THE 'GREAT DISILLUSION': KOREAN POSTCOLONIAL OCCUPATION[1]

Word spread quickly that the Japanese emperor would address his empire by radio at precisely noon on August 15. At this time his imperial subjects dutifully gathered around radios to hear for the first time his voice. After deciphering his rather confusing message—that Japan would accept the terms of the Potsdam Declaration—Koreans across the empire took to the streets in celebration. In Seoul, an estimated 1.2 million people packed the public square in front of the city's central train station.[2] Throughout the empire they manufactured makeshift Korean flags, many made from fabric swaths torn from their very clothes, to wave for the first time in decades without fear of reprisal. Over the next few days, weeks, and even months, Koreans lived "incandescent, intoxicating days. The nation took a spontaneous holiday."[3]

That they awoke the next morning to find the Japanese still manning their positions presented few problems; their colonial subjugators surely would soon be repatriated. Few Koreans, however, expected to be reading in their newspapers three months later editorials inquiring why Shinto shrines, Japan's "militaristic symbols of its idol religion," still remained erect;[4] nor did they expect to be reading five months later demands that "Japan's imperial detritus (*chanjae*) be swept away."[5] Likewise, few Koreans expected to find in their December 1949 newspapers commentary questioning whether "imperial Japan was being revived."[6] After all, Japan, by accepting the Allied forces' terms of surrender, had also accepted their orders to disarm its military, rollback its empire, and transform its government into a "peacefully inclined and responsible"

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[1] This paper benefited from comments made at presentations given at the Tsuda Juku University, University of Sydney, Rikkyo University, and at the Modern Japanese History Workshop.
[2] Mun Chaean, *8/15 ŭi kiŏk* [Memories of August 15] (Seoul: Hangilsa, 1976), 20.
[3] Gregory Henderson, *Korea: The Politics of the Vortex* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), 114.
[4] "Sinsa ch'ŏlgŏ hara" [Dismantle the Shinto shrines], *Yŏngnam ilbo* (November 28, 1945). Shinto shrines were generally the first symbol of Japanese colonialism to be targeted for destruction following liberation, many going up in flames soon after the emperor's announcement. At present, one Shinto shrine remains in Korea.
[5] "Ilche chanjae rul ilso hara" [Let's sweep out Japanese imperialism], *Yŏngnam ilbo* (January 18, 1946).
[6] "Ilbon cheguk'i buhwal inga?" [Is Imperial Japan being revived?], *Kukminbo* (December 21, 1949).

body. The imperial broadcast would not immediately return all Japanese to their homeland or wash all traces of their presence from Japan's imperial outposts. Yet, Koreans did not expect to find remnants of Japanese presence lingering so stubbornly, and in some ways even strengthening, to leave such a strong footprint on their postliberation history.

That postwar colonial detritus delayed true liberation from colonial subjugation in hardly a story unique to Korea, or even that of over histories of Japan's colonized peoples. The emperor's broadcast signaled Japan's intention to surrender; it did not immediately end the fighting that had brought so much destruction to the region. Pockets of fighting lingered after his broadcast, and even after Japan formally signed the surrender papers on September 2.[7] Indigenous armies in Malaya, Indonesia, Vietnam, and elsewhere battled their former European colonial subjugators (with Japanese soldiers joining the fray on both sides) for years after.[8] In northern Korea, the Soviet military sustained close to 2,000 casualties, including 691 fatalities, over their ten-day war that began on August 10.[9] Southern Korea endured ethnic and political disputes that lasted up into the Korean War (1950-1953).

Japan's surrender failed to provide Koreans, either in the north or south, with true liberation in the sense of the people being able to determine their political future. Many Koreans were probably aware that the Cairo Communiqué signed by the United States, Great Britain, and China in December 1943 had prescribed their occupation after the war's end.[10] However, the vagueness of the communiqué's wording—Korea would

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[7] To others the emperor's words served as their death sentence as the Japanese military began to kill off some of its victims, including military comfort women. See George Hicks, *The Comfort Women: Japan's Brutal regime of Enforced Prostitution in the Second World War* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1994), 20. Close to 150 Koreans were found guilty of war crimes, and many spent the initial period of their country's liberation serving out their sentences in Japanese prisons. See Utsumi Aiko, "Korean "Imperial Soldiers": Remembering Colonialism and Crimes against Allied POWs," in *Perilous Memories: The Asia-Pacific War(s)*, edited by T. Fujitani, Geoffrey M. White, and Lisa Yoneyama, 199-217 (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001).

[8] See Ronald H. Spector, *In the Ruins of Empire: The Japanese Surrender and the Battle for Postwar Asia* (New York: Random House, 2007).

[9] Ki Kwangso, "Soryŏn'gun ŭi 'haebangjŏk' yŏkhal kwa pukhan ŭi insik" [The North Korean recognition of the Soviet Union's role in 'liberation'] in *8/15 ŭi kiŏk gwa tongasiachŏk chip'yŏng* [Memories of 8/15 and Asian territory], edited by Chŏng Gunsik et al, (Seoul: Sŏn'in, 2006), 195.

[10] The primary Korean language newspaper in Korea, the colonial government-produced *Maeil sinbo* (Daily news), did not announce the signing directly. However, references to the agreement that appeared in later editions suggest that the government-general offices understood that the

be granted independence "in due course"—precluded Koreans from estimating just how long they would have to host foreign troops on their soil. Koreans tended to estimate this period in times of weeks or perhaps months, while the United States saw it as a longer process covering years or even decades.[11]

The long-term effect that these occupations had on Korea was in the delay they caused in the Korean people's decolonization process. Prasenjit Duara defines decolonization as a "process whereby colonial powers transferred institutional and legal control over their territories and dependencies to indigenously based, formally sovereign, nation-states."[12] Postliberation occupations interrupted this process by controlling the reins of political control rather than immediately passing them on to an indigenous party. The southern Korean occupation, organized and directed by the United States, further delayed this process by encouraging Japan's continued presence on the peninsula, rather than banishing it back to the archipelago. William R. Louis and Ronald Robinson's concept of "neo-colonial state"—invisible empires (in the post-World War II situation, the "expansion of American capitalist imperialism") dominating the environments of formerly colonized peoples[13]—only partially explains Korea's postliberation case. As this paper will show, post-World War II global politics subjugated southern Korea to two not-so-invisible "empires"—the victorious U.S. economic and military hegemony and the reemerging Japanese economic influence.

Our focus here is to determine how the detritus of Japanese-ness influenced what Albert Memmi calls the "great disillusion": liberation's failure to erase the elements of colonial mentality.[14] The detritus of Japan's colonial rule in Korea assumed various

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Korean people were aware of this development. One particular reference appeared in this newspaper on December 11, 1943 as an article written in Japanese titled "Kairo yume mongatari wo seigi to jitsuryoku de yaburu" [Puncturing the Cairo dream story with truth and capability].

[11] U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt once suggested to Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin that a twenty-to-thirty year period appeared appropriate. Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War: Liberation and the Emergence of Separate Regimes* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 109. Gregory Henderson notes that estimates ranging from five to fifty years in his *Korea*, 121. The U.S., Great Britain, and the Soviet Union finally agreed on a time frame, five years, when they signed the Moscow Agreement in December 1945, although they ended their respective occupations less than three years after the meeting.

[12] Prasenjit Duara, "Introduction: The Decolonization of Asia and Africa in the Twentieth Century," in *Decolonization: Perspectives from Now and Then*, edited by *idem* (London: Routledge, 2004), 2

[13] William R. Louis and Ronald Robinson, "Empire Preserv'd: How the Americans put Anti-Communism before Anti-Imperialism," in ibid., 152.

[14] Albert Memmi, *Decolonization and the Decolonized*, translated by Robert Bononno

forms. It was initially rather visual: Japanese colonial officials retaining influence in Korea; armed *kenpeitai* (military police) openly roaming the streets of Korean cities; the continued domination of Seoul's skyline by the imposing government-general building (soon reoccupied by southern Korea's second foreign occupiers). It gradually assumed a more discrete form as Japanese repatriated: Japanese weapons in Korean hands; Koreans bickering over Japanese property; Smugglers transporting Korean rice to Japan. Often it circulated as an idea or rumor: the Japan-based Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers (SCAP) grooming Japan to re-colonize Korea; United States Army Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK) supplying Japan with Korean products. Japanese-ness also came to be interpreted through Koreans, rather than Japanese, as Japan's colonial offspring—the *ch'inilp'a* or Japan-friendly faction of Koreans—maintained positions of influence in Korea's political and control mechanisms. These elements of "Japanese-ness" all shared the overpowering image of Japan as Korea's former colonial subjugator that lingered long after Korea's liberation. Japanese detritus, often exploited and occasionally exaggerated, instilled within Koreans a collective image of their colonial past that in many ways exceeded the distain that Koreans felt toward Japanese colonial rule prior to liberation.

Korea's "grand disillusion" resulted from a series of expectations that followed foreign occupations that lasted throughout the first half of the twentieth century. This paper will examine southern Korea's postwar occupation (1945-1948) to understand the strong staying power that its first occupation, the period of Japan's colonial rule (1910-1945), had on modern Korean history. Soon after annexation in 1910, Japan initiated a direct an imposing administrative policy that preached Korean assimilation but practiced segregation.[15] This policy strengthened factional rifts that had long plagued Korean politics and society[16] by dividing Korean responses to Japan's imperial ambitions: Koreans divided over whether they should accept or reject Japanese policies, and if the latter how best to combat them. Liberation deepened the schisms that developed from decisions made by Koreans under colonial rule, with the most evident being the divide separating "patriot" from "collaborator." The United States and the Soviet Union

(Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 3-4.

[15] I trace this history in my *Japanese Assimilation Policy in Colonial Korea, 1910-1945* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009).

[16] Edward Wagner dates factional strife from the late sixteenth century in his *The Literati Purges: Political Conflict in Early Yi Korea* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974).

created Korea's deepest physical divide by partitioning the peninsula at the 38th parallel and by eventually supporting extremist leaders in Syngman Rhee and Kim Il Song. Yet, the foundations for political and social division were established decades prior to these occupations.

Liberation intensified, rather than abated, political division among Koreans in southern Korea and Japan as repatriation further diversified Korea's political spectrum. In southern Korea, an estimated 350 political parties representing a diverse range of political ideologies competed for political influence after USAMGIK announced its intention to hold elections.[17] Early attempts to organize political sentiment around a moderate centralist party failed, and U.S. support shifted toward the extreme conservative elements. This decision ostracized southern Korea's leftwing and central elements (not to mention communist northern Korea) creating further discord and violence. The conservative Rhee administration's rise to power as the first president of the Republic of Korea (ROK or South Korea) in August 1948 all but solidified north-south division.

Korea's occupation history developed along a trajectory similar to that seen in U.S.-occupied Japan. The inauguration of the second Yoshida Shigeru cabinet exactly two months later washed away liberal rule from Japan and strengthened the Japan-ROK-U.S. bloc to combat a similar China-DPRK-Soviet Union bloc. ROK political developments thus synchronized with developments in SCAP's "reverse course" policies: the shift in Japan's occupation goals away from the idealistic goals of democratization and demilitarization toward the more practical goals of economic recovery and military security. Success depended on Japan and the ROK burying their past differences to unite efforts against the new enemy—communism. President Rhee tacitly acknowledged the importance of this shift upon assuming office, and as he prepared to make Japan his overseas state visit in October 1948.[18] Rather than purge "Japanese-ness" he hoped to tame it, provided that Japan relaxed its colonial mentality.[19]

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[17] Kim Kut'ae, *Mi Kunchŏng ŭi Hanguk t'ongch'i* [U.S. military administration's rule in Korea], (Seoul: Pagyŏngsa, 1992), 336.

[18] In a September 1948 interview with the *Kokusai taimuzu* (International Times) titled "Regarding the Future Relations with Japan," Rhee stated that he wished "to have [Japan-Korea relations] restored as quickly as possible. I believe a sound trade between the countries will do good to both of them. Only the Japanese should give up the old idea of exploiting Korea and Koreans." "Interview of Rhee in Kokusai Times" (September 20, 1948), In *Mi Kun CIC chŏngbo bogosŏ* 1 [US military CIC reports] (Seoul: Sŏn'in munhwasa, 1996), 52.

[19] This is not to say that things progressed smoothly between Japan and Korea from this point. To

Understanding these remnants of "Japanese-ness" in Korea requires examination of both Koreas—the ROK as well as the DPRK. However, due to a number of factors, this paper will limit consideration to the ROK. First, the story of Japan's colonial detritus in Korea is more appropriate for the ROK than the Soviet Union-directed northern occupation, which made greater efforts to isolate and erase Japanese influence in the aftermath of the war. U.S. documents note Japanese expatriates and Koreans, many Japanese collaborators, fleeing to the southern zone after the Soviet military's arrival.[20] These refugees carried with them horrendous stories of looting, rape, and violence at the hands of this military. The Soviet military also transported many Japanese men to Siberia to perform hard labor, and, according to U.S. sources, dismantled and shipped Japanese industrial facilities back to the Soviet Union.[21] What it did not take the Soviet occupation government nationalized and redistributed. This history was quite different from that which transpired in the U.S.-occupied southern zone where USAMGIK exploited the talents of Japanese and their Korean offspring.

This paper will examine three important areas in which Japan's detritus was felt in Korea over the years following the emperor's August 15 broadcast: in the Korea-based Japanese population, in the Korean colonial-era collaborator, and in material remnants. It will argue that the negative influence that this imperial detritus had on southern Korea's postwar history manifested in the local civil unrest that ignited soon after Japan's surrender and eventually evolved into civil war. Japan may not have fought in the Korean War directly. But the stubborn resilience of Japanese-ness deepened political schisms born under its colonial occupation of Korea. These remnants disrupted a process by which Koreans were to emerge from their colonial past as a sovereign people. This, of course, did not happen immediately and, given the continued state of the divided Korean Peninsula, it is one that remains unfulfilled. The present situation—two separate Korean

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the contrary, their relations quickly deteriorated over Rhee's terms in office. Rhee famously drew a "peace line" off the ROK coast and began arresting Japanese fishermen who violated it.

[20] This flow of people appeared to go both ways. Ann Louise Strong reported that "Koreans have been migrating from the American Zone to the Russian at the rate of 1,500 a day, according to the figures of the quarantine stations along the parallel." Find her report in "North Korea" (January 17, 1948), *Internal Affairs of Korea, 1945-1949*, vol. 2 (Seoul: Arŭm, 1995), 239.

[21] The United States occupation officials in both southern Korea and Japan filed many such reports. However, the report compiled by the Pauley Commission in 1946 concluded otherwise, that Russians were assisting rather than pilfering northern Korean industry. Charles K. Armstrong, *The North Korean Revolution, 1945-1950* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), chap. 2.

states divided by a three-mile wide demilitarized zone (DMZ)—is thus one for which the Japanese must also bear responsibility.[22]

JUSTIFYING KOREAN OCCUPATIONS

The Korean peninsula remained formally occupied territory for the better part of the first half of the twentieth century, from the time Japan transformed the ancient Chosŏn kingdom (1392-1910) into its protectorate in 1905 in preparation for its 1910 annexation of the territory, until the formation of two separate sovereign Korean states in 1948—the ROK on August 15 and the DPRK on September 9. U.S. and Soviet troops remained stationed in their respected zones until mid-1949. U.S. troops returned to the peninsula the following year after conventional war erupted on the peninsula. They remain stationed here to this day. The ROK thus recognizes August 15 as a day that ended two occupations, even though both occupiers long overstayed any welcome they may have once enjoyed.[23]

The two occupiers defined their missions differently, though ultimately their justifications for initiating their missions intersected. Japan argued that Korea's annexation was necessary to protect Northeast Asian peace and security. The Korean Peninsula had become a magnet for discord among its neighbors as witnessed by the two wars that Japan fought with China (1894-1895) and Russia (1904-1905) to secure Korean independence. The Korean leadership's inability to protect its national interests, argued the Japanese government, required that Japan absorb the peninsula into its empire.[24] Their true liberation, it predicted, would come through their assimilation as imperial subjects. The United States, on the other hand, defined its mission as the liberation of the Korean people from a tragic and unjust colonial history. Yet, like Japan it also explained

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[22] I discuss these ideas as "comprehensive security," the idea that a number of states share responsibility for the dangerous situation that the Northeast Asian region, as well as the global community, face with a nuclear DPRK. See, for example, my "Kitachōsen no kiki ni tai suru shudan sekinin to heiwateki kaiketsu" [Collective responsibility and peaceful resolution to the North Korean nuclear crisis], in *Ajia taiheiyō chiiki ni okeru heiwa kōchiku* [Peace construction in the Asian Pacific region], edited by Sugita Yoneyuki, 130-50 (Tokyo; Daigaku kyōiku shuppan, 2007).

[23] Chŏng Kunsik presents an interesting discussion on the multiple meanings of August 15 in his "8/15 ŭi kiŏk kwa kinyŏn taehan tach'awonjik yŏngu rul hyanghayŏ" [Multidimensional studies on the memory and recollection of 8-15], in *8/15 ŭi kiŏk gwa tongasiachŏk chip'yŏng*, 15-24.

[24] For example, see the summary of Prime Minister Katsura Tarō's announcement of Korea's annexation in "An Important Talk on the Annexation," *The Japan Times* (August 30, 1910).

its occupation as the Korean people being incapable of managing their internal affairs. True Korean liberation, USAMGIK officials argued, rested on their demonstrating the capacity to do so.[25]

That this mistrust in Korea's capacity to self-govern would carry into its post-liberation was clearly spelled out in late 1943, when the United States, along with China and Great Britain prescribed Korea's second occupation after Japan's defeat. The Allies used the Cairo Communiqué to criticize Japan for stealing territories "by violence and greed," and for "enslav[ing] the people of Korea." But these claims were as hypocritical as they were misleading. They were hypocritical because they criticized Japan over its participation in an institution in which both the United States and Great Britain also engaged. They were misleading because the claims hid the fact that these two colonial powers had encouraged Japan's intrusions into Korea.

The communiqué signatories may have been "mindful of the enslavement of the people of Korea," but apparently not mindful enough to lend their good offices in its defense, as they pledged to do in treaties they signed six decades previous.[26] In 1882 the United States became the first Western state to negotiate a modern treaty with Korea. Their agreement obligated both parties to "exert their good offices…to bring an amicable agreement [should] other Powers deal unjustly or oppressively with either Government."[27] Soon after Korea negotiated similar promises with Great Britain, Germany, Italy, Russia, and France.[28] As Japan's intrusions intensified, the Korean government made repeated attempts to enlist the international community to fulfill what it interpreted to be their responsibilities. These pleas, however, fell on deaf ears.[29] These

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[25] This opinion is found in the "Report by the State-War-Navy Coordinating Subcommittee for the Far East" (undated but probably October 1945), *Foreign Relations United States (FRUS)*, vol. VI (Washington, D.C.: The United States Government Printing Office, 1969), 1101. This document defined the "primary purpose of the administering authority for Korea" as making it possible "for the Koreans to accept the responsibility of independence and for Korea ultimately to become a member of the United Nations." Such documents often pointed to the Japanese occupation that prevented Koreans from gaining political experience as reason for this extended tutorial session.
[26] See for example, John Edward Wilz, "Did the United States Betray Korea in 1905?," *Pacific Historical Review* (1985): 245-46.
[27] Extracts from the May 22, 1882 "United States Treaty" can be found in Young Hum Kim, *East Asia's Turbulent Century* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1966), 238-41. Japan negotiated Korea's first modern treaty in 1876.
[28] Martina Deuchler, *Confucian Gentlemen and Barbarian Envoys* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1977), 122-27,169-71.
[29] Both before and after annexation Koreans attempted to gain a seat at various international conferences, but to no avail. For Korea's attempts to gain entrance to The Hague Peace

signatories, colonial powers in their own right, could not criticize Japan over its actions in Korea, particularly after many had negotiated secret treaties with Japan that blessed its territorial aspirations in Korea to protect their own.[30]

Japan's success in part resulted from the global powers believing that Japan's intrusions had been carried out properly—it had gracefully accepted the burden of minding the affairs of a helpless people in a way deemed acceptable by international law. Japan had taken extreme caution to act legally by, in addition to following international protocol, forcing the Korean government to "legitimize" its intrusions by having it sign treaties.[31] These states saw Korea in an opposite way, as a kingdom that clung to tradition and refused to modernize despite Japan having provided it with the guidance it needed to reform. In 1900, U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt wrote that he encouraged Japan's annexation of Korea, as it would serve as a "check upon Russia." In this letter, which he sent to a German embassy official, Speck von Sternburg, the president added, "Japan deserves [Korea] for what she has done."[32] Roosevelt did not specify exactly what Japan had done to "deserve" Korea. He was, however, rather explicit as to why Koreans no longer deserved their sovereignty. In a 1905 letter to his secretary of state, John Hay, Roosevelt wrote that the U.S. refused to support a people who "could not strike one blow in their own defense."[33] His representative in Korea, Horace N. Allen, was even more direct. In a 1904 letter to William Rockhill, a China expert who advised the president on Asian affairs, Allen wrote of Koreans: "These people…cannot govern themselves. They must have an over-lord as they have had for all time. When it was not China, it was Russia or Japan, and as soon as they came out from one they made such an awful mess of things as to oblige someone else to take charge of them…Let Japan have Korea outright…if she

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Conference in 1907 see Alexis Dudden, *Japan's Colonization of Korea: Discourse and Power* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i, 2005).

[30] For example, the Taft-Katsura exchange involved U.S. interests in the Philippines; Japan's 1907 revision of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance fortified Great Britain's interests in India; and the treaty that ended the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905) included a clause where Russia recognized Japan's presence in Korea.

[31] Dudden, *Japan's Colonization of Korea*. For a review of these treaties see Unno Fukuju, *Kankoku heigôshi no kenkyû* [Research on the history of Korean annexation]. Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2000).

[32] Dudden, *Japan's Colonization of Korea*, 314.

[33] Quoted in Howard K. Beale, *Theodore Roosevelt and the Rise of American World Power*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1969), 323.

can get it."[34]

U.S. claims that Korea lacked the capacity to protect its national sovereignty, that it required others to come to its assistance, reflected an image of Korea that Japan had harbored from centuries previous, and one that USAMGIK would adopt in a more contemporary context to justify its harsh responses to the civil unrest that broke out between political factions during its administration of southern Korea. Scholars of the Tokugawa period (1603-1868) used Korea's devoted participation in the Sino-centric order to argue that the Chosŏn kingdom was incapable of maintaining its sovereignty, and to certify the need for a rival Japan-centric order.[35] When Western ships began appearing at Japan's shores in late Tokugawa, two scholars, Aizawa Seishisai and Yoshida Shoin, advised that strengthening Japanese security required Japan altering its relationship with Korea. Yoshida, in his *Yushuroku* [Record of Confinement], reasoned that for Japan to strengthen its national security it must absorb peripheral territories, but also require that Korea "submit hostages and pay tribute as in the flourishing days of old."[36]

Matthew Perry's arrival in Japan intensified this discussion as Japan sought to "modernize" its relations with Korea and contemplated invading the peninsula when Korea responded negatively. During the transition period between Tokugawa and Meiji Japan (1868-1912) Japanese strengthened the image of the Korean peninsula as threat by revising history, as seen in a series of woodblock prints carved just before and after the Meiji Restoration. These pictures revised history *Imjin waeron* (the late sixteenth-century Toyotomi Hideyoshi invasions of Korea) to argue that Japan fought Korea to contain a threat from the peninsula rather than (as Ming China and Chosŏn Korea interpreted this history) an expansion-minded Japan invading Korea to gain access of China.[37] These

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[34] Ibid., 319. Allen had been a big supporter of the U.S. protecting Korean sovereignty until he returned from a trip home to find Korea deteriorating, and the king (Kojong) "playing with dancing girls like Nero fiddling while Rome burned" (ibid.).

[35] Ronald P. Toby, *State and Diplomacy in Early Modern Japan: Asia in the Development of the Tokugawa Bakufu* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), 172-74.

[36] Quoted in David M. Earl, *Emperor and Nation in Japan: Political Thinkers of the Tokugawa Period* (Seattle: University of Washington, 1964), 173. Aizawa penned his expansionist ideas in his *Shinron* (New Thesis). See Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi, *Anti-Foreignism and Western Learning in Early-Modern Japan: The* New Theses *of 1825* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press).

[37] These prints, which can be found at <http://mdat.ff.tku.ac.jp/korea>, showed Hideyoshi's most trusted generals, Satō Masakiyo and Katō Kiyomasa, battling encroaching Koreans who were often portrayed as tigers. James B. Palais notes that the Imjim War claimed about 2 million people, or 20 percent of the Korean population. James B. Palais, *Confucian Statecraft and Korean Institutions: Yu Hyŏngwŏn and the Late Chosŏn Dynasty* (Seattle: University of Washington Press,

depictions coincided with the *seikanron* (invade Korea debates) that took place over the first decade of Meiji as Japanese leaders contemplated whether to punish Korea for refusing to recognize its embassy.[38] From the 1880s, Japanese emphasized two contradictory metaphors toward the Korean peninsula: one that strengthened the threat image, as depicted by Korea described as a "dagger pointing at Japan's heart," and another that introduced Korea as an isolated, stagnant territory, a "hermit kingdom" incapable of protecting itself in the hostile world. Japan juxtaposed these images to argue its cause as rescuing Koreans from an inept government, advising first vigilance and later, after rival threats had subsided, annexation. The Korea-as-threat image returned in the closing days of World War II as the United States and the Soviet Union tacitly justified the need for postwar Korean occupation to protect their interests. Upon assuming occupation responsibilities, the United States resurrected the image of Koreans as incapable of acting on their own by interpreting any civil disturbance in either southern Korea and Japan as an act inspired and directed by the communist north, and by extension Moscow.[39]

The image of a lazy Korean provided yet another often exploited myth that the Japanese and United States also exploited separately to define and justify their occupation missions. Both occupiers linked this shortcoming to an incapable government—the Japanese to an incompetent Chosŏn regime and the United States to the overbearing Japanese colonial system—by arguing that had these administrations been more capable they would have instilled in the people the will to be industrious. Japanese and Americans both noted that Koreans proved to be extremely hard working once they left the peninsula. Japanese often depicted the lazy Korean who remained on the peninsula by displaying him taking a mid-day snooze as his donkey, overburdened with a heap of firewood, waited patiently by its master's side. The government-general's office in Korea listed the removal of the people's "evil" distain for work and their preference for engaging in

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1996), 110.

[38] The Korean government refused the embassy on a technicality: the letter bore the seal of the Japanese emperor whose legitimacy the Korean government refused to recognize. The invasion was delayed in 1872 when members of the Iwakura Mission returned from their global voyage to argue that Japan would face economic ruin if it undertook this mission at this time.

[39] As exemplified by traditional interpretations of the Korean War's origins, an invasion planned and directed by a Soviet Union in pursuit of global dominance rather than a civil war inspired by Korean aspirations for national unity.

"useless and empty talk" as a primary goal of its First Education Ordinance of 1911.[40]

Pre-liberation reports compiled by various U.S. offices initially complemented the Korean people for their industriousness, a people "capable of great exertion for a cause."[41] Yet, soon after September 1945 when the United States established its military government in Korea it began to see the people in a different light. Political Adviser H. Merrell Benninghoff, in a report titled "Conditions in Korea," noted that many Koreans were "voluntarily unemployed." He added, "almost all Koreans have been on a prolonged holiday since surrender was announced…. It is apparent that their idea of independence is freedom of all cares of work and that the world will support them." Lieutenant General John R. Hodge, commander of U.S. forces in southern Korea, cited Japanese industry, which had sapped all ambition from the people, for their lack of "interest in returning to any normal pursuits." Rather than consider Korean "laziness" as a problem of this people's unwillingness to accept orders from a foreign occupier, both he Japanese and the United States followed trends of other occupiers by seeing laziness as an endemic characteristic of the people. Hodge argued that Koreans must understand that they have to "stay on the job and build up their own country for their future and for Koreans."[42]

The December 1943 communiqué that the United States, Great Britain, and China signed in Cairo signaled a turning point in Korean history. Here the three allies promised to end one occupation, but vowed to begin another just as soon as the war with Japan was won. Their employment of three words—"in due course"—incorporated all of the above negative images that they held toward Koreans. Occupation would delay Korea's independence for an unspecified period until the people demonstrated an ability to handle their internal affairs; they remained a threat to the region should they fail at this task. Much of the tough talk that this document used toward Japan was apparently forgotten by August 1945. Even as Japanese cities lay smoldering from Allied air bombings the argument could even be heard that Japan should retain the right to govern

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[40] Chōsen Government-General, *Thriving Chōsen: A Survey of Twenty-five Years' Administration*, (Keijō: Government-General, 1935), 9-10.

[41] Joint Intelligence Study Publishing Board, "Joint Army-Navy Intelligence Study of Korea (Including Tsushima and Quelpart): People and Government" (April 1945), Yi Kilsang, ed., *Haebang chŏnhusa charyojip I*, *Mi kukjŏng chunbi charyo* [Collection of historical documents before and after liberation I: Materials of United States administration preparation] (Seoul: Wonju munhwasa, 1992), 274.

[42] H. Merrell Benninghoff, "Conditions in Korea" (September 13, 1945), in *John R. Hodge mŭnsŏjip*, vol. 3, 3-5.

the Korean Peninsula after surrender.[43] More distressing news for Koreans came even before the occupation forces arrived, when initial orders directed the incoming administration to retain the former administration—both Japanese and Korean—that they were supposed to relieve from duty. This directive sent an unfortunate message to the Korean people that would haunt General Hodge and others throughout their stay in Korea. Yet, more critically, it revealed just how pitifully unprepared the U.S. were for its mission.[44]

UNITED STATES PREPARATION FOR OCCUPATION IN SOUTHERN KOREAN

It would be incorrect to argue that the United States did absolutely nothing to prepare for its postwar responsibilities in southern Korea. Its preparation, however, primarily involved fact finding rather than policy formation. Historically having played a relatively minor role in Korean affairs, United States familiarity with the Korean peninsula, and its contacts with the Korean people, were far less developed than those the U.S. had established with either Japan or China. Thus, much of the information that it collected prior to the war's end was rather fundamental: Korean population, geography, industrial capacity, and the like. U.S. officials also accumulated more useful information and insights on Japanese rule and Korean views on the Japanese and their colonial rule by interviewing people who were familiar with Korea, including former missionaries, Korean expatriates living in the United States, and Korean prisoners of war (POWs). Very little of this information, however, appeared to have translated into practical policy once the U.S. occupation began.

The United States began investigating the Korean situation as early as August 1942, over a year prior to the Cairo meeting. At this time the Joint U.S. Intelligence Committee issued a report titled "Recognition of a 'Free Korean' Organization" that aimed to establish whether the United States should recognize the Korean Provisional Government (KPG) then stationed in Chungking, China, and whether the U.S. military

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[43] A column authored by a Frank Kent titled "A way out for Japan" suggested that if the Japanese surrendered now (June 1945) they should be able to retain Korea and Formosa. Quoted in I. F. Stone, "How Soon We Forget" (June 15, 1945), reprinted in I. F. Stone, *The Truman Era* (New York: Vintage, 1973), 15.

[44] This is the conclusion that most studies on this history reach. See Kim Kut'ae, *Mi Kunchŏng ŭi Hanguk t'ongch'i*; Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, 128-29; Bonnie B.C. Oh, "Introduction: The Setting," in *Korea Under the American Military Government, 1945-1948*, edited by *idem* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002), 2.

could make use of Koreans in the war effort against Japan. This report cautioned against recognizing the KPG until this body could demonstrate that it had gained the support of the Korean people. It offered more positive hope regarding the second concern: the Allied forces should consider ways to exploit Korean anti-Japanese sentiment.[45] Subsequent inquiries would return to these issues throughout the duration of the war though it appears that little headway was made with either issue prior to the war's end.

The War Department issued a second, more extensive, report in June 1943. "Survey of Korea," which totaled over 185 pages, provided general summaries of the geographic, political, social, and economic situation in Korea. These discussions, and others on Korea's Japanese population and the Koreans Japanese language capability, suggest the compilers' dependence on Japanese colonial administration's annual reports that were published in both English and Japanese. Other parts, such as the Korean people's "almost universal hatred of the Japanese," the differences in attitude toward the Japanese by the southern and northern Korean, and the history of the Korean independence movements suggest input from former residents of the peninsula interviewed by U.S. officials.[46]

Once the Allies had decided that Korean peninsula would be occupied after the war, United States officials began gathering information from people familiar with Korea to prepare for this responsibility. While primarily they appear interested in the views of Koreans, on at least one occasion they interviewed a Japanese national who had spent considerable time in Korea. Summaries of most interviews conducted with civilians (but not with POWs) were "sanitized" before being declassified to protect the informants' identity. It is thus difficult to ascertain just who these interviewees were. The case of Kwang Won Kim, a student who came to the United States in April 1937, was exceptional in that his private information remained attached to his interview report. We can assume that more students like Kim, as well as Koreans migrants to the U.S. and missionaries stationed in Korea up until the December 1941 Pearl Harbor attack, were targeted by U.S.

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[45] Joint Intelligence Committee, "Recognition of a "Free Korean" Organization," in Yi, ed., *Haebang chŏnhusa charyojip*, 9-13.

[46] The Japanese began integrating Koreans into its military from 1938 as volunