The nationalists cared for little else beyond the assurance of American power, particularly military power, in the post-war world. They were nationalists or "expansionists" in the sense that they looked to American power to protect their investments at home and abroad, to open up certain markets (mostly in Asia and central America), and to intervene on their behalf when the natives grew restless. In terms of epistemology, the mentality of the nationalists was very different from that of say, a Wall Street banker, the quintessential internationalist. Whereas the Wall Street banker knows that he is "in control" holding 51% (or less) stock in a company, the nationalist does not feel secure unless he owns a great deal more than 51%.¹²

In a sense, nationalists are primitive capitalists, interested primarily in acquiring land, mineral rights, or monopoly businesses. For these reasons, nationalists are strong advocates of the military. Expressed in political terms, nationalist ambitions are realized by adding on pieces of territory, securing military bases, or obtaining access to certain markets. These ambitions are realized in an incremental fashion, usually at the expense of some other power. In terms of method, the nationalists tended to distrust supra-national structures, favoring instead a unilateral (or bilateral) approach.

On the other hand, internationalist ambitions [Capitalist] are realized through the creation of world-spanning systems. These ambitions are realized in one historical moment, then sustained and guaranteed by the great powers. In that sense, internationalists do not fully trust the military. Internationalist ambitions are non-territorial, opposed to the unilateral control of any region by a single power. The internationalists feared a world divided into isolated blocs, favoring instead multilateral approaches that would create a "one world."

F.D.R. was the most powerful spokesman and advocate of this type of internationalism. While he was alive the internationalist vision reigned in American post-war thinking. But after his death, advocates of interests that were submerged during his tenure thrust themselves into the public discourse. Four months before the end of the war, then, the hegemonic bloc (the New Deal Coalition) lost its unifying force, and a

11. Ibid., p. 64.
12. This idea is taken from Bruce Cumings' Origins of the Korean War, p. 130.
nationalist agenda came to share the stage with Roosevelt’s vision of a “one world.”

What did this signify in terms of American planning for Korea? According to Bruce Cumings, the trusteeship concept had been a fundamental element of Roosevelt’s vision. But within the military and the State Department, “the view had taken hold . . . that trusteeship arrangements were not a sufficient hedge against potential Soviet duplicity on a peninsula increasingly defined as essential to the security of the post-war Pacific.”13 When Truman assumed the presidency, bureaucratic power was cast upward, and the planners in the State Department and the military became more relevant than they would have been under Roosevelt.14

It should be noted that it was the State Department which advocated the partition of Korea into spheres.15 At the Potsdam Conference in July, 1945, it was the advisors from the State Department and President Truman himself who determined that “the successful testing of the atomic bomb at Alamogordo, New Mexico, provided the opportunity to abjure diplomacy, draw the Pacific War to a quick close, and exclude the Soviets from significant participation in postwar East Asian affairs—in effect, to contain the Russians.”16

What Bruce Cumings is describing here is a nationalist logic starting to displace Roosevelt’s internationalist vision. When Roosevelt died, so too did the hope that the U.S.S.R. would be woven into the new world order. With this, as Franz Schurmann suggests, Roosevelt’s “one world” came to be displaced by the idea of “the free world.”

Preparation for Military Government

The Idea of Military Government

Military Government as practiced by the U.S. Army was to be an integral and instrumental part of America’s crusade to bring its version of peace and order to a war-torn world. On December 3, 1941, Brigadier General Wade Haislip, Assistant Chief of Staff, issued a directive to the Provost Marshal General of the U.S. Army, instructing him to set up a program to train officers “for future detail in connection with military government.”17 Until that time, in the entire history of the U.S. armed

15. Ibid., p. 121.
16. Ibid., p. 120.
17. History of Military Government Training. United States, Office of the Provost Marshal General, 1945. (From the historical manuscript file, Office of the Chief of Military History) microfilm. Washington: Photo duplication Service. The date of this directive is interesting, suggesting a great deal of certainty, within the War Department at least, that the United States was about to enter the war.
forces no effort had ever been made to train officers for military government duties. In the words of the official military historian, "the activities resulting from this directive became not only a program, but a crusade as well."\textsuperscript{18}

Indeed, it became a crusade. Concerning military government, one instructor at the School of Military Government put it this way: "War is a fearfully destructive business. May I suggest to you that military government is the only constructive phase of this destructive business I know."\textsuperscript{19} This instructor thus conceptually linked the purpose of military government to the purpose of the over-all war effort. The military government would be instrumental in establishing "a universal reign of law backed by whatever degree of force may be necessary to repress aggressive individuals and nations."\textsuperscript{20}

In the process of training civil affairs officers, the idea of military government came to be anchored to several interlinked, sometimes conflicting, ideological positions. One such ideological position had to do with international law, and America's effort to posit international law as relevant and enforceable in the post-war world. This, of course, was not a new idea. But one can discern in the language of the military government instructor quoted above the tremendous political will with which the United States would call on other nations to conform to a supra-national legal order in the aftermath of the second world war.

Another ideological position had to do with democratic structures, and America's effort to bring "enlightened government" to the occupied peoples, be they friend, foe, or somewhere in between. There is implicit here a tremendous faith in the power and progressive nature of American-styled, liberal, "pluralistic" approach to political economy. There is here too the explicit idea that "democratic" societies are inherently peaceful, and that the United States if need be should forcefully bring about democratic structures.

The third position was seemingly least ideological, and it had to do with "military necessity"—that military necessity is the primary underlying principle for the conduct of military government. This was an attempt to de-link the concept of military government from political discourse, or more precisely, from political contention and accountability. It was an effort to portray military government as an apolitical apparatus, a mere instrument for furthering America's national policies, an instrument that, by itself, was value-free.

By the end of 1943, the third position comes to take primacy over the rest, the position that the apparatus of military government is, and

18. Ibid., vol. 1.
19. Ibid., vol. 2.
20. Ibid., vol. 2.
should be, politically neutral. It also happened that this position provided the “site” within which the conservatives sought to conceal their anti-communist, reactionary schemes. Originally, the idea that military government per se is politically neutral was a bureaucratic conception, an attempt on the part of the Army to retain control over civil affairs matters so long as the possibility for hostilities still existed. But this idea, once co-opted by conservative forces, later became transformed into the idea that reconstruction of occupied territories required stability and continuity, code words for counter-revolution.

The Genealogy of Field Manual 27–5

The War Department’s Basic Field Manual on Military Government, FM 27–5, published in June, 1940, contains the first official statement of U.S. policy on military government in the World War II period. The publication of FM 27–5 coincided with the completion of the Nazi blitzkrieg in the West and the capitulation of France. However, as Merle Fainsod points out, FM 27–5 was not conceived in terms of America’s imminent struggle with Nazi Germany or fascist Japan.

FM 27–5 expressed a nineteenth century spirit—it was basically a codified expression of the already anachronistic concept of “civilized” warfare. In this manual, war was still conceptualized as a conflict between opposing armies, rather than a total struggle between opposing populations. Fainsod traces the intellectual basis of FM 27–5 to three texts: (1) the Hunt Report, written by a Colonel I. L. Hunt, the chief civil affairs officer of the American Forces in the occupation of the Rhineland at the close of World War I; (2) the Lieber Code, authored by Francis Lieber during the American Civil War; and (3) the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907, treaties to which the United States was a party.

The second and third texts mentioned above typify nineteenth century thinking about war, and the responsibilities of the occupying power. As Francis Lieber put it in 1863, “The unarmed citizen is to be spared in person, property, and honor as much as the exigencies of the war will admit.” An even more protective outlook toward both the civilian population and the status quo was contained in the Annex to the Hague Convention of 1907. Article 32 of the Annex stated, “the occupant . . . shall take all the measures in his power to restore, and
ensure, as far as possible, public order and safety, while respecting, unless absolutely prevented, the laws in force in the country.\textsuperscript{23}

These two nineteenth century texts, then, argued that military government must operate within a framework of legal constraints, and that, aside from military necessity, the native social fabric was to be kept intact. As far as possible, the military government was not to interfere with the established political, social, and economic institutions in occupied areas.

The Hunt Report, for its part, provided a meticulous account of the problems faced by the American forces in the occupation of the Rhine. This report illustrated the tremendous array of problems encountered in governing a foreign population by an occupation army, problems that had to do with sanitation and health, food supplies, industry and labor, finance, and so on. Overtly political matters were dealt with also: cooperation between allied forces, armistice provisions, the question of the Rhenish Separatist Movement, and the problem of restoring the old status-quo in response to the socialist threat.

The Hunt Report, then, was different from the other two texts in that it was written by an American officer faced with the enormous problems of actually governing an alien population. The various observations and "lessons" drawn from the Rhineland experience became the basis for the policies and procedures codified into \textit{FM 27-5}. The official military historian notes that Colonel Hunt closed his report "almost with a prayer," that never again should the American Army be permitted to undertake such a task without having first trained a sufficient number of officers for civil affairs duties in military government.\textsuperscript{24}

The Hunt Report, then, provided the Army with a catalogue of colonial techniques. It also provided an important history, the interpretation of which was essential to creating a "subject position" for those being trained for civil affairs duties in military government. The civil affairs officers, in other words, would be trained as inheritors of an established practice.

Let us turn now to the \textit{Field Manual} itself. The military government policies set forth in \textit{FM 27-5} were divided into two categories: basic and secondary. Five basic principles were outlined:

1) military necessity; 2) welfare of the governed; 3) flexibility; 4) economy of effort; and 5) permanence.

According to the \textit{Manual}, the first basic principle was the prosecution of the war to a successful termination. "So long as hostilities continue, the question must be asked, with reference to every intended act of the

\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., p. 24.

\textsuperscript{24} History of Military Government Training, vol. 1.
military government, whether it will forward that objective or hinder its accomplishment.\(^{25}\)

Keeping in mind military necessity, the secondary principle of military government was that its rule "should be just, humane, and as mild as practicable, and the welfare of the governed should always be the aim of every person engaged in [military government].\(^{26}\) The Manual rationalized this humanitarian principle in calculated terms, arguing that, if the occupation is marked by harshness, injustice, or oppression, the occupation would leave "lasting resentment against the occupying power when circumstances shall make that possible; whereas just, considerate, and mild treatment of the governed by the occupying power will convert enemies into friends."\(^{27}\)

In this fashion, the Manual recognized the tremendous political responsibility placed on military government in constructing a favorable and enduring peace. But one should also notice that political considerations are acknowledged only in so far as it serves as an injunction to what is primarily a moral principle. In other words, the welfare of the Other was not immediately linked to the welfare of a world system. The welfare of the Other was still primarily conceptualized in terms of moral categories. Even when acknowledged in political language, the defeated nation is a potential friend, or again a potential foe, but was not conceived of as a necessary component to be integrated into a global system.

The three remaining basic principles are no less important than the first two in their implications for the occupied populations: "Flexibility," meaning that the policies of the military government must suit the people, the country, the time, and the strategical and tactical situation to which it is applied; "Economy of effort," meaning minimum commitments in terms of manpower, resources, money, and so on; and the principle of "permanence," which called for continuity in personnel and policy. We could say that all three of these principles called for maintaining, or re-establishing, the old status quo.

Derived from these "basic principles" were a set of "secondary principles," the first being that the commanding general of the theater of operations should have full control of military government in his theater. Next, "the personnel of the military government should, as far as possible, deal with the inhabitants through the officers and employees of their own government." Military government, in other words, governs the native population through existing state apparatuses and officials, govern, that is, indirectly, by controlling the native hierarchy.

\(^{25}\) Quoted in *American Experiences in Military Government*.
\(^{26}\) Ibid.
\(^{27}\) Ibid., p. 25.
Finally, the third "secondary principle" advised against making changes in the native laws, customs, and institutions. This principle was an explicit statement of what was implicit in the basic principles of "economy of effort," and "flexibility." Understandably, this principle quickly drew criticism and controversy. Was the victorious American Army to simply restore fascist institutions?

**Opposing Voices**

As noted earlier, *FM 27-5* was published one year and five months prior to Pearl Harbor. When the War Department established the School of Military Government at the University of Virginia early in 1942, the principles and policies outlined in *FM 27-5* came under attack from different quarters. The fundamental philosophy informing the curriculum of the School had come from *FM 27-5*. But under the impact of the war, a war which came to be increasingly defined as a war against a political system, made synonymous with certain races of people, the principles outlined in *FM 27-5* came to be recognized as being anachronistic.

In the press, and through all the apparatuses mobilized by the state, the war was conceptualized as threatening Western civilization itself. Thus, in parallel with strategic planning for the post-war world, the ideas contained in *FM 27-5* came under intense scrutiny and debate within leading government agencies (Departments of State, War, Treasury, the OSS, etc.), the Congress, the press, and the most prestigious universities.

We can perhaps group together the various criticisms leveled against *FM 27-5* into three categories. The first line of criticism came from those who sought to conceptualize military government primarily in terms of military necessity. Coming from within the military, this line of criticism sought to revise *FM 27-5* in such a way that it would conceptualize military government as an integral part of attaining military objectives, rather than as an instrument for reconstruction.

The second line of criticism questioned the very idea of military government, arguing that it should not be the job of the military to govern civilian populations; responsibility should go to the State Department, or to a combination of such civilian agencies. This was a position shared by certain elements within the State Department and other civilian agencies, the press, and certain elements within the military itself.

The third line of criticism raised the most fundamental long-term issues, focusing on the twin principles of retention of civil personnel in occupied areas, and the avoidance of changes in existing laws, customs, and institutions. It thus pointed to a basic failure of *FM 27-5*
to visualize the character of the impending war with the fascist states and the political consequences this would entail.

The first line of criticism was expressed in a lecture given at the School of Military Government by a Colonel Lewis K. Underhill. Referring to FM 27–5, Colonel Underhill said,

*FM 27–5 gives us the impression that the objectives of promoting the welfare of the governed in occupied territory is almost as important as the objective of military necessity. In fact, you get the impression from the text that our principle objective in invading a foreign country is to bring light to the heathen. Now I can assure you that that is not realistic. There is only one legitimate objective of military government, and that is to win the war. It is a method of fighting behind the lines, and it is done by holding the civil population in subjection... Everything you do in military government has to be tested in the light of whether it will aid or retard the campaign.*

In stressing military necessity, Colonel Underhill was highlighting the very real possibility that in occupying enemy territories, the military government would be governing a hostile population. Military government, in other words, was conceptualized as operating under combat conditions, where hostile elements might be active not only at the front (perhaps only a few miles away), but in the rear as well, within the civil population. This emphasis on military necessity and the concomitant deemphasis of social welfare went hand in hand with the feeling that the occupying army should punish the enemy population.

Moreover, Colonel Underhill’s critique of the 1940 version of FM 27–5 was a polemic directed against those who questioned the capacity, indeed, the advisability, of the Army governing civilian populations. This was the second line of attack, coming from those who mistrusted the military for various reasons, arguing that the job of governing possibly hundreds of millions of people for an indefinite period rightfully belongs in civilian hands, a job that, in all probability, would effect the political and social landscape of the occupied areas for perhaps generations to come.

Colonel Underhill’s line of reasoning, then, defended the Army’s claim to absolute control over civil affairs matters by identifying, and thus limiting, the idea of military government to the combat phase. It would be the prerogative of the Army, or the President, to judge when the situation should be deemed non-hostile, whereupon control over

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28. Quoted in *American Experiences in Military Government*, p. 27. Colonel Underhill’s presentation was given in 1943, before the revised version of *FM 27–5* was published, but we can assume that Colonel Underhill’s line of reasoning reflected the shifts in thinking that took place within the military during 1942 and 1943.
civil affairs would be transferred to civilian control. Civilian agencies like the State Department would then take over responsibility until an armistice was signed.

In the more sensationalist press, however, accusations were made that the Army’s School of Military Government was turning out corps of gauleiters, and that these were being trained to impose martial law in the United States. In more measured tones, journalists like Hiram Motherwell made articulate and penetrating critiques of the Army’s plans. In the October issue of Harper’s Magazine, Motherwell argued against military control over civil affairs, and linked his arguments to the larger political issues of post-war reconstruction.

Motherwell began his article by acknowledging that government of occupied territory during periods of war and armistice has always been a function of the military. The military, after all, was a huge and disciplined organization, with its traditions and its rules carefully written down for just such occasions (e.g. FM 27-5). Motherwell conceded that in the earliest days of the occupation, in order to safeguard the rear and to protect troops and supplies, it might be necessary for the military to govern the civilian population. But very quickly, Motherwell argued, this would raise vast and complex problems.

Motherwell asked, “Should the Army—which for good reasons of its own always tend to be conservative-minded—be authorized to make the unavoidable political decisions which may fix the tone and pattern of Europe’s politics for years?”

When Motherwell wrote this article, he was aware that the Army was in the process of revising FM 27-5. He quotes Under Secretary of War Robert P. Patterson who spoke of military government as being “limited, in point of time, to the period of emergency that is closely tied to the conduct of the campaign against the enemy . . . When military necessity ceases and civilian government can take control, government by military authority comes to an end.” But already, it had become evident that the crucial political decisions would be made on the spot, by military government officials, in the early months of the occupation—not six or 12 months later when civilian government would presumably take over.

The alarm that Motherwell raised did not take place in a historical vacuum. The U.S. Army had already occupied Sicily, and based on reports passed by the military censor, Motherwell concluded that the military governor in Sicily was protecting the bulk of the personnel of the old Fascist administration in office. Motherwell quotes a report

30. Quoted in Ibid., p. 443.
in the *New York Times*, a dispatch authored by Herbert Matthews who wrote, "when every function of the State is identified with fascism, to abolish fascism would threaten to leave society high and dry. What often happens in effect is that the fascist label is removed, but the same men carry on the same functions." Motherwell saw this as the logical outcome of what he called the [reactionary] class consciousness of the American military.

Motherwell accounted for this consciousness in terms of the tasks given to the military. The Army, faced with the complex task of civil administration, knows that it must govern so far as possible through existing institutions and officials in order to maintain law and order. The Army thereby tends to constitute itself as a counter-revolutionary force. Motherwell found historical evidence for this in the Hunt Report. Colonel Hunt had written,

> The political institutions with which the American Army came into contact during the occupation [during World War I] were, without exception, those of the old regime . . . The autocratic nature [of the Prussian Civil Service] peculiarly fits it to adapt itself to the wishes of an occupying force . . . In the first days of the occupation, the ideas of the great middle class were being revolutionized under the pressure of internal disorder and the opinion of the outside world. This was unfortunate, since it was to this body of public opinion that Germany would have to turn if she were to erect a stable democratic government . . . [Hence] in many cases our arrival was welcomed by the [ex-imperial] officials, who regarded our coming as being of great assistance in enforcing their authority, which had been weakened by the revolution.\(^{32}\)

For Motherwell, Colonel Hunt’s report thus revealed an affinity between military government and the forces of reaction in the occupied areas. It seemed obvious to Motherwell that, in the present war, the United Nations should cast out from German society every vestige of Nazism.\(^{33}\)

Allied victory should mean that Nazi, Fascist, Quisling functionaries, army officers, and police chiefs would be permanently exiled from political power. Furthermore, allied victory "should certainly mean that the classes that put the Nazis in power—the Junker landowners and predatory industrialists in Germany; the industrial, banking, and aristocratic interests generally everywhere—must be liquidated as social classes."\(^{34}\) Motherwell asked, "Shall our armies deliberately prevent

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33. Presumably, this principle should also apply to Japan. But Motherwell, like most progressive liberals in the U.S., were concerned primarily with events in Europe.
this, as they did last time to the best of their power? Shall they appoint themselves allies of the very forces that crushed European democracy and organized this war of conquest?"  

For journalists like Motherwell, it seemed that the American Army was side-stepping such questions by speaking of military government only in terms of military necessity. Already, by 1943, it seemed to Motherwell that in Europe and Asia, revolution would be in full swing when the American Army arrived. Would the Army deal with the new revolutionary officials? Or would they insist that the fascist civil service, with its vast power, be restored to office save for the most conspicuous criminals? In view of past history, and confirmed in the Army’s Field Manual, Motherwell concluded that a military government run by the Army would be sorely tempted to retain the vast majority of the civil servants who had worked for the fascist regime.

As an alternative solution, Motherwell saw great promise in civilian agencies like the Office of Foreign Economic Coordination (OFEC) under the aegis of the State Department. Motherwell noted that OFEC was designed to harmonize not only military with civilian claims, but also military with political, and political with economic, and at the same time those of the United States with those of others of the United Nations. Motherwell predicted that, as military government established by the United States “progressively demonstrate [their] practical inability to harness the coming European whirlwind, OFEC may take over the civilian functions of military government both ‘speedily’ and ‘efficiently.’” “If it does not,” Motherwell warned, “then the Army is licensed to become virtually the political arbiter of tomorrow’s Europe.”

The confidence that Motherwell placed in agencies like OFEC, or in men like Dean Acheson, was perhaps unwarranted. But Motherwell recognized, in an almost clairvoyant way I think, that without clear political leadership and international cooperation the Army’s response to local conditions would be to unilaterally re-establish the old regime with a few cosmetic changes.

Thus, Hiram Motherwell synthesized two lines of criticism directed against FM 27–5: one, that civilian agencies should be responsible for civilian operations under military government; and two, that FM 27–5 had utterly failed to anticipate the political dimensions of waging war against fascism. The latter view was shared by many of the planners in the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee (SWNCC), but as for the view that the responsibilities of the military for governing civilian

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35. Ibid., p. 444.
36. Assistant Secretary of State Dean Acheson was the appointed chairman.
37. Ibid.
populations should be delimited in scope almost from the beginning, this view was destined to have relatively little influence, at least while active hostilities raged.

The Revised Field Manual 27–5

The revised edition of *FM 27–5* appeared on December 22, 1943, three years after the original version was published. As we might have gathered from Colonel Underhill’s critique of the original version, the revised *Manual* conceptualized military government primarily in terms of the requirements of the combat phase. It gave little thought to the problems of military government after hostilities ceased. Further directives and policy statements were to be issued through the command channels as the occupation went on.

Compared to the old *FM 27–5*, the new *Manual* took a harsher stance toward enemy populations in enemy areas. Merle Fainsod notes that “Welfare of the Governed” no longer is listed among the basic objectives. Indeed, pleas for “considerate and mild treatment of the governed,” as a way of converting enemies into friends, cease to appear. In the section on “Treatment of Population,” the tone of the text is aloof and stern:

> While the welfare of the inhabitants should be considered also for humane reasons and should be safeguarded as far as military requirements permit, the primary purposes of military government are to facilitate the military operations and to meet obligations imposed by law . . . Such a policy, however, should not affect the imposition of such restrictive or punitive measures as may be necessary to accomplish the objectives of military government in any area.

With respect to the retention of local government officials, as well as of existing laws, customs, and institutions, as stipulated by the old *FM 27–5*, the new *Manual* made tentative steps toward addressing the problem of imposing military governments in areas formerly dominated by fascist regimes. But as we shall demonstrate, these steps were half-hearted at best, moving from the blatantly reactionary position of the Hunt Report, to an ambiguous, generally conservative position which left itself open to a range of interpretations.

The new *Manual* called for the retention of existing laws and customs “to avoid confusion and to promote simplicity of administration . . . except where they conflict with the aims of military government.”

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38. The complete title is *United States Army and Navy Manual of Military Government and Civil Affairs*.
The vagueness and generality of this principle allowed two lines of interpretation: to some this principle seemed to call for the restoration of the older political structures that fascism had displaced; to others who put priority on administrative efficiency and convenience, or simply out of personal preference, it appeared to give the green light to buttress, and to make use of, the fascist administrative structure.

The new Manual noted that, “Usually it will be necessary to remove high ranking political officials from office.” But the old principle of “Economy of Effort” dictated a cautious application of the removal policy. Thus, the new Manual anticipated a variety of possible situations, including situations where “the native population may have had very limited participation in government because of the domination of a foreign power.” In such cases, the Manual noted, “civil officials may have fled when invasion takes place, or it may be inexpedient or unsafe for them to continue in office, even if they remain.” In territories of this sort, the military government might find it necessary to train native personnel to take over certain positions. In all cases, “careful consideration should be given to their reliability, their willingness to cooperate with the military government, their position in the community, as well as other considerations.”

Thus, the fears raised by journalists like Hiram Motherwell seemed justified in light of the new Manual. The military would remove from office those officials who were highly visible as leaders of the fascist state, but their replacements were to be reliable, willing to go along with American objectives, and hold prominent positions in the community. While these criteria do not explicitly exclude the Left, in places like Korea (after 1945) those who held prominent positions in the community and were willing to go along with American objectives were, almost by definition, the former Japanese collaborators, including landlords, bureaucrats, minor capitalists, and the police.

We might recall the observation made by Colonel Hunt during World War I that “in many cases our arrival was welcomed by the [ex-imperial] officials, who regarded our coming as being of great assistance in enforcing their authority, which had been weakened by the revolution.” In the present war, people like Motherwell anticipated that “at least 90%” of the fascist civil servants would tell the military government officials that they had been ardent democrats all along, and that they obeyed orders from above only to earn money to support their families.

42. Ibid., p. 9.
43. Ibid., p. 9. Emphasis added.
Motherwell imagined a scenario where Nazi generals would explain to the U.S. military government officials that they were never Nazis but were merely doing their soldierly duty. What would happen, Motherwell wondered, if those German generals offered to solve the Bolshevist problem once and for all, guarantee law and order and a stable government, if only the generals of the occupying forces would look the other way? Indeed, I think Bruce Cumings' work has suggested that the most reactionary elements in Korea, entrenched within the coercive apparatuses of the Japanese colonial government, made such offers, and that the leaders of the American occupation took them up on it.

Thus, due to the nature of their given tasks, interpreted in the light of past practices, a definite class bias permeated the occupation policies as outlined by the new Manual. This will become even more evident if we examine its policies on economic matters. The Manual sketches out basic economic policies as follows:

First, to revive economic life and stimulate production in order to reduce to a minimum the needs of the area for the United States and Allied assistance and to develop the area as a source of supply for further operations, and second, to use available goods and services as efficiently as possible for the satisfaction of military and civilian needs.45

Here, we should note what the Manual meant by "reduc[ing] to a minimum Allied assistance." Corollary 3 to the basic economic policy spells this out: "Steps must be taken to put into immediate effect plans for the rehabilitation for production . . . It will be necessary to prevent abnormal wage increases, insure regular and adequate hours of work, and control labor organizations."46 In the name of "military and civilian needs," then, relations of production, i.e. the class structure of the occupied areas, was to be preserved until control over civil affairs policies pass to civilian hands.

Thus far, I have noted various aspects of the new Manual which gave evidence of a definite class bias in favor of conservative/ reactionary politics. It should be pointed out, however, that the new Manual tried to define military government as non-political administration. This was a concept which the Americans, in concert with the British, tried to implement in Sicily. In August, 1943, the Sicilian campaign had ended, and through General Administrative Instruction No. 1, military government officers were told:

Your job is to administer and not to frame policy or talk politics. You are

45. FM 27-5. p. 11.
46. Ibid., p. 11.
not to discuss political matters with local Italians. Your are not to discuss religious matters.47

And in General Administrative Instruction No. 2, the same point was reinforced:

"It is essential to avoid any commitments to or negotiation with any local political elements, either in local or in general problems. Your job is to administer military government and to avoid any political discussion or commitment."48

The simplest way for us to interpret these instructions would be to conclude that the planners of military government had no desire to become embroiled in local political controversies while the war was still going on. However, military government officers were also instructed to “make it clear to the local population whenever opportunity presents itself that military occupation is intended a) to deliver the people from the Fascist regime which led them into the war and b) to restore Italy as a free nation."49 But how were military government officers to deliver the above message and at the same time “avoid completely any political discussion?”

In theory, the military government was committed to dismantling the fascist structures “from the earliest possible moment”50 but the Italians were also told that “no political activity will be countenanced.” The anti-fascist political prisoners, recently released, were warned that “political activity on their part . . . will not be tolerated.”51 Clearly, the concept of non-political administration contradicted the purported aim of the Allies to “deliver the people from the Fascist regime . . . and to [quickly] restore [their independence].” Yet this concept made its way into the revised Manual as official American military government policy.

Regarding the selection of local officials, the revised Manual states, “appointments from a political faction or cliques, regardless of their friendly sentiment, should be avoided, except in unusual circumstances."52 Moreover, “neither local political personalities nor organized political groups, however sound in sentiment, should have any part in determining the policies of the military government."53

49. Quoted in Ibid., p. 30.
50. See General Administrative Instruction No. 1.
51. Quoted in Ibid., p. 31.
52. FM 27–5, p. 10.
53. Ibid., p. 10.
But what was the military government to do if it should encounter a revolutionary situation, as it did in Korea? Almost from the beginning, wouldn’t military government planners look for “stabilizing” elements? Moreover, who would most welcome the imposition of American military government if not those conservative (collaborationist) elements whose authority was being weakened by liberation and revolution? As Motherwell anticipated, wouldn’t the reactionary elements in the occupied areas offer to solve the Bolshevist problem, and wouldn’t the American Army tend to accept such an offer?

In such manner, I am arguing, the concept of non-political administration inscribed into the new FM 27-5 provided the “site” for a conservative/reactionary agenda. Whatever ambiguities or contradictions existed in the Manual were not necessarily resolved in the actual training program which produced the military government officers. As for the class bias and other assumptions embedded in FM 27-5, biases and assumptions which structured American perceptions of the situation in post-1945 Korea, these were also evident in the practices of the School of Military Government.

The School of Military Government

When the Chief of Staff directed the Provost Marshal General to establish a School of Military Government, a memorandum was prepared outlining the general nature, scope, and personnel of such a school. This memorandum quoted from a report filed by the American Military Attache in London:

After the defeat of the Nazis, the whole world is going to be in a state of chaos with only two great powers in possession of well established systems of politics, society, finance, economics, shipping, industry, etc. These will be the United States and Great Britain. Of the two it may be forecast that the British will be almost exhausted from most points of view. The burden of reconstructing the chaotic conditions of the world will, therefore, rest chiefly upon the shoulders of the United States and capacity of the agents which are available for getting the ordinary machinery of peacetime reestablished and operating.

54. FM 27-5 was meant to serve as only a general guide, and it was not mandatory for the theater commander to strictly adhere to the Manual. My attempt, however, is to distill from the Manual clues as to how, in what ideological form, and under what political circumstances, the discourse on military government changed in the space of a few years, clues that should help us to decipher the actions of the U.S. Military Government in Korea.

55. “Memorandum prepared for General Gullion, Office of the Provost Marshal General,” in History of Military Government Training, vol. 1. tab 2. Since the concept of training military government officers was new and experimental in the American Army, the War Department was very interested in a school established by the British at Cambridge University, a school whose purpose was to train a very small number of officers for
Clearly, the Office of the PMG saw its mission as an historic one, with the implication that the School of Military Government was to turn out agents intelligent and capable enough to shoulder "the burden of reconstructing . . . the world."

We should keep in mind that only two years prior to this, the U.S. Army had been fighting with Congress for a couple of billion dollars a year; soon after Pearl Harbor, and as the directive to establish the School of Military Government was being issued, the Army was spending that much every month. The armed forces had become the largest buyer of goods and services, the largest direct handler of manpower, the largest customer American industry had ever had, and they were spending the biggest sums of money ever handled by any group in American history.\(^{56}\) Indeed, the enormous power which the armed forces suddenly acquired troubled those who saw in this development a real threat to the long-standing tradition of civilian control over the military.

As to be expected, when the first class of the School of Military Government got under way in May, 1942, with 49 student officers in attendance, a hue and cry was raised by a number of civilian agencies, notably the Secretary of the Interior, who saw in the Army’s plans imperialist designs. But it should be noted that when the Army established the School, it had done so with a fair amount of political will, expecting to meet resistance from various quarters. The Army, of course, recognized that certain agencies (especially the State Department) would take an immediate interest in occupied areas, but the Army was determined that so long as hostilities continued, complete and exclusive control of the occupied area had to be entrusted to the Army.

To win over the opposition, the Army, in a sublime move, argued that the function of the Army in any occupation was to be primarily an administrative one. The high policies of the occupation, which the Army itself was incompetent to prescribe, should be laid down by the pertinent civilian agencies. To this end, the Office of the PMG was directed to integrate, under War Department leadership, the activities of other departments and agencies, and to engage in “broad planning” for military government.\(^{57}\) At the same time, the PMG was ordered to prepare a brief Synopsis of how the War Department conceptualized special missions in certain areas—to produce, as the Secretary of War later put it, “a limited number of Lawrence of Arabias.”


military government. This *Synopsis*,\textsuperscript{58} prepared (and soon published) by the Office of the PMG on September 4, 1942, played a pivotal role in the military-civilian struggles, and left a lasting influence on the program.

The *Synopsis* divided the occupation of hostile territory into two phases: (a) a period of military necessity and (b) an ensuing period when military necessity no longer exists. During the first phase, the *Synopsis* argued that it is the obligation of the armed forces to establish and maintain military government; during the second phase, civilian authority of some type will probably assume the mission then to be surrendered by the Army. But since the Army’s mission of military government is primarily an administrative one, even in the first phase of the occupation high policy will be determined by agencies other than the War Department or the Army. The *Synopsis* stated:

The political policy of an occupation will be determined by the State Department; the economic policy by the State Department or the Board of Economic Warfare, or both; the fiscal policy by the Treasury Department and the Federal Reserve Board, and so forth.\textsuperscript{59}

Based on these principles, the *Synopsis* explained, the War Department’s program was designed to accomplish two objectives: (1) the procurement and training of an adequate personnel to fulfill the Army’s mission of military government, and (2) the development of a technique which would effect the transition from military control to civilian control with a minimum impairment of efficiency.

To meet these objectives, the Civil Affairs program visualized a need for four categories of occupational personnel: (a) top administrative commissioned personnel, (b) junior commissioned personnel, (c) occupational military police (i.e., military government police), and (d) technical and advisory personnel.

The “technical and advisory personnel” were to be selected from highly qualified civilians recommended by the leading civilian agencies (State, Board of Economic Warfare, etc.). These technical personnel would deal with the many problems that inevitably come up in any occupation, problems in the fields of law, monetary policy, banking, industry (including labor control), public health, etc. The *Synopsis* explained that “since the function to be performed by these technical personnel will be largely administration of those policies formulated by agencies other than the War Department, it is planned to recruit them from nominations supplied by the various agencies concerned,

\textsuperscript{58} Its full title was *Synopsis of War Department Program for Military Government*. See *History of Military Government Training*, vol. 1, tab 8.

\textsuperscript{59} “Synopsis,” *Hist of Milit Gov. Training*, vol. 1 tab 8.
since such agencies are in a position to discover the best-qualified individuals for the tasks in which they have a peculiar interest."\(^{66}\)

Thus, the War Department sought to win over the opposition by promising that much of the military government’s administrative personnel would be recruited from civilian life, based on the recommendations furnished by the civilian agencies, and that the political and economic policies to be implemented by military government would be formulated by the civilian agencies.\(^{61}\)

The official military historian notes that there was by no means unanimous agreement on the part of the civilian agencies most intimately concerned. When the *Synopsis* was circulated, opposition to the Army’s plans coalesced and the issue brought to the highest circles of power. Two entire cabinet meetings were devoted to this matter in October and November of 1942. During these confrontations, the Secretary of War converted the President and most of his cabinet colleagues to the essential soundness of the War Department’s position. Thus, the Army’s program as outlined in the *Synopsis* survived and became accepted doctrine (and later codified into FM 27–5).

At this point we should note that the Army’s definition of its mission as primarily an “administrative one” became the basis for its claim that military government was “non-political administration.” But this was a mis-representation. The *Synopsis* had made it clear that even in its earliest stages military government was to have a political and economic policy, as defined by the State Department, etc.

In fact, to implement these policies, and to facilitate the transition from military to civilian control, the “technical and advisory personnel” (recruited from those recommended by the pertinent civilian agencies) were to merely take off their uniforms when military government as such came to an end, and continue, as civilians, in the very missions that they had been performing as members of the armed forces, i.e. mission that were not very “non-political.”\(^{62}\)

Seen in this light, the Chief of Staff’s directive establishing a School of Military Government, and the suggestion that this School was to produce men capable of shoulderung “the burden of reconstructing . . . the world,” seems not at all flippant or cavalier—the grandiose scope of the mission given to the School was driven by a firm political will and supported by a powerful political coalition (the hegemonic bloc), capa-

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60. Ibid.

61. To this end, the *Synopsis* requested that all the relevant civilian agencies furnish the War Department with (1) lists of persons qualified for missions in military government, (2) studies of various “technical” problems that the military government might face, and (3) materials and lecturers for the Army’s training program.

ble of mobilizing enormous resources, human and materiel.\textsuperscript{63} Eventually, all the leading agencies in government (the Departments of State, Treasury, the OSS, etc.) as well as the top academic institutions in the country (Harvard, Yale, Chicago, Michigan, Stanford, etc.) took part in training civil affairs officers for military government duties.

It was here that men, drawn from within the military and from civilian life, were indoctrinated for their roles in military government. President Roosevelt had insisted that the personnel of the School and the student officers were to be "absolutely first class men."\textsuperscript{64} The Secretary of War was able to assure him that the men selected were of the highest caliber.

One of the first tasks given to the faculty at the School of Military Government was to determine how many military government officers needed to be trained. The faculty at the School told the War Department that the minimum number of officers that would be required was six thousand.\textsuperscript{65} Based on the School's recommendations, the PMG determined that this number of officers were to be trained by the end of the calendar year 1944. They were to be trained in the following manner:

(a) "Top administrative commissioned personnel" were to be trained at the School of Military Government in Charlottesville. This course was to run for four months, and with each class consisting of 100 to 150 student officers, about 1,000 officers were to be produced by the end of 1944.

(b) "Junior Commissioned Personnel" and "Occupational Military Police" were to be trained at the Provost Marshal General's School in Ft. Oglethorpe, Georgia (later changed to Ft. Custer, Michigan). This course was to run for two months, and 2,400 officers were to be produced by the end of 1944.

(c) "Technical and Advisory Personnel" were to be trained in a combined military and civilian university set-up. These personnel, commissioned from civilian life, were to go through a training period of one

\textsuperscript{63} Brigadier General C. W. Wickersham was made Commandant of the School of Military Government. The administrative staff for the School consisted of five officers; the instructional staff of six officers and three civilians. In addition, large numbers of outside lecturers were brought in to lecture on their various fields of specialty. During the first course at the School of Military Government, for example, 51 outside lecturers delivered one or more lectures each. These lecturers included men like H. M. Beninghoff from State and academics like George McCune from the OSS.

\textsuperscript{64} See the President's Memorandum to the Secretary of War, dated October 29, 1942, in \textit{History of Military Government Training}, vol. 1, tab 10.

\textsuperscript{65} The faculty turned to the Hunt Report and found that the American occupation of the Rhineland (during World War I) had involved about 250,000 troops. The number of military civil affairs personnel required there was approximately one-tenth of one percent of the occupation forces. If the same ratio of civil affairs personnel to combat troops was to be applied in the present war, with the occupation forces numbering three to four million, widely scattered, at the very least three to four thousand civil affairs officers needed to be trained.
month at Ft. Custer, followed by a three months course at one of ten civilian universities: Harvard, Yale, Pittsburgh, Michigan, Chicago, Northwestern, Wisconsin, Western Reserve, Stanford, and Boston. The program set up at Ft. Custer was called the Specialists course, while the programs set up in the civilian universities were known as Civil Affairs Training Schools (CATS). This "Specialist—CATS" program was to produce 2,500 officers by the end of 1944.

We should note here that over a third of the officers trained were to be recruited from civilian life. All of these civilian-recruits would have come with impressive resumes describing successful careers in law, business, government administration, medicine, etc. Of those drawn from the military, these officers too came with high recommendations, experience in pertinent fields, and some demonstrable achievements. These military officers ranged in rank from Lt. Colonels to Second Lieutenants (inclusive).

The average age of the student officers accepted to the School of Military Government was about 40. For the Far Eastern Theater, the ratio of those selected for training to the total number of applicants was nearly 1 to 4. These student-recruits, in short, were achievement-oriented, successful men. The Civil Affairs Division of the Army (G-5), it was said, had the highest I.Q. in the U.S. armed forces.

Training for the Far Eastern Theater

Training for the Far Eastern Theater conformed closely to that of the Specialist—CATS (Civil Affairs Training School) course in the European training program. For the Far Eastern Theater, 1650 officers were selected and trained. After an initial period of six weeks at the School of Military Government, the student officers proceeded for six months

66. The decision to recruit civilians for military government duties was probably influenced by more than one factor: as a way to overcome opposition put up by the civilian agencies, as I've suggested; but also, this decision might have been influenced by the actions of the enemy.

The Commandant of the School of Military Government, in a memorandum to the PMG dated June 11, 1942, noted that the Germans and the Japanese utilized both military and civilian personnel in military governments. The Germans had been conducting a school in Berlin since 1935 for the training of Gauleiters and subordinate personnel. The Japanese had had a school for similar training on the island of Formosa for many years. The Commandant noted that for the Japanese, military government policy was directed by a "Commission for Military Administration" located in the War Office in Tokyo. The personnel of Japanese military government was predominantly military but some civilians were also utilized in subordinate and technical capacities. According to the Commandant, "It is clear that any effective American personnel policy must follow a somewhat similar pattern. The direction and command of any American military government must be in the hands of the Army and the top personnel can ultimately be supplied by the existing School of Military Government." See History of Military Government Training, vol. 1, tab 5.

67. Training for the Far East began in June, 1944, and was to have been completed by October, 1945.
of further training at one of the following universities: Harvard, Yale, Michigan, Chicago, Northwestern, and Stanford.

Compared to the European program, the officers trained for the Far East were given "better" and more extensive training. The training period was longer (seven and a half months); all student officers attended the School of Military Government for the first part of the program; and finally, when the training program for the Far East began, the Army already had had two years of experience in military government in Sicily, Italy, etc., experience which was incorporated into their instruction.

At the School of Military Government the student officers were given a basic course in military government and civil affairs, including topics in law, intelligence, supply, public administration, and operations/personnel problems in occupied territory. While the principles outlined in this course were general in nature, the problems and discussions were keyed to the Far Eastern situation. After six weeks of this intense training, the student officers were assigned to one of the civilian universities designated as CATS.

Here, language (Japanese) and area studies were stressed, along with continued study of specific military government problems. It should be noted that "Area studies" in the Far Eastern Program referred to study of Japan proper, exclusive of Korea, Formosa, etc. In other words, until the middle of 1945, the U.S. Army had not been preparing to occupy Korea. Language study consisted of 444 hours of contact with instructors and drill leaders; area instruction consisted of approximately 140 hours of lectures, conferences, and viewing/discussion of exhibits; while 244 hours of instruction were to be devoted to solving problems in specific military government situations.

It should be noted that the CATS established at the civilian universities, besides being provided with a curriculum, were given precise instructions as to how the training program was to be structured. Regarding instruction in area studies, the CATS were reminded that the first objective of a civil affairs officer in occupied territory was to restore law and order, and thereby relieve the combat troops of the necessity of providing men from tactical units. The Provost Marshal General also made it clear that emphasis was to be given to concrete topics like governmental structure and practice, law enforcement, and the economic, transportation, and utilities systems. Topics like these were to be ex-

68. The School of Military Government in Charlottesville had more prestige than the Provost Marshal General's School at Ft. Custer. The SMG had better faculty and better access to resources, e.g. the library at the Army's War College.

69. Selection of (native) Japanese language "informants," as well as the method of language instruction, were decided upon with the assistance of the American Council of Learned Societies.
explored in detail rather than in the form of vague generalities. Questions to be addressed might be:

How is food grown, harvested, distributed, and how is its production and distribution controlled? Could the civil affairs officer supervise these agencies without making changes in administration? What is the principle diet and will it be necessary to import food? Of what items will there be a shortage? How is food rationed and how are prices controlled?

Are the police considered reliable? How are they organized?

What officials have charge of repair of streets and public buildings? How are gas and light plants operated and controlled?

Are the public officials traditionally honest or dishonest? Are they the actual administrators or mere puppets? Who actually is in control of national and local affairs?

Through what agencies could civil affairs officers receive the greatest cooperation in preserving law and order?70

After stating that these were only a few of the questions the area instructors should discuss and cover in their lectures,71 the PMG linked the materials covered in area instruction to the topic of military government instruction. The objectives to be achieved in military government instruction at the civilian universities were (a) to provide necessary review of the instruction received at the SMG; (b) to provide further instruction in certain topics; (c) to keep abreast of current developments in military governments in areas already occupied; and (d) to provide practical exercises which would apply the knowledge gained in area studies.

These "practical exercises" were actually hypothetical problems in military government which demanded from the student officers, working in groups of nine, a creative synthesis, and application of everything they had learned about the principles of military government, along with the politics, economics, and culture of the area studied.

An examination of the hypothetical questions posed, the answers suggested by the instructional staff, and the actual responses of the student officers should reveal a great deal about how the training program tried to prepare their students for their Far-Eastern assignments. It should reveal too, something about how the student officers sought to interpret the native terrain and how they would act upon it. Let's look at one such military government problem which dealt with agricultural production.72

70. Ibid.
71. An exhaustive list of such questions, covering a range of topics, came along with the curriculum.
72. This exercise was based on the area topics covered during the period September 18—October 25, 1944 at Stanford University. This was exercise no. 6 on the topic of
The student officer was to assume that American forces had occupied all of Honshu, following the unconditional surrender of the Japanese on that island. A military government has been set up and seems to be functioning smoothly in most respects. The student officer was to also assume that he was a member of a Civil Affairs Control Group at the theater level, which had established an advanced headquarters in Tokyo. He is instructed to investigate persistent reports of food shortage in northern Honshu, and to recommend remedial measures.

Upon investigation, the officer finds that there is an appreciable food shortage which showed signs of growing progressively worse. The rural people seemed listless, dejected and helpless and take little interest in farming. The food situation may easily become critical within a few months. What was the officer’s recommendations and the reasons therefore?

In the answers suggested by the instructional staff at Stanford University, four principles were offered as being relevant to this particular situation:

1. that whatever measures to be recommended should be uninvolved, direct and prompt in effect;
2. that long-term policies in general lay beyond the scope of the duties of the civil affairs officer;
3. that all costs should be borne by the Japanese (insofar as practicable);
4. and that interference with the basic economy and with the established customs of the occupied country should be minimized.

Here, it is evident that the principles outlined above were derived from the principles contained in the *Synopsis* and the revised FM 27–5. Principles #1 and #3 are related to the principle of “economy of effort”; principle #2 is related to the principle of “non-political administration”; and principle #4 is related to the principle of “retention of existing laws, customs, [etc.].” The instructional staff, in other words, demonstrated to the students how they would define the problem in accordance with the principles established by the War Department.

With these principles thus defining and limiting the officer’s field of action, what creative solution could the officer come up with? First, from his geographic studies, he would conclude that a food shortage in northern Honshu was not a natural situation, since this area ordinarily produces a surplus of rice and other goods. The cause of the food shortage, then, had to do with the human factor—in the low morale of the peasants and their unwillingness to work the land. Moreover,
the civil affairs officer, since his mission was to restore normal law and order, was duty-bound to respond to the problem.

Thus, the question becomes, what ways can be found to encourage the producers of food to increase their efforts which are below past performance? The instructional staff suggested a number of possibilities which did not violate the principles outlined above:

(a) Check to see if somehow the civil affairs officers in the field were interfering with the procedures of farming.

(b) Stabilize the price of agricultural commodities at levels somewhat above the current price (i.e. offer the producers a better price for their harvests.).

(c) Modify the quota of production slightly downwards and promise premium payment for surplus produced above quota.

(d) On the basis of stabilized monopoly rates, allow payment of certain taxes “in kind.”

(e) Explore the possibility of modifying the existing cooperatives so that consumer goods and farm supplies are sold to the farmers at a lower price (i.e. cut the profit margin of the middle-men).

(f) Distribute emergency food.

(g) Declare a moratorium on the payment of debts pending a study and revision of current loan practices.

If we analyze these proposals in terms of their impact on class relations, we might conclude that these proposals, while they do not address the landlord-tenant problem, do favor those who are directly engaged in production. In all of the suggested procedures, the cost would be borne by the unpopular broker or middle-man. Thus, without disturbing the class structure, and without making radical revisions in the agrarian policy, measures like these could effect some degree of increased production in a prompt manner. Measures such as these, they argued, could address pressing problems without violating the principle of "economy of effort," and so on.

Other exercises dealt with the problem of literally restoring law and order. One such exercise involved a civil affairs officer stationed in the field. A local court which functioned in the officer's town had a vacancy, and the officer was faced with a situation where he had to recommend one of the following men to fill that vacancy:

74. Whatever funds the occupation authorities provide, these funds were to be in "occupational currency" redeemable by the occupied country.

75. Another exercise on the economy posed the question of what was to be done with Mitsui, Mitsubishi, Sumitomo, etc., and the families that controlled them. Unfortunately, the official military historian did not include the answers suggested by the instructional staff at Stanford in the History of Military Government Training.

76. This was an area exercise given at the CATS at Harvard. See History of Military Government Training, vol. 3, "Harvard University's Civil Affairs Training School—Far Eastern Area."
(1) Bengoshi San. A practicing lawyer for 20 years, he is highly respected in the local community but he is openly anti-American. His two sons were killed at Saipan, and his home was demolished by American bombing.

(2) Toshiyori-hakase. A native of the town, he was forced to retire as a professor of law at the Imperial University in Tokyo because of his support of the constitutional theories of Professor Minobe. He is now 75 years old and infirm. Shortly after his retirement as a professor he became a partner in a Gomei Kaisha which failed and he was judged as bankrupt, and since then has been a charity case.

(3) Inukai San. Formerly a procurator of the local court, he is very able. He was relieved from office by the Minister of Justice for being involved in a graft scandal. Thereafter, he became an active member of the Minseito party. In 1942 he was called to service and later received a medical discharge from the army after being wounded at Guadacanal. Since that time, up until the occupation, he was a practicing lawyer and local head of the I.R.A.A.

The officers were asked, whom would they recommend and why? The response of the group mentioned in the Harvard program was: Inukai San 5; Bengoshi San 4; and Toshiyori-hakase 0.

I have no way of determining how representative this group might be, i.e. the degree to which their views and feelings might be representative of all the student officers in the program. But perhaps more than the vote itself, the discussion which followed the vote on the relative merits of the three men might be more significant to our analysis. First I will give a brief overview of some of the topics touched on in the discussion. Then, based on this text, I will try to unravel the values and prejudices which might have determined the vote, see how these values and prejudices were prioritized in the course of the discussion, and compare their hierarchy of values to what was stressed in the "FM 27-5.

The discussion began with the question, in considering qualifications for a local court judge, should Japanese regulations be followed or should the civil affairs officer make up his own rules?

This group decided that Japanese rules would be followed whenever practicable, but that the military government should not bind itself to any existing rules.

The next issue that was brought up had to do with whether the military government wanted efficiency in the court, or was it more concerned with having cooperation and compliance even if it meant less efficiency?

That brought up the question of just what kind of cases would be tried by the local court.

77. This is the only documentation in the History of Military Government Training which shows how the student officers responded to a military government problem.
It was agreed that the local court would hear only civil suits and such criminal cases as had no bearing on military government or the U.S. Army.

As indicated by the early vote on the candidates, the discussion on efficiency first vs. cooperation became a fairly evenly divided debate on the relative merits of Bengoshi San and Inukai San.

Those advocating Bengoshi San [i.e. those advocating “efficiency”] argued that his anti-Americanism was natural and likely to be found in practically every Japanese of ability and respect within his community. Further, they argued that he will be constantly under the scrutiny of the military government and therefore could not go too far astray without being checked. Finally, it was suggested that his position of high respect and integrity within the community would be a large enough asset to offset his extreme anti-Americanism.

The argument for Inukai San was that he was a man much more likely to cooperate and work with the Americans. That he was, furthermore, a man of proven ability. His onetime membership in the Minseito Party indicated that he might have liberal leanings.

His membership in the I.R.A.A. was discounted by all, inasmuch as everyone in the public eye in Japan probably belongs.

His graft scandal implications were definitely a big liability. But the consensus was that his good qualities would tend to overshadow that blackmark.

Toshiyori-hakase, all agreed, was not the man. His bankruptcy, infirmity and political discredit would weigh too heavily against his Assets of being an ex-law professor and sufficiently aged to be listened to with respect.

From this summary of the discussion it is clear that this group of officers, in setting out to choose the best candidate for the job, brought into the discussion an awareness of having to place limits, limits on their own power (if practicable the officers were to follow Japanese regulations) and limits on the power of the position itself (the judge would hear only civil suits and criminal cases not involving the military government). The discussion began, in other words, with an effort to define the boundaries and limits of power for all the parties concerned. The Americans would recommend the candidate, but their decision would be made, so long as there were no complications, within the framework of Japanese regulations. The candidate, once he assumes the position of local judge, would find that his role is limited to hearing non-political cases, and that his actions would be watched by the military government.

Once the boundaries and limits of power have been defined, the discussion could shift to which candidate would (1) most efficiently and (2) reliably carry out his functions. As the text implies, “efficiency”
had to do with technical competence and public influence, while “reliability” had to do with trustworthiness in the sense of not working at cross-purposes with the aims of military government. Moreover, a judge should be healthy enough to carry out his task, and financially be on a sound footing. Without these, it was doubtful that the judge could wield influence over the community. These officers, in other words, associated the function of dispensing justice the local elite. There was to be no revolutionary justice here.

At this point, a number of assumptions and biases come into play. There is a certain confidence on the part of the civil affairs officers which had to do with the power of military government, i.e. a feeling that even anti-American sentiment in the local courthouse could be tolerated since, ultimately, the Americans had the monopoly over coercive power. It was assumed that the anti-American sentiment was natural, and that it would gradually disappear. It was also assumed that a public figure would have held some position in a fascist organization, and thus, at the local level anyway, this was not to be given undue emphasis. On the other hand, membership in a “liberal” organization was an important factor, while openness to the Americans was definitely an important factor, these two points overshadowing certain questions regarding integrity.

All these assumptions and biases, however, could not be resolved given the range of choices open to the civil affairs officers, and the vote was split. It would seem that no one was fully satisfied with the selection that they had to make, but it should be noted that everyone recommended a candidate. The student officers, in other words, were disciplined in such a way that they could act, and act decisively, in a non-ideal situation. They were trained, in other words, to expect non-ideal situations, and to accept and implement imperfect solutions.

To summarize, the two hypothetical problems given above, one dealing with a food shortage in northern Honshu, and the other dealing with how to restore a local court system, were just two military government problems among dozens addressed by student officers in conferences, group discussions, or written examinations. Through these exercises, the student officers were made to understand how the principles outlined in the *Synopsis* and *FM 27–5* were to be applied in various situations.

These texts, especially *FM 27–5*, defined the limits within which, and the principles in accordance with which, the civil affairs officers were to carry out their missions. The hypothetical problems posed demonstrated again and again the principle that high policy, or long-term policy for the occupation were to be formulated elsewhere and relayed through the theater commander. The solutions that the student officers
produced, on the other hand, demonstrated how they would act to restore and maintain "normal" law and order in the meantime.

**The U.S. Occupation of southern Korea**

*First Greetings*

In the Introduction, I suggested that certain texts, produced during World War II, provided the "epistemological coordinates" with which the post-1945 Korean terrain would be read. The very first message communicated to the Korean people, in fact, was an attempt to implement, in the most literal fashion, the principles and procedures outlined in the Army's *FM 27-5*. The message, in the form of 300,000 leaflets dropped over southern Korea between September 1 and September 5, reads as follows:

To The People of Korea

The armed forces of the United States will soon arrive in Korea for the purpose of receiving the surrender of the Japanese forces, enforcing the terms of surrender, and insuring the orderly administration and rehabilitation of the country. These missions will be carried out with a firm hand, but with a hand that will be guided by a nation whose long heritage of democracy has fostered a kindly feeling for peoples less fortunate. How well and how rapidly these tasks are carried out will depend upon the Koreans themselves. Hasty and ill-advised acts on the part of its residents will only result in unnecessary loss of life, desolation of your beautiful country and delay in its rehabilitation. Present conditions may not be as you would like them. For the future of Korea, however, remain calm. Do not let your country be torn asunder by internal strife. Apply your energies to peaceful pursuits aimed at building up your country for the future. Full compliance with these instructions will hasten the rehabilitation of Korea and speed the day when the Koreans may once again enjoy life under a more democratic rule.

John R. Hodge  
Commanding General  
U.S. Army Forces in Korea  
(2 September 1945)^79

There was an obvious contradiction here—the U.S. Army was landing in Korea to liberate the Korean people from Japanese rule, and yet, its first communication to the Koreans contained threats of death and "desolation of [their] beautiful country." A diplomatic message this was not. But neither was it capricious.

At one level of analysis, we can say that this proclamation was, in a sense, a legal document, and that General Hodge was simply acting in accordance with the procedures outlined in *FM 27-5* for [hostile] occupations. Section VI of the Manual dealt with proclamations and

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ordinances, and it advised the theater commander to “issue to the inhabitants of the occupied territory a proclamation informing them of the fact of occupation, the extent of territory affected, and the obligations, liabilities, duties, and rights of the population.” As suggested in the Manual, the proclamation was brief, written in simple terms, and published in English and in the languages of the occupied area (Japanese and Korean).

As for the tone of the proclamation, the Manual advised the theater commander to address the people “of a major enemy” in a firm and blunt manner, but that the language “should not be vindictive or needlessly offensive.” For other territories inhabited by “a non-hostile population which is being freed from enemy domination,” the Manual stated that the proclamation should be “more friendly in character and . . . emphasize deliverance from a common enemy.” From the tone of this proclamation, then, it would seem that General Hodge considered Koreans as an enemy populace. In fact, in his September 4 directive, General Hodge told his officers to consider Korea “an enemy of the United States” and therefore “subject to the provisions and the terms of the surrender.” What was the logic operating here?

When the civil affairs officers under General Hodge were planning military government operations for Korea, one of the first decisions that had to be made was whether Koreans were to be considered as an enemy populace, or as a liberated people. From the first introductory lecture at the School of Military Government, civil affairs officers were taught that American military governments would govern in accordance with international law, and that control of non-enemy territory necessarily differs from control of enemy territory. “Military government,” in its strict sense, is operative only in enemy territory, and there, its powers are virtually absolute in the sense that it exercises sovereign power.

By defining the occupation as a hostile one, General Hodge quashed whatever uncertainties might have existed among his civil affairs officers as to the limits of their power vis-a-vis the Korean people. By thus laying the conceptual basis for establishing a military government in Korea, General Hodge was making a statement of American commit-

80. FM 27-5, p. 45.
81. Ibid., pp. 45-46.
83. This does not mean that sovereignty passes to the military government, but merely that the occupying power exercises sovereign power for an indefinite period. See “Introduction and Orientation [to the School of Military Government]” in History of Military Government Training, vol. 1.
ment to will the future of (at least southern) Korea. By the logic of the training given to them, the civil affairs officers under General Hodge drafted a proclamation that was meant to project authority and power.

Besides the content of the proclamation, the manner of its delivery was also calculated to project American power. The Japanese Government-General in Korea would gladly have published the proclamation on behalf of the Americans. But American planes were used instead, dropping leaflets from the sky as easily as they might have dropped bombs, filling the sky with thousands and thousands of leaflets, making literally sure that the natives got the message. With this proclamation, political groups were given notice that the U.S. Occupation forces would be the sole arbiter of politics in southern Korea.

Annex 7 to Field Order 55

Detailed instructions concerning the occupation of Korea were issued in the form of Field Order No. 55. Annex 7 of this order outlined the objectives of the occupation and how the machinery of military government was to be established. Let us first examine what the objectives were. The Annex listed the immediate objectives of the occupation to be:

- the abolition of militarism; the immediate apprehension of war criminals for punishment; the disarmament and demilitarization of Japan; the abolition of discriminations on grounds of race, nationality, creed, political opinions; the strengthening of democratic tendencies and processes; the encouragement of liberal political, economic and social institutions; and
- the creation of conditions in Korea which will facilitate the emergence of a responsible Korean government capable of administering internal affairs and maintaining peaceful relations with other nations and with which the United Nations can deal.

These objectives clearly posited a political agenda, an agenda which tried to synthesize the principles of military government [as outlined

84. According to Bruce Cumings, the XXIV corps [then on Okinawa] established radio contact with Seoul on August 31. Two days prior to this, the Government General had sent messages to the American forces in Japan saying, “the local Japanese authorities eagerly await for the arrival of the Allied Forces which are due to take [over] the maintenance of peace and order from the Japanese forces in southern Korea.” (Quoted in Origins, p. 127.) It would seem that the Japanese administration in Korea was having problems controlling their former colonial subjects.

85. This Annex was written by a Colonel Brainard E. Prescott along with three other civil affairs officers, and published on September 1, 1945. This Annex, then, was written at the same time that the proclamation discussed above was written, and by the same men. When the military government was established in Korea, Colonel Prescott became one of its principal officers, initially taking the post of civil administrator. See History of the U.S. Military Government in Korea [USMGIK], Part III, Chapter 1.

86. See USMGIK, Part III, Chapter 1, pp. 15-16. Emphasis added.
in FM 27-5] with certain assumptions held by the State Department which prompted the decision to divide Korea and occupy the southern half.

In writing the Annex, in other words, the civil affairs officers under Hodge used their own judgement. From their training, these civil affairs officers had expected the State Department to formulate policy regarding the occupation of Korea. In the "scramble" to occupy Korea, however, the civil affairs officers under Hodge had to formulate the occupation's immediate objectives based on what they knew about the State Department's policy toward Korea.

Based on the political decision to divide Korea and occupy the southern half, these officers knew that their presence was meant to stop the southward flow of Soviet power, and a "nationalist" logic asserted itself. According to the official military government historian, the civil affairs officers planned for the occupation on "the basic principle that an orderly, efficiently operating and politically friendly Korea was more important than pleasing and winning the enthusiastic cooperation of the Korean people."88

This "basic principle," I would suggest, was distilled from a set of assumptions which had informed the State Department's war-time planning on Korea. Bruce Cumings lists these assumptions: "[1] Korea was important to post-war American security concerns; [2] a Korea entirely in hostile (i.e. Soviet) hands was a threat to that security; [3] Korea could not govern itself after Japan's defeat; [4] multinational administration of Korea was preferable to unilateral means, unless American predominance was in jeopardy; [5] trusteeship arrangements were the preferable means for handling postwar great power conflicts over Korea, but partial or full military occupation of Korea might be necessary to assure an American voice."89

Since the political leadership had decided to occupy southern Korea to "assure an American voice," U.S. policy seemed to be leaning toward "unilateral means," and the civil affairs officers concluded that the creation of a "politically friendly Korea" should be the primary objective of the occupation. In the Annex, this objective was expressed as "the creation of ... a responsible Korean Government ... with which the United Nations can deal." Here, "United Nations" were code words

87. General William E. Grist, head of the newly formed Government section, GHQ AFPAC, told Colonel Prescott to "use his own judgement" in planning for military government in Korea. See HUSMGIK, Part III, Chapter 1, p. 12.
88. The official military government historian, HUSMGIK, Part III, Chapter 1, p. 10. Emphasis added.
89. Bruce Cumings, Origins of the Korean War, pp. 113-114.
for the new post-1945 world system led by the United States, a world system that was to include Korea, if not the U.S.S.R.

The Annex had placed emphasis on “strengthening of democratic tendencies” and “encouragement of liberal political, economic and social institutions.” By democratic tendencies, the American officers did not mean revolutionary politics, and by liberal institutions, these officers did not mean mass movements or organizations. Concomitant with a shift away from an “internationalist” approach vis-a-vis Korea, Annex 7 gives evidence of a decisive shift toward a conservative political agenda.

As for how occupation objectives were to be achieved, the Annex adhered closely to the principles and policies established in FM 27-5. As we noted in the previous chapter, FM 27-5 called for the removal from office those officials who were highly visible as leaders of the fascist state; but it also advised a cautious application of the removal policy so as to “avoid confusion” and to “promote simplicity of administration.”

In the same manner, then, Annex 7 stated that the existing government machinery (the Japanese Government-General) was to be utilized, but that “no persons will be allowed to hold public office or any other position of responsibility or influence in public or private enterprise who have been flagrant exponents of militant Japanese nationalism and aggression.” In the same breath, the Annex stated that “policy-making officials will be removed where such removal will not jeopardize the efficiency of the present government controls and administration.”

In the words of the official military government historian, this order “imposed at the outset an almost impossible problem.” For the civil affairs officers, the ousting of the Japanese from the colonial bureaucracy and the preservation of maximum efficiency of administration were contradictory policies. This “contradiction” was intensified by the fact that the Japanese colonial state had reached so deeply into every aspect of Korean life.

Politics, economics, business, education, justice, and culture—in all these areas the colonial state had established structures of control, structures which were staffed at the top by the Japanese. The civil affairs officers reasoned that, to avoid “confusion and chaos,” and “to promote simplicity of administration,” the colonial structures (1) had to be kept largely intact (especially the coercive apparatuses), and (2) its personnel “Koreanized” through a gradual (controlled) process.

90. It was expected that the United States would dominate all international organizations, including the UN, in the immediate post-war period.
92. See ibid., p. 9.
93. Ibid.
The civil affairs officers knew prior to landing in Korea that such a policy would be highly unpopular. These officers had with them on Okinawa JANIS-75, a massive and detailed intelligence study of Korea. Here, the military government planners were given a good estimate of what the attitude of the Korean people was likely to be:

[The Korean People] would prefer initial inefficiencies of administrative inexperience to the danger of extended control . . . [they] would favor an international regime rather than one of a single nation . . . Korean cooperation [is] likely to be proportioned to Korean belief in the strictly temporary and short term nature of such control . . . Appointment of a non-Korean official to a post for which a Korean is available, however, may have an unfavorable effect on public opinion.

Why did the civil affairs officers ignore these warnings, at least initially? The main reason, it seems to me, was that the civil affairs officers knew that they would be competing for power with various Korean groups, and that in order to establish hegemony, they would have to capture, preserve, and perhaps strengthen the existing state apparatus. This line of reasoning is not very different from the ideas/logic contained in FM 27–5, Annex 7 to Field Order 55, or the official history of the military government itself. But we should note that the language employed by the U.S. Military Government had already taken on a certain specificity. When the military government spokesmen spoke of “confusion” or “chaos,” they were referring to a revolutionary situation. When they spoke of law and order, these were justifications for working with the Japanese and conservative Koreans to establish American control.

Bruce Cumings points out that General Hodge and his civil affairs officers understood the imperatives behind their rush from Okinawa to Korea: they were to occupy southern Korea in order to block the southward flow of Soviet power. Moreover, “they knew better than Washington that they would confront not only the Soviets but the indigenous revolutionaries as well.” We had noted that the civil affairs officers had established radio contact with Seoul on August 31 (see note above). On September 1, Lieutenant General Kozuki Yoshio sent the following message to the XXIV corps: “There are communists and independence agitators among Koreans who are plotting to take advantage of the situation to disturb peace and order here.”

By communist and independence agitators General Kozuki was probably referring to “People’s Committees” which had sprang up seem-

94. See Origins, p. 129.
96. Origins, p. 128.
Henry H. Em

ingly out of nowhere, committees which were starting to play a hegemonic role in Korean society. These committees were locally rooted; they exerted moral leadership over the local populace; and they were linked into a national network. In fact, 2 days prior to the American landing in Incheon, a Korean People’s Republic (KPR) was proclaimed. This incipient state, headed by Yo Un-hyong, claimed the loyalty of the majority of these local people’s committees.

The real “contradiction,” then, was not between a quick removal or a slow removal policy. The real contradiction was between American ambitions and Korean nationalism. As noted in the previous chapter, FM27-5 stipulated that “neither local political personalities nor organized political groups, however sound in sentiment, should have any part in determining the policies of the military government.”98 Almost immediately after landing in Korea, however, the American forces established an inter-dependent relationship with the most conservative of Koreans, organized in the Korean Democratic Party (KDP).

In the first weeks of the occupation, Bruce Cumings notes that virtually all Korean informants cited in the daily intelligence (G-2) reports were KDP leaders. Even before landing in Korea, the XXIV corps had received warnings from the Japanese Government General about Red labor unions, and Colonel Nist’s interviews with “respected Koreans” seemed to bear this out.99 By September 11, Colonel Cecil W. Nist, chief of military intelligence, had prepared a short analysis of the principle political parties active in Seoul.

Colonel Nist knew a great deal about the KDP, and the analysis even contained the party’s platform (actually a list of requests made to the military government). Regarding the Korean People’s Republic, Colonel Nist concluded that, after American planes dropped leaflets informing the Korean people about America’s intention to occupy southern Korea, the “pro-communist Koreans” within KPR “became less openly active.” Regarding the Korean Communist Party, Colonel Nist stated that not very much was known about the KCP except that “there is the suspicion that this is probably the best organized of all political parties.”100 There is, in this analysis, a clear sense that the KDP was a party which the U.S. could work with, while the Korean People’s Republic and the Korean Communist Party, on the other hand, were groups to be watched, and brought under control.

98. FM 27-5, p. 10.
99. According to information furnished by a Mr. W. H. Kim, editor of the Korean Times (Chason Ilbo?), all printers and laborers had been ordered by the KCP to cease work. Colonel Nist noted that this information could not yet be confirmed, but Mr. Kim’s remarks took up the bulk of the short analysis on the KCP.
Conclusion

By examining the history of the idea of military government, I tried to reconstruct, in a very general way, the subjectivity of the U.S. occupation authorities in post-1945 Korea. I conclude this paper by acknowledging that, in talking about the U.S. military Government in Korea, one cannot speak about a subjectivity that was fixed and unchanging. The object of my analysis had to be conceptualized as an intricate and dynamic inter-subjectivity, an inter-subjectivity that was linked to power relationships within the American camp as well as between all the contending political forces in Korea.

I might note that when I first began thinking about how I could interpret the course of action taken by the U.S. Military Government in Korea, the interpretive framework that came to mind was suggested from my reading of John Dower's War Without Mercy and Richard Drinnon's Facing West. But, perhaps due to the nature of the texts that I had chosen to examine, I quickly abandoned the idea of interpreting the American occupation in terms of broad categories like "racism." One can certainly find racist assumptions in these official texts, and one could perhaps argue that the way the occupation authorities dealt with the Korean people was informed by a "metaphysic of Indian-hating," a racist epistemology deeply rooted in (white) American culture. But such an interpretive framework, I think, would have forced me to situate my chosen texts within a much larger discourse, something I knew I could not do in a short paper.

The strategy that I settled on was to try and reconstruct from my

101. Richard Drinnon, in Facing West, argues that (white) American culture was largely a product of a series of encounters with "the West." These encounters were understood through an epistemology created by the Enlightenment, an epistemology which saw Nature and the human body as objects to be brought under control, objects to be dominated or "tamed" by reason.

These repressive attitudes toward Nature and the body were projected onto the Indian, now associated with filth, death, and radical evil generally. Drinnon states, "Out of this psychosexual complex arose the generic native, that despised, earthly, animalic, suppressed 'shadow self' projected by the Western mind." (p. xvii) Borrowing from Herman Melville, Drinnon calls this "psychosexual complex" the "metaphysic of Indian-hating."

Drinnon thus posits a fundamentally racist epistemology as underlying white America's westward movement, a straight line of march "from the Massachusetts Bay Colony ... across the Alleghenies to the Mississippi; on across the Rockies to the Pacific slope; out from there onto island stepping-stones [Hawaii]; and touching down most recently in Asia." (p. xiii)

texts the epistemology which made the text "sensible" to its authors. I could then assume that the men who wrote these texts were not necessarily cynical, sinister characters. Nevertheless, these texts, in my view, were not "innocent." These were ideological productions, and as such, require a rigorous critique. What I tried to accomplish, then, was to show how reasonable, decent men could initiate, and implement, imperialistic, repressive schemes. I tried to show, in other words, how reason had become a mere tool, an unreflective instrument, as Horkheimer and Adorno put it, "fit to do service for everything, wherever it can be applied." Here, then, was one origin of the tragedy to follow.

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Korea and Austria Between Great Powers

Ron Kim

A tree's leaves may be ever so good,
So may its bark, so may its wood;
But unless you put the right thing to its root
It never will show much flower or fruit.

—Robert Frost, “Leaves Compared with Flowers”

The respective fates of Korea and Austria appear at first glance to be a matter of extremes and contrasts. In Korea, the pressures of the Cold War and internal political strife ignited a war which few understood but many at the time believed would be the first round of a superpower showdown. Austria, by contrast, had been relatively dormant for a decade after the close of the Second World War, occupied and partitioned, awaiting a great power solution, and never serving as cause for a regional or global conflict. Korea increasingly became the focus of Soviet-American enmity, Austria a peculiar area of superpower cooperation. By May 1955 the Korean landscape still bore the scars of three years of war as the country, still divided, neared its third year of an extremely tenuous armistice; Austrians meanwhile were celebrating their independence and unity as a neutral nation. Why such differing results?

The initial impulse is to make some vague generalizations about how Korea was once an insulated nation, the Hermit Kingdom, and would have remained so had Japan not modernized it. Its social and political systems based, respectively, upon agrarian-bureaucratic and dynastic
tradtions were different from western styles of social order and political leadership. Austria, conversely, was once part of an empire which stretched across Southeastern Europe. It was not isolated but expansive, perhaps to its ruin, and it was governed by a monarchy, an archaic form of leadership by 1914, but quite familiar to those European nations with a similar political past. These contrasts, one could assume, were then compounded by the Cold War to produce an outcome as different as their histories: war on one continent and peace on another. This process of deduction, however, is not very convincing, for the two countries in many ways share a common heritage.

Both were occupied and exploited by major Axis powers, Korea under Japan and Austria by Germany, before World War II, and suffered the consequences of their defeat; both were liberated only to be occupied and abused by their liberators; and both became pawns again in a struggle between major powers. That the two nations experienced different outcomes later, despite these similarities, is due primarily to internal political and social factors rooted deeply in their distinctive colonial pasts. This colonial legacy forms one portion of this paper. In addition, the external influence of the two superpowers, and their post-war ambitions in Europe and Asia in general and Korea and Austria in particular, had a profound effect on their roads to war and peace. It is this matrix of cross-relationships in the post-war period which constitutes another portion of this study.

The advantages of investigating Korea and Austria within the context of Soviet-American rivalry is that, first, they force the historian to look beyond bilateral or regional relationships in favor of discovering the common ideological, economic, or strategic bond that made these peripheral states part of the same Cold War. Secondly, these “non-vital” areas draw attention away from the traditional regional foci—Japan and Germany—thereby offering a modified conception of the post-war world. Finally, as I will show later, the experience of these smaller states can pose a challenge to common generalizations about the behavior of the United States and the Soviet Union in the Cold War. This paper is not meant to revise all previous histories of American diplomacy in the post-war period, although it will question many, nor is it meant to confuse or befuddle by using small nations as so many hairs to be split. Rather it will pay proper heed to two countries which were important to, and serve as windows on, the Cold War.

The Colonial Legacy

Before the First World War, Austria was the center of an unstable and overextended Habsburg Empire, an empire that spanned across Southeastern Europe and laid its claim as one of the great powers within the constantly shifting system of alliances. The empire, in fact, had as its
principal ally the latest and potentially greatest of all European powers, a unified Germany. Otto von Bismarck in 1879 finalized the alliance with the previously de facto ally to balance the power of the British-French-Russian coalition. It would not be the last time that Austria's future was tied so directly to that of its brother country, Germany, or that it rode the tide of a leader with a continental if not a world vision.

Today historians view the term "Austrian empire" as a misnomer, for although it was large and important, it was inherently weak, torn by nationalistic strife, the sick man of Europe as Laurence Lafore called it. The more it tried to expand the less stable it became until eventually constituted more of a burden than an asset to its German ally. Austria's instability became apparent to all in 1914 as Balkan tensions triggered a series of tragic events which led to the First World War and ended with the long awaited demise of the Habsburg empire. Austria was fortunate, however, that despite its central role in the origin of the great war, it was spared the ravages of a full-scale invasion. As we will see, Austria time and again found itself caught in the middle of events, yet emerged largely intact and independent.

Austrians at the time probably did not feel so fortunate. The victorious powers met in Paris in 1919 and reduced Austria's empire by methodically carving chunks from its once vast land mass. Vienna, once the proud center of the empire, suddenly found itself isolated in the far eastern portion of a truncated Austria, as if to serve as a permanent reminder of Austria's new status as a secondary power. The Treaty of Saint-Germain, however, did not strip Austrians of their political instincts. Communists were in power in Bavaria and Hungary, and Vienna had what Cary Travers Grayson termed "the most highly organized and class-conscious workers in Europe." Nevertheless Austrian socialists rejected the idea of a proletarian revolution and opted instead to unite with the Christian socialists, thereby ensuring the preservation of the parliamentary system in Austria.

Perhaps a more serious and persistent threat to Austria was its economic weakness. This factor more than any other made an Anschluss with Germany appealing, for despite Germany's nightmarish economic upheavals, a union with Germany at least promised Austria what it had lost after the war—its own sphere of free trade. The League of Nations offered no assistance to Austria in this area, while its neighbors, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, erected prohibitively high tariffs

which prevented the natural reformation of a Danubian trading bloc. The best solution seemed to be “a fusion with the great German economic world,” but economic unity was a possible prelude to German-Austrian unification, a contingency that the European powers and most Austrians were not ready to accept. An article in The Commonweal, however, pointed out that “if two nations want a union; it will be realized sooner or later and cannot be prevented for all time. . . . If it really comes to a German annexation of Austria it will just be the logical consequence of self-adjustment growing out of impossible economic conditions formed and created by the peace treaty.”

With Adolf Hitler’s ascension to power in 1933, Austria’s absorption came sooner rather than later. An Anschluss was one of Hitler’s first and most prized goals, for he felt it would consummate a natural cultural union of which the Austrian born Hitler was himself a product. Not insignificantly, he was also confident that it could be accomplished without fear of war with the major European powers. Within a year, Hitler had encouraged Austrian Nazis to assassinate Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss only to fail to seize control of Austria. Four years later, Hitler made another spirited attempt to take over Austria by placing enormous pressure on the new Chancellor, Kurt von Schuschnigg, to accept an Anschluss. Although annexation appeared to offer Austria economic salvation, Hitler might also swallow Austria whole and make it little more than a German subject. Therefore, Schuschnigg hesitated before finally deciding to call a plebiscite so that Austrians could vote their own fate. Since Hitler realized that most Austrians preferred economic dislocation to a loss of independence, he immediately ordered a coup against Schuschnigg and crowned Seyss-Inquart, an Austrian Nazi, chancellor for a day, literally, as he stayed in power just long enough to offer an official invitation to the German army.

Austrian Nazis were jubilant and lined the streets to welcome the Germans, although “an important percentage . . . were given orders to turn out.”7 Most Austrians, including the Social Democratic Party’s conservative leader Karl Renner, decided it was better to accept the annexation than to fight a futile battle. In his farewell speech, Schuschnigg conceded that “since we were not prepared, even in this terrible situation, to shed blood. So we decided to order the troops to offer no

4. “Austria’s Salvation Seen in Unity with Germany,” The Literary Digest 87 (5 December 1925): 16.
For the next seven years Austria essentially served as an economic appendage of the Nazi war machine, a shorter and less disruptive occupation, however, than the one suffered by Korea.

Saburo Ienaga writes that “the annexation of Korea in 1910 started Japan on the road to empire and aggression.” Austria, in much the same way, was a watershed for Hitler’s goal of creating a Thousand Year Reich. The similarity does not end there, although few then and now understand that the domination of Austria by Germany and Korea by Japan were part of the same historical dialectic. For Germany and Japan the attempt to carve out their own regional economies constituted a rejection of the volatile international market system and the Depression it would spawn. That their respective invasions came 28 years apart can be attributed to the dislocative effects of World War I, which altered but did not change the economic impulses that drove these nations toward autarkic policies.

Some observers at the time viewed the struggle as one between democracy and fascism, or “have versus have-not nations.” These interpretations, though, were only partially correct which helps to explains why efforts at appeasement failed. For while it is true that the western powers were weak in the face of fascist aggression, a strong stand would not have obviated Hitler’s desire to turn Europe into Germany’s semi-periphery, it would only have delayed it. The source of world instability was much more fundamental and entrenched than any diplomatic maneuver could have cured. In addition, as John Diggins points out, the United States and the western nations, mired in the Great Depression, were unable to offer a convincing alternative to fascist economies which, he argues, rendered diplomatic protests spurious and impotent. Japan’s counterpart to the Thousand Year Reich, the Co-Prosperity Sphere, was part of the same lineage, and it is to Japan’s New Order and Korea’s role in Japan’s designs that we now turn.

Americans were indifferent to Japan’s annexation of Korea in 1910. If anything, the United States supported Japan, a putative model for Asian industrial development, for its admirable attempt to introduce the backward Koreans to the twentieth century. What the United States

either did not know or fully appreciate was that for Japan, Korea would be the first stop toward the development of a regional economy with Japan at the core, and at the expense of traditional western interests in Asia. Akira Iriye analyzes Japan’s behavior during the 1920s as a response to the post-war breakdown of the western imperialist system which had once governed Asia. Proponents of that theory, however, essentially view Japan’s annexation of Korea a decade earlier as part of a different dynamic, whereas one could include Korea in the same dialectic by referring to the more deeply-rooted if less obvious move away from the international market economy. Whatever theory one uses, the characteristics of Japan’s incipient empire are important for understanding Korea’s history, and for illuminating the numerous parallels between Japanese and German expansionism.

First, as Bruce Cumings mentions, Japan’s colonization of Korea was not like the colonial domination practiced by Europeans in Africa. Korea was much more advanced and organized than Africa had been which made the colony more immediately profitable, but also more volatile. The same conditions applied between Germany and Austria, though their cultural affinity helped reduce the outbreaks of violence. There were also similarities in the tardiness of these colonial ventures. Europe’s colonial rush took place in the 1880s, but Japan, because of its late industrialization and its delayed reaction to the increasingly unstable world market, did not seek a periphery for its core economy until the European spree had subsided. Germany’s annexation of Austria was much like Japan’s—the annexation of contiguous territory for the creation of a self-sufficient economic sphere after the fire sale in Africa had proven to be of marginal value. Lastly, the context in which Korea and Austria were viewed by the dominant nations was virtually identical. Mark R. Peattie writes that “Korea was seen as a possible area of overseas settlement where Japan’s surplus population could go, create ‘new Japans’ which would strengthen Japan as a whole.” Replace Korea with Austria and Japan with Germany and the rationale applies nicely in both places—a Japanese and German lebensraum.

Thus we see Germany and Japan reacting to the vicissitudes of the international economy with unilateral actions toward the formation of

16. Adolf Hitler: “The aim of German policy was to make secure and to preserve the racial community and to enlarge it. It was therefore a question of space.” Documents on German Foreign Policy, 10 November 1937, 29.
regional control. As one would expect, Austria and Korea were in turn buffeted by the exploitative policies of their colonial rulers, especially during the Second World War. But the parallels begin to diverge considerably when one studies colonialism in practice, for the effects colonial domination had on the Korean and Austrian societies were severe in the first case and mild in the second. Certainly the relatively short annexation period for Austria as opposed to Korea had telling effects, but the full story is much more complex.

"During the 34 years that have passed since the Japanese annexed their country the Koreans have waged an unceasing struggle for independence." The same was never said of Austrian reaction to the German occupiers which led Allied leaders to wonder aloud during the war whether Austrians indeed resisted their incorporation into the Third Reich. Why was resistance so fierce in Korea and not in Austria? Aside from the simple explanations of duration and racial animus, the answer can be found in the respective occupation goals and policies of Japan and Germany. My purpose, however, is not to compare levels of hatred, but to understand the differing degrees of exploitation and the effect that that had on the situation confronting the United States in 1945.

One of Japan's major goals was to make Korea its agricultural appendage. That aim in itself was not entirely destabilizing, for Korea was primarily an agricultural nation with no signs of pending industrialization. But since Korea's immediate value for Japan rested in its comparative advantage in rice production, the Japanese introduced modern techniques to maximize output, and purchased outright much of Korea's best farmland. Koreans responded by protesting and finally revolting en masse in 1919 to which Japanese colonial authorities reacted with brutal force and more repressive policies, actions which were ignored by a world engrossed with events in post-war Europe. It is conceivable that had Woodrow Wilson possessed an interest in Korean affairs, he could have made an effort to free Korea from domination either immediately or perhaps in "due course." This is entirely hypothetical and mentioned only to make the point that Korea had yet to suffer the social dislocations that would make it apparently unsuitable for immediate independence twenty-five years later.

What happened in the next quarter century was a thorough transformation of Korea's landscape, an alteration of the country's economic base, an imposed great migration of peasants to different regions and

unfamiliar jobs, and ultimately a startling incongruity between the nation’s economic and industrial position vis a vis the people’s economic, social, and political background. On a macro level one could have predicted such an outcome when Japan launched its drive for autarky in the late 1920s and especially the 1930s. By forcing Korea to grow a single crop for the core economy, Japan made its colony dependent on Japan’s import market, but when Japan changed its focus to industrial development in the 1930s, Korea was transformed into a center of industrial activity, acting completely in accord with the needs of the dominant partner. As Sang-chul Suh observed, “[Korea’s] development was designed to serve the needs of the Japanese Empire” at a time when the world’s economic and political order had been torn asunder. Worst of all for Korea, the mostly agrarian population was not given the time necessary to adapt to the changes inherent in industrialization as Japan’s immediate needs took precedence.

On a micro level Japan was obligated to introduce all the trappings of forced and rapid industrialization—railroads, factories, skilled personnel, bureaucrats, soldiers. At first glance, it is tempting to marvel at the sudden modernization of a backward nation, and postulate that perhaps the occupation was not so bad after all. Unfortunately the residual benefits for Koreans were few. Even the improvement in the literacy rate has to be qualified as minimum level literacy for the performance of basic factory labor. Factories in turn centralized Koreans where they could be overworked and taught minimal job skills while working under the close scrutiny of Japanese superiors. And the railroads, which in Europe less than a century before was a sign of affluence and national strength and in the United States signified the opening of a great frontier, in Korea transported chemicals, textiles, and metals for the furtherance of Japan’s economic interests, and were used to penetrate the countryside and ferret out resistance groups.

By far the most detrimental effect of forced industrialization was the dislocation and migration of Korean peasants from their villages to other locales in Korea and even to Manchuria and Japan. The traumatic effects of industrialization on western societies have been well chronicled, but they were less severe than the accelerated and enforced process that came with colonialism. Almost overnight Korea developed a working class and urban centers, though without the political and social maturation that accompanies a more gradual industrialization process. In fact, the Japanese went out of their way to prevent

political sophistication lest the natives become even more restless. The consequences of this process are covered more completely elsewhere, but the important point is that by 1938, the year of the Anschluss, Korea had already experienced a generation of intense and thorough colonial manipulation, which would make Korea difficult to control once the repressive hand of foreign domination was lifted.

From the late thirties through the Second World War, Korea was squeezed harder as Japan’s dependence on its periphery was heightened with every defeat, but the fundamental character of the occupation changed very little. For Austria the war nearly amounted to the entire occupation period as the fighting commenced less than a year and a half after its annexation. During those eighteen months, however, the essential elements of the occupation were established. Not long after Karl Renner described his country’s absorption into *ein volk* as “a logical historical development,” German and Austrian Nazis rounded up and deported Austrian Jews until by 1945 just seven thousand out of an original 175,000 remained. If that did not bother most Austrians, subsequent events would.

The Nazis seized the Austrian national bank, confiscated its gold reserves, and imprisoned its president; public assets and commercial banks were raided for their funds; industries which were unimportant for the Wehrmacht were shut down, while more valuable iron, chemical, and shipping factories were upgraded and staffed to the hilt; local governments were disbanded, laws were revised; the Supreme Court was abolished; and Austrian men were conscripted into the army with casualties by 1945 surpassing that of the American armed forces. All this was done in the name of the Third Reich.

So total was the absorption and control that Austrians had difficulty mounting effective resistance. Although seventy thousand Austrians were imprisoned for “resistance activity” during the occupation, that was most likely a catch-all phrase for even the most minor offenses, with the threat of imprisonment acting as a powerful deterrent to vigorous subversive activity. In addition, since Austrian opposition was more passive than overt, manifested more in work slowdowns than

in bloody rebellions, it seemed non-existent in comparison to Poland, France, and Korea. But perhaps the greatest inhibitor of spirited opposition was the fact that the exploitation of Austria was not nearly as internally destructive as Japan’s colonization of Korea.

In some ways, the occupation was actually very constructive. Austrians who had suffered from a high rate of unemployment in the interwar years were suddenly working, the hydroelectric industry was developed far ahead of schedule (though oil and chemical manufacturers were exporting more than they wished), and although colonization made Austria economically dependent, Germany filled an export vacuum, providing Austria with a market that had not existed since the dissolution of the Habsburg empire. If industrialization had occurred too quickly, Austrians were still able to retrace their steps, never losing touch with their political and social foundations. For Austria the industrialization process had definitely been accelerated, but it was not socially destabilizing nor was it counter to the general direction of Austrian development. Under the thumb of Japanese colonialism and imposed industrialization, Koreans, conversely, were never given the opportunity to adjust to the volatile process of modern economic development.

The relatively sunny side of economic exploitation is not offered to suggest that Austrians should have enjoyed their war experience. Instead I wish to point out that Austria economically, socially, and politically, was vastly more stable and developed than Korea, and thus it absorbed and in some areas even profited from the demands imposed by an occupying power. To underscore the contrasting effects, a Foreign Affairs article in July 1938 lamented that “for Austria the era of sound budgets is over: her indebtedness and taxation will increase rapidly. The German tax burden is 50 percent higher than was Austria’s under the Republic.” The relatively mild task facing Austrians in the postwar then would be to elect a government and alter the tax system, both of which Austrians routinely performed before March 1938. The basic social and economic fiber of the country remained intact. As for Korea, “it had to be rebuilt on a memory and a Japanese structure.”

The Allies had been keeping watchful eyes on Korea and Austria throughout the war, and it is to the Allied powers and their leaders that we now turn.

After Secretary of State Cordell Hull announced that “there was nothing the United States intended to do about [the Anschluss],” Austria

went the way of Korea—occupied and forgotten. More than three and a half years later on December 9, 1941 Roosevelt included Austria among a list of forcibly occupied countries, effectively exonerating Austria of its alliance with the Axis powers. But it was not until the Allied powers gained the initiative in the war that serious discussions between the allies occurred concerning the post-war status of Asia and Europe in general and more specifically Korea and Austria.

The subject of Korea was first broached at the Cairo Conference in October 1943. The United States, Britain, and Nationalist China agreed that Korea should be freed from Japan and granted independence in due course. Stalin, who was absent from the conference since Japan was not at war with the Soviet Union, approved the declaration at the Big Three meeting in Teheran, though he was uncertain about the term “due course” and the unusual trusteeship period proposed by Roosevelt. Stalin seemed to prefer that Korea be granted immediate independence, but his goal at Teheran was to secure a second front, not to quibble over Korea’s post-war status. Thus, the possibility of an extended presence by western forces in an area of traditional Russian interest probably disturbed him, but there would be other occasions to discuss the topic.

Roosevelt harbored fewer doubts about his trusteeship plan. In a perfect world Korea would have been prepared to regain its independence, and contribute to political and economic stability in Asia. But once Japan was defeated, what would political and economic order really look like in Asia? Roosevelt had his hopes for China as the center of a reconstructed Asia, but even a stable China could not roll back the detrimental effects that Japanese colonization had had on Korea, nor would it instantly create a free trading and thriving regional economic system. In an imperfect world, the president believed that Korea had to relearn independence and be reintegrated into Asia and the world. Stephen Pelz criticizes the president since he feels “Roosevelt committed himself to his Korea policy without investigating its chances for success.” However, an economic survey of Korea prepared three months before the Cairo Conference seems to justify F.D.R.’s position. The report stated that “the decision [to separate Japan from Korea] cast up by this war will only be unsettled by the next, unless Korea’s post-war status is established and neutralized as part of a general plan to ensure peace and progress in the Far East.”

29. FRUS: Cairo and Teheran, 26 November 1943, 449.
appeared to offer the best chance of fostering international cooperation and order in post-war Asia.

Roosevelt has taken heat from other historians who believe trusteeship was designed principally to project American economic and military power. William Appleman Williams argues that F.D.R. was simply pursuing traditional Open Door diplomacy by another name, with the threat of a post-war Depression as acting as a powerful stimulus. Gabriel Kolko believes that Roosevelt never intended to carry out the trusteeship agreements, but offered it as a smokescreen for his real desire which was to extend American military power through the establishment of overseas bases. According to Kolko, Roosevelt's reluctance to commit American occupation forces for Korea indicates that the president was never serious about implementing this strategy, for "trusteeship without an occupation was patently impossible." For Roosevelt, an occupation was patently unjustifiable unless accompanied by a developmental program like trusteeship. Robert Dallek attempts to reach a consensus by arguing that F.D.R. wanted both to expand American power and set nations free—trusteeship serving as the best strategy for attaining these twin goals.

None of these interpretations do justice to Roosevelt's plans. F.D.R., the New Dealer, who had tried with varied success to resurrect a depressed domestic economy found that a global war provided him with vast, essentially unrestricted opportunities to remake a world economy. Even though F.D.R. was able to open previously inaccessible markets and establish America's military presence over most of the globe as part of that effort, that is not ipso facto proof of neo-imperialist intentions. Those are ends in themselves which could have been attained with a policy far less subtle than trusteeship. Instead trusteeship was part of a Rooseveltian ideology which stressed the enmeshment of the Soviet Union, the expulsion of archaic colonialism, and the economic integration of colonies like Korea and Indo-China—obscure areas that a previous internationalist, Wilson, had neglected to consider. If this plan can still be termed imperialism for its effects on opening trade doors and channeling revolutionary nationalism, then it was imperialism not for its own sake, but for the establishment and perpetuation of a new order of global economic and political interdependence.

F.D.R.'s less astute successor later attempted to carry out these com-

plex goals as best he understood them which in some ways explains trusteeship’s ultimate failure. It would have aided Harry Truman, of course, if F.D.R. had made his goals more explicit, or had at least shared some thoughts with his vice-president. But at Yalta, Roosevelt’s last major conference, the president and Stalin conferred only on the length of the trusteeship period. This lack of discussion is grist for Kolko’s mill as he views the lack of planning as proof that trusteeship was contrived. However, it is important to remember that by February 1945 the war, especially in the Pacific, seemed far from over. Until the war with Japan neared its completion, intricate planning over Korea was deemed to be premature and less pressing than the myriad of issues that the war leaders did discuss at Yalta.

Wartime discussions about Austria’s fate were equally imprecise, but ultimately with less severe consequences. In October 1943, the Moscow Declaration, much like the Cairo Declaration for Korea, renounced Germany’s absorption of Austria, and promised to grant Austria independence after the war, a pledge that was reaffirmed at Yalta. But significantly, the Soviet Union, which had only recently driven the Wehrmacht from the outskirts of Moscow and had fought Germans and Austrians in Stalingrad, agreed on the terms of the declaration only after inserting a clause that did not exist for Korea at Cairo which recognized Austria’s role in the war. In regard to this clause, Vojtech Mastny comments that “Austria’s sovereignty was to be recognized, but the material foundations of its independence were to be impounded.”36 This addendum did indeed portend nearly complete and arbitrary control by the Russians over their zone of occupation. But at the time, the future of Austria, like Korea, was seen in relation to its dominant neighbor which meant that it was virtually ignored at discussions at Teheran and Yalta. Less than three months later, the Allied armies squeezed Austria then Germany from the west and the east faster than diplomats could formulate comprehensive rules for the post-war occupation.

If one considers this confusion as a simple lack of foresight, then F.D.R. is surely to blame again. His critics have argued that he left Korea and Austria in the lurch, hardly the actions of a “visionary” leader. Roosevelt, however, had a broader view of America’s post-war role which went beyond specifics about trusteeship or occupation policies. The president quite rightly believed that Soviet-American cooperation was essential for future peace, and it was his attempt to nurture this relationship that guided his policies. Churchill had more limited, imperial interests and thus his recommendations to Roosevelt were always more definitive; some may say more realistic.

In regard to Austria, for instance, F.D.R. sent a memo to Churchill in May 1944 telling him that they should inform the Combined Chiefs of Staff that “it will be assumed in this [post-war occupation] plan that France, Austria, and the Balkans will not be included in an American zone of responsibility.” This was another way of saying that power politics—the presence of troops—may have been Churchill’s way to save the empire, but it was not to be Roosevelt’s policy in promoting goodwill between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. In Korea as well, F.D.R. envisioned a trusteeship without the stationing of soldiers. A realist would say that troops were necessary to back America’s bargaining position, but Roosevelt had grander plans than holding the bottom half of peninsulas and truncated portions of vanquished nations. He wanted to create an atmosphere of harmony that would lead to multilateral cooperation between the superpowers. Non-threatening actions in Austria and Korea were small steps in that direction.

Whether Stalin would have acceded to the president’s world view is questionable and will obviously never be known. However, Stalin’s purges indicate that personal trust was not one of the dictator’s qualities, and Adam Ulam argues that Russia, like most great powers, has a long history of expansionist tendencies. If either is true, then a post-war confrontation between the superpowers was perhaps unavoidable and Roosevelt’s plans doomed to failure. Furthermore, Stalin’s negotiating tactics during the war suggest that superpower confrontation or detente Stalinist-style, as William Taubman termed it, began even before Roosevelt’s death. At the second Quebec conference in September 1944, the Soviet delegation was anxious for the United States to take a zone of occupation in Austria along with the Red Army and the British. Roosevelt was quite opposed since he wished to concentrate on the German question, while avoiding involvement with internal problems in southern Europe. A historian’s instinct is to interpret the Russian invitation as an attempt to use an American occupying force as leverage against Churchill’s imperial ambitions. That may be so, but first consider Stalin’s position regarding Korea.

At Yalta, Roosevelt and Stalin agreed on both the trusteeship plan for Korea and the removal of Soviet and American troops after the disarmament of Japanese forces. There was disagreement, though, over the president’s desire to leave the British out of the trusteeship plan.

40. FRUS: Conference at Quebec, 1944, 154–5.
F.D.R. thought Britain's participation was superfluous, whereas Stalin expressed concern that "the Prime Minister might 'kill us'" and that the British should be invited. The British could have been kept out of Korea easily enough, yet Stalin did not mind introducing Britain's imperialist tendencies into Asia. Why? First, Stalin was playing the negotiator, offering something that the other parties did not particularly want. Secondly, and more deviously, Stalin hoped to overextend his allies into previously ignored regions, allow Anglo-American interest to decline over time, and later gain complete control, unopposed. If there was a transition, as Taubman believes, from entente to detente in Stalin's foreign policy, it must have occurred before or around September 1944 and not April 1945 as he suggests.

This early shift in Soviet foreign policy provides the setting for Truman's introduction to the presidency on April 12, 1945. Truman never had strong feelings for the Soviet Union, and one can assume that he rarely thought deeply about Austria and Korea. Unlike his predecessor, Truman saw only black and white where Roosevelt had once seen gray, and he opted for confrontation where F.D.R. had sought compromise and cooperation. His dilemma, then, in his first harried year as president, was that he viewed the world much as Churchill did, along solidly defined lines supported by power, yet he inherited a foreign policy built around a Rooseveltian logic which rejected the same power politics that Truman wished to employ. American diplomacy, therefore, promised to undergo a rough transition at a critical moment in the war, and at a vital moment in Soviet-American relations.

Truman's arrival was a welcome change for Churchill since he finally had a receptive ear in the White House. Much to Churchill's dismay, Roosevelt had not been willing to make rapid advances late in the war to stop Soviet expansion into Europe. A week before his death F.D.R. received a cable from Churchill stating that "now that [the Russians] are on the eve of taking Vienna and very likely will occupy the whole of Austria, it may well be prudent for us to hold as much as possible in the north." In actuality the Red Army took only the eastern portion, leaving the remainder, as it had in Korea, for Anglo-American forces, and the political consequences of partition to the diplomats. It was exactly this ambiguity of zones and spheres within countries that Churchill had hoped to avoid. With Roosevelt gone, three practitioners of realpolitik were left to resolve the problem of divided countries and multi-power occupation. Not surprisingly, the temporary partitions

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41. FRUS: Malta and Yalta, 8 February 1945, 770.
42. "Winston Churchill to Franklin D. Roosevelt," 4 April 1945, Document 541, 705, in Roosevelt and Churchill: Their Secret Wartime Correspondence.
soon became solid dividing lines in a zero sum game of great power politics.

Stalin tried to remedy the confusion with force. As the Red Army made its way into Austria, the Russian troops treated the Austrians less as liberated people and more like the enemy that they had been fighting for four years. By raping and pillaging, the Soviets certainly did not improve their chances of gaining rapid control of Austria, but the discovery of Karl Renner seemed to Stalin a serendipitous discovery which would help him gain proxy control over Vienna and later Austria. Stalin allegedly reacted to Renner’s emergence by exclaiming the “old traitor is still alive? He is just the man we need!”43 The quote may be apocryphal, but Stalin believed Renner’s previous approval of the Anschluss would give him the proper blend of political popularity and Nazi complicity to be an ideal puppet. Thus, on April 27, 1945, two weeks before Germany’s surrender, the second Austrian republic was founded with Renner as head of state and communists in powerful cabinet posts.

Churchill and Truman were alarmed by Stalin’s unilateral attempt to create a government sympathetic to the Soviet Union, and especially so as Anglo-American forces were prevented from entering Vienna until June 3, ostensibly on the grounds that no agreement on the partition of the capital had yet been arranged. In the five weeks between the establishment of the Renner government and the arrival of British and American forces, the chancellor proved to be anything but a puppet. He installed non-communists underneath the communist cabinet officials, thereby circumventing their posts and creating an administration that more accurately represented the political leanings of Austrians. The importance of Renner’s stable leadership during this period cannot be overemphasized. As Grayson observes, “at no time after the War did an actual political vacuum exist in Austria. This was true of government administration at municipal, provincial and federal levels, and was an indication of strength and resurgence in Austria which the Allies had been unable to perceive.”44 As we will see later, a political vacuum in an occupied and liberated country can lead to disastrous results.

Another distinction between Austria in Korea in the period following liberation was the clear recognition by prominent American officials of Austria’s strategic implications. On May 4, still four days before the fall of Berlin, Under Secretary of State Joseph Grew explained to Truman that “Austria’s capital, Vienna, like Prague, is at the crossroads of Europe where Russian and Western influences meet in equal force. Austria is a strategic center for which there is bound to be a political

43. Mastny, 268.
44. Grayson, 51.
struggle, the outcome of which will affect the economic well-being and stability of South Eastern Europe."\(^{45}\) It is difficult to quantify the effect such evaluations have on diplomacy, but it is enough to realize that Austria was deemed vital at the moment of liberation both to its immediate neighbor and to the region as a whole, and received corresponding care by diplomats in Washington.

For example, as early as May 10 the Commander in Chief for U.S. Forces in Austria was informed that "the Control Council should be responsible for facilitating the severance of all governmental and administrative connections between Austria and Germany and the elimination of German economic influences in Austria. Every assistance should be given to the Allied Administration in Austria in its efforts to effectuate these purposes."\(^{46}\) This order was given before the stability and nature of the Renner government had been ascertained which indicates that unlike Korea, Austria was to be reconstructed immediately without recourse to pre-existing colonial mechanisms, tools which could have helped to administer the country in the short term, but which had to be discarded for the sake of Austria’s future as a stable and sovereign state at the “crossroads of Europe.”

This was not an insignificant decision on Washington’s part, for it provided the basis for a quadripartite agreement on the control mechanisms for Austria. Granted, the rules for the occupation came two months after allied forces had arrived, but no such agreement was ever reached in Korea or Germany. Stalin’s behavior during this period had been less than exemplary. He unilaterally instituted a government, temporarily blocked the entry of British and American troops into Vienna, and launched a vigorous propaganda campaign for communist candidates in the fall election.\(^{47}\) But overall Austria was well on its way toward independence and sovereignty along western lines. At Potsdam, the United States grudgingly agreed to recognize the Renner government, further solidifying Austria. As the American commission put it, “whatever might be the regrettable nature of Soviet action, it appears beyond serious doubt that, in terms of the men themselves and in terms of representation of political forces, the Renner Government is as good a coalition as could be devised at the present time.”\(^{48}\) The British and French acceded to the American view, and Austria’s

\(^{45}\) Memorandum from Joseph Grew to Harry Truman, 4 May 1945, Subject File, Foreign Affairs, Austria and Czechoslovakia, Harry S. Truman Library.

\(^{46}\) Directive to Commander in Chief of U.S. Forces of Occupation, 10 May 1945, 2, in HST/WHCF: Confidential File Army, Department of the, May 1945—September 1949, Box 3, Harry S. Truman Library.

\(^{47}\) FRUS: Potsdam, 20 June 1945, 1: 340.

\(^{48}\) FRUS: Potsdam, 23 June 1945, 1: 334.
quadripartite recognition was a significant deterrent to any plans to partition Austria.

On the whole, the early history of American foreign policy in Austria is quite admirable, marked by patience and incisive decisions, with one exception. At Potsdam, the United States agreed to give the Soviets possession of German assets in Austria. This seemed to be an innocuous and justifiable demand from a nation which had suffered so much, partly at the hands of Austrians. However, Austria had been annexed by Germany, making everything in eastern Austria, for lack of a clear definition of a "German asset," legal spoils for the Russians. This diplomatic gaffe cost Austria $250 million, a small but not insignificant amount of money. The U.S. indirectly picked up the tab through UNRRA and later Marshall Aid, but the German assets issue was a constant obstacle in negotiations and a perpetual drain on Austria's economic recovery. Fortunately for the Americans, it did not undermine the pluralist political system that had taken root so quickly in Austria.

The Austrian government dug in further on November 25, 1945 when a free election legitimized Renner's leadership, and gave the socialist party a huge victory over the communists, who received just 5.4 percent of the vote. The logical question is why Stalin allowed elections to take place. First of all, he hoped the communists would do much better. Also, it was probably an experiment for possible free elections in Hungary and Czechoslovakia which, had they taken place, would have eliminated a criticism levied by the West against the Soviet Union. In addition, Stalin believed he could reverse the election results as soon as the United States became impatient and withdrew from Austria, leaving behind the weakened British and the prostrate French. Lastly, once the predicted post-war economic Depression forecast by his economist, Eugene Varga, set in, the U.S. would certainly have little concern for the fate of political freedom in Austria.

For the moment, though, Stalin did not take defeat in Austria too kindly. It was, in fact, a poor last half of 1945 for him. There was no agreement in sight for Germany, the Soviet Union had been denied access to Japan, the United States had the atomic bomb and was evidently willing to use it, the Soviet Union was economically devastated with little help foreseeable from the West, and it was altogether unclear whether Russia could count on a safe western frontier. As a result of their frustration, the Soviets charged that denazification and demilitarization were not proceeding swiftly enough in Germany and Austria, accusations that the West would hear repeatedly when Russian diplomacy was failing. Thus, Austria, which before the election looked primed for a peace treaty with the occupying powers was now
part of an emerging struggle between the superpowers that promised to tie the Austrian treaty more closely to the course of the Cold War than to the ostensible issue, the Second World War.

For the Koreans, World War II was mostly a distant event which did not directly affect them until Japan’s defeat in it brought 35 years of colonial rule to an end. When Korea had last enjoyed independence, William Taft was America’s president and Austria was an empire. It is not surprising, therefore, that a briefing report before the Potsdam Conference reminded the American delegation of “the probable inability of the Koreans to govern themselves immediately following liberation.”

This political Rip Van Winkle was given a sudden awakening on August 15, 1945, but just as old Rip’s world changed during his slumber, so had Korea’s. Japan was gone, but the Soviet Union came crashing down the peninsula before stopping at an imaginary line, where Americans would meet them three weeks later. By the end of the year, Korea would find itself in the middle of a superpower tug of war, a curious position for a former colony whose people were attempting to rediscover their national identity and their station in society after so many years of Japanese domination.

Thirty million Koreans were forced to reconstruct their country within the confines of agreements made by liberators whom they had never seen before. Trusteeship was supposed to have been the guiding principle for the Korean occupation, with the compliance of the Koreans themselves having been assumed. But without Roosevelt’s direction or Korean cooperation, this unprecedented and largely ill-defined plan was unlikely to work. Henry Stimson, the Secretary of War, was one of the few who pushed trusteeship on Truman. Stimson believed the Soviet Union was forming Korean divisions designed to seize power as communist proxies, an effort that could be stopped, he thought, through the creation of an international trusteeship if not something else. Stimson supported trusteeship, then, not in the spirit of Soviet-American cooperation, but as part of an effort to stem Soviet expansion in Korea. Trusteeship, however, was part of a larger, multilateral, and cooperative vision of the world which could not be easily transplanted into the world of power politics. Nevertheless, Stimson essentially advocated for trusteeship as an early form of containment.

What General John Hodge did in Korea was to establish the first line of containment. While the Truman administration and the Soviets attempted to work out a trusteeship plan for Korea, Hodge pursued a unilateral course in in the American zone which rejected the participation of communists in southern Korea’s nascent government. As the

49. FRUS: Potsdam, 4 July 1945, 1: 312.
50. FRUS, 16 July 1945, 2: 631.
decision-maker on the spot, Hodge acted on the assumption that communist participation in the southern government was tantamount to eventually relinquishing control to Soviet stooges. If Stalin’s actions in Austria are any guide, Hodge was probably correct in assuming that given the opportunity, the Soviet Union would have emplaced and supported a sympathetic, if not communist, regime. His alternative was to lock out communists altogether, thereby making the 38th parallel more an impermeable dividing line than a temporary partition. In the wake of Stalin’s celebrated speech on February 5, 1946 and Kennan’s long telegram, Hodge’s counterrevolutionary actions received the official sanction of Truman and Secretary of State Byrnes. The containment of communism in Korea became official American policy, and the precedent for anti-communist stands elsewhere.

Containment is usually understood as a creation of George Kennan’s manifested in policies like the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan. However, American actions (or more accurately Hodge’s actions) beginning in September 1945 in the southern half of Korea amounted to containment before Kennan in that a conscious decision was made to create a regime distinct from and opposed to the one being formed in the Soviet zone. Certainly Hodge’s decisions to ignore the people’s committees and support rightist factions and Syngman Rhee, to retain collaborators within the bureaucracy, and to form a national police were not part of a larger effort to create a containment policy. But as impulsive as Hodge’s decisions may have been, they were consistent with the confrontational atmosphere that had developed between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. The deliberate formation of a conservative government in the south solidified the division of Korea, and it symbolized the decline of superpower cooperation. Sensing trouble in the future, General Douglas MacArthur lamented that “the splitting of Korea into two parts for occupation by force of nations operating under widely divergent policies and with no common ground is an impossible situation.”

Perhaps the superpowers realized that a divided Korea was an “impossible situation,” for the rhetoric of trusteeship was not abandoned until the Korean War made cooperation on the peninsula a chimera. At the Council of Foreign Ministers meeting in Moscow in December 1945, the Allied powers defined trusteeship as a five year period of tutelage which would ideally lead to a unified Korea. Unfortunately, the trusteeship plan was destined to fail for reasons having very little to do with Soviet obstructionism. A solution for Korea was made difficult by political tensions among the numerous Korean factions.

51. Commander in Chief MacArthur to War Department, 18 September 1945, 1, in HST/PSF, Subject File, Harry S. Truman Library.
About all they could agree upon was that they wanted immediate independence, and that trusteeship and its sponsors were to be opposed. Additionally, trusteeship failed because it could not work in a contentious environment, which the emergence of separate regimes had created in Korea. Finally, the international arena had hardly supported cooperative ventures. American unilateralism in Italy and Japan and Soviet expansionism in Eastern Europe indicated that de facto spheres of influence were not peculiar to the Korean peninsula or to Austria, but in fact marked the ascendance of confrontation over cooperation in Soviet-American relations.

Therein lies the dilemma for Korea and Austria as they stood at the end of 1945. There was no natural dividing line between the rival powers in those countries or in Germany. The partitions drawn so casually for those countries just months earlier had become sources of potential conflict in a less harmonious setting. The Soviet Union and the United States could not retrieve the moment of expedience and trust that had allowed such indeterminate partitions to be formed in the first place. Thereafter, they would struggle to reach an acceptable resolution to these ambiguities. Austria with its stable past and its good fortune in having created a single national government was capable of absorbing the shocks inherent in the superpower duel. Korea, though, was given no time to recover from 35 years of colonialism and the antecedents of civil strife that it had engendered before it was split and thrust into the Cold War. It was, as MacArthur put it, “a powder keg.”

The Era of Superpower Politics

The internal characters of Austria and Korea were especially important in the immediate post-war years, for the Truman administration operated without a distinct sense of direction. Truman was determined to be tough with the Soviet Union, but it was not until June 1947 and the Marshall Plan that Truman’s truculence was set within a clear ideology. In the interim, American foreign policy was driven by a desire to check Soviet expansion, but a broad explanation of how and where to contain the Russians was missing. For Austria, support of the non-communist Renner government and an expeditious signing of a peace treaty was essentially the extent of American policy. The Soviet Union, though, had other ideas for settling the Austrian issue.

Stalin’s insertion of Karl Renner into the presidency and the communist propaganda push before the November elections were both failed attempts to establish Soviet influence in Austria. He could have quit while he was behind and granted Austria a peace treaty. For a number

52. Commander in Chief MacArthur to War Department, 18 September 1945, 1, HST/PSF, Subject File, Harry S. Truman Library.
of reasons, however, it was more prudent for Stalin to delay action on an Austrian settlement. Russia’s occupation responsibilities gave Stalin an excuse for maintaining troops in Hungary and Rumania as part of a line of communication to Austria. Also, as long as the occupation forces remained, the Russians could continue to extract German assets and work out an arrangement for buying Austrian oil at low prices. More importantly, Stalin did not believe that the Americans could remain interested in Austrian affairs for too long which meant that his bargaining position would grow stronger with time. America’s overextension would then permit the Soviet Union to eliminate Renner and establish a more cooperative Austrian government. Thus, it did not disturb Stalin that in June 1946 he essentially mortgaged Russia’s future in Austria by agreeing to the Second Control Agreement.

The agreement enabled an occupying power to reach bilateral trade arrangements with Austria, which for the Soviet Union meant access to badly needed oil. But in return, Stalin relinquished unilateral veto power in Austria, effectively giving the Renner government autonomy in its foreign relations, which, ironically, enabled Austria to drive a hard bargain on oil sales to Russia and later receive Marshall aid. The Soviet commission in Austria realized that it had conceded too much and attempted to reverse the decision, but when that failed Stalin opted for an obstructionist policy, including charges that an Austrian state treaty could not be concluded on the grounds that denazification, demilitarization, and democratization had not progressed sufficiently. The Soviet Deputy Commissioner pushed Russian interference to an absurd level asserting that, “a button factory which could produce buttons for military uniforms constitutes war potential.”

Although disappointed by Stalin's diplomatic encumbrance, the United States, Britain, and France were more importantly granted an autonomous, western oriented Austrian government with which to pursue relations. The collective goal was to reach a quick settlement, albeit one that would have ensured an anti-communist government, but as treaty talks with the Soviets dragged along, the United States began to form a coherent policy for Austria that placed it increasingly within a greater European and containment context. Originally the United States had no plan for guaranteeing the viability of the western sector or the Renner government over a long period of time. In January 1946, the American political advisor in Austria, John Erhardt, gave a pessimistic appraisal of Austria’s future. According to Erhardt, Austria’s best hope for economic recovery was through the formation of a Danubian federation, which, unfortunately for Austria would be

53. Stearman, 97.
dominated by the Soviet Union. The implication was that unless the United States was prepared to finance Austria’s recovery, it would inevitably gravitate toward the Soviet sphere.

Perhaps the Truman administration was awaiting an agreement on Germany which would in turn solve the Austrian dilemma, for no new policy had yet been created. Instead, the U.S. continued to funnel aid to Austria, though just enough to sustain it, thereby ensuring Austria’s aid dependence while both justifying and encouraging Soviet intransigence. In April 1946 Charles Kindleberger pointed out that America’s indecisive behavior toward Austria appeared to the U.S.S.R. as less an attempt to solve the deadlock than “as part of a long-run effort to corrupt the East European bloc,” thus necessitating corresponding pressure from the Russians, and increasing their determination to prolong the occupation. Ten months later a Central Intelligence report stated that “the best interests of the USSR may be served by a protracted military occupation of Austria,” and portrayed the Soviet Union’s occupation to be more aggressive than defensive, and designed to win the diplomatic waiting game. From either perspective, the conclusion was that the United States was investing resources in Austria while neither significantly advancing its recovery nor encouraging the Soviets to withdraw.

The United States was thus encouraged to push negotiations along by pursuing an Austrian solution independent of the German issue. The U.S. hoped to push through a treaty for Austria, for that would reduce its aid dependence while also removing the Soviet Union’s rationale for keeping troops in Hungary and Rumania. Unfortunately, the Americans found the Soviets no more receptive than before. From a broader view, decoupling was a tacit confession that like Korea, the fundamental differences in superpower politics were not over issues related to World War II, but those which affected the current Cold War. It is no surprise then that a change in Austria’s status awaited a comprehensive American Cold War strategy which began to take shape with the enunciation of the Truman Doctrine in March 1947.

Nothing in Truman’s seminal speech applied directly to Austria, but it set in motion a serious evaluation of Austria’s strategic value to the United States as it would manifest itself in the allocation of Marshall Plan funds. In May the Joint Chiefs placed Austria fifth in importance to the national security of the United States, ahead of Italy, Japan, and
Korea among others. The JCS also advised that "we cannot afford to let this key area fall under exclusive influence of [the] Soviet Union, for if this should happen it would not only consolidate Soviet domination of Danubian and Balkan areas but would also weaken our position in Italy, Germany, and Czechoslovakia." Clearly an overall commitment in Europe had to include generous aid to Austria beyond subsistence levels.

It was probably no coincidence that an unsuccessful communist putsch was attempted in May 1947 just as the United States was ready to make a deeper economic commitment to Austria. Audrey Kurth Cronin interprets this Soviet inspired coup as a desperate attempt to establish communism in Austria and solidify the Soviet bloc from its own borders to the gates of Switzerland. However, this is a generic analysis that could apply to any period during the post-war. If one assumes that Stalin knew a major infusion of American aid was in the works, then a hasty attempt to seize power in a decidedly anti-communist Austria makes sense. The one area in which Stalin could not rival the United States was in economic aid. Once American dollars began flowing into Europe, the American sphere of influence would be sealed with Austria in it, and there was nothing Stalin could do about it short of severing eastern from western Austria. Thus by June 1947 Soviet influence had been gradually, and was on the verge of being dramatically, reduced: quite a remarkable feat given that Soviet troops still occupied the country in numbers greater than the western forces could have resisted.

Some have argued that the spring of 1947 was actually less than a watershed in the history of Soviet-American relations. Ulam, for one, views the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan as simply an evolution in superpower relations into an era of "competitive coexistence." Taubman downplays these events further, claiming that the U.S.S.R "exaggerated American aggressiveness" by interpreting American munificence as an assault on its unstable position in Eastern Europe. (Of course, even if the Soviet Union misinterpreted America's actions, the threat still seemed no less real at the time). With these qualifiers in mind, I would hesitate to say that the European Recovery Program was in itself a revolutionary moment in the Cold War. The Marshall Plan, however, forced Washington to set priorities, make choices, and create

57. FRUS, 12 May 1947, 1: 738.
60. Ulam, 409.
61. Taubman, 178.
a global strategy in the pre-NSC 68 world where interests appeared to outstrip American resources. Not since Roosevelt had American foreign policy operated with such a clear perception of the interrelatedness of its global interests, a cognitive process that George Kennan had had in mind a year earlier when he identified the key centers of world power. Thereafter Austria became firmly imbedded in America's sphere of interest. By contrast, the immediate post-war period found Korea receding into the periphery of America's field of vision, but never completely out of it.

While Austria's political stability and obvious geographical value encouraged the United States to commit to its viability, Korea's political and social volatility and uncertain geopolitical importance made the Truman administration's policy toward Korea correspondingly less committal. The American backed Korean Provisional Government protested after learning that the superpowers had agreed at the CFM meeting in December 1945 to place Korea under trusteeship for five years. Americans interpreted this outburst as an indication of Korea's political immaturity, but for the moment the U.S. backed the southern regime, even if it was not fond of its leadership. In the Soviet zone, the Russians were beginning to rehabilitate the region's industrial and natural resources which made more sense than the original, shortsighted aim of looting the country. It was also a means of attaching northern Korea to the Soviet economy.

Certainly the superpowers realized that their unilateral actions were working against Korean unification, but in this early stage of the Cold War the partition was viewed more as a temporary condition until one of the powers finally dominated the entire peninsula. Unfortunately both sides preferred to keep Korea in their sphere of influence. For its part, the United States wanted to contain communism, though not until the reverse course in Japan was Korea's value beyond its role as a containment country fully appreciated. General Hodge offered the Soviet Union's rationale for retaining Korea: "The Soviet Union has a keen interest in Korea being a true democratic and independent country, friendly to the Soviet Union, so that in the future it will not become a base for an attack on the Soviet Union."62 To carry this geopolitical argument further, the strategic importance of northern Korea becomes even more evident in comparison to the Soviet occupation of Austria. As Stalin probably saw it, the Soviet presence in Germany prevented a rebirth of the Wehrmacht, with the Red Army's occupation of Austria serving as additional support and perhaps as a bargaining chip. But Russia's traditional antagonist to the east, Japan, was completely out of his hands. Moreover with China's future still undetermined, northern

62. FRUS, 22 March 1946, 8: 653.
Korea was the only place in Asia where Stalin could curb American influence and stop possible Japanese expansion. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Soviet Union would one day agree to an Austrian neutrality treaty while North Korea remained suspended in a geopolitical stalemate.

On May 8, the Joint Commission adjourned, having been unable to solve the manifold differences separating the two sides. Hodge's political advisor, William Langdon, vented his frustration on the Koreans when he wrote to Byrnes that "the delegation approaches the problem realistically and has no sympathy with Korean sensibilities over trusteeship. . . . The delegation also takes the view that Koreans contributed little, if anything, to their liberation, and therefore, have no moral right to question the plans which their liberators have for their independence." It is tempting to cite this paternal and condescending attitude as the source of the superpowers' inability to solve the Korean question, but more commendable American views in Austria, a country presumably equally bereft of moral rights, did nothing to improve negotiations.

What was more important was that neither side was willing to budge. President Truman, on one hand, wrote to Edwin Pauley, "I agree with you that Korea is, as you so aptly phrase it, 'an ideological battleground upon which our entire success in Asia may depend.'" Stalin, on the other hand, was no doubt hoping the United States would suffer that anticipated economic depression, or at least bow to public pressure to bring the boys home, and quietly withdraw from Korea. Langdon, this time in a less passionate memo to Byrnes, picked up on the probable Russian approach, writing that "it is therefore entirely possible that the Kremlin will delay a resumption of negotiations and wait for our natural impatience, our demobilization problems, declining American interests in Korean affairs and local dissatisfaction with the division of the country to oblige us to supply speedy solution of these terms."

In fact, impatience on the part of some Americans, particularly in the War Department, gravitated toward a quick settlement on Korea. For the remainder of 1946, though, Korea continued to enjoy wide support for reasons having little to do with Korea itself. In June, the State-War-Navy committee concluded that any agreement on Korea had to be viewed in terms of the effect it would have on the anti-communist struggle in China. If it appeared that the U.S. had given up in Korea, the logic went that Chinese Nationalists would be more apt to quit the

63. FRUS, 8 May 1946, 8: 670.
64. FRUS, 24 May 1946, 8: 686.
65. FRUS, 24 May 1946, 8: 686.
66. FRUS, 6 June 1946, 8: 697.
fight and relinquish China to the communists. One would assume then that the communist seizure of China in fall 1949 would have led to a corresponding reduction of interest in Korea. But by then, the U.S. had reoriented its Asian policy, with Korea still within the American fold, though for reasons having little to do with China.

A new policy for Korea came none too soon, for American policy in Korea had reached a critical moment. Hodge informed the War Department in January 1947 that Koreans were growing increasingly impatient with the prolonged occupation, and posed a threat to the American mission’s goals. The next month an inter-departmental committee on Korea warned that without a program of economic aid and Congressional action in support of Korea, “the Korean situation will so deteriorate as to seriously impair the U.S. world position.” Finally, Secretary of War Patterson told Under Secretary of State Robert Lovett, “I am convinced that the United States should pursue forcefully a course of action whereby we get out of Korea at an early date and believe all our measures should have early withdrawal as their overriding objective.” The prospect of essentially abandoning Korea was distasteful, but Patterson felt it was better to withdraw voluntarily than be forced out at a later date.

His argument sounds reasonable, but during the spring of 1947 the United States was re-evaluating its priorities and its global strategy. The Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan are seen as instruments for American foreign policy in Europe, and they had a more obvious effect on Austria than Korea. However, the United States also made a commitment to a reverse course in Japan, whereby the previous plan to neutralize Japan was changed to rebuilding Japan as the center of Asian industrialism and the expression of American power. Secretary of State George Marshall was well aware, after his extended mission to China, that America would have to look elsewhere for a stable Asian ally. Implicit in this policy change was the reconstruction of Japan’s economic empire once known as the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere, which included Korea. The majority of the funds and the attention in 1947 may have been directed at Europe, but that should not conceal the significant change that had taken place in America’s Asian policy. For those like Patterson who were unaware of the nature and scope of this shift, Korea still seemed like a trivial interest which could get the U.S. into major trouble. For Marshall and his Under Secretary Dean Acheson, Korea was an integral part of America’s plans in Asia.

68. FRUS, 25 February 1947, 6: 609.
69. FRUS, 4 April 1947, 6: 626.
Austria and Korea took different roads to the spring of 1947 but they both arrived in the same place—within the American sphere of interest. The major difference from America's perspective was that whereas Austria had a western-oriented, democratically elected national government, Korea had two separate governments of which the leftist version was only slightly more distasteful than the troublesome and often authoritarian regime that the U.S. supported. Korea also had enormous internal strife, "a powder keg," that would probably be set off with the removal of the occupying powers. Therefore, the United States had no qualms about publicly supporting Austria and its government. By contrast, Truman and the State Department desired to retain Korea but preferred to eject the Rhee regime. This latter aim would create a great deal of confusion about America's designs for Korea.

In comparison to events in Korea, the picture in Austria through June 1950 may appear to be rather uneventful. However, as I have mentioned, the two countries were part of the same Cold War, and the most salient aspect of the Cold War during this critical period was the difficulty of applying containment to artificially partitioned countries. A rollback or a retreat strategy offered the simplicity of a single objective, but containment's goal was to perpetuate a static line, a compromise strategy that called for neither complete seizure of the initiative nor the relinquishment of peripheral interests. The awkwardness of this strategy was reflected in American foreign policy's vacillation between acceptance and resistance toward the finalization of an Austrian treaty. American diplomacy was also subject to the differing philosophies and conflicting priorities of competing bureaucracies, a story more familiar in the Korean context but equally applicable to Austria. In short, despite Austria's internal social and political stability, it was no more able than Korea to control its fate within the sphere of great power politics.

The price Austrians would pay in this high stakes game was not immediately apparent. In July 1947, the Export-Import Bank loaned $13 million to Austria for the purpose of purchasing key raw materials and restarting the nation's industry.70 In addition, not only was Austria eligible for Marshall aid, but the U.S. also began paying for the occupation costs in its zone, a public acknowledgment that Americans were there to fight the Cold War. Lastly, Austria was being integrated into a West European economy which could substitute for the loss of its traditional Danubian markets. All this munificence, however, indicated that the U.S. had made a major economic and political commitment to Austria which made an acceptable superpower settlement less likely.

Indeed, the initial effect of Austria's participation in the Marshall Plan was to polarize the competing occupiers. The Soviet Union in Oc-

70. FRUS, 31 July 1947, 2: 1192.
October 1947 announced its support of Yugoslavia’s claim of $150 million in reparations from Austria which was in clear violation of the Potsdam agreements against reparations payments. Two months later, the American High Commissioner, General Geoffrey Keyes, parried the Soviet move by reiterating Austria’s strategic importance, emphasizing that “Austria’s participation in the European Recovery Program... has made that country the easternmost Central European bulwark of the European Recovery Program.” Within this confrontational setting, Austria had moved closer to economic recovery, but it was now further from independence. As Brewster Morris, the American political advisor in Germany stated, “Soviet-American negotiations as regards Austria, Korea and Japan do not suggest any moderation in the Soviet point of view—in fact, if anything, the contrary.”

Soviet intransigence in Austria was marked by reparations demands and more accusations of a re-emergence of nazism and militarism. These claims did not affect the American delegation or Austrians who knew better, but the U.S. was wary of pushing the Russians too far. It was in the American interest to keep Austria in the western sphere of influence, but if Austria leaned too heavily toward the American side, Stalin could seek a separate solution, as he had in Hungary and Czechoslovakia, by blockading Vienna and partitioning eastern Austria from the west. Therefore, the U.S. continued to pursue a negotiated agreement, but with the stipulation that an Austrian gendarmerie be created to ensure the survival of the democratic government in Vienna. Ironically, the fear of a communist coup or an overt invasion by the Red Army led American observers in Vienna and policymakers in Washington to push for a security force, exactly the kind of remilitarization that the Russians had been accusing the United States of fostering all along.

The Austrian government secretly supported the creation of an army, knowing that it would hinder negotiations, but all the while claiming to the public that a treaty was desired above all. The American position was unified behind the belief that a withdrawal of troops was “unlikely and undesirable.” This was the last time that such unity would exist between the Austrian government and the various American bureaucracies, for the Soviet Union began a peace offensive that enticed the Austrians but worried the U.S. The Soviet delegation reduced the German assets claim from $250 million to $200 and finally to a relatively paltry $150 million. It also desired serious negotiations of other, less pressing issues which prompted the American delegation to write a

71. FRUS, undated, 2: 795.
72. FRUS, undated, 2: 887.
73. FRUS, 10 March 1948, 2: 1473.
panicked letter to the Acting Secretary of State Robert Lovett: "We feel the $64 question still remains unanswered, i.e., do you want a treaty in the present situation in Europe? If not, what is your advice on best tactics to be employed in breaking off negotiations? We should have done so before Easter if we could only have persuaded the French and British to come along."74

For a number of reasons, the United States did not want a treaty and thus negotiations stalled over American demands for Soviet acceptance of an Austrian army and ironclad frontier guarantees. Erhardt and Samuel Reber, the American representatives in Vienna, and Under Secretary Lovett all believed that the Russians wanted a treaty, but they agreed that it was only to open the way for the satellization of Austria. The next month a Central Intelligence report also cited the undesirable precedent a treaty in Austria would have on solving the German issue to Russia's liking. The arguments against a settlement had merit, but the important point is that since the United States deemed Austria to be of strategic, economic, and psychological value, the U.S. was determined to close the door to any agreement that threatened any of those interests. By becoming a dependency of the U.S., Austria took on the unexpected role of a Cold War keystone which belied its small size and its modest aim of simply regaining its unity and independence. Korea suffered a similar fate which suggests that an unstable social and political climate may aggravate the disruptive forces of a superpower rivalry, but the Austrian case shows that even a stable nation, caught in the middle, is subject to the will and the whims of the greater powers.

The Berlin blockade served as a grim reminder to Austria that the Cold War could easily escalate into a real, shooting war. The last discussions of the year occurred one month before the crisis began, and thereafter it seems that the Renner government was determined never to let an opportunity for a treaty slip by, regardless of the security threat. Austrians, to be sure, understood the threat of Soviet infiltration, but later they expressed a desire to take their chances in bilateral negotiations with Russia rather than continue in the volatile arena of superpower politics. Unfortunately for Austria, and as we will see later with Korea, it was easy to become a participant in the Cold War but it was exceedingly difficult to get out.

Austria's best hope for a treaty came with the ascension of Dean Acheson to the office of Secretary of State in January 1949. Acheson did not possess special insights into Austria in particular, but he discerned

74. FRUS, 5 April 1948, 2: 1490.
75. CIA: Review of the World Situation as It Relates to the Security of the United States, 12 May 1948, 6, in NSC Meetings, Index Numerical List 1-13, September 26, 1947 to June 17, 1948, Box 203, Harry S. Truman Library.
that Austria could not remain in the western sphere if its survival was predicated upon American aid and the presence of occupation forces. The British and French also pushed for a resolution as did Reber who wrote in May that the “Austrian situation cannot remain as it now is for an indefinite period.” At a Council of Foreign Ministers meeting in June 1949, the Soviet Union dropped its two most obstructive demands—reparations for Yugoslavia and its claims on German assets. The path seemed clear for a treaty, but Acheson’s more difficult task was to convince the president that America’s interests were best served by an immediate settlement which in turn brought the State Department into a direct conflict with the JCS and the Defense Department. Their feeling was that Austria was strategically located and psychologically valuable, and thus needed a substantial army and police force to guarantee its survival prior to the signing of a treaty. The Russians had made their concessions, and were not inclined to cave in on this demand.

Francis Williamson, the acting chief for Austrian affairs, commented that Defense Secretary Louis Johnson “has taken the position that no Treaty with Austria is desirable,” and that “Johnson will not let us sign the Treaty until he has 88 million dollars for small arms and ammunition.” The Joint Chiefs sided with Johnson, which was the most reasonable stance for the JCS and the Defense Department to take. The bureaucratic role for these organizations was to evaluate Austria’s security on a military basis, and their conclusion was that Austria was safer with an army than without. Acheson, the primary formulator of American foreign policy, certainly appreciated this point, but he argued that it was irrational to insist on a demand that the Soviet Union could never accept. Acheson’s doubts about a settlement were reinforced when Austria’s October 9 elections showed no gains for the communist party but an impressive debut for the VDU, a nascent right-wing party that in conjunction with American demands for an Austrian military seemed to justify Russia’s fears of a rearmed, anti-Soviet Austria.

On October 20, at a critical NSC meeting over the revision of the NSC draft 38/3, Acheson hoped to win Truman over to his side. The Secretary of State advocated that the U.S. come to terms on the minor issues which continued to block an Austrian state treaty. General Keyes, who spoke for the American occupation force in Austria, and General Omar Bradley, the chairman of the JCS, did not actively oppose the recommendation. In fact, Bradley supported the idea “because of our militarily untenable position.” But both wanted an Austrian

76. FRUS, 11 May 1949, 3: 1095.
77. FRUS, 4 October 1949, 3: 1171-2.
78. “A Treaty Negotiations Progress Report,” 20 October 1949. 2. in HST/PSF, NSC
security force first; that was the rub. Bradley interpreted Acheson's disagreement as an indication that the Secretary did not care about Austria's fate. Acheson claimed that he wanted Austria aligned with the West, but Bradley did not understand how that could be accomplished without adequate security. The difference was that Acheson saw security in terms of economic and political strength in addition to military strength. The current American course sapped Austria's economic and political stability in exchange for the continued presence of American soldiers which Acheson realized would further alienate the Austrians, drain America's economic resources, and ultimately force an embarrassing withdrawal.

Truman, however, split the difference between Acheson and the military by calling for a treaty, but not before Austria possessed adequate security forces. NSC 38/4 was thus a document that basically ensured the continued quadripartite occupation of Austria. It called for the eventual creation of a 53,000 man army with an initial force of 28,000. A JCS recommendation that the western powers proceed over Soviet objections was inserted, though it admitted that this could lead to unilateral actions in the Soviet zone. In light of these actions, Austria could potentially have traveled a path similar to Korea, for the partition and unilateral policies planted the seeds for a conflict that, were it not for the presence of a stable society and political system, could have led to war and a permanent division. Austria, despite conflicting priorities with its friends, managed to survive this uncertain period.

The first half of 1950 solidified the differences between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. The JCS, in a memo to Louis Johnson concerning the seemingly harmless replacement of the Austrian high commissioner with a civilian, interjected the viewpoint that "the Cold War is in fact a real war in which the survival of the free world is at stake." In a May meeting of the NSC, Acheson made another futile attempt to persuade the military to adopt his views. Bradley again dissented saying that the "JCS did not want to upset the applecart in Austria nor to give others the impression of a lessening of our interest there." Acheson's assistant Michael McDermott, believing that Russian good will could stabilize the applecart, stated that "what we would like to see are some actions by the Soviet Union which would give the world solid reasons for renewed hope that there will be a relaxation of pressures." What

Meetings, Memoranda for the President, V. I-IV, 1947-1953, Box 220, Harry S. Truman Library.

79. FRUS, 2 May 1950, 4: 395.
81. "Memorandum by Special Assistant McDermott," 15 March 1950, in HST/WHCF:
he got instead was the Korean War, and a suspension of serious negotiations.

The course of events in Korea leading up to June 25, 1950 are enormously complex, and cannot be completely detailed within a few pages. However, complexity should not for convenience's sake lead to a reductionist argument which identifies a single concern—strategic, ideological, psychological, or economic—as the primary consideration, for it was an interplay of all these factors which affected American policy. Korea was the locus of a dangerous clash of superpower interests, a vigorous bureaucratic battle in Washington, and increasing civil strife within the country itself. In this setting, a peaceful solution would have been more surprising than a war.

In the fall of 1947 many Americans were willing to withdraw from Korea, gracefully if possible, on the grounds that it was strategically insignificant, economically hopeless, and a political disaster. Indeed, the best argument for retaining an American presence seemed to be one of prestige, of retaining credibility in the Cold War battle of perceptions. For those who advocated a pullout, prestige was quite justifiably viewed as insufficient cause to remain in Korea. Hodge's political advisor Joseph Jacobs wrote to Secretary Marshall asking whether Korea was vital to American security or not. Had he queried the Secretary of Defense James Forrestal, the answer would have been no. Forrestal himself sent a memo to Marshall stating that "the United States has little strategic interest in maintaining the present troops and bases in Korea." Five weeks later the Policy Planning Staff concurred, concluding that "since the territory is not of decisive strategic importance to us, our main task is to extricate ourselves without too great a loss of prestige."

Korea's economic plight provided especially strong incentive for the US to cut its losses. Although some economic forecasts predicted a Korea that would gradually improve to the point that American aid would no longer be necessary, most assessments were consistent with the NSC's judgment that "such is the extent of this dependence that it is estimated that economic collapse would ensue in south Korea within a matter of weeks after the termination of U.S. aid to that area." In the

Confidential File, State Department Correspondence, 1950, Box 41, Harry S. Truman Library.
83. FRUS, 19 September 1947, 6: 805.
84. FRUS, 26 September 1947, 6: 817.
85. FRUS, 6 November 1947, 1: 776.
86. FRUS, 2 April 1948, 6: 1166.
years prior to NSC 68, the emphasis was on providing aid to nations which could become politically stable and economically self-sustaining, for countries of that type promised to be viable, pro-American additions to the containment line. Austria fit that definition but Korea was politically volatile and extremely aid dependent. A strong argument could thus be made to abandon Korea on economic grounds.

And then there was Syngman Rhee. Rhee's saving grace was that he was profoundly anti-communist, but his authoritarian tactics were embarrassing to the U.S. The dilemma, then, for those in Washington who did believe that Korea was of strategic and economic importance was to somehow support Korea without bolstering the Rhee regime. Those who argued that Korea was unimportant were happy to let Rhee's government disintegrate provided that there was a decent interval between the time of America's withdrawal and his demise. In short, there were numerous arguments for the U.S. to concentrate on saving China or developing Japan fully as a containment country while allowing Korea to recede quietly into the Soviet sphere.

The State Department, though, viewed Korea as a vital element in both the containment of communist expansion and the re-emergence of the Asian economy. Korea may have been a political liability, but in defiance of the conventional wisdom, Secretary Acheson pursued a course that deemed Korea to be strategically and economically relevant to American security. The arrival of the United Nations Temporary Commission in November 1947 to supervise a national election helped establish southern Korea as a separate entity from the north and within the American sphere of interest as the Soviet Union and northern Korea refused to participate. Jacobs acknowledged that "what is needed is an election at earliest possible date (realizing without further shedding of tears that such election cannot be perfect and that for time being at least north Korea is lost)."

Throughout 1948, it appeared from the outside that the U.S. was unconcerned should south Korea be lost as well. The United States and Soviet Union agreed to withdraw their troops by the end of the year which placed Rhee's government in jeopardy of being overthrown from within or invaded from without. The NSC recognized the threat the Soviet backed North Korean army posed to the south's security, and the detrimental effect that that might have on the overall situation in the Far East. But the NSC did not believe Korea was in itself a strategic interest, and thus it agreed with Truman's decision to withdraw. Meanwhile Acheson was playing a precarious game as he attempted to retain Korea but eject Rhee. As a result, Korea's biggest ally in Washington refused to give unequivocal support in public for the ROK. However, the

87. FRUS, 8 February 1948, 6: 1095. Emphasis mine.
best measurement of the State Department's intentions was the three year $410 million aid package for Korea approved in September which indicated that Korea's survival, withdrawal notwithstanding, was more than just a matter of protecting American prestige.

The next month a CIA report on the Republic of Korea affirmed the two essential features of Acheson's Asian policy. It noted that prior to a withdrawal, a South Korean army could be trained which could deter "Soviet-inspired aggression," much as the U.S. tried to create an Austrian army for the same purpose. It seemed possible, then, for the U.S. to strip Rhee of his security blanket (the American military) while salvaging south Korea as a containment area. It further explained that the "ROK can permanently overcome its present deficient economic position only on the basis of multilateral trade with other Far Eastern countries and with the northern zone of Korea." To open the KDR to multilateral trade would have required a rollback of communism, which at that time was not a popular option. Otherwise the report capsulized quite nicely Korea's position as it related to America's containment strategy and the reverse course in Japan.

Max Bishop, the chief of Northeast Asian Affairs, also caught on to the logic of the State Department's actions. He remarked that Korea was a fundamental element for both Far Eastern and thus American security, and that Korea was absolutely vital to Japan's economic reconstruction. What he did not quite grasp was Acheson's esoteric desire to eliminate Rhee while reducing as much as possible Korea's aid dependence. Thus, Bishop called for a re-evaluation of NSC 8's proposed withdrawal lest his superior Walton Butterworth and those above him underestimate Korea's value. Truman and Acheson in fact delayed the withdrawal as scheduled in NSC 8 by six months, not because they suddenly realized Korea's value, but because they had to be as certain as possible that Korea possessed adequate deterrence in the form of a credible army and suitable navy. To leave Korea too weak to survive would have unraveled Acheson's carefully laid strategy.

That strategy was supported by NSC 8/2, which stressed the Soviet threat in Korea while emphasizing the psychological importance of stopping communist expansion. It also backed Acheson's desire, as we might say today, to Koreanize the armed forces. Rhee was understandably nervous about American diplomacy throughout 1949. He constantly pressed the American ambassador John Muccio for information on Korea's status in the defense perimeter and he demanded that

89. FRUS, 17 December 1948, 6: 1338–40.
a Pacific Pact be created, while simultaneously alienating the U.S. by tightening his political grip and inciting skirmishes along the 38th parallel. Recall that it was around this period that the Austrian government was anxious to expel the occupation forces, and simply desired enough economic assistance to revive its economy. The United States wanted to promote containment in both countries, but it is almost as though South Korea was too willing and Austria not willing enough.

As I have mentioned, the difficulty of maintaining a static as opposed to a dynamic line of defense was especially acute in partially occupied countries. In Austria the dilemma was eased by the country's political and social stability in that containment could be perpetuated by simply ensuring the survival of the democratically elected government. The more ambitious desire to rollback Soviet influence could be achieved in a sense through the mutual withdrawal of troops and the creation of an adequate deterrent force, for it was clear that an unoccupied Austria would side with the West.

The situation in Asia was decisely more complex. In December 1949, executive approval of NSC 48 sanctioned a rollback strategy as an alternative to containment in Asia. Korea, for numerous reasons, was the best candidate for its implementation. Politically and economically, the ROK's future was still uncertain, and though the U.S. risked the millions in aid it had sunk into its development, the rollback of communism in Korea would have enhanced not only America's prestige but also Japan's security and the ROK's economy as envisioned by the CIA report. If rollback failed, containment could be adopted again, or in the worst case scenario, a nation that the military believed was strategically insignificant would be relinquished. In the meantime, the enormous defense expenditures outlined in NSC 48 could be passed through an otherwise reluctant Congress faced with an actual war in Korea.

The rationale behind NSC 48 may suggest that the U.S. invited war in Korea, but the evidence is short of conclusive. The Acheson press club speech in January, Senator Tom Connally's U.S. News and World Report interview and Washington's overall silence over Korea's position in America's defense plans raises doubts as to how lucky the Truman administration was in getting the war it needed to implement NSC 68. But whatever ulterior motives the administration may have had, actions leading up to the war suggest with little ambiguity that it was determined to defend the ROK. For example, South Korea continued to receive aid, $9.8 million for 1951. In May, the State Department overrode NSC 8/2 in attempting to use MDAP funds to supply the ROK with 20 to 40 jet fighter planes. And two weeks before the invasion,

90. FRUS, 10 May 1950, 7: 82-3.
Acheson proclaimed that "the future course of events in Southeast Asia, in the Philippines, in Korea, and in Japan as well as in China proper are of great importance to the security of the United States. Our policy is and must be devoted to doing everything within our power to prevent the further spread of communism." 91

The invasion on June 25 ensured that Korea, short of a complete victory by one side, would remain partitioned. The artificial split of an economic, social, and cultural unit made no more sense when the armistice was signed in July 1953 than it did when the original parallel was drawn in September 1945. Had the situation been left to the Koreans, a civil war would have been the likely result, a logical assumption considering the massive economic and social dislocations created by an imposed industrialization. But Korea would at least have remained a single nation. The superpower rivalry, almost by definition, created mutated forms which had to survive in a strange and hostile environment, completely unlike the one from which they had evolved. It is no wonder that many of the countries which were infected by the rivalry became dependent upon one or the other of the superpowers. It is here that we leave Korea, for the story of its partition is complete.

Although the superpowers always viewed Austria and Korea as part of the same Cold War, the three year war in Korea was a unique period when developments in one nation had a direct effect on the other. Economically, the quadripartite occupation and the loss of natural markets had stifled Austria, but 1950 was seen as a potential turning point when it would finally achieve a balance of payments, increase exports, and stabilize currency.92 The Korean War, however, abruptly drove up the cost of agricultural products, raw materials, and consumer goods, thus setting back the progress Austria had so painstakingly achieved. W. Averell Harriman later lamented that had it not been for the Korean War, "we would have seen remarkable results in Europe."93

Continued economic hardship had two dangerous effects on Austria. Internally, it helped inspire two communist led general strikes in September and October 1950, both of which failed quickly, and neither of which the Red Army overtly supported. The only Austrians who were equally dissatisfied with the government was the ultraconservative VDU, hardly a candidate for a coalition with the communists. The Soviet Union’s passivity during the uprisings indicates that Stalin


93. Interview with W. Averell Harriman, 1 October 1952, 2, #19, in Harry B. Price, Oral History Interviews of the Marshall Plan, Box 1, Harry S. Truman Library.
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knew where communism could be imposed, and where its imposition could lead to a shooting war with the West. Thus, Austria survived this episode, but an external threat came later from the United States. Austria was of political and ideological value to the U.S., but its inability to contribute militarily or economically began to irritate some Americans, especially as the Korean War continued to siphon off American resources. Ivor Porter of the ECA informed the ECA mission in Austria of the growing frustration in Washington, and warned that badly needed aid would be increasingly difficult to obtain given Austria’s inability to support the Western defense program. He went on to assert that perhaps not enough pressure had been placed on Austria to develop economically.94 The Under Secretary of State James Webb and the office of West European Affairs also backed a get tough policy. The Korean War, then, had the ironic effect of making the American occupation more palatable to Austrians who feared that they could be the next victims of an invasion, while creating greater restiveness within the Truman administration for a final resolution of the Austrian question.

This dialogue in 1951 between Austria and the U.S. was reminiscent of the Korean-American relationship in early 1950. The U.S. had grown impatient with the economic drain caused by Korea's dependence, and its relatively marginal benefit to American security interests. Korea like Austria also desired the retention of American troops, while bristling at the notion that it was not doing enough to become self-sustaining. Austria supporters such as High Commissioner Walter Donnelly were quick to observe that if nothing else it provided a barrier against further communist expansion, which was an argument of last resort. Americans were still not about to abandon Austria, for as an NSC report stated, “withdrawal of U.S. aid in the foreseeable future would sacrifice all the U.S. policy interests in Austria.”95 But in March 1952, the Americans tried to find a way out by offering the Soviets an abbreviated treaty that covered just the remaining disputes apart from the more complicated full treaty agreement. The Soviets refused. Whether the Senate would have ratified such a treaty in the middle of the Korean War and McCarthyism is uncertain.

On March 5, 1953 Stalin died. Initially the effect the dictator's death would have on Austrian negotiations was uncertain, but as the Soviets grew more receptive to a treaty the Americans became cool to the idea again. The American embassy in Vienna worried that a withdrawal of American forces would be an invitation for communist invasion

94. FRUS, 3 August 1951, 4: 1055–6.
or infiltration. The JCS was as usual determined to stay despite the withdrawals by French and British forces in September. The Policy Planning Staff also feared that a state treaty "might serve as a precedent for the German peace treaty and prevent a united Germany from joining EDC."96 Secretary of State John Foster Dulles warned that if the Austrians really wanted neutrality, he could do little to stop it, but the next month he approved of NSC 164/1, which recommended that the U.S. "vigorously resist the neutralization of Austria as contrary to the U.S. interest."97

Negotiations predictably ground to a halt as superpower interests again moved away from an agreement until March 1955 when the Soviet Union launched an all-out effort for the conclusion of a peace treaty. The peace offensive caught the Americans by surprise, forcing a hasty revision of NSC 164/1 which gave Dulles the authority to support the neutralization of Austria if all other parties did as well. With remarkable speed, the various interests came to terms on the outstanding issues which, as Cronin observes, "had little to do with Austria itself and much more to do with the course of the Cold War."98 By May 15 the Austrian State Treaty was signed. On September 19, the last Russian soldier left Austria with the last American following on October 21. In regard to the historic treaty Dulles felt American strength and determination had been vital in creating an acceptable agreement, but he added, "why they are doing it, we are not quite sure."99

In actuality, the logic behind the Soviet Union's diplomatic efforts is quite clear. For the Russians, a neutralized Austria could not pose a threat to its eastern neighbors, it made another Anschluss unlikely, and it served as a possible model for a German treaty. Also, a prolonged occupation of a nation so clearly opposed to communism would have proven burdensome, and in light of the creation of the Warsaw Pact, the occupation was no longer needed as a justification for the presence of Soviet troops in Rumania and Hungary. There were additional, more timely considerations deriving from NATO's efforts to remilitarize western Germany and include it in Europe's defense force that made Austria's neutrality attractive, namely, the elimination of Austrian manpower from NATO, and the severance of the line of communication which ran from Italy through Austria and into western Germany. As a bonus, the neutrality treaty isolated Italy, the southern flank of NATO's defense, by creating a huge neutral salient across central Europe.

96. FRUS, 28 September 1953, 7: 1901.
97. FRUS, 14 October 1953, 7: 1918.
98. Cronin, 21.
For the U.S., the treaty promised to eventually eliminate Austria from its list of aid dependent nations, while keeping Austria a democratic unit and within the western economic sphere. At the same time, Americans were determined to prevent the Austrian treaty from becoming a model for Germany. Austria was insignificant enough to be granted neutral status, but Germany’s value by any standard of measurement superseded a solution of the Austrian variety. As for the logistical difficulty involved for NATO now that the treaty had created a 530 mile neutral bulge above Italy, military strategists knew that Austria’s neutrality was, to state an oxymoron, western leaning, and in a crisis it was unlikely to hinder military operations.

Finally, there was a great deal of merit in the superpower compromise on Austria. Neither side wanted the burden of supporting a divided portion of the country. The western zone was the more industrial half with heavy metals, chemicals, and hydroelectric power; the eastern half had oil, coal, and more agriculture. In sum, a permanent partition would have made as little sense in Austria as it did in Korea. Neutrality also served a strategic purpose for both sides in that the Soviet troops were pushed back east, a diplomatic version of rollback, while the United States was prevented from adding Austria to its defense alliance. Despite the numerous advantages to the Austrian treaty, failure to reach an agreement in May 1955 probably would have led to the partition and continued occupation of Austria not as the first best (complete control) or second best (neutrality) but third best solution that would at least have prevented the other from reaping all the advantages Austria had to offer. Had Korea not broken out in civil war in June 1950, it too could have been part of a second best world. Instead Korea experienced the nightmare of a Cold War turned hot.

Dean Acheson boasts that he was “present at the creation,” but whereas the genesis of American Cold War policy may be found in 1941, the world the U.S. confronted was formed long before Acheson, Truman, Kennan, and the rest began drawing containment lines and pinpointing vital centers. Korea and Austria show that a thorough understanding of the Cold War requires an appreciation for national histories before American intervention, for these two countries reacted differently to American policies, but in a manner consistent with their pasts. To the untrained observer, Korea and Austria in 1945 looked very similar—centrally located, liberated, and adrift, but their likeness was tempered by radical differences.

Today the disparities between the two are readily apparent. Only a year ago the continuous tensions along the Korean demilitarized zone were representative of the Cold War in general, but now it is neutralized, unoccupied, and democratic Austria, so long considered
the anomaly in the Cold War, which signifies the status of the Soviet-American relationship. Yet Korea remains divided, almost by habit now. For 45 years the Cold War prevented the uneasy unification process from taking place, but it is time now that Korea emerges from its colonial and Cold War past and discovers its place in the world as a single nation. The transition will not be easy, and there are many political and social problems to solve, but it is a finale long overdue.
The Myth of North Korea

Charles K. Armstrong

If I want to imagine a fictive nation, I can give it an invented name, treat it declaratively as a novelistic object, create a new Carabagne, so as to compromise no real country by my fantasy (though it is then that fantasy itself I compromise by the signs of the literature). I can also—though in no way claiming to represent or to analyze reality itself (these being the major gestures of Western discourse)—isolate somewhere in the world (faraway) a certain number of features... and out of these features deliberately form a system. It is this system which I shall call: Japan.

—Roland Barthes, Empire of Signs

Orientals, Orientalism, Oriental Despotism

Imagine a society that is exactly the opposite of our own. Where we have democracy, they have tyranny; where we have rule by law, they have rule by terror; where we are governed by reason, they are hopelessly irrational; while our society is open, dynamic, decentralized, and pluralistic, theirs is closed, stagnant, highly centralized, and monolithic; where we value the rights of the individual, in their society the individual is completely obliterated by an all-powerful State; in short, while we have freedom, they have slavery. Such a place in times past might have been called Persia, "Islam," the Ottoman Empire, or China. In the twentieth century this might be a country called the Soviet Union, "Red China," or Iran; one might even call it North Korea.

Images of the mysterious, exotic, frightening, incomprehensible but in any case always different East are deeply ingrained in Western consciousness. Indeed, the juxtaposition of "us" (the West) against "them"
(the East) is at the very core of European cultural self-definition, one of the most common methods of identity being inversion: the East is everything the West is not, and vice-versa. Edward Said has demonstrated that the production of a self-contained discourse on the East, which he calls Orientalism, has been an integral part of Western self-consciousness and the intellectual accompaniment of global imperialism. Although Said limits Orientalism to the discourse on the Islamic "East," it is in many ways equally part of Western understanding of India and the Sinitic world. According to Said, the principle dogmas of Orientalism include the absolute and systematic difference between the rational, developed, humane and superior West and the aberrant, undeveloped, inferior East; the belief that the Orient is eternal, uniform and incapable of identifying itself, therefore it is better for Westerners, who are "objective" (Orientals, by definition, cannot be objective) to describe it; and finally, that the Orient is something either to be feared (Yellow Peril, Mongol hordes) or controlled ("by pacification, research and development, outright occupation whenever possible").

From Herodotus to Hegel to the advocates of modernization theory, the East (Asia, the Orient, the "Third World") has been seen as stagnant, corrupt, despotic. As the West's power over the East gradually grew from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries, the attitude toward the Orient shifted from primarily one of fear (although that is still present) to one of authority and control. The ability to control is always closely linked to the power to represent, to categorize; in short, the power to name. The ability to give meanings to things, to control communication and ideology, to "lay down the categories through which reality is perceived" is a tremendous source of power, and it is through lenses of the West that we have seen, and continue to see, the image of the East.

One of the names the West has given to the East is "despotism." Where once the Orient was seen as advanced and enlightened by such eighteenth century thinkers as Voltaire, by the time of the Industrial Revolution and the European conquest of much of the world, the East was seen as stagnant and backward compared to the dynamic, progressive West. This backwardness was explained, at least in part, by the Orient's propensity for overly centralized, absolute and arbitrary authority—in short, by despotism. The idea of a stagnant, unchanging Oriental Despotism became common in late eighteenth and nineteenth century Europe. This concept is expounded upon at length in Hegel's *Philosophy of History*, and is also expressed in Marx's famous references

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to the "Asiatic Mode of Production." Indeed, there is little difference between Hegel and Marx in their respective views on the Orient as opposed to the Occident, except for the source which they believe propels Western dynamism: for Hegel what distinguishes the West is an idea (Reason), for Marx it is a mode of production (capitalism). For both the East has no true history, only cyclical change; no true politics, only despotic rule.

Marx's views on the Orient, however misconceived, are patchy, somewhat inconsistent, and never laid out systematically and at length. It is the communist-turned-Cold Warrior Karl August Wittfogel who has given the purest and most elaborate expression to the Western notion of Oriental Despotism, by his influential book of that name. Wittfogel, who began his career as a Sinologist, attempts to expand his observations on traditional Chinese society, with its highly centralized state based on the control of water works and resources ("hydraulic" society, in his terminology) to a vast range of other non-Western societies. Oriental Despotism manages to lump together nearly every non-Western society from Mesopotamia to Hawaii to Hopi Arizona, which is to say the least a questionable undertaking; many later scholars have sharply criticized this study. Nevertheless, Wittfogel casts a deep, abiding and largely unconscious influence over Western scholarship on communism to the present day. For Wittfogel’s project was not merely to describe the dynamics of non-Western agrarian societies, but explicitly to link pre-industrial "Oriental Despotism" with modern "totalitarian" communist regimes.

The term "totalitarianism" was originally used in a positive sense by Italian Fascists to describe the supposedly complete solidarity of their society. The theory of totalitarianism as a new kind of political and social organization began in the 1930’s as an attempt to explain the phenomenon of Nazi Germany, and the concept was soon applied to Stalin’s Soviet Union. As the theory developed, totalitarianism was seen as a political system which set out "totally to reshape the individual in the interests of the ideology and the leadership," and which combined archaic, traditional aspects of the society with new techniques of political and social organization. Books like Fainsod’s How Russia is Ruled and Friedrich and Brzezinski’s Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy had a profound influence on academia and the foreign policy establishment in the United States, seeming to justify Western antagonism toward the Soviet Union, China and other Marxist-Leninist states.

The latter were represented as completely lacking in democratic principles, bent on world domination, unremittingly hostile toward the West, and incapable of internal reform. In short, they were much like the unchanging, despotic East of earlier Western imagination, but with new and deadlier techniques of social control and warfare and a new expansionist ideology (communism could even be referred to as, tellingly, the "New Islam").

The Totalitarian Thesis conveniently combined Cold War hostility, scholarly rationale and latent Orientalist prejudices. It is not only that the totalitarian stereotype no longer applies to post-Stalin U.S.S.R., post-Mao China and what was once the Soviet bloc in Eastern Europe: this view of communist states was never accurate, just as the view of an "unchanging Orient" was always a myth. As Sheila Fitzpatrick points out, even under Stalin "civil society" existed in the U.S.S.R.\(^6\) And one of the key myths of the totalitarian model, that totalitarian societies (like the Eternal Orient) can never change, has by now been completely discredited. The Totalitarian Thesis has been largely abandoned in studies of the U.S.S.R. and China, and the term is rarely used except as pure rhetoric, even by conservatives. Yet to this day the dominant perception of North Korea held by scholars and others in the West is overwhelmingly an unreformed and unselfconscious idea of totalitarianism.

The stereotype of the faceless mass of Orientals ("Golden Hordes," "Yellow Perils") and of Oriental Despotism have long been part of American, no less than European, perceptions of the East. For reasons of history and proximity, however, "Oriental" for Americans has generally mean the Far East, especially China and Japan, rather than the Islamic East or India. The American discourse on Asia as it developed after World War II combined traditional stereotypes of Asians with the new fear of communism: the "Yellow Peril" met the "Red Menace." In a remarkably smooth transition, the stereotypes held by Americans toward the Japanese in World War II were transferred to the Chinese communists after their 1949 revolution, catalyzed by the Sino-American clash in the Korean War.\(^7\) The Chinese, only recently portrayed as a nation of budding democrats, were seen as "hordes," a nation of "blue ants," a faceless embodiment of Oriental Despotism in its new totalitarian guise. Since the 1960s with Sino-US rapprochement and the waning of the Cold War these stereotypes have largely receded in the field of Chinese studies, but have remained virtually intact in

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6. Ibid., p. 156.
Western scholarship on North Korea, all the more persistent because they consist largely of hidden, unstated biases and assumptions.

Part of the reason for this may be found in the tradition of America's interaction with East Asia, particularly China. Since the mid-nineteenth century, Americans pursued three main goals in China: religious (Christianize the nation), political (introduce liberal democracy), and economic (bring China into the American market). By the middle of the twentieth century Americans had failed to achieve any of these goals in China, but were relatively successful in Korea, especially in introducing Protestant Christianity, and had promoted capitalism and the form, if not the substance, of liberal democracy in South Korea. North Korea, the "other" Korea—like China until recently—has rejected all three, thus fitting into all the negative stereotypes of Asians and inviting the continued, almost visceral hostility of the United States. As the images of Japan and China reversed themselves in the postwar American imagination, the image of North Korea went with "Red China," the image of South Korea with democratic, capitalist, allied Japan.

One need not look very far to find the "Orientalist" discourse pervading American scholarship in Korea, and North Korea in particular. Indeed, if the discourse on Orientalism described by Said is "thick," with extensive texts, institutions, scholarship and vocabulary, North Korean studies is exceedingly thin, almost transparent. Western scholarship on Korea is for the most part barely over 100 years old, and is dominated by a tiny number of texts and scholars, in comparison to, say, scholarship on China or Japan. American scholarship specifically on North Korea is just over 40 years old, and the link between that scholarship, the U.S. foreign policy (or, to put it in Said's terms, colonial and imperial) establishment and the South Korean government is often quite intimate and literal—embodied in the scholars themselves.

Gregory Henderson, once a minor official at the American embassy in Seoul, is one such scholar. His 1968 study entitled *Korea: The Politics of the Vortex*, remains one of the standard works on the subject. Henderson demonstrates the most unselfconscious repetition of Oriental Despotism misconceptions. He characterizes Yi Dynasty Korea as "extremely centralized" with "no intermediary social groups," claiming that "few states eliminated local power so soon or so completely and sustained centralized rule in such unchallenged form for so long." As amply demonstrated by Palais, this was far from the reality. Although the king of Korea in theory had complete power within his domain,

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he faced limits on his power by elements both in the central bureaucracy and in the provinces. Yi dynasty Korea was closer to Eisenstadt's model of competing power centers than Wittfogel's stereotype of Oriental Despotism.  

Henderson sees Korea as diseased, but "modernization . . . carries within it institutions well adapted for Korea's cure." He is searching for a non-existent middle class to arise literally *deus ex machina* (in this case, out of industrialization) and save Korea. Paradoxically, or perhaps inevitably, he projects the myths of his own society onto Korea. He sees all societies, Korea included, as moving toward the ideal goal of a liberal, individualistic society, of which the United States happens to be the most advanced. Koreans are merely immature and need to be led by democratic, liberal Americans toward "modernity." Like a disappointed parent, Henderson looks at the early history of Korea as a missed opportunity to develop along the "normal" path of a liberal, Western society:

Strangely, the challenge of Korea's vulnerability failed to create the response of a lastingly strong military institution and with it an enduring vested interest that could contribute to the variety and strength of the society. Early centuries had contained much military promise.

As in all Orientalist discourse, the West is seen as the norm, the East as an aberration. Early Korea shows "promise," like a talented child, but ultimately fails to live up to Western standards. To achieve history, Korea (and the East in general) must join the Western path of development. As Hegel put it, "The Sun—the Light—rises in the East. The History of the World travels from East to West, for Europe is absolutely the end of History, Asia the beginning." When all societies reach this liberal ideal, it will be the "end of history." There is no real understanding or appreciation of difference. As James Clifford points out, "the privilege of standing above cultural particularism, of aspiring to the universalist power that speaks for humanity . . . is a privilege invented by a totalizing Western liberalism." It is from this perspective of "totalizing Western liberalism," with its Hegelian teleology and its Orientalist condescension, that Henderson and others have viewed and continue to view Korea.

What little scholarship that exists on North Korea generally repeats the received wisdom and widespread assumptions about North Korea.

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12. Ibid., p. 16.
with little or no criticism. There is, to begin with, always an attempt to deny authenticity to the place. North Korea is lumped together with East Germany and Czechoslovakia as communist regimes imposed from "outside," by the Soviet Red Army. Even after demonstrating independence from the U.S.S.R., North Korea is seen as totally unoriginal; it merely "emulates" Chinese or Russian "models." Any indigenous roots of Korean communism, any popular support communists may have had in their revolutionary struggle and the creation of the North Korean state, any original contribution of Koreans to communist theory or practice is belittled, dismissed, or denied. The very title of Scalapino and Lee's monumental *Communism in Korea*, which has held a lasting hegemony on North Korean scholarship in the West, demonstrates this denial of authenticity: communism in Korea, not Korean communism.

Communism is something external, imposed, alien and unnatural. Scalapino and Lee's criticism of Korean communists is scathing, unrelenting, and incredibly condescending. Early on we learn that "[t]hese early Korean 'Communists' had at best a precarious hold upon Marxist doctrine." Scalapino and Lee have knowledge, they know who is a true Communist and who is not. They have the power to name. They can give words legitimacy, or deny legitimacy by putting words in ironic quotes or prefacing them with "so-called" (so-called Democratic People's Republic of Korea, "socialist revolution" in the countryside).

Paradoxically, Scalapino and Lee condemn the Korean communists both for being Communists (which is ipso facto a bad thing) and not being "true" communists—and, of course, Messrs. Scalapino and Lee know the difference. They are even more knowledgeable of communism than Marx and Lenin:

Marx and Lenin proved to be "wrong" in some of their basic theoretical assumptions about about Communism and about Asia, but ironically, they proved to be "right" in certain equally basic tactical decisions based on those assumptions.19


18. Ibid., p. 3.

19. Ibid. p. 61.
If even Marx and Lenin so misunderstood communism and Asia, what hope could there be for a handful of ignorant Koreans? The commitment of Korean communists to their cause is dismissed as satisfying infantile psychological needs for group identity. Perhaps Mr. Scalapino is projecting from the naive and excitable student protestors on the Berkeley campus of the late 60s and early 70s, although this is probably an unfair characterization of them as well.

Scalapino and Lee have a tendency to categorize Korean Communists into groups, ("Soviet-Koreans," the "Yenan Faction," etc.) like a biologist dividing life forms, or Adam naming the animals. Again, as in all exercises in Orientalism, the power to name is fundamental. From beginning to end, the Korean communists are ridden with factionalism. Indeed, factionalism is one of the key myths of Korean communism to this very day, even though the North has exhibited an exceptionally high degree of political stability and cohesion since the late 1950s, while it is the South Korean government that has been plagued with incessant factionalism. No doubt factionalism did occur in the early communist movement and into the Korean War period, as in all radical movements, but one result of this continuous stress on factionalism is to imply that only a ruthless, authoritarian leader could have forced such inherently faction-prone people into order.20

Why were the Korean communists so beset with factionalism? Besides the factional nature of the Korean race (more than one scholar has referred to Koreans' alleged "propensity" for factionalism), the communists were initially led by intellectuals, and as Scalapino and Lee remind us, "[m]ost persons classifiable as intellectuals have well-developed egos, are hypersensitive, and exhibit certain other qualities strongly conducive to factionalism."21 This is a very good description of academics in Western universities, but one has to wonder whether it really applies to early Korean communists in Korea, Manchuria and Siberia.

According to Scalapino and Lee, communism (not just Korean communism, but all forms) is evil incarnate, against which even Japanese colonial oppression pales in comparison. "Japanese authoritarianism,

20. Henderson's portrayal of Koreans is that of a people almost biologically prone to factionalism, based on evidence from Yi Dynasty court intrigue and post-war South Korean governments. As Jon Halliday points out, what is remarkable about the Korean communist movement is not that it suffered from splits and factions, but that it continued to exist at all under the constant threat of Japanese extermination and the geographical separation of different communist groups. Few have pointed to the strenuous attempts on the part of the Korean left to attain unity in the early years of liberation, which contrasts quite favorably to the situation among conservatives in the south. See Jon Halliday, "The Korean Communist Movement," Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars, vol. 2, no. 4, Fall 1970.

21. Scalapino and Lee, op. cit., p. 64.
while often cruel, was *neither as complete or as thorough* as the totalitarian societies spawned by the West.\footnote{Ibid., p. 64, emphasis added.} Jeanne Kirkpatrick could hardly have put it better; the double standard for “authoritarianism” and “totalitarianism” has long served as a rationale for American foreign policy behavior. Furthermore, “spawned” is an interesting choice of words, the kind of sexual metaphor frequently used in Orientalist discourse. The virile West impregnates the passive East with political ideologies which then bear the fruit of totalitarian (or liberal) societies.

Scalapino and Lee do not refrain from pedagogical digressions, and the story of Korean communism is a sort of parable for the dangers of communism in general.

Perhaps one lesson to be drawn from the early Korean Communist movement is that only relatively inefficient states—or relatively democratic ones—are likely to fall to an internal foe in our times.\footnote{Ibid.}

This seems to be a warning to South Korea, South Vietnam, and United States, but the “lesson” is not entirely clear. Is it that we need a strong, efficient state, and thus perhaps a note of grudging envy for North Korea’s stability?

Scalapino and Lee warn us that “official Communist materials must be used with a full realization of the ideological perspectives, the political biases, and the various taboos that accompany them.”\footnote{Ibid., p. ix.} This is a caveat that one should apply to all texts, including (indeed, especially) that of Scalapino and Lee. What is remarkable about mainstream scholarship on North Korea is the almost complete lack of self-reflection on the part of authors. Even South Korean analyses, which for obvious reasons are anything but objective, are taken more or less at face value. Gramsci reminds us in his *Prison Notebooks* that “The starting point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one really is, and is ‘knowing thyself’ as a product of the historical process to date, which has deposited in you an infinity of traces, without leaving an inventory.”\footnote{Cited in Said, *op. cit.*, p. 25.} Much of the scholarship on North Korea could be preceded with the following caveat: “I am a South Korean. I have been educated all my life to hate communism in general and the North Korean regime in particular. Furthermore, if I stray from the official line and question assumptions about North Korea I will jeopardize my chances of employment and acceptability in South Korean society.” The same, with only slight modifications, could be applied to American scholars of North Korea, especially those who may wish to (or in fact do)
work for or close to the U.S. government. In order to pierce the fog of prejudices and self-censorship and attempt to look at North Korea we must "unlearn the dominant mode," to paraphrase Edward Said quoting Raymond Williams.  

In this paper I will attempt to look at a radically different society without privileging either that society or our own. The text is not based on "primary" evidence collected by a "disinterested" observer; rather, our documents are the publications of North Korea itself, and particularly the images and symbols contained in them. My purpose is not to judge whether or not these texts represent "reality." In most Western literature on the subject the content of North Korean texts is dismissed as "propaganda," called a lie. But it is more than a lie: it is myth. All societies are held together by myth. There are myths of North Korea just as there are myths in the West about North Korea. Our purpose is to understand that myth, explore that textual world. Scalapino and Lee et al look suspiciously at North Korean texts, sifting through them to find the "truths" that satisfy themselves. But these texts do more than "hide" certain truths; they themselves comprise a fascinating reality. What follows is necessarily tentative and exploratory. In particular, I will not attempt to examine the actual production and use of these official myths on the part of the North Korean state; such a study would be beyond the scope of this paper. Leaving aside for now a criticism of the North Korean political system, which is the starting point of nearly all Western work on the subject, I merely suggest new means of interpreting what I take to be the central myths of North Korea—not to condemn or excuse, but to describe, and seek to understand.

The Myth of the Leader

Perspectives on the "Cult of Personality"

The most pervasive, obvious and problematic feature of North Korean texts is the place of the Great Leader. Kim Il Sung's words, images and presence are everywhere, the praise bestowed on him is boundless, and the accomplishments attributed to him utterly (and often literally) fantastic. As has often been noted, even Stalin and Mao in their respective heydays did not receive such an excess of adulation.

There are three general perspectives in criticizing Kim's "cult of personality," which might be called conservative, communist, and New Left. The last group is the most diverse of the three, ranging from those who basically ignore the issue of Kim's personality cult and focus on the material achievements of the regime (White, Noumoff), to

26. Ibid., p. 28.
those more directly critical of Kim's cult (Halliday, Cumings), to those who more or less accept the cult as it is (Brun and Hersh). What the New Left critics have in common is support for certain aspects of the North Korean regime while remaining critical of others, in particular the problem of human rights and the cult of personality. This is probably the richest body of literature on the subject, but it is not by any means the dominant viewpoint in Western literature on North Korea.

The conservative and communist critics, despite occupying opposite ends of the political spectrum, are remarkably close in their views on the cult of personality in North Korea. Both see Kim's cult as an aberration from Marxism-Leninism and a throwback to pre-modern personal rule—in short, as pure, atavistic Oriental Despotism. That the conservative critics, such as Scalapino and Lee, who dominate Western scholarship on North Korea would be so utterly condemnatory of Kim's system, is not surprising. What is interesting, though, is the fierceness of the communist attack on Kim. This type of communist critique of the cult of personality as apostasy from Marxism-Leninism and a return to Oriental Despotism has a tradition going back to Trotsky's attack on Stalin, and there is little doubt that the Soviets have long detested Kim II Sung and his style of rule.

"Lim Un," supposedly "a communist who once was active at the core of the Kim II Sung regime but now lives in exile in the Soviet Union," has written a blistering attack against Kim and his regime. Lim sees Stalin, Mao Kim II Sung and Pol Pot as betrayers of communism who have set back the cause of true socialism through their reigns of terror and personality cults. Like Wittfogel and other conservative critics of communism, Lim locates the origins of Kim's personality cult in traditional Oriental (in this case, Korean) society, which has a profound weakness for despotic leaders.

But the thoughts of Confucius, Mencius, and Chu Hsi infiltrated deeper into the mind of the people of Korea than the people of China. They have been accustomed to look up to their king, respect the old and revere their


Indeed, Lim describes the regime as a "vicious totalitarianism." He would be in complete agreement with Lucian Pye, surely no friend of communism, who believes that all Asian cultures, from Turkey to India to Japan, share a "common denominator of idealizing benevolent, paternalistic leadership and of legitimizing dependency." Thus, the cult of personality is the monstrous offspring of traditional despotic culture and modern political organization. Jeremy Palifel, in an analysis of Stalinism and Maoism, similarly suggests that the origins of the cult of personality are to be found "at the intersections of Leninist ideology and organization on the one hand, and their impact of a traditional political culture on the other." Here we clearly see the return of our old friend, the Totalitarian Thesis.

Dismissing the cult of personality as the child of a passive, "traditional" Oriental culture impregnated by a virile Western ideology (Marxist-Leninism), besides smacking of classic Orientalism, does not explain the extent and longevity of Kim's cult, or the particular and novel form which it has taken. Purely instrumentalist explanations of the cult, in which it is seen as a tool used by the regime to enforce social solidarity and support for the political system, are also insufficient—surely less extreme means could be used to reach such ends. A number of South Korean-cum-American scholars, who all seem to have passed around a copy of Laswell's *Power and Personality* among themselves, have made much of Kim's supposedly enormous ego (as if modesty were a common trait among political leaders) and hypothetical "psychic needs" which include an "insatiable craving for recognition and deference." But even if Kim Il Sung's ego were the size of Mt. Paektu, so to speak, this would not explain the construction, perpetuation and popular acceptance of such a peculiar personality cult.

One place to begin in attempting to understand the cult of personality is to realize that it differs in degree, rather than in kind, from the symbolism of authority present in all societies, throughout history.
Even in the most self-consciously democratic, egalitarian and secular of societies there is a certain aura of sacredness, a numinosity, surrounding centers of power. “At the political center of any complexly organized society,” writes Clifford Geertz in a study of “centers, kings, and charisma,” “there is both a ruling elite and a set of symbolic forms expressing the fact that is in truth governing.” It is these symbolic structures

that mark the center as center and give what goes on there its aura of being not merely important but in some odd fashion connected with the way the world is built. The gravity of high politics and the solemnity of high worship spring from liker impulse than might first appear.37

Although “the ingenerate tendency to anthropomorphize power” is expressed more subtly in modern political regimes than traditional monarchies, the mystique of power, the deference to authority at times bordering on religious worship, is prevalent in the most “developed” societies even today, and is not limited to political figures. “Charismatic figures can arise in any realm of life that is sufficiently focused to seem vital,” Geertz argues, whether in science, academia, or the arts as well a religion or politics.38 If Westerners are disturbed by the cult of Kim Il Sung, North Koreans no doubt would be equally appalled by the emotional fervor of the cult of Mick Jagger. Later in this paper we will discuss in greater detail the social implications of the Kim Il Sung cult for the North Korean people. For the moment, it is enough to keep in mind that the propagation of a quasi-religious mystique around a leader is a familiar theme in all cultures, and is certainly no stranger to South Korea.39 Dismissing charismatic cults as the expression of individual or collective pathology cannot explain their continued acceptance.40 Whatever the needs of Kim Il Sung’s ego, it is the universal human need for conceptualizing and participating in a symbolic order that his “cult” seems to satisfy for North Koreans.

Some may find it condescending to suggest that North Koreans “really believe” what seems so transparently ridiculous a pseudo-religion. But this assumes that North Koreans should separate politics from religion as neatly as we claim to do in the West, and ignores the equally irrational beliefs held by Western adherents of various “cults”—

38. Ibid., p. 123.
including Sun Myung Moon’s Unification Church, an organization which might bear some comparison to the cult of Kim Il Sung. It is the West that is unusual; elsewhere the charisma of politics and the numinosity of religion have not been so clearly distinct, and even in the West political figures, institutions, and objects are at times imbued with a mystical or quasi-religious aura. Leaving aside recent, obviously comparable politico-religious cults such as those of Mussolini, Hitler, and Franco, even the pragmatic Americans are prone to the “religification” of politics, with their fondness for Kennedy’s “Camelot,” their reverence for the Constitution, their ubiquitous monumentalism (the Statue of Liberty, the Washington Monument), and their iconic treatment of the flag. The true condescension is to see charismatic politics in non-Western societies as indicating that those people are in a “lower” stage of development. In this regard I would have to disagree with Clifford Geertz, who in his analysis of Sukarno’s Indonesia argues that

the conceptual transition from the classic image of a polity as a concentrated center of pomp and power, alternately providing a cynosure for popular awe and lashing out militarily at competing centers, to one of a polity as a systematically organized national community has... still not yet been completed.41

The assumption that non-Western societies are “farther behind” in an inevitable evolutionary process toward a rational, secular ideal of which the West is the model and leader, is—as we have discussed earlier—to adopt a mode of emplotment that privileges the West at the expense of the non-West, and which in any case has been called seriously into question by recent events such the fundamentalist revolution in Iran. To understand the cult of Kim Il Sung one must first rid oneself of the assumption of liberal Western superiority and realize that this “cult” is a particular symbolic expression of a universal human need equally present in our own society.

The Life of the Hero

Much ink has been spilled over whether the present leader of North Korea is the “real” Kim Il Sung who led a guerrilla struggle against the Japanese in the 1930’s. It is now generally acknowledged that the present Kim Il Sung was in fact an important anti-Japanese activist in Manchuria.42 However, for our purposes it would not matter if Kim were a complete fiction, for what we are concerned with is “Kim Il Sung” as a myth revealed in North Korean texts, a symbolic expression of power and collective identity.

In a sense it is virtually impossible to isolate texts about Kim Il Sung because all contemporary North Korean texts are about Kim Il Sung. He is literally everywhere. He is held personally responsible for every accomplishment of the regime. He, and by extension his family back to his great-grandfather, have become synonymous with Korean history itself. In short, the heroic life of the Great Leader is the essential myth of North Korea. The place to begin, therefore, is with the main text of the Leader’s life, Baik Bong’s official biography of Kim Il Sung.

Kim’s life reads like a textbook version of the universal myth of the hero—“his miraculous but humble birth, his early proof of superhuman strength, his rapid rise to prominence or power, his triumphant struggle with the forces of evil,” and all the elements of hero-myths in all cultures. He is introduced as a Messiah-like figure, the “saviour of the nation,” the culmination of Korean history. The titles given to him, and the order in which they are given, bear close observation: “peerless patriot, national hero, ever-victorious iron-willed brilliant commander and one of the outstanding leaders of the international communist movement and working-class movement.” Kim is first the nationalist leader, lover of the country; second, the great military leader; and last, almost as an afterthought, a leader of international communism. Clearly his function as a national leader and symbol of Korean unity is primary. He is also called “sun of the nation,” an image that we will explore later in more detail.

The representation of Kim’s early years, “from birth to triumphant return to homeland,” is a fascinating mix of archetypal hero-myth, apparently religious (and specifically Christian) imagery, and elements of Confucianism. Despite references to communist revolution and Marx, Kim’s biography reads more like the Book of Exodus than Das Kapital. Kim’s revolutionary lineage is impeccable, beginning with great-grandfather Kim Eung Woo who led the attack on the U.S. “pirate ship” the General Sherman. Kim’s father is both a revolutionary activist and a keen scholar, “burning with an unsatiable [sic] appetite for learning,” his mother is idealized in a rather typical Korean way: gentle and beautiful, yet strong and resolute. In true Confucian fashion, Kim’s success is attributed to his parents.

It was because of his rare parents that the General [even as an infant Kim

45. Ibid., p. 3.
47. Ibid., p. 19.
Charles K. Armstrong

is referred to as “the General”), so early in life, came onto the stage of history as the leader of his nation.48

As in all good hero myths, Kim’s father dies when Kim is still a child and he is raised by his mother. And in a scene that would certainly raise Freudian eyebrows, Kim is initiated into the life of a revolutionary by his mother giving him the two guns that his father had used to fight the Japanese.49

At the age of 13 Kim crosses the Amrok (Yalu) river into Manchuria (crossing of the river—another common mythic theme), vowing not to return until it is to liberate his country. In Manchuria (like Moses, Kim grows up in a foreign land) Kim quickly becomes the leader of an anti-Japanese movement, astonishing his elders with his wisdom, organizational ability, and familiarity with Marxist theory (like the young Christ in the temple). He is eventually arrested and put in a “cross-shaped” (!) prison where he undergoes a “dark night of the soul” that is expressed quite literally in spiritual terms:

The General suffered behind the bars not so much from the physical pain inflicted upon him as the spiritual pain—the spiritual pain he felt when he saw prison inmates were forced to serve terms, and when he was keenly conscious of the ugly society in which justice and conscience were made crimes.50

Kim is released, of course, and organizes a group of guerrillas deeply loyal to him, and together they deal blow after telling blow on the evil Japanese imperialists until Kim returns in triumph to liberate Korea.

The description of Kim’s return bears yet another remarkable resemblance to Biblical imagery. Upon seeing the General,

The tools of Japanese imperialism lay broken; its agents, landlords, comprador capitalists and reactionary bureaucrats hid from the light of the sun and crawled to find ways of escape.51

Compare:

And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.

[Revelation 7: 15–16]

48. Ibid.
49. Ibid., p. 33.
50. Ibid., p. 104, emphasis added.
51. Ibid., vol. 2, p. 15.
After the war years, the biography becomes much less interesting, for the same reason that Dante’s Paradise is boring compared to his Inferno and Purgatorio: paradise is dull, and the North Koreans under the guidance of Kim Il Sung have by their own admission created paradise (doingsu) for the chosen people of Korea, with Pyongyang serving as the New Jerusalem. The last remaining task is to liberate the oppressed brethren in South Korea, oust the evil imperialists and their lackeys, and usher in the millennium.

This, then, is the heroic myth of General Kim Il Sung. Whether or not he “actually” accomplished all of those remarkable deeds is really neither here nor there. What is interesting is the way in which Kim’s life is portrayed and the manner of his representation as the leader of the (North) Korean people. He is now the “son of the nation” from which wisdom, benevolence and inspiration radiate outward in a series of concentric circles embracing the whole Korean people, and Korea itself is a revolutionary example for the whole world. North Korea has constructed a myth of a Korea-centric world, and Kim Il Sung is the center of the center. It is a curious inversion, or rather appropriation, of the Sino-centric world view of traditional China, in which the Emperor was the hub of the world. North Korea’s International Friendship Exhibition Hall displays gifts from various world leaders to Kim Il Sung, showing their love and respect for the Great Leader, and demonstrating that whereas in the past Korea once paid tribute to China, now China and other countries bring gifts to Kim Il Sung. That North Korea also gives reciprocal gifts to other countries is not mentioned.

North Korea was not the first country in the Chinese cultural orbit to appropriate China’s place as the conceptual center of the world. Certain thinkers in late Tokugawa Japan, such as Aizawa Seishisai, had conceived of a similar project, using their emperor as the symbolic center. Japan is by nature at the “borders” of the world and sets the standard of all other nations. The august authority and virtue of his imperial majesty radiates boundlessly to the ends of the earth.

There is a distinct resemblance between the cult of Kim Il Sung and Japanese Emperor-worship of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, perhaps the legacy of thirty-five years of Japanese colonial rule in Korea. Certain aspects of Kim’s symbolic imagery, such as the recurrent use of the sun as a metaphor, are also reminiscent of


medieval and early modern European "political theology," in which the monarch was often equated with the sun and thus with God.\textsuperscript{54}

This is not to say that North Korea is in some sense at an equivalent level of "development" to that of medieval Europe, but the separation of politics and religion is a relatively recent phenomenon even in the West, and there is no reason to assume that the North Koreans would make such a clear distinction.

The specifically religious, and indeed Christian, imagery of the Kim cult is striking and not easily explained. It may be that Kim himself was influenced by Christian ideas. According to Lim Un, Kim Il Sung's father Kim Hyong Jik attended Songgol Middle School, one of the famous mission schools. The family of his wife was also devoutly Christian. Therefore, he had Kim Il Sung study at Ch'angdok school and taught him the Bible.\textsuperscript{55}

It may also be of relevance that Korea, and particularly northern Korea, was heavily Christianized by the early part of this century. The center of Korean Christianity was Pyongyang, which "gained a reputation as the most successful mission station in Asia."\textsuperscript{56} Despite the reported persecution of Christians in North Korea (except for the syncretic Ch'ondogyo sect, which was tolerated by the communists), some of the Christian beliefs adopted by the Koreans may in a peculiar way have re-emerged in the modern political system.

South Korea is now the most heavily Christianized country in Asia next to the Philippines, and it is interesting that the most popular Christian denominations in the South are the emotional, evangelical, fundamentalist brands of Protestantism which, as in the U.S., are closely associated with rightwing, aggressively anti-communist politics. Perhaps more than religious persecution in the North and political naiveté are behind the hatred of so many fundamentalist Korean Christians toward the Northern regime; it may be that they sense a kindred spirit there, and there is nothing more abominable to religious dogmatists than apostasy.

At present, the relationship between Christianity and North Korean political ideology is virtually terna incognita in the literature, perhaps in part because many of the South Korean scholars are themselves committed Christians and would be reluctant to see such a connec-


\textsuperscript{56} Spencer I. Pulman, Korea and Christianity: The Problem of Identification with Tradition (Sheffield: Royal Asiatic Society, 1967), p. 82.
tion. Whatever the case, a careful study of the Christian (and possibly Shintōist) imagery in the Kim cult may reveal a great deal about the production of ideology in North Korea.

From Father to Son

The North Koreans' intention, made open since the early 1980s, of passing on the rule of their country from Kim II Sung to his eldest son, Kim Jong Il, has received much scorn and criticism from outside observers, communists and anti-communists alike. Critics see this hereditary succession as the crowning symbol of Kim's quasi-monarchical rule, a refutation of socialist principles and a blatant assertion of traditional Oriental despotism.

The North Koreans naturally insist that the passing of power from father to son is not a revival of monarchical rule. Kim Jong Il is portrayed as the most qualified person in the country to succeed Kim II Sung by virtue of his rearing, his alleged intelligence and talent, and above all by his loyalty to the leader. Inoue Shubachi writes that

The people of the Republic (North Korea) heartily respect and trust the President as the son of the nation, a legendary hero and benevolent father. I am convinced that this is essentially different from loyalty to the king forced on the people in the feudal age, and is an expression of voluntary, pure and true loyalty... The people of the Republic firmly believe that the loyalty of the popular masses to the President finds its perfect crystallization and purification in Secretary Kim Jong Il's loyalty to the President.57

If the people consider Kim II Sung as father, Kim Jong Il is their natural representative as the biological son of the Great Leader.

The epithets and activities associated with Kim Jong II are quite different from those of his father. The younger Kim is a "great teacher of journalists," and gives detailed guidance on literature, films, and other art forms. He even has a flower named after him. In short, where Kim II Sung was associated with revolutionary action, economic construction and ideological formulation, Kim Jong II is associated with culture. Kim Jong II is supposed to "bring a cultured and happy life to the people."58 There is a shift here from economic to cultural production, the last of the "three great revolutions"—ideological, technical, and cultural. Kim Jong II has a "great personality" rather than a record of great revolutionary accomplishments, although many achievements are attributed to him. Above all he is associated with love and affection, rather than authority. The most common title given to him

is ч’їнє ч’єнєн ч’єдєя, usually translated as “Dear Leader,” but more accurately meaning “Beloved Leader,” with the connotation of familial or fraternal love. Ч’єдєя is less authoritative than сунєнєнєнєнемєнгєн, which is the word for “leader” that is applied to Kim Il Sung. We will explore the significance of love in the North Korean literature later in this paper.

Modern North Korean texts claim that Kim Jong Il was born in a “secret camp” in Мt. Пакдук during his father’s revolutionary activities. In 1942. Most Western sources put his birthplace in the Soviet Union, and the claim that he was born on Мt. Пакдук is considered sheer fabrication. Why would North Koreans claim Kim Jong Il was born on Мt. Пакдук? Partly to associate him with the revolutionary activities of his father, but more than that. There is a great symbolic significance to this mountain. Straddling the Sino-Korean border, it is the tallest mountain in Korea, and is often called the “sacred mountain of the revolution” in North Korean texts. Books often begin with a painting of Kim Il Sung, sometimes with Kim Jong Il, standing atop the mountain. In Korean folklore Мt. Пакдук is one of the legendary places where Tangun, the mythical ancestor of the Korean people, came down from heaven. It is connected to a great chain of sacred mountains in Chinese mythology that had its source in K’om Lun mountains. The phrases which associate Kim Jong Il with Мt. Пакдук often contain shamanistic, animistic elements:

When he [Kim Jong Il] spoke about Мt. Пакдук he referred to its soul. Kim Jong Il told his listeners about the revolutionary spirit of Мt. Пакдук, about the roots of the Korean revolution which started on the mountain and about the unaltered advance of the Korean revolution which started in the primeval forest of Мt. Пакдук.59

Like the Christian imagery surrounding Kim Il Sung, the Shamanist associations of Kim Jong Il’s hagiography seem to reflect an underlying, perhaps unconscious revival of pre-communist Korean thought.

The Myth of the People

The myth of the leader in North Korea is not simply naked despotism, the ostentatious display of power before the powerless. The leader is above all the expression of the collective identity of the Korean people, a spirit of intensive nationalism concentrated and embodied in a single individual and his family, which represent the “family” of the Korean nation. Ernst Cassirer, in his The Myth of the State, calls this kind of myth “le désir collectif personifié”—the collective desire personified. Although Cassirer’s analysis was originally an attempt to explain the

rise of Hitler in Germany, there are indeed some parallels to the North Korean case.

The call for leadership only appears when a collective desire has reached an overwhelming strength and when, on the other hand, all hopes of fulfilling this desire, in an ordinary and normal way, have failed. At these times the desire is not only keenly felt but also personified. It stands before the eyes of men in a concrete, plastic, and individual shape. The intensity of the collective will is embodied in the leader.60

The brutality and dislocation of the Japanese occupation, the chaos of sudden liberation, and the trauma of a horrific and internationalized civil war are all important factors to inspire and intensify the Koreans' "collective desire" for leadership and independence which could not be fulfilled in "an ordinary and normal way," by which Cassirer means a Western-style, democratic political process. Although it may be an exaggeration, albeit a typically North Korean one, to claim that "[i]n modern history, no people had suffered the tragic suffering of the Korean people"61 (a statement that might come as a surprise to Jews, Cambodians, Armenians or Native Americans, among others), the exceptionally adverse circumstances of North Korea's origins and early years seem to have opened the way for an exceptionally intense form of leader-oriented politics.

Again and again Western observers have located the origins of the Kim cult in a misconceived notion of traditional Korean monarchy. Comparing Kim II Sung's cult to Maoism, Helmut Martin holds that the more extreme cult of personality in North Korea has roots that "reach back to Korea's highly centralized version of the Confucian system of ranks, that is, its tradition of bureaucratic centralism."62 In fact, as we have seen earlier, the idea of an absolutist despotism in traditional Korea is simply false; the reality was a monarchy that was strong on paper, weak in practice; an agrarian bureaucracy strong at the center, weak at the periphery. Indeed, because of Korea's subordinate position in the Sinocentric world order, the king of Korea was considerably less a figure of awe and absolute power than the Chinese Emperor.63 As Lee Mun Wong points out in his study of rural North Korea, the ruler-subject relationship was relatively weak in traditional Korea; among the five traditional Confucian relationships it was the

father-son relationship that was most highly stressed.\(^{64}\) If the North Korean state has "roots" in the Korean tradition, it is not so much a "socialist monarchy" as a family state that is well integrated as an extension of filial piety, expressed through strong loyalty to its leader.\(^{65}\) Thus the constant references in North Korean texts to Kim Il Sung as "father," "benevolent father," or even eldest, a term meaning both mother and father. If Meiji Japan effectively transferred feudal loyalties to the nation as a whole, North Korea has done the same with familial loyalties; the modern state is able to tap into the strongest loyalties and emotional attachments of the traditional culture.

To return to Geertz, there is often a conflict in post-colonial societies between "primordial attachments" (kin, religion, language, local culture) and loyalty to the civil state.\(^{66}\) But in a society of linguistic, cultural, and ethnic homogeneity the North Koreans have "solved" this contradiction by identifying the modern state with the "primordial unit" of the family. There is also an element in official North Korean ideology of a "sacred community," knit together by what Durkheim called "mechanical solidarity," reminiscent of religious groups, peasant movements in Asia and elsewhere, and not least in a wide range of nationalist movements.\(^{67}\)

If the family is the model and metaphor for the North Korean state, the North Korean attitude toward foreigners, often seen by outsiders as xenophobic, may be related to Banfield's "amoral familism": there is a double standard for "us" and "them," or as Barrington Moore notes, peasant societies are characterized by "cooperation within a group, hostility toward outsiders."\(^{68}\) And of course, late Yi dynasty "hermit kingdom" attitudes may have lived on in North Korean attitudes toward foreigners. However, one cannot accept at face value the Western

\(^{64}\) Lee Mun Yong, Rural North Korea Under Communism: A Study of Sociocultural Change (Glenstone, TX: Rice University, 1976), p. 117.

\(^{65}\) Ibid., p. 120.


\(^{67}\) Eliot Kintisch criticizes all forms of nationalism, especially in the Third World, as a kind of "political religion" with roots in millenarian Christian doctrines. See his Nationalism (London: Hutchinson, 1968). Hans Kohn distinguishes between "Western" (national, goods and "Eastern" (emotional, bad) nationalism, the latter including German and Russian nationalism. Hans Kohn, The Idea of Nationalism: A Study of Its Origins and Background (New York: Columbia, 1967). The presence of a strong streak of Chineselastinjuation in such a view goes without saying. The revival of ethnic nationalism in "developed" Western countries over the last two decades or so has greatly undermined the perception that the West is somehow immune to the irrationalism of more "backward" peoples. See A. D. Smith, The Ethno-Racial (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

The Myth of North Korea

stereotype of an “isolated” North Korea. In the West it is virtually taken for granted that North Korea is “one of the most isolated countries on earth.” But if North Koreans are xenophobic, theirs is a selective xenophobia. Isolationism is certainly not expressed in the North Korean media, which broadcast with much fanfare each visit of a foreign delegation, cultural troupe or head of state. Not all foreigners are to be shunned, only the bad ones; the right foreigners are greeted warmly. On closer examination, “isolated North Korea” primarily means isolated from the West, especially the United States (the presumed center of the world). At least until very recently North Korea has had extensive contacts with the Soviet bloc and Third World countries, and from its very inception North Korea has made efforts to show solidarity with a wide range of progressive forces, nations and groups.

The hostility toward “bad” foreigners, i.e., imperialists, seems to a great extent to be a substitute for classic Marxist notions of class struggle. There is surprisingly little mention of class struggle in North Korean texts; it is on the international battlefront against the imperialists and their “stooges” that North Korean propaganda concentrates, the internal contradictions of the society largely (although not entirely) collapsed into a “monolithic ideology” (yuil sasang). It is the nation that is the focus of group identity, and reunification even more than communism that is the utopian goal which calls for the continual sacrifice of the people of North Korea.

“The People” are, as it were, the reciprocal myth to “the Leader.” The former find their realization and fulfillment in the latter, they are united by bonds of loyalty and love. There is a certain sexual or rather gender-relationship connotation here, similar to early Christian texts which refer to the Church as the “Bride of Christ”: the Leader is the active, dynamic force who goes “deep among the masses” to awaken them from passivity and inspire their revolutionary consciousness. This awakening is sudden, emotional and dramatic, like religious conversion in evangelical Christianity. Indeed, the terms used are quite similar: upon Kim Il Sung’s return to Korea at the moment of liberation, the people are “aflame with inexpressible joy and emotion,” no longer living “as wanderers in an alien land,” having “reached the shore of light from the dark seas.”69 But the metaphors of liberation and salvation used by evangelical Christians for individual conversion are themselves derived from the Old Testament story of the exodus of the Jews from Egypt, and it is of course the latter kind of liberation that the North Korean people have experienced. Moreover, it is precisely this metaphor of the Jews in Egypt that was used by Korean Christians in the colonial period to describe their oppression by, and the need for lib-

eration from the Japanese. Thus we come full circle from collective to individual back to collective, through the vehicle of religious/political metaphor.

Karl Polanyi once described three "revelations" in the development of the consciousness of Western man: knowledge of death, revealed in the Old Testament; knowledge of individual freedom, revealed in the teachings of Christ; and knowledge of society, gained through living in industrial society. In a similar way—and yet, in a sense through a reverse course—the North Koreans have discovered a radical collectivism through an attempt to create a modern industrial society, using the metaphors of Christian conversion and universalism, and returning to a kind of Hebraic exclusivity of the (Chosen—Choson) People.

Philosophy

In orthodox Western scholarship on North Korea virtually everything in that society stems from either political factionalism or the necessities of foreign policy. The central concept of juche, usually translated as self-reliance, is no exception. Scalapino and Lee explain the appearance of juche in North Korean texts in the mid-1950's as a means to gain leverage vis-a-vis China and the U.S.S.R., or as a "weapon" against Kim's opponents. Few have taken a close, careful look at the place and meaning of juche in the North Korean literature.

Chuch'e (or juche in North Korean romanization) is a Sino-Korean word composed of two parts: chu, meaning to master or control; and ch'e, meaning body, essence, subject (the same character as tai in the Japanese kokutai, or "national essence," and ti in the Chinese ti-yong debate). Chuch'e is most often used in South Korea in its literary or philosophical sense as "subjectivity." In North Korea it is constantly invoked, usually as juche sasang (chuch'e thought or ideology), and is associated with national self-reliance and development. Kim II Sung himself has explained in the following manner.

The establishment of Juche means holding fast to the principle of solving for oneself all the problems of the revolution and construction in conformity with the actual conditions at home, and mainly by one's own efforts. This is a realistic and creative position, opposing dogmatism and applying the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism and the experiences of the international revolutionary movement to one's own country in conformity with its historical conditions and national peculiarities. This is an independent stand, discarding dependence on others, displaying the spirit of

71. Scalapino and Lee, op. cit., p. 525.
self-reliance and solving one's own affairs on one's own responsibility under all circumstances.\textsuperscript{72}

Thus \textit{juche} is opposed to dogmatism and "flunkeyism," in favor of flexibility and independence. This is partly a reaction to the tradition of obeisance to higher authority, or \textit{sadaechui}, in Korea's relationship to China, and to problems of ideological cleavages that affected the early Korean communist movement.\textsuperscript{73} One also cannot dismiss the impact of the Sino-Soviet split and the fear of antagonizing one of these communist giants on North Korea's choice of a self-reliant development path.

Thus at one level \textit{juche} is a way of constructing an independent socialist society, but there are deeper, more philosophical implications. One notion which frequently appears is that "[t]he Juche idea is based on a philosophical theory that man is the master of everything and decides everything."\textsuperscript{74} This could suggest a radical subjectivity, but is instead intended to bind individuals into a collectivity. Many outside analysts of North Korea have entirely missed this point and thus misunderstood what \textit{juche} is meant to convey. Koh Byung Chul, for example, says that the cult of personality "clearly accentuates dependence on the supreme leader's ideas and instructions, thus undermining the goal of chuch'e."\textsuperscript{75} But \textit{juche} is not individualist: the "man" who is the master of all things is not the individual man, but the collective. The place of the leader in this system is all-important.

How the masses are awakened to consciousness and organized in a revolutionary way, and how they perform their duties and historical mission, depend on whether or not they are given correct leadership by the party and the leader.\textsuperscript{76}

This could be seen as the Leninist idea of the vanguard taken to an extreme, and also in a strange way an echo of Hegel, who observed The glory of the Oriental conception is the One Individual as that substantial being to which all belongs, so that no other individual has a separate existence, or mirrors himself in his subjective freedom.\textsuperscript{77} This is not to say that the theorists of Oriental Despotism were right after all; Hegel notwithstanding, such a concept of what one might call


\textsuperscript{75} Koh, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 34.

\textsuperscript{76} Kim Chang Ha, \textit{The Immortal juche Idea} (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1984), p. 177.

\textsuperscript{77} Hegel, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 105.
"collective subjectivity" is no stranger to the West, whether in medieval kingship, absolutist monarchy, or even Hobbes' Leviathan.

In North Korean juche, as in Mao's China, there is a great deal of emphasis on thought. Change begins in the human mind, a somewhat Hegelian notion: the goal of juche is "a subjective, solipsistic state of mind, the correct thought that must precede and which will then determine correct action."78 There is also a kind of Confucian ideal of the benevolent leader, who rules by example rather than force: "good ideas come from right thought—rectification the mind—proceeding from the leader down through the masses."79 With correct thought and leadership, the people can accomplish anything: they can literally move mountains, they become the masters of their essence and their history. From liberation onward, "the people were moving along the path of their own choosing and it is the people who are the makers of history."80 This directly refutes Marx, who said that men make history but not in the manner of their own choosing, but it perfectly fits the voluntarist, collectivist ideology of juche.

Love

In the Western image of an unremittingly hostile, totalitarian North Korea, it may seem strange to talk of love. But the word permeates North Korean texts, recurring again and again in many different contexts. Love is said to be the basis of juche (sarang pangbop, or "method of love"); love of the people motivates the actions of the leader, and vice-versa; even an article on the Pyongyang Metro is subtitled "a story about love for the people." Love has nothing to do with Marxism-Leninism, and has little relevance to traditional Confucian ideas. But it is there all over the texts, unavoidable, undeniable.

Love seems to be at the very basis of the society; one author describes the "beautiful love between the true leader of the people and the masses, and this is the motive power which propels the Republic forward."81 Kim II Sung is qualified to be the leader most importantly because of his exceptional love for the people, and Kim Jong Il is his successor because of his love for the leader.

Deep in [Kim II Sung's] heart lay the agony of people in the depths of poverty. That is why he truly loved his fellow countrymen more than anybody else did, by staging a great revolutionary struggle.82

79. Ibid., p. 297.
82. Baik, op. cit., p. 15, emphasis added.
Throughout his revolutionary struggle Kim II Sung has a "spirit burning with love," and this image of fire, with both revolutionary and shamanistic connotations (drawn together also in South Korean student demonstrations, which begin with a ritual bonfire) is constantly associated with love.

The transition from the Great Leader to Dear Leader is a movement from authority to love, obligation to spontaneity, from a Confucian society regulated by duty to a communist society functioning in organic unity. Once again to use a Christian metaphor, it is the movement from the Old Testament to the New Testament. But again, although this love resembles the Christian conception, it is a collective act, not individual. And at root, anterior to all action, is a change of mindset, from which all else follows. To quote one decadent representative of Western popular culture, "all you need is love."83

The system we have constructed and called North Korea is a strange yet strangely familiar place. But the country even on its own terms is only a fiction, only half of a nation. "North Korea" is a term designated by the West, small "n" north Korea by the South Koreans. To the North Koreans themselves it is the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea, or simply Korea, a fiction that they actually control and represent the entire peninsula.

We have attempted to describe the myths held in the West about North Korea as well as the myths North Korea has of itself. But North Korea is in another sense itself a myth. It is after all a place to which I have never been, and which I only know through photographs, written texts, and second-hand impressions. It is a fantasy, a system that I have created, and placed faraway.

One must keep in mind one thing. It isn’t necessary to know what that thing is.

—John Ashbury, "Love"84

83. The Beatles themselves derived this idea from what they thought was Indian philosophy, when in fact it is of course a totally Western concept; the West, as always, sees its own image in the mirror of the East.

The South Korean Student Movement
1980–1987

Namhee Lee

Father, it is already May. It has been nearly a year since my arrest . . .

Father, struggle is a process of gaining freedom by freeing oneself from all oppressions, a process of regaining true self by throwing away all falsehood, and a process of contributing to history . . .

Father, each year, when the spring comes, when April and May comes, I would like to give you, instead of foreign carnations, a bundle of chindallae that gushes out in the land in whose bosom breathing of the people like spring aroma is glowing warmly and freshly. And to mother, I would give a bundle of yellow kaenari that burns itself with such passion and yet with such gentleness.

Father, chindallae and kaenari contain within themselves the true image of April and May, the struggle that glows like fire, and the pain and the endurance that cuts into the bone, and the life of the people who have lived this life like spring all along.

—Ryu Ho-Chan, from Youndeungpo Prison

Introduction

Student movements are as old and ubiquitous as universities. Nevertheless, perhaps due to their many failures and seeming impotence, they elude historians and are usually studied by sociologists. Students are hard to take seriously: they are "marginal," "idealistic," and exist
"in a transition zone," with freedom to pursue their ideals without serious consequences. We are constantly warned of their limited scope: tiny handfuls of "radicals" who take up polemical cudgels against the existing order.

What is the character of the Korean student movement, which shares features with movements past and present and yet obstinately persists in "picking fights" after others have left? In this paper I trace the historical development of students' theoretical debates from the Kwangju Uprising in 1980 up to the beginning of the so-called "Democratization Era" in 1987. I will also briefly discuss the history of the pre-1980 student movement, the understanding of which is imperative for the understanding of the present student movement. These debates show that the movement has come to take a decidedly nationalistic outlook, despite its Marxist-Leninist analytical tools. This is most clear in the explosive "ideological struggle" of the mid-1980s, out of which groups associated with the anti-imperialist National Liberation People Democratic Revolutionary (NLPDR) line prevailed over more class-oriented groups.

Bringing together all manifestations of nationalism, which Rosa Luxemburg describes as "empty husks into which all historical epochs and class relations pour their special material content," is difficult. Definitions, hence implications, abound: Hegel described it as "spirit," "will," and "idea." It is a "fanaticism of the will" according to Heine, and it is based on culture and tradition, according to Herder and Fichte. It is also a "determination of the will." Marxist theory overlooked it despite its prevalence, perhaps because of its assumptions that class interests predominate and that the form of economic organization determines the course of events. Julius K. Nyerere, president of Tanzania and one of the more subtle theorists of the new nationalism in Africa, suggested that its over-emphasis in the campaign for decolonization may make the eventual attainment of socialism more difficult.

What to Sun Yat-sen is one of the three greatest movements of the day (along

1. The Great Debate between Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg concerned this issue of whether the nationalist struggle should be given priority over the "class struggle." For a Marxist approach on the nationalism question, see Horace B. Davis, Toward a Marxist Theory of Nationalism (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1978).
4. Ibid., p. 81.
5. Horace Davis, p. 3.
6. "Everyone wants to be free, and the task of the nationalist is simply to rouse the people to a confidence in their own power of protest. But to build the real freedom which socialism represents is a very different thing. It demands a positive understanding and
with democracy and socialism), is to Benedict Anderson "an imagined political community," a by-product of an eighteenth century coalition of Protestantism and print-capitalism. It is not uniquely produced by the constellation of certain objective social facts; rather, the nation is "thought-out," "created."7

With the possible exception of the prewar Japanese student movement, the Asian student movement—the May Fourth Movement, December 9ers in China,8 and the Korean student movements from the colonial period—were, albeit with varying forms, manifestations of nationalism9 whose meaning is embodied within the ambit of a colonial discourse: "the search for and articulation of national identity that is combined with the creation of programs for the maintenance or attainment of self-government and independence on behalf of a group, some of whose members conceive it to constitute an actual or potential nation like others."10

The program of focusing on the "creation and nurturing of national identity," and on the "specific political programs to spread this collective sentiment and mobilize it for political action" was an expression of "bourgeois nationalist" consciousness that developed in the framework of knowledge created by the Japanese; specifically, Japan's "emulation" of Western rationalist thought, attributed to making her culturally equipped for power and progress, operated as guidance. Accordingly, the bourgeois nationalist discourse claimed that the backwardness of Korea was not historically immutable: it could be transformed

positive action, not simply a rejection of colonialism and a willingness to cooperate in noncooperation." Ibid., p. 55.


by the nation acting collectively, by adopting all the modern attributes of Japanese (and European) culture. The nationalist text, addressed both to "the people" who were said to constitute the nation and to the colonial masters whose claim to rule it questioned, denied the alleged inferiority of the colonized people and also asserted that a backward nation could "modernize" itself while retaining its cultural identity. It thus produced a discourse which, even as it challenged the colonial claim to political domination, also accepted the very intellectual premises of "modernity" on which colonial domination was based.

This narrative of modernity palpably signified the transition from feudalism to capitalism, and this is where the central political-ideological dilemma of modernization occurred in a colonial country. It required the mobilization of the popular elements in the cause of anti-colonial struggle, and, at the same time, a distancing of these elements from the structure of the state.

A point of departure for the Korean student movement in the 1980s is their frank and open revisionist attitude toward, if not a downright rejection of, this brand of nationalism, which I believe is derived from the experience of failures and contradictions of the earlier cultural nationalism studied by Michael Robinson. In my reading of the current Korean debate on nationalism within the relations between culture and politics, Antonio Gramsci's writings provide a useful line of inquiry. It is Gramsci's conception of the state as "coercion plus hegemony" and of the struggle for power as "domination plus intellectual-moral leadership" which enables the understanding of the students' critical reexamination of the nationalist movement of colonial Korea.\textsuperscript{11}

More specifically, in his "Notes on Italian History,"\textsuperscript{12} Gramsci outlines an argument about the "passive revolution of capital." Contrasting the history of the formation of the Italian state in the period of the Risorgimento with the classic political revolution in France in 1789, Gramsci says that the new claimants to power in Italy, lacking the social strength to launch a full-scale political assault on the old dominant classes, opted for a path in which the demands of a new society would be "satisfied by small doses, legally, in a reformist manner—in such a way that it was possible to preserve the political and economic position of the old feudal classes, to avoid agrarian reform, and, especially, to avoid the popular masses going through a period of political experience such as occurred in France in the years of Jacobinism, in 1831.


and in 1848.\textsuperscript{13} Thus in situations where an emergent bourgeoisie lacks the social conditions for establishing complete hegemony over the new nation, it resorts to a "passive revolution," by attempting a "molecular transformation of the old dominant classes into partners in a new historical bloc and only a partial appropriation of the popular masses, in order first to create a state as the necessary precondition for the establishment of capitalism as the dominant mode of production."\textsuperscript{14} (I will come back to this point in the following section.)

The reexamination (and reinterpretation) of modern Korean history by the students in terms of the "passive revolution" (achieved with a great deal of urging and assistance from the foreign powers) of bourgeois nationalism is an attempt to rectify it and to provide an analytical framework in which to anticipate a new generation of popular struggles that will redefine the context of Korean nationalism. It is within this context of questioning and redefining the "traditional" nationalist discourse that my usage of nationalism—in terms of the NLPDR’s position and of the student movement in the 1980s—resides.

Although by no means unique, (students in Paris of 1968 self-consciously acted in the tradition of past revolution)\textsuperscript{15} we see that each successive generation of the Korean student movement, in their actions and in their shaping of new ideologies, reveals evidences drawn from previous critical discourses. This is implicitly shown, although modes of expression and reference points vary, in Tonghak, the March First Independence March, and the April 19th student uprising. The role of ideologies during this process then was to transform the widely felt but vaguely defined individual sentiment into a socially available and powerful tool.\textsuperscript{16} We see that in this process the determining forces of an event are not wholly sociological or political but are also cultural, that is, conceptual.\textsuperscript{17}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{13} Ibid., p. 119.
\item \textsuperscript{14} P. Chatterjee, p. 30.
\item \textsuperscript{15} "But for all of them, the sensibility of May triggered off a remembrance of things past. By way of Raymond Aron, himself in touch with Toqueville, readers of Le Figaro remembered February 1848; by way of Henri Lefebvre, French students remembered the Proclamation of the commune in March 1871, as did those who read Edgar Morin in Le Monde; French workers listened to elder militants who spoke of the occupation of factories in June 1936; and most adults, whether or not they had been in the Resistance, relived August 1944, the liberation of Paris." Quoted in George Katsiafas, \textit{The Imagination of the New Left} (Boston: South End Press, 1987), pp. 6-7.
\item \textsuperscript{17} Yi-sheng Lin’s study on the May Fourth movement in China shows the emphasis of the students on the "necessary priority" of intellectual and cultural change over political, social and economic changes which he characterizes as a "cultural-intellectualistic: "It implies a fundamental belief that cultural change was the foundation for all other nec-
Genesis: Nationalist Origin in Tonghak

With the students in South Korea, this conceptual labor is expressed in their description of the society's political process, which is suggested through its "ideological symbols," each attempting "to name its cause, and to give point and purpose to its polity." It is also where the Gramscian notion of "elaboration" is fully appropriated, whether consciously or not. Elaboration is "the kind of analytic pluralism ... proposed for dealing with historical-cultural bloc, for seeing culture and art as belonging not to some free-floating ether or to some rigidly governed domain or iron determinism, but to some large intellectual endeavor—systems and currents of thought—connected in complex ways to doing things, to accomplishing certain things, to force, to social class and economic production to diffusing ideas, values, and world pictures." According to Gramsci, a thought is produced so that actions can be accomplished, and it is diffused in order to be effective. In his seemingly "contradictory but actually complementary meaning" of elaboration, Gramsci noted that it means on one hand to "redefine, to work out some prior or more powerful idea, to perpetuate a world view." On the other hand, it means also something "more qualitatively positive, the proposition that culture itself or thought or art is a highly complex and quasi-autonomous extension of political reality."

From this process of "elaboration," of naming the cause and purpose, a unifying theme of rebellion shapes a reality—however unrealistic and irrelevant in the end—in accordance to its practitioners' vision. What is revealing in their ideological symbols is the inherited reverence for the action, readily recognizable in the elevated status of such persons as Chun Tae-il, Kim Se-jin and Lee Han-yul. It is within this context of critical conceptualization that the Tonghak Peasants' Uprising in 1894...
has come to be foregrounded in the genealogy of the people's movement in Korea. Tonghak's place in the South Korean people's movement is what the Boxers' Rebellion is in China's history of nationalist movement, albeit with significantly varying manifestations. It is where the historical and "spiritual" genesis of the anti-imperialist struggle points to the future with its inspiration and historical mandate. For the students, epistemological questions such as what is their theoretical justification for appropriating historical phenomena for contemporary use is a secondary issue; what is at stake is the power to "name the name," and reinterpret historical events hidden from the knowledge of the people and long co-opted and distorted by the powers-that-be. It is a way of shifting the terms of understanding by transforming what has been given to the people by the traditional historical narrative.

Initially a religious movement against the prevailing order, Tonghak turned into a powerful countervailing ideology in the predicament of impending foreign dominance. While the ideas propagated by Tonghak were not innovative nor historic, Tonghak nevertheless captured the peasants with its transformational potency. The teaching of Ch'oe Chehwu, the founder of Tonghak, that all men are the "incarnation" of Heaven (Innaech'on) was predicated upon the notion that all people are equal. This translated into "commoners having been endowed with the ability to acquire basic knowledge to order and manage the world around them." With this idea, Ch'oe Chehwu proposed to build an ideal society by making and regenerating human beings. He required "a social attitude of mind, a heart of social love, and a spirit of service" in all human relationships: "Man should serve all his fellows as he serves Heaven." The guiding principle of their vision, the notion of the Oneness of Heaven and Humanity translated into, in social and political arena, a society of "emancipation of the untouchables and slaves, equal access to employment at all levels regardless of lineage, and local self-rule based on the peasant councils" formed during the rebellion. Their economic vision was to "replace feudal control of land and produce with peasant ownership of land, economic autonomy for


24. See Benjamin Weems, Reform, Rebellion and Heavenly Way.

small farmers, and the lifting of restrictions on small merchants (to break official monopolies)."\textsuperscript{26}

Embraced by the peasants with its teachings of equality, the earlier movement to exonerate Ch'oe Chehwu (who had been executed under the charge of false teaching) had later merged with the grievances of impoverished peasants, culminating in the final uprising against the Japanese. Thus, Tonghak, which began as a movement against the existing system and thought of the Yi dynasty, later transformed into a movement to seek Korea's national identity against the penetration of foreign influence.\textsuperscript{27} The Tonghak Peasant War eventually failed, not achieving the immediate objectives of reforming the Yi dynasty and expelling foreign powers.

However, this act of "pitting a horizontal realm" against the prevailing vertical world, which later transforms into an anti-imperial struggle, is the inheritance which the students proudly claim. Particular significance for the student movement is the legacy of the anti-imperialist struggle and the "all-inclusive nationalist coalition" to achieve this goal. The earlier anti-feudalistic nature of Tonghak, its struggle for land distribution and against unfair tax collection and the dishonest and corrupt yangban (hereditary aristocrats), is sacrificed for the anti-imperialist struggle.\textsuperscript{28} Tonghak, in its attempt to fight against encroaching Japanese and Chinese, actually "gave up" the struggles against the traditional ruling class by including them in the coalition to drive away the foreign powers.\textsuperscript{29}

Such a pan-nationalistic coalition is not a uniquely Korean phenomenon.\textsuperscript{30} The precedent of the uprising led and constituted by peasants, however, has given students a sense of historical legitimacy and a sense of continuity, a kind of historical mandate that tells them to "carry on." What is important here is not so much the revolutionary program Tonghak developed and implemented. It is understood that in spite

\textsuperscript{26} Declaration by Chun Bongjun, the leader of the Tonghak armed insurrection, described the minjung socially as commoners and "untouchables" (butchers, tanners, etc.) and slaves, and economically as peasants, small merchants, and the unemployed. Generally, they comprised the mass of people who suffered under the "feudal" system of yangban. See Kenneth Wells, "Concepts of the People in Modern Korea," presented at the Conference on Korean Nationalism (November, 1989), pp. 17-18.


\textsuperscript{28} For Tonghak's anti-feudal elements in its philosophical teachings, see Ibid., pp. 116-121; Shin's article shows some of the limitations of the anti-feudalistic aspect of Tonghak teaching, especially in its "consent" to the traditional subordination of women to men, pp. 33-34.

\textsuperscript{29} This point is developed in Dongno Kim's "The Causes and Internal Dynamics of Tonghak Revolution," outline of his Modern Korean History Seminar paper presented during the Winter Quarter, 1990.

\textsuperscript{30} Perhaps the most notable example in the modern period is the coalition of the Chinese Nationalists and Communists against the Japanese during 1920s and 1930s.
of its generally progressive nature, Tonghak’s vision and therefore its impact had been limited by the time in which it developed. For the students, rather, the sense of legitimacy and justification for their action and their historical place stems from at least two critical reinterpretations of Tonghak and thus history in general: first, that the moment(s) of change in history are pluralized and plotted as confrontations rather than transitions and, second, that such changes are signalled or marked by a “functional change in sign-systems,” such as from uprising to revolution, from popusang (peddler) to merchant, and so on. The most significant outcome of this revision or shift in perspective is that the agency of change is located in the insurgents or the minjung (I will come back to the notion of minjung in the later section). This is perhaps the most important legacy of Tonghak.

Japanese Colonialism and the Student Movement
The students of Korea, as students in other countries, have always shown a keen awareness of their privileged position in society, with a concomitant sense of responsibility in rectifying social ills. The students during the Yi Dynasty, though they never reached the point of defying the existing social order like today’s students (in fact they served with their education the existing aristocracy very well), took seriously their responsibility; students’ protesting what they thought was unjust (or more often the king’s misjudgment) was acceptable behavior and a rather common occurrence. It is possible to say that the legacies of Confucianism, taking strongly moralistic views on public matters and taking action on the basis of universal norms or causes, existed in the early student movements.

For the students in the 1980s, however, the genealogy of their movement is located in the nationalist movement during the Japanese occupation. The colonial status of Korea made national independence the most acute and urgent task, and the student movement became a part of the nationalist independence movement, as in China and Vietnam. The philosophical vision of the March First Movement—the

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establishment of an independent nation-state against Japanese colonial rule—manifested, in the theoretical level, toward what Lin Yu-sheng calls a "cultural-intellectualistic" orientation; for a real change to occur, more important than political, social and economic changes was a "new intellectual and cultural foundation." Chinese students during the 1920s shared its implication that cultural change was the foundation for all others, thus spurring the May Fourth Movement, a pivotal point in Chinese nationalism. This thinking assumed, further, that cultural change—change in the system of symbols, values, and beliefs—could best be achieved through "changing man’s idea, concerning his total conception of, and relationship to, both cosmic and human reality; that is, changing his world view."

These nationalist sentiments which later transform into a state ideology legitimizing its own rule, appropriating the life of the nation, and propelling it along the path of "universal modernization," is clearly rejected by the students, as we shall see in the following. It is a grave mistake, however, to lump all the independent movements in the category of "culturalist" or "bourgeois nationalist," for many who took up arms in resistance did so within the same framework of nationalist struggle (from which the originary point of north Korea's Chuch'e ideology is located and which I will come back to in the section on NLPDR). Thus when the students claim their genealogy in the colonial nationalist movement, it is not a simple continuity from bourgeois nationalist discourse but rather a rupture from it, a discontinuity which students are anxious to rediscover and reconnect. It is also at this point that the NLPDR's calling for nationalist revolution departs from traditional nationalist revolution in the way it seeks to reconnect with the "historical legitimacy" of the Korean revolutionary movement of north Korea. Students are soberly reminded of the process of Gramscian "elaboration" when every year March First is celebrated under the auspices of the Korean government while the Muo Declaration—which actually gave impetus to a later Declaration in Korea and advocated armed resistance against Japan—has never been mentioned in the textbooks. If


37. Ibid.

38. In Manchuria and the Russian Far East, students and other nationalist leaders with varying ideological commitments participated together in the Muo Declaration in November 1918, stimulating the later Declaration in Korea. By advocating armed resistance to the Japanese colonial power, as opposed to achieving independence through peaceful means and by enlisting the support of third countries, the Muo Declaration is
there was any mention of the armed resistance it is always in reference to and within the context of the bourgeois nationalist tradition with which the current south Korean leadership identify and from which they derive legitimacy.

**Student Movement: 1945-1980**

Under the American military occupation which immediately followed the "Liberation," student activism more or less became subsumed under national life, which was ideologically divided into left and right wings. Little is written about this period, and most available documents reveal ample cases of right-wing activities, which more often than not were rampant terrorism sponsored by Syngman Rhee's cohorts against the left-wing groups. To the extent that this period was the only time in which the Korean student groups (there was not a separate, organized student movement to speak of) had openly and politically aligned themselves with existing political parties, it was the only period in which Korean and Japanese student activism share a commonality. Unlike the Japanese student movement, which, since the 1920s, has articulated its ideological basis in terms of the existing Communist Party, the Korean student movement since then has maintained an independent position in terms of its ideology and organizational formations. Even during the Occupation, the real concerns for the students in the left were being for or against the American military government, which translated into for having one Korea or divided Korea, rather than for liberal democracy or Marxism.

It is ironic that the most "successful" student movement in terms of achieving its goals also saw itself giving impetus to the rise of the most draconian and authoritarian regime in south Korea. The immediate background of the 1960 uprising was the debilitating education system (which in many other countries triggered student revolt) and

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thought to have been influenced by Western socialism. See Frank Hoffmann, "The Muo Declaration," *Korean Studies* (1989), pp. 31-33.


the "shameless and rampant" corruption of the Rhee regime. In spite of its success in toppling the Rhee regime, however, the uprising failed to sustain its political gains. The lack of a coherent formula for the future of south Korea was not due to a paucity of ideas as much as to the spontaneous and reactive nature of the uprising, which the later generation vowed not to repeat. The students' demand for democracy was accepted by the public as legitimate, in the historical tradition of nationalist sentiment; and as with Tonghak, the students bequeathed to the next generation a "spiritual, psychic" legacy. Today's students often exalt the heroic deeds of their predecessors, although they seldom find it efficacious to follow their elders' footsteps in all respects.

The military coup and subsequent authoritarian rule of Park Chung-hee saw sporadic student activities but the student movement remained by and large the "conscience" of society rather than a serious threat to the state. A major issue that roused students on a massive scale was the government's "humiliating" posture in negotiating the Normalization Treaty with Japan in 1965.42

With the last of spontaneous demonstrations crushed again, the rest of the student activities were severely suppressed by the military regime throughout the 1970s, resulting in the prevalence of underground study groups. The 1970s also saw labor-intensive light industry—the backbone of the south Korea's export-oriented economy—in full-swing, resulting in a massive migration from rural areas to cities with their accompanying social, economic differential structure. The exploitative working conditions led one of the factory workers to immolate himself in protest, calling for the reduction of working hours and better wages.43

Seldom has the death of a factory worker aroused and mobilized the students (and the progressive groups) as did the death of Chun Tae-il, a twenty-three year old garment worker. His death, ironically and yet not unexpectedly, brought the students more than the workers to the issues of labor. Also, during this process, in which the students wrestled

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Latin American countries—Argentina, Brazil, Venezuela, Colombia, and Mexico—what may have started as protests against educational policies ended as serious challenges to the political authorities as government troops moved against university campuses to put down the activities. The 1969 Chilean student activism also involved the issue of university reform. On Chilean student activism, see Frank Bonilla and Myron Glazer, Student Politics in Chile (New York: Basic Books Inc., 1970); on Argentinian students, see Richard Walter, Student Politics in Argentina (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1968).

42. Japanese society in 1960 also witnessed widespread student struggle on the issue of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty. As Korean students were successful in bringing down the Rhee regime but easily disintegrated afterwards, after Zengakuren forced the cancellation of Eisenhower's visit to Japan and the Prime Minister's resignation, it dissolved into many small sects and went into a period of stagnation. See Miyori Nakazawa, "A Rhetorical Analysis of the Japanese Student Movement," pp. 31-35.

43. Cf. note 22.
with immediate and concrete issues such as labor, the “sprouting” of the ideological debates can be located. No longer satisfied with being a “voice in the wilderness,” the students found that they could wield political leverage. It was no longer whether one should remain detached or “plunge into the fray,” but rather what strategies and tactics should be employed.

The issue that brought a subtle difference in perspective but a wide divergence in tactics was the question of the students’ role in the present stage, resulting in the emergence of two different groups: one group emphasized “political struggle first” (chungchi’i toojaeng uiwi-ron)44 and the other put forward the theory of working within the existing people’s bases (hyonchang-ron). The former group felt that in the prevailing stagnant mood due to the government’s severe crackdown, if the students did not involve themselves in political struggle, the democratic movement as a whole would fall into defeatism. This position reasoned that the particularity of south Korean society required that students stand at the forefront of the political struggle, to inspire and generate strength in the movement in large.

The people who constituted the hyonchang-ron were involved in the education of workers in night schools. Critical of the “political struggle” position, they thought that emphasis on demonstrations and rallies, far from dealing a conclusive blow to the dictatorship, debilitated the student movement by isolating it from the (student) mass. Also, students alone could not solve the contradictions of south Korean society, and thus raising the consciousness of workers and organizing labor was deemed more important.

The two groups’ differing strategies and conflicting political lines derived from the different schools of thought existing at that time in Seoul National University. Because many student groups were forced underground by severe police surveillance and arrests, they mainly focused on the theoretical materials they could get their hands on, from orthodox Marxist-Leninist writing to various political economy and philosophy. One group studying mainly political economy emphasized the importance of labor, drawing its perspective from wonron (orthodox Marxism-Leninism). The other, drawing from philosophical materials, emphasized the importance of the political struggle.45 This debate continued after the fall of Park Chung-Hoe in 1979, with

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44. “Political struggle” meant street demonstrations, rallies through which the political messages are to be channeled to the public. It is derived from the belief that societal problems are to be solved ultimately through political means.

more groups participating, whose orientations ranged from advocating “gradual struggle” to advocating “all-out struggle.”

The 1980 Kwangju Uprising

The Kwangju uprising of 1980 started with the student demonstration at Chonnam University demanding democratic reforms, including the lifting of martial law declared by then General Chun. As citizens witnessed the paratroopers' brutality and joined the students, it grew into a massive uprising. This eventually was ruthlessly suppressed, making it the most pivotal event in the history of the South Korean movement.

The Kwangju uprising was a watershed; the problem of how to interpret it became a central issue for the movement. The experience of Kwangju was important in many ways, but the crucial lesson from the students’ perspective was that they should let go of “romantic” notions about the revolution. In their assessment, hopes that the U.S. would support the toppling of the military dictatorship and that the united efforts of students and the “petit bourgeoisie” would bring down the regime showed the movement’s abstract, naive, and romantic understanding of revolutionary change. This realization was concomitant with the idea that a “scientific” mode of social analysis would provide a theoretical guide for social change. It was also thought that the absence of a vanguard organization that could provide correct strategy and tactics to the rising revolutionary aspirations of the masses was the crucial limitation of Kwangju. In addition, the absence of organized labor as a revolutionary force was believed to be another factor in contributing to the failure of Kwangju. This realization, that not only was there a lack of revolutionary ideology but a lack of any organized revolutionary forces, set the direction and tone of the student movement’s development for the next several years. Thus what we now call “ideological struggle” (sasang tujaeng) began to take place in this context of having gone through the painful experiences of utter failure and trying to recover and develop out of that experience something positive and concrete.

This assessment made the existing debates more serious, fierce, and contentious; pamphlet after pamphlet poured out from the campuses, calling for various strategies from a “period of preparation” to advocating immediate action. The former position is represented by the

47. “Olbarun Haksaeng Undong ui Jumgonip ul Wihayu” [For a Correct Student Movement], Chunjin [Forward] (Seoul National University, 1985), pp. 2-3.
Murim group, and the latter by the Hakrim group. First made public in the pamphlet titled “Declaration of the Anti-imperialism Antifascism Struggle” on December 1980, Murim’s position called for internal preparation of the students rather than continuing political demonstrations. Fearing increasing political suppression of student activism, Murim called for restraint on sporadic demonstrations that would take away the strength of the student body, and defined the role of students as providing leadership to the sectoral movements functionally paralyzed by the government crackdown.

Meanwhile, attributing the defeat of 1980 to the lack of a vanguard party (or centralized leadership in each of the sectoral movements), Hakrim began to organize both students and workers in an attempt to form a united organization. Hakrim maintained that the authentic mass line is to continue political struggle—as opposed to Murim’s daily struggle (on campus related issues)—and by doing so, provide the basis for the next popular uprising. Street demonstrations had “diagnostic significance,” identifying the ills of the society, and thus were the most useful tactic in the political struggle, being the most direct means of propagating to the people the ways in which to rectify these social problems. This is expressed in one of the leaflets distributed on Seoul National University in March 1981:

What should we do? There must be a fierce, relentless mass struggle for democratization by all the people against the Chun fascist dictatorial regime. . . . Only through a thorough struggle in which we press on, no matter how bad the situation is, no matter how oppressive or vindictive they are, stepping over the dead bodies of our people, can we expose their filthy true colors, reveal the hollowness of their pretensions, and vehemently overthrow them once again. . . .

We will be judged, not by that cut-throat Chun Doo-Whan group, but by the sacred history of the Korean people, by no one else but the masses of this land. . . . We must keep, not the disinterested attitude of an observer fleeing reality, but the passion and courage of the mass struggle.

Murim, on the other hand, maintained that in order to advance the

48. The names of groups are usually given by the government prosecutor office, for most student organizations became public only after the involved students were arrested or tried.
49. Murim’s Declaration partly read: “The strategy of the “political struggle,” [street] demonstrations for all issues must be discontinued. Demonstrations are to be held at the best of circumstances under which the most can be gained so that the student movement can obtain the most flexible and comprehensive strategic advantage against the enemy. . . . The immediate task we face is how to squeeze down the enemy continuously and effectively and how we are going to prepare ourselves for this task.” Haksang Undong Nonjaengsa, p. 30.
student movement, it was paramount to first obtain the general rights of students within the existing university system. This had to come before the students could lead the masses. But this was criticized by Hakrim as "suppressing the student mass' will to fight," isolating itself from the mass and exposing its weakness to the regime. Massive arrests and forced army enlistment of Murim's leaders were, according to Hakrim, because of their lack of organizational ties to other movements.51

One notable development during this debate was an attempt to forge unity with the labor movement. A quick glance at modern Korean history would indicate that this phenomenon is not accidental. The Korean national liberation movement was closely intertwined with the Korean Communist Party, whose priority was working with "the workers, peasants, and all other working elements."52 Even without the historical precedent and the Marxist-Leninst analysis on labor, given South Korea's rapid economic change in the last decades, which resulted in a surge of urban population whose majority are workers, it is not surprising to find the students' emphasis on the working class. Nor was student-labor collaboration unique to the Korean student movement. The prewar Japanese student movement, Shinjinkai, helped to lead the existing labor movement to reform and turn it in more radical directions, not only by working but also by living with workers.53 The Chinese students in the 1930s collaborated with Shanghai labor groups.54

What is particular and remarkable about the South Korean student movement in its relation to labor is its absence of manifested sectari-

51. From March to June 1981, forty-two incidents relating to students distributing leaflets to demonstrations to sit-ins took place in about 11 university campuses in Seoul alone, resulting in 74 students arrested, six in hiding, and an indeterminate number of students in detention. "Student Protests: Spring, 1981," Korea Communique (July 4, 1981), 8-10.

52. At the inception of the Korean Communist Party, the Comintern directed the KCP to "give first priority to the national liberation struggle by uniting with the workers, peasants, and all other working elements." The specific tasks assigned to Communists at that time, aside from strengthening the party, was to work among the labor unions. A series of labor organizations, from the Proletarian Comrades League to Korean Labor Federation, led strikes and demonstrations. See Cheng-Sik Lee, Korean Workers' Party (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1978), p. 23. For student-labor activities in the 1960s in other countries, see George Katsiaficas, The Imagination of the New Left, pp. 58-59.

53. See Henry Smith, Japan's First Student Radicals, pp. 77-88. For postwar student-labor activism, see David Apter and Nagayo Sawa, Against the State (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984).

54. The student-labor relationship in the history of the nationalist Chinese student movement is not as strong as in the Japanese or Korean student movement, however. During the May Fourth movement, student attempts to work with labor are not particularly discernable. In fact it was some prominent members of the Shanghai business and industrial elite who took initial steps in encouraging and promoting the Shanghai students and workers to rise up in response to the Peking students' anti-government movement. See Joseph T. Chen, The May Fourth Movement in Shanghai, pp. 46-65.
anism and its actual success, albeit limited, in bringing about reforms, such as improved working conditions and labor law reforms. Whether for or against the direct organization of workers, concern for and working with the workers became the overriding issue. Murim engaged in educating workers through the "workers' night school movement," often at the risk of detention and imprisonment under the National Security Law and the Anti-Communist Law. Hakrim led the resurgence of labor activities: unionization of non-union factories and democratization of the existing company ("yellow") unions as well as organization of underground activist groups. These activities carried heavy risks for those involved, resulting in massive imprisonment. One of the numerous such cases that became known to the public involved a publisher (whose books were rented to workers) receiving a life sentence (later commuted) and eighteen other students serving varying years in prison.

As the Murim-Hakrim debate continued into 1982—often with leaders being arrested, forcibly drated into the military or in hiding—the questions of the students' role, the extent and the possibility of the student movement's "originality" (tok'ch'ak-sung) in relation to other movements, and the student relation to minjung became central.

Because an understanding and appreciation of Minjung is paramount in apprehending the conceptual process of the student movement, a preliminary word about minjung is in order. The word Minjung first appeared in the Tongnip Shinmun in the 1890s and has since undergone transformation, within the discourse of the Korean nationalist movement. Although it is generally referred as the "mass," the "main force" of the change in the vocabulary of the "social formation," its meaning is inclusive and multi-faceted, as elaborated by Wells:

Minjung is not a substitute for the previously more common taewung (the masses), which now has less of a value-laden and more of a modest descriptive quality. Nor is it coterminous with the commoners, the blue-collar workers, the proletariat, or any other such term, analytical or otherwise. . . . Indeed it has an almost alavistic quality: Koreans must revert to type; the minjung are the type. . . . The minjung have to be Korean, and can only be Korean, not a social grouping generalization over all

57. Among the various positions put forward during this time, four positions had significance: The "Direct Struggle" group advocated political struggle similar to that of Hakrim and became dominant; the "Avoid Direct Struggle" group advocated struggle for campus-related issues, avoiding straining the movement's strength; the "Minjung" group advocated the working with minjung groups rather than in the campus; the "Preparation" group separated the role of intellectuals from the "mass" and concentrated on "education" through public forums. Underground pamphlet, "Abang Tabang" [Friend and Foe], n.d. pp. 24-26.
nations. . . . When the *minjung* are considered in relation to the problem of reunifying Korea, as it increasingly is, a Leninist theory of imperialism may serve as a framework, but there is always an irreducible remainder in the concept of *minjung* which its champions consciously uphold. This remainder appears at times to be the unique spirit of the Korean people which no general theory can contain: it is a historical law of development peculiar to Korea.58

This nationalistic and rather imprecise notion of *minjung* becomes problematic, since it is not defined as a class or any other such social group, when the students invoke *minjung* to be the central force in the historic transformation of the south Korean society. (We will come back to this point later.)

**Yuhwa Kukmyon of 1984 and 1985**

With the end of 1983 began a relatively democratic breathing space (*Yuhwa Kukmyon*, “state of appeasement”) as the government adopted some reform measures. The scheduled twelfth general parliamentary election in February 1985 provided an impetus for an outpouring of activities in the political arena, with opposition parties actively seeking opportunities to regain its lost seats and the public keenly tuning in. In the universities, a series of so-called “Campus Autonomy” (*Hakwon Chayulwha*) measures were announced, which included reinstatement of discharged students and professors and withdrawal of riot police from the campuses. It is at this period that the student movement began to openly articulate itself as a “revolutionary,” as opposed to the previous “social transformation,” movement.

Continuing the *Hakrim-Murim* debate were questions such as how to define the character of south Korean society (e.g. was it neo-colonial or merely subordinated monopoly capitalist?); how south Korea should be reconstructed; what the role of the students should be; and (although at that time not a central question) who were to be the subjects of this revolutionary movement. At this time the term *sahoe kusungche* (social formation) came into widespread use, and the most intense debates took place over the characterization of south Korean society and its basic contradictions. The debates resulted in three main models for the south Korean revolution, namely CDR (Civil Democratic Revolution), NDR (National Democratic Revolution), and PDR (People’s Democratic Revolution).59

In dealing with the basic issue of the socio-economic formation of south Korean society, NDR saw it as basically *neo-colonial*, foreign-dependent (subordinated) state-monopoly capitalist. Chun’s regime

was a foreign-dependent fascist regime backed by the military. Therefore the major contradiction was the conflict between the Korean people and the combined forces of domestic fascists and U.S. and Japanese imperialists. It suggested the object of the movement was the establishment of people's democracy through anti-imperial anti-fascist struggle.60

PDR (People's Democratic Revolution), on the other hand, characterized south Korea as state monopoly capitalist, emphasizing the contradiction between the conservative and progressive forces within south Korean society, therefore calling for "the class struggle over the nationalist struggle." According to PDR, the national questions, such as the division of the country and foreign influence, required the perspective of class antagonisms. The "incipient" revolutionary character of the working class in south Korea dictated that the movement concentrate on organizing the working class. In essence, the PDR denied the need to form a united front with the "opportunistic" liberal opposition party and the middle class, while the NDR called for a united front with the middle class.61

CDR (Civil Democratic Revolution) characterized south Korea as periphery capitalist, the basic contradiction being the military dictatorship and the minjung, and aimed to replace the military dictatorship with a civilian democratic government (bourgeois democracy). This line was immediately disregarded as not viable, as it also assumed the assistance of the United States in replacing the military dictatorship. Students charged their predecessors of the 1970s with naiveté for having had faith in the U.S.

The foregoing is not to suggest that these debates started with groups clearly demarcated, nor are these the only elements in the debate; rather, in the process of formulating each position, much crisscross and overlapping took place as often criticism of one line led to an emergence of another whose theoretical formulation is based on the former line and so on. This renders any attempt to put a label on a group as either NDR or PDR difficult, but helps us understand the extent to which the students tried to grapple with the nature of the rapid transformation south Korea has undergone and the extent of their frustrations when these changes were not accompanied with concomitant political and social democratization.

The debate concerning the role of the student movement and the relations to the minjung continued during the relatively liberal era. Variously known as "MT-MC" ("Mintu-Main Current") or "Flag-Anti

60. Underground document, "Ch'oe'g'un Hakseng Undong Napu ui Nonjaeng Kawkwan" [An Overview of the Recent Student Movement Debate!], p. 3.

61. The social formation explained by the NDR and PDR is different from the later theory of NLPDR.
Flag” Debate, this debate reveals an intense discussion on philosophical positions and perspectives on organization, strategy, and the students’ relation to labor. The MT-MC debate is a continuation of earlier Hakrim-Murim arguments regarding the role of the students and the proper concept of the minjung. In their theories both MT and MC saw the working class as the central force (motor) of the revolution. However, at the time when labor movement was “incipient” and just “sprouting,” relative to the students’, who had considerable experience in organization and political activities, what was to be done?

MT (whose line is associated with Hakrim) maintained that all emphasis should be on strengthening labor, since minjung ideology and minjung support had to be an integral component of the student movement. Students should strive to reach for perfection not only for their own sake but also to lead the “vanguard” (sondochukin) political struggle to raise the consciousness of the mass and to generate the mass movement. Simultaneously it was to help strengthen the other sectoral movements, especially labor. MT saw labor as having heightened class consciousness and possessing the potency to lead the struggle. Therefore continuous support of the students would bring about rapid change in the working class outlook, and accordingly MT pursued a series of activities in solidarity with labor.62

Perceiving the working class as devoid of an “authentic proletariat class consciousness” and contaminated with “false consciousness,” MC saw little possibility of advancing the labor movement through status change of the students (becoming a worker, for example). Raising the consciousness of the working class required long term education and must be achieved by the struggles of the workers themselves. The correct relationship between students and labor was to be achieved by the correct minjung-oriented ideology on part of the students and their political propaganda and agitation (sunchun suntong) to the working class.63

What appears to be nebulous theoretical differences had a serious and far reaching implication in their relation to labor. This debate also spurred the Korean version of narod movement: hundreds of students went into factories to organize workers and share their lives, resulting in a ridiculous but effective (for the time being) attempt by the management to declare anyone educated beyond high school ineligible for factory work. Estimated by the government to be 700 in some 375 plants in the Seoul and Incheon area alone in 1986, these students-becoming-workers brought home not only the issues of the horren-

62. For the activities of the students in labor, see Human Rights in Korea 1986 (Asia Watch), pp. 170–271.
63. Haksaeung Undong Nonjaengsa, p. 87.
dous working situation but also a host of related social, political, and moral issues. One such case involved a former woman student at Seoul National University; after having been sexually tortured during the interrogation—she was arrested for having forged identity papers to work in a factory—she went public, and her trial became one of the most dramatic events, revealing a multi-faceted “darkside of the miracle” of south Korean society that the government has tried in vain to keep from public and other international circles.64

Anti-Americanism in the Movement

In the history of the south Korean student movement, anti-U.S. sentiment, seemingly the major feature of 1980s student activities, had a significantly “late” beginning.65 Discernable anti-U.S. sentiment was first expressed in a pamphlet circulated in the summer of 1980 titled “The Voice of the Nationwide Democratic Youth”: “The U.S. had agreed to the massacre carried out by Chun Doo-Whan . . . We warn that there will be no guarantee of the life and property of the Americans [in south Korea] until the U.S. policy is changed.”66 The first clearly anti-U.S. act was the bombing of the U.S. Culture Center in Pusan in March 1982. The testimony of one of the leading students, Moon Pu-shik (who originally received a death sentence) reflects:

I hope that my death will be a turning point of U.S.-Korea relations, and that the U.S. government will no longer force the Third World countries to maintain the Cold War system, but will support and help her friends to build a democratic society and a unified country. The relationship of both countries should be based on equal friendship, not vertical control. At the same time I would like to warn Japan [who] is trying to follow an imperialistic pattern of diplomacy. I want to warn against such a relationship even at the cost of my own life.67

A subsequent series of bombings on U.S. culture centers and more declarations on the U.S. role in Kwangju received mixed responses, however. Only Kwangwon University students showed their solidarity with the Pusan bombing by burning a U.S. flag; the student movement by and large criticized the act as “not the best thing to do in terms of

64. See “Why did the people respond in June,” an unpublished article by Saundra Sturdevant (August 8, 1987), pp. 1-3. One of the largest auto makers in south Korea, Daewoo Auto, was “infiltrated” by the students who led a successful strike in 1985. See Human Rights in Korea 1986 (Asia Watch), pp. 250-260.

65. Japanese student activism in the 1960 had a significant “anti-U.S.” component, and Latin American countries’ student activism also seemed replete with anti-U.S. rhetoric and activities. See David Apter, Against the State; Seymour Lipset, eds., Students in Revolt.

66. Quoted in the underground document “Hankuk Ch’ungmyon Haksaeng Undong ui Saeroun Tonghyung” [A New Trend in the Korean Youth Student Movement].

timing and method." At the demonstrations in September 1983 during the IMF-IBRD talks in Seoul, the issue was not U.S. imperialism but the forced demolition of squatters' homes and the livelihood of street vendors. Even the visit by Reagan in November 1983 was met with mild protests whose basic line went something like "we have to push for withdrawal of the support of the foreign powers to the military dictatorship." The prevalent sentiment was then that it was premature to bring up the question of foreign dominance. It was thought that "ordinary people" were not yet ready to tackle that issue.

By 1985, however, anti-Americanism, which had thus far remained at the level of individual acts and pamphlets calling for restraint and "repent" on the part of the United States, reached a new stage, with the occupation of the United States Information Service building in May. The crucial factor behind this occupation was, among other things, Kwangju. More immediate factor enabling this major "media stunt" was however, the formation of a united front, as it were, among the different groups. In a remarkable show of unity, the different groups who had previously avoided each other's rallies and demonstrations formed the Sammintu (Struggle Committee for Minjung, Democracy, and National Liberation). This was to launch nationwide political activities in May commemorating Kwangju. Since 1980, the month of May always brings massive student demonstrations much as April brings the tradition of paying respect to the fallen students of April 19th.

The three Min line, namely Minjok, Minju, and Minjung (Nationalism, Democracy and People), was a summing-up of their analysis of the south Korean society and an open articulation of their strategy cloaked in the classical Marxist-Leninist language: the struggle between class groups is the central motif of human history and the existence of social conflict in south Korea is not due to transient maladjustments in the social mechanism but to deep-seated social structures. Their analysis constituted the three enemies of the people: state-monopoly capital, imperialism, and the fascist regime:

The Sammin movement of today is an anti-foreign and anti-military dictatorship movement that tackles simultaneously the confrontation between the military dictatorship and the minjung and the confrontation between the foreign power and the minjung. The goal at the present stage of our Sammin movement is to dissolve the the anti-Sammin power structure through the united front of all democratic and nationalistic elements—the workers as the main force with urban poor, farmers, students, youth, intellectuals, and anti-government leaders—and the estab-

68. This concept is not to be confused with Dr. Sun Yat-sen's "San Min Chu I" [The Three Principles of the People], which can be summed up as Nationalism, Democracy, and Livelihood. Sun Yat-sen, San Min Chu I: The Three Principles of the People (Taiwan: China Publishing Co., 1963), p. 17.
lishment of the Sammin government based on the principles of the Minjok, Minju and Minjung. 69

Revealing an extreme naivety but also confidence that their sincerity and eloquence could move and generate truth to the minjung, the Sammintu was nevertheless able to instill the Three Min concept in the minds of people through a process of various strategies, including an act of public drama that was to become another watershed in the Korean student movement, the occupation of the United States Information Service (USIS) building in May 1985. Prior to the occupation, a series of demonstrations and public forums were held to educate the minjung about the “truth” of Kwangju and “seek together the historical meanings of Kwangju.” Previously confined to pamphlets and wall-posters (taejabo) in their means of communication, students in 1985 tried to generate common people’s commitment to their ideas by making them accessible, by holding public forums and publishing their findings (taechunghwa).

The occupation of the USIS was a culmination of these efforts. In retrospect, their demands were conspicuously mild relative to their bold act. In the pamphlet distributed as they entered the USIS, students asked the U.S. government to heed the American people who put their faith in democracy, and stop backing Chun Doo-Hwan:

We request that the American people defending democracy make efforts to create a proper relationship between the U.S. and South Korea. We wish to ask the American people, who defend the fact that the U.S. government supported the Kwangju massacre by Chun Doo-Whan. Aren’t you surprised at the fact that you who struggled to pioneer that vast land might be seen as villains for supporting the evil Chun regime, which has forfeited its legitimacy and right? ... We ask once more! The American people, who defend democracy, should make sincere efforts to establish proper relations between the U.S. and South Korea. 70

Even without the explicit claim made that they were not fundamentally “anti-American,” it was apparent for those who watched this dramatic event unfold that the South Korean government had much more to lose—even if it was just its face—than the United States, the presumed culprit of Kwangju. Their rhetoric during the occupation was an active appropriation of the culturally and socially inscribed symbols with which the common people were familiar and identified with. The students partly achieved their aim in “waking up the public” only because their act was so bold to that generation for whom

69. Underground pamphlet, “85 Nyon Habanki Haksang Undong ui P’yongka” (Evaluation of the Student Movement in the Latter Half of 1985), p. 23. All translation in this paper is mine unless otherwise noted.

70. Pamphlet, “Why We Had to Occupy the USIS building.”
America was still too sacred to be treated with such disdain. If the minjung did not comprehend the theoretical basis behind this act, and doubted as to the efficacy of such action, it nevertheless had a therapeutic effect, akin to having a (shamanistic) gut performed for the sick person regardless of its capacity of actual cure. Wrapped in south Korean flags as they voluntarily withdrew from the USIS building after three days, the students made clear that they did not recognize the state as representing the minjung, and that they have the moral right to represent the righteous demands of the people.\textsuperscript{71} The nation existed with the people, but the state did not.

The Emergence of NLPDR

The vexing issue that made students plunge themselves during the summer into whatever materials they could find was the question of how to look at the U.S. and the relationship between “U.S. imperialism and the fascist subcontractor, Chun’s regime.” This issue became more urgent as the U.S. increasingly demanded the opening of the domestic agricultural product market and the IMF-World Bank annual meeting was scheduled to open in Seoul.\textsuperscript{72}

Out of this intense questioning and from a continuous exchange among the different groups emerged a political line that called for direct confrontation with the U.S.’s demand, which later became known as NLPDR (National Liberation People Democratic Revolutionary). In an attempt to base their theory in history, the NLPDR characterized the last hundred years of Korean history as a history of the people’s resistance against imperialist aggression and the present as a fascist regime backed by the imperialist United States. By renaming the April 19th Student Uprising as an anti-imperialist struggle, the NLPDR also

\textsuperscript{71} “The right to live for workers, farmers and urban poor is thoroughly oppressed because of low wages, low prices for crops and forcible evacuations. The people’s struggle demanding the right to live is cruelly suppressed through evil labor laws and policemen’s clubs. Campuses are surrounded by plainclothes police, riot police and pepper fog; surveillance is strengthened against us only for calling for democracy; many students have been forcibly drafted into the military, taken off the school registers and imprisoned; and we are extremely saddened by the suspicious deaths of six students who had been forced into the military. The National Assembly’s Legislation of the Basic Press Law, the Assembly and Demonstration Law, and so on, restricts the everyday life of the nation and blinds the eyes, plugs the ears and gags the mouths of the citizens. How can the Chun military dictatorship be recognized as just or legitimate by the people? Only the U.S. and Japan alone support the government, which is not recognized by the people.” \textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{72} IMF-World Bank joint meetings became a target for student protest because the government restricted street vendors from selling their goods in certain areas. Vendors protested against this claiming that the government “let its own people to starve so that downtown Seoul can be made beautiful for visiting foreigners.” Students joined with them criticizing the government for using the IMF gathering “to conceal the crisis of the foreign debt-ridden economy and to find a cause to prolong its power.” \textit{Korea Communiqué} (October 1985), p. 19.
brought forth the historical precedents such as 1982 bombing of the U.S. Culture Center and the 1985 May occupation of the USIS as a signal for all-out anti-U.S. struggle, pushing for strategies that would explore the true "expansionist nature of the U.S."

In the background of the NLPDR's emergence was also the critical evaluation of the Sammintu that led the student movement since the spring of 1985. The Three Min concept defined the character of the south Korean regime as anti-minjok, anti-minju, and anti-minjung. It followed that the form of the struggle should be that of promoting minjok, minju, and minjung, dictating in theory an equal importance to the anti-imperialist and anti-fascist struggle. The students affiliated with the Three Min ideology led a series of attacks on the government, occupying the ruling party's education facilities and continuously calling for the abolition of the "Fascist Constitution." Charging that this tactic relegated the anti-imperialist struggle to a secondary position by giving primacy to the anti-fascist dimension of the struggle, the NLPDR called for the anti-imperialist struggle as the most immediate and urgent task.73

By the spring of 1986, through the process of the earlier mentioned critique-response-critique, the NLPDR line gave birth to the organization Jamintu (Committee for Struggle for Independent Democracy) while the NDR (associated with Sammintu) gave birth to the organization Minmintu (Committee for Struggle for National Liberation). The contention between these two organizations ranged from who to designate as the main enemy, the military dictatorship (Minmintu) or American imperialism (Jamintu), to questions of organization and tactics. What are the differences between Jamintu and Minmintu? For the sake of simplicity, I will use "NL" to refer to groups that largely follow the analysis of NLPDR (Jamintu and later NLI) and "CA" to refer to groups that trace their intellectual precedence to NDR (Minmintu). This is a rather crude demarcation, for there are many fine points that cannot be put into neat groupings.

The contention between the NL and the CA centers on the analysis of the social formation of south Korean society. At the risk of oversimplification, the following is delineated from their pamphlets and writings. NL sees south Korea as a colonial state, undergoing metamorphosis from direct control (Japanese colonialism) to substitute control (United States), while the CA sees it as subordinated state-monopoly capitalism.74

The difference between characterizing south Korean society as be-

ing colonial, or merely as being subordinated to imperialism, lies in whether the contradiction between capital and labor is the central factor in social formation. Both the NL and the CA see South Korea as subordinated state-monopoly capitalist; however, the point is whether South Korean society has produced a capitalist system with a unique logic of its own (the position taken by those who put central importance on the class contradiction), or whether imperialism, as it sought to assert itself through colonial rule, developed Korean capitalism as a method of domination (the position taken by those who consider the contradiction between the Korean people and U.S. imperialism to be central). This difference caused the NL to criticize the CA for “diluting the colonial nature of the South Korean society” while the CA accuses the NL of “treating indiscriminately the concept of colonialism and neo-colonialism in ideological abstraction, disregarding the developmental stage of capitalism.”

In other words, NL’s position is that in South Korea, like in many other Third World countries, the class contradiction (i.e., the contradiction between capital and labor) takes the form of the contradiction between imperialism and the Korean people. For NL, therefore, the contradiction between imperialism on the one hand and the Korean people on the other constitutes the main conflict, and the main enemy of the Korean people is U.S. imperialism.

Thus, between these two points of view, imperialism, the present regime, and the relationship between them are assessed differently. Of course both sides agree that the present structure is a form of fascism, but the question is, what are the limits within which fascism has a free hand? Is the fascism that we speak of here the alliance between autonomous capital and an autonomous military power? On this question, the CA sees South Korea as a state power (kukga kwonryuk), a product of the deviant development of capitalism, resulting from the seizure of the economic structure by the military dictatorship. In other words, fascism in South Korea is a unity of domestic monopoly capital and foreign monopoly capital on the basis of their common interest. The NL, on the other hand, denies any autonomy to Korean capital and the Korean military. NL displaces the subordinated state monopoly capitalism thesis by stressing the fact that the present form of dictatorship is but a mere tool for U.S. imperialism.

While the previous three Min concept clearly designated who the “main enemies” of the Korean people were (i.e., U.S. imperialism, state monopoly capitalism, and fascism), the CA put all three in the same

75. Haksaeung Undong Nonjaengsa, p. 125.
place. The NL pointed out that imperialism was the main contradiction and the main enemy. While none of the three exist independently, it is imperialism that is the dominant force, and therefore the main target of the movement.

To reiterate this point, the line represented by the CA is generally associated with class struggle, a line that calls for the workers to lead the revolution. The line represented by the NL calls for a nationalist revolution (or national liberation from U.S. imperialism) led by a united front made up of all the revolutionary classes including the nationalist capitalist and the nationalist army. The CA denies the existence of the nationalist capitalist, for south Korean development of state monopoly capitalism did not allow the existence of a true nationalist capitalist. The “united front” concept of the NL has led it to align itself with the conservative “liberals” while the CA emphasized on exposing their true counterrevolutionary class nature. The political objective of the NL, then, is to expel U.S. imperialism, dismantle fascism and other structures that served as tools for imperialism, and establish a people’s democratic society. The polemics between the two groups manifested themselves in their different organizational structures, strategies, and slogans shouted in street demonstrations.

Constitutional Revision

One way of looking at how these different analyses resulted in different strategies is to study the issue of constitutional revision. Under the previously mentioned “liberal era” of 1984 and 1985, the demand for constitutional revision (the constitution was adopted in 1972 by the Park regime and has not been revised since) became the rallying point for the progressive movement. It was clear to the students that the problem of social conflict could not be solved with constitutional palliatives or social policy meliorism. However, constitutional revision seemed to present an opportunity by which the minjung’s zeal could be channeled into a potentially revolutionary direction. The questions students had were: what is the position and strategy of the student movement on the issue of constitutional revision? More fundamentally, should the issue of constitutional revision be debated at all at that particular time? If it is to be debated, what are the positions of the movement, what is the meaning of the movement participating in such a process, and what are the principles and slogans of the strategy?

Minmintu (CA group) responded by staging demonstrations and occupying the opposition party headquarters, calling for a “constitutional assembly” and “down with the military dictatorship.” Its immediate goal was to channel into a true revolutionary path what it believed to be the people’s heightened political consciousness. Since the people’s consciousness expressed itself through the demands for constitutional
revision, Minmintu believed that its role was to actively participate and further the revolutionary zeal. That thousands of people went to the rallies called by the opposition party confirmed to the Minmintu their belief that people were ready to struggle to "obtain [state] power." Lest this zeal be misguided by the conservative (opposition party) politicians, who advocated constitutional revision for their own benefit, the immediate task was to organize the people, so the argument went, and the way was to call for a "people's constitutional assembly."

Jamintu (NL group), on the other hand, criticized its own earlier analysis in their publication Haebang Sonon, that the period of relative liberalism was to be an auspicious occasion for constitutional revision (kaehon kukmyon). The assessment now was that the reform measures were in fact a "reorganization of the power basis" instigated by the imperialist desire to firm up its control over Korea. Therefore, rather than working for revision, the movement should expose the conspiracy of the imperialist and its subcontractor fascist regime and at the same time obtain the democratic rights of the people. The democratic rights of the people were not going to be handed over by the regime through reform measures such as a constitutional revision; rather it had to be fought over. Jamintu therefore responded with slogans of "Anti-war Anti-nuclear" and "Yankee go home!" A series of anti-U.S. activities, from demonstrations in front of the U.S. Army headquarters to resisting compulsive military training (a week long program for freshmen and sophomores at front-line military camps) to "Anti-war Anti-nuclear" demonstrations were held. During these protests, a number of students immolated themselves, an act which further heightened the mood of defiance among the students and brought the stunned public to face the pressing issues. A long time observer of the Korean situation has thus the following to say:

The self-immolations in the midst of the struggle are perhaps the union of strength and weakness, of gentleness and force, of purity and malice. . . .

Contempt for morality and spirit arouses the protests of self-immolation. Formerly in history, a martyr-like conscience and a purified human dignity

79. The students believed that compulsory military training would aid only the interests of the U.S. and began resisting it from 1985. Protesting students faced forcible enlistment to the army, sometimes without even their knowledge. Once conscripted, they were re-educated and forced to make detailed reports on school friends' activities. At least six students in 1986 died under suspicious circumstances while being subjected to this program. See, "Byongyanghwa dwen Hankuk," [Militarized Korean Peninsula] Haebang Sonon (April 25, 1986), p. 1; Also see Korea Communiqué (May 1986), pp. 5-6.
aroused the people, who had no weapons. That moral force demolished the handful of evil powers. In that sense, the self immolations are a way to struggle and a tactic. They can be said to be a symbol pointing out that the evils of this era have reached their limit and that the dawn is close at hand. It is not a failure in the fight or an injurious death. It is a moral way for the conscience of Confucian intellect to live. Because it is a beautiful death, the title of "one who died for justice" is soon given to the person.  

If their act of desperation failed to arouse the public, it helped to draw the previously reluctant and the uninitiated closer to the cause of their movement, yet becoming another culturally inscribed symbolic "strategy," at it were, appealing to the tradition of Confucian ethic and the superiority of defiance that could face death. In the end, their persistent and bold strategies contributed, to a considerable degree, in breaking down the so-called "red-complex" and the strong taboo on anti-Americanism prevalent even among activists.

The Student Movement and North Korea

From 1986, as seen in the debates between the NL and CA, the ideological framework of the student movement took a large leap, both in terms of articulation and organizational strength. Their theoretical contention seems to have a feature all too familiar in Third World student movements: uncritical adoption of Marxism-Leninism. Before taking this view, however, we must refer to the particularity of the Korean context.

As is well known, the division of Korea in 1945 has left the psyche of the country paralyzed; searching for continuity in historical tradition is rapidly cast into sharp ideological terms, if not condemned outright. Students, driven to secrecy by the government attempt to eradicate any opposition from the moment of its inception, and mindful of the "pro-communist" label which could carry years in prison and end their activism, have not had open access to materials concerning north Korea or any other leftist-oriented views. Cut off from a history rich in its ideological commitments (which Bruce Cumings's Origins of the Korean War has amply documented), and confronted with a tradition appropriated by the state and thus seen as distorted and disfigured, the crisis of subjectivity became keenly acute as students faced not only repression but the absence of alternative visions.

80. Korea Communique (June 1986), p. 14. This commentary was written by an anonymous author who has written numerous articles related to Korea and is known only as T. K.

81. The relaxation of the publication law changed this situation somewhat since 1987 although people publishing materials on north Korea still face possibility of charges of violating the National Security Law.

In this context, the fact that students are taking up north Korean analyses has a different interpretation. If we look closely at the underpinnings of the NLPDR's position, it is almost identical to the August Thesis announced in 1945 by the then newly reorganized Korean Communist Party. The thesis, which was the Party's political program, declares the present (1945) stage of the Korean revolution a "bourgeois democratic revolution" and the main task of the revolution "a complete independence of Korea" and providing "revolutionary solutions" to the country's problem, i.e., the distribution of land and nationalization of major industries. The Thesis defined the character of the new government (to be constructed after the liberation) as the "revolutionary democratic people's," although the ultimate stage of the Korean revolution was to be a proletariat dictatorship. What was required in 1945, therefore, was a "broad democratic popular front," uniting all bourgeois democratic elements, except the pro-Japanese landlords and collaborators.\(^{83}\)

Before remarking upon the possible influence of north Korea on the student movement, however, let us consider the context in which it developed. It is not clear when and how the students took up the question of north Korea and made it an integral part of their debate. While the assumption that a modicum of influence would always have existed seems reasonable if only because of proximity, the south Korean government's usual portrayal of the students as pro-communist makes it difficult to extract even a rough time table. One unpublished document dated June 13, 1986 seems to indicate that the issue of north Korea surfaced during the debate on the constitutional revision.\(^{84}\) (The indictment records of the National Security Planning Board would count many incidents of north Korean-directed student activism prior to 1985.\(^{85}\) Beginning around the summer of 1985, as the

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83. Chi-Yun Shim, Chosun Hyungmyung-non Yonku [A Study on the Korean Revolutionary Ideology] (Seoul: Silch'un Munhaksa, 1987), pp. 40-63. There is a problem in suggesting that NL's position is based on this Thesis although the similarity of the analysis is striking. NL believes that the historical legitimacy of the Korean revolutionary movement is in north Korea, especially the Kapsan Faction which Kim Il-Sung led. The Thesis quoted here is written by Park Hun-young (whose purge by Kim Il-Sung for spying is more or less accepted by the NL affiliated students). Given this, a further study on the Korean Communist Party which would shed light on the question of to what extent the Thesis adopts Kim's analysis would be helpful.


85. The case of the Soh brothers is one of the frame-up cases in which the government charged the students or the main leaders of the student group with being communist agents. The Soh brothers were arrested by the KCIA in 1971 and charged with violation of the Anti-Communist and National Security Laws, on the ground that they were north Korean agents sent to Seoul National University to organize students. See Waiting for the Dawn: The Soh Brothers' Case in South Korea (Kyoto, Japan, 1985).
question on the existing U.S.-Korea relationship and how to view the U.S. became central, the question of north Korea was raised. Among the issues wrestled with were: how are we going to view north Korea? More specifically, how are we to assess Chuch'e (the principal ideological framework within which political, economic and military policies are formulated in north Korea)? Is the revolutionary movement in south Korea to be sympathetic to Chuch'e, anti-Chuch'e, or simply non-Chuch'e? Within what framework are we to assess Chuch'e? And related to this, how must we approach the problem of reunification? In other words, is the revolutionary movement in south Korea to be understood simply in the south Korean context, or in the context of the overall Korean revolution? Since people in the south and north constitute one people, doesn't this mean that we must think of the revolution in south Korea as a single revolutionary process? Whether the revolutionary movement in south Korea has a separate identity, independent from the revolutionary process in the north, or whether it is a part of a single, larger process, the question remains: how is the movement actually to be carried out? Should the movement follow north Korea or must it, in the process of independent development, grope toward establishing some sort of a relationship with the north?86

With these questions students again immersed themselves into materials on the Korean War and the north Korean view on reunification.87 The June 13, 1986 underground document suggests that the emergence of NLPDR was a culmination of these intense activities.

The debate on north Korea also gave predominance to Jamintu (NL) over Minmuntu (CA). In their respective official organs, these issues are dealt with clearly in Jamintu's Haebang Sonon [Liberation Manifesto]. Regarding reunification, both NL and CA agreed on establishing first the minjok minju (nationalist democratic) or minjung minju (people's democratic) government in south Korea, and then establishing a peaceful and independent (from foreign interference) reunification through a dialogue with north Korea. The NL believes reunification is an integral process of national liberation, and advocates a continuous struggle for speedy national reunification, calling specifically for the removal of nuclear weapons from the Korean peninsula, conversion of the armistice treaty to a peace treaty, and the withdrawal of U.S. troops. NL sees

86. This is a summary from the document "Ch'oe'g'un Haksæng Undong Naepu ui Nonjaeng Kaekwan," p. 10-11.
87. An Amnesty International report of the so-called "Marxist-Leninst Party" case (in which the students allegedly attempted to set up a Marxist-Leninst Party), shows that the students possessed books, pamphlets and other printed materials inspired by or containing material from "The Selected Thoughts of Kim II Sung" and "Kim II Sung University Lectures" broadcast on north Korean radio. See Amnesty International External Report, Republic of Korea, The Marxist-Leninst Party Case, April, 1987.
reunification as closely linked with national survival and as constituting the most important aspect of the anti-imperialist, self-reliance movement.\textsuperscript{88} The CA has avoided further clarifying its position, only articulating its opposition to the present north Korean system and the future possibility of developing an alternative system. The CA sees the immediate task as the anti-imperialist anti-fascist movement, criticizing the demands of the NL as "leftist extremism" and "adventurism."

From reading the NL's position, it is clear that it places the historical legitimacy of the Korean revolutionary movement in north Korea. Reading clandestinely circulated materials on Chuch'\'e became part of the "curriculum." Soon words like chachu-sung (having the quality of independence), chuch'\'e sung (subjectification, having the quality of self-reliance) became everyday student vocabulary. While the element of bravado involved with the difficulty and the danger of possessing Chuch'\'e materials obviously played a role, it was taken seriously by the students, some of whom went to jail for reading and getting inspiration from it.

First a few words about Chuch'\'e. Claiming a departure from orthodox materialism, which has the explanation of the material world's general law as its fundamental task, Chuch'\'e proposes a new philosophical inquiry, reflecting the drastic changes since the Russian Revolution. These are: what is the relationship between the human being and the material world, the human being as the highest form of material (the unity of the spirit and material)? Is the human the master (chuin) of the world (both nature and society)? Is the world (segye) the owner of the human? In Chuch'\'e, the relationship between the human being and the world, especially the position and the role of the human within the world, is the basic philosophical question.

True to classic Marxism, Chuch'\'e posits the human being as the master and determining force; human being is the pioneer (kaech'\'ukja) and reconstructor (kaechoja) of one's destiny and the world. According to Chuch'\'e, the true nature (ponchil) of personhood inherently possesses three characteristics, namely, chachusung (self-reliance), ch'angchosung (creativity), and uishiksung (having consciousness, as opposed to animals).

The class struggle as a constitutive force in the historical development of dialectical materialism is replaced with the dialectical process of the manifestation (silhyon) of self-reliance; the will of the individual to manifest his or her chachusung and the forces that repress it constitute historical development in Chuch'\'e. This has a significant implication insofar as the notion of the main moving force of history is concerned: rather than the materialistic concept of class (kyekup), it is the people

\textsuperscript{88} Haksaeng Undong Nonjaengsa, pp. 129-130.
that becomes the main force of history. This is where Chuch'e takes off from traditional Marxism.

Chuch'e sees the nature (bonchil) of praxis (silch'on) as the manifestation of chachusung. There are many factors that oppress the full development of chachusung: natural limitations, anachronistic and oppressive social systems, and self-imposed limitations. It follows that not only the reconstruction (kaecho) of nature and society but also that of the individual is required for genuine social change. Herein lies the brilliance of Chuch'e, according to its epigones: The Russian Revolution that overthrew the Czarist yoke has not in its seventy years eradicated the problems of robbery, rape, and alcoholism; the mere change of social system does not overcome alienation and automatically guarantee individual liberation. Chuch'e overcame this limitation of orthodox materialism by making the transformation of the individual an integral and fundamental basis for social change.

This philosophical aspect of Chuch'e is seldom noted in scholarly work; most concerns its utilization in the economic and social development of north Korea. That Chuch'e is largely based on a “quintessential Marxist theme of homo faber, Promethean man whose nature it is perpetually to be transforming Nature, and whose history is made of that dialectic of transformation,” is a claim repeatedly made by Kim Il Sung himself. Before dismissing Chuch'e as “merely a defense mechanism against the unreliability of the Soviet Union as an ally or aid giver, or as a cynical tool used by Kim Il Sung to discredit opposition factions within the Korean Workers Party,” a “culturalist” approach might be warranted: a closer look into its origin, development, and historical effects, aside from its immediate influence on the south Korean students.

In the broader perspective of modern Korean history, Chuch'e can be seen as an attempt to eradicate the “colonized mentality,” thought

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90. Some recent works on north Korean in relation to Chuch'e can be found in Robert Scalapino, eds., North Korea In a Regional and Global Context (Berkeley: University of California, 1986).
91. Quoted in Aidan Foster-Carter, “North Korea,” in Korea, North and South: The Deepening Crisis (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1978), p. 123. Also for the Marxist notion, “History does nothing, it ‘possesses no immense wealth,’ it ‘wages no battles.’ It is humans, real, living humans who do all that, who possess and fight; ‘history’ is not, as it were, a person apart, using humans as a means to achieve its own aims; history is nothing but the activity of humans pursuing their aims.” Quoted in George Katsiaficas, Imagination of the New Left, p. 233.
93. I borrow this term from Wells’s notion of culture as history. See “Concepts of the People in Modern Korea,” pp. 5-6.
to have been embedded in the Korean consciousness through her long history of subordination. It can be regarded essentially as an outcome of the confrontation with Korean history: feudal Yi dynasty marked by 
sadae ("rely on the great") and 
mohwu ("emulate China"); the "cultural assault" of Japanese colonialism on Korea; and the "Coca-Colonization" of south Korea by the United States. Chuch' e must be, then, within this context, seen as a "nationalist" response to the history of foreign encroachment, a method of teaching the right determination of the will. Certainly this kind of attempt at the "psychological decolonization" is not unique to north Korea.

While the notion that the "[human is master of everything and decides everything" is nothing remarkable or innovative (which incidentally finds its appearance in Korean socialism of the 1920s), it is a transformative concept that can find historical reference in nativistic discourse, in the concept of human-being that begins with Tonghak. Beginning with the founder Ch'oe's notion of the oneness of Heaven and Humanity (Innach'on), and later with the social and political emancipation of the minjung (commoners, "untouchables," and slaves) envisioned by the armed insurrection leader Chun Bongjun, the continuity of the perception of the people's role in Korean history can be discerned. The idea of people as masters of their destiny espoused in Chuch'e was propounded by the culturalists from the late 1890s, albeit with varying implications.

In the context of the crisis students faced in finding subjectivity, we might suggest the cultural context of the appropriation of the Chuch'e framework by the students. The minjung are called upon to struggle less against an oppressing class than against an oppressing outside force, imperialism, with a view to bypassing the present (south Korean) rulers and reunifying the peninsula on the basis of a cultural ideal. To

94. This point is also argued by Gordon White in "North Korean Chuch'e." Bruce Cumings also sees Chuch'e as a nationalistic concept—"Korea for the Koreans"—derived from the Koreans' sensitivity of their history of cultural achievement and their present predicament of economic (and political) "backwardness." Bruce Cumings, "Kim's Korean Communism," Problems of Communism (March–April 1974), pp. 34-35. For a historical background on the development of north Korea, see Bruce Cumings, The Origins of the Korean War, pp. 382-427.


96. For example, see Frantz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth (New York: Grove Press, 1963).

97. North Korean treatment of Tonghak renders a different interpretation. As Kenneth Wells shows in the "Concepts of the People in Modern Korea," while the principle of Innach'on is interpreted as a repudiation of the transcendental ideas of god, heaven and as an affirmation of the material processes of history, it is insufficiently revolutionary in its objectives. It is not linked with any minjung property or lineage, but is lumped with a bourgeois phase in Korea history which includes the Independence Club and everything else up to the March First Movement in 1919. Wells, p. 18.
the students in the movement, the NLPDR's call for struggle against "imperialism" is more urgent than the call for "class struggle" of the CA. For them, like their predecessors during the colonial period, the solution to the pressing socio-political and economic issues was thought possible only after or in the process of attaining a common national objective, that of reunification.

The NLPDR criticizes the CA for the "uncritical and mechanical" adoption of foreign ideas, without discerning the socio-political and objective conditions of the south Korean society. The emphasis is on tracing the origin of "our movement," which, though robbed of its historical continuity in the 1950s, has nevertheless kept its pulse: the April 19th student uprising, the 1965 struggle, and Kwangju. In one pamphlet the activists were admonished for their "myopic vision," made narrow by the dominant ideology (i.e. western), that blinded them to the rich legacy of theoretical articulations accumulated over the years. NLPDR advocated the "bold shedding of foreign influence" and the principle of "solving all the problems independently and creatively by placing the issue at question in the context of specific reality and historical experience."

Taken at face value, this kind of pronouncements seem hollow, mere reiterations of Kim Il Sung or Mao. In the context of Korea, however, where the issue of legitimacy still dominates both south and north, it involves a deeper and much more poignant (and politically dangerous) significance. Essentially, the calling for indigenous and independent solution meant, by necessity, conferring legitimacy to north Korea and adopting its ideological offspring, Chuch'e.

This calling for "nationalist solution" is criticized by the CA for siphoning off the energy from what they perceived to be the most urgent and imminent task of building a revolutionary workers' vanguard. The CA's criticism of the NL in larger context concerns the future direction of the student movement: whether to follow the nationalist course or the class-oriented struggle. As the CA is criticized for being a Russian copycat, the NL is criticized for being a north Korean stooge, akin to a fanatic saibri (false, unorthodox) religious group who blindly follow their leader. The debate (and criticisms) is by no means over; what is clear at the present moment is that the student movement, by and large, followed the direction of the nationalist NL over that of the class-oriented CA. The predominance of the NL's position within the student movement was conclusively shown in the number of students involved in the organizations affiliated with the NL and a relative decline of the CA affiliated groups since the 1987 presidential election. This by no means suggests that numbers of students belonging to different organizations could be easily drawn up; in this case a longevity

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and prevalence of manifested slogans and ideas are employed as a yardstick to measure the relative strength of each group.

Since 1988, the NL-affiliated Chondaehyup (National University Students' Committee) has led the student movement with an emphasis on reunification and anti-U.S. struggle, including attempted meetings with north Korean students at Panmunjum, and succeeding in sending one representative to the 1989 International Youth Festival held in Pyongyang.

Concluding Remarks

The south Korean students in the 1980s did not reject tradition nor advocated an adoption of new thinking in the fashion of the "totalistic iconoclasm" of the Chinese students in the 1920s. They rather tried to find what Raymond Williams would refer to as "residual and emergent forms," counterhistories with subversive agendas, through an admittedly subjective and selective process; traditional symbols and values which are thought to have provided seeds for change, which are in turn reformulated and reconstructed so as to bring their transformative potency to the current generation. In their attempts to "dig up the past," they come to confront, invariably, the history of the once-buried people's movements of Korea. It is in this process of actively seeking the historical precedent, that once forgotten and co-opted Tonghak is dug out and given a role, much more significant and far-reaching than perhaps warranted and justifiable. The act of locating the will of minjung as the sovereign cause—which in fact is no more than the effect of their own conjecture—has also conferred the students historical mandate and legitimacy, with which to perpetuate their own world vision and to justify their action.

The epistemological questions of how and why students assumed they were the voice and true representatives of the people, and the only group entitled to and worthy of receiving the historical tradition and interpreting the history, are not explained by "scientific" analysis. They only understood that a subjective will can bring about "functional change in a sign system," and that its process is a violent event. Even when it is perceived as "gradual," or "failed," the change itself can only be operated by the force of a crisis. The student movement scrupulously assumed, or rather, placed themselves in that position of enunciating crisis. This position can be seen as stemming not from the rigorous analysis of their own social and economic position in the society but rather from a particular reading of history as a "active transaction between past and future," which generates the notion of historical responsibility, operating in the framework of pervasive if vaguely defined sense of collective responsibility. They are also keenly aware of their privileged position in society (only one out of four high school
graduates enter university due to the high cost of education and the competitive educational system whose job is more to weed out than to educate) and of society's implicit expectation for them to "carry on the tradition."

If they are burdened by this "historical mandate," they have not betrayed any sign of relinquishing this uniquely "privileged" status conferred to them. Their appropriating of Chuch'ê also lies squarely within this notion of continuity and legitimacy, in the context of nationalist movement of twentieth century Korea. When Korea was colonized, students took on Western ideas and values to build the basis for the future of Korea as a nation and state. The successive military regimes backed by the Western power never held legitimacy; students, with their cumulative act of "secession" from the illegitimate state, in their act of "pitting a horizontal realm" against the prevailing vertical world, have attempted to forge a nation rooted in minchok, minjung, and minchu, bypassing the current state altogether.

The students in the process became both heroes and fools: exalted as some of their predecessors were exalted as "those who died for justice," and jeered for their lack of "practicality." While embracing the "scientific" analysis that called for revolution, the remnants of the past, reverence for "the martyr-like conscience" and "purified human dignity" were upheld with more zealousness than ever. Given to the desperate act of self-immolation, as a way of symbolizing their purity and sincerity, and sometimes successful in generating the reverence and awe among the people they themselves revered so much, the students did not in the end produce a blue-print for the future of Korea. Whatever reform that was achieved with the June Struggle in 1987 was achieved through a massive participation of the people that crossed lines of class and gender. No one else knows this better than the students themselves. Through years of both open and clandestine activism, nurturing generations of activists, they succeeded in bringing the country to confront the question of legitimacy but did not succeed in bringing about solutions to that problem. In the process of working with the minjung, the previously patronized, deprived, powerless, and suffering minjung is entrusted to fulfill the national imperative of reunification, not the students themselves. With no clearly defined role other than being a "vanguard" and "signifier," with no special claim to creativity or ingenuity in their too-familiar Marxist-Leninist language and seeming atavistic visions, that of creating a minjung oriented, reunified country that was ravaged by alien intrusion, the students have nevertheless succeeded in giving a dignifying motive for their revolt: mending history's broken knot and restoring the distorted tradition,
hitherto possessed solely by the powers-that-be and subjected to ruthless appropriation and disfigurement.

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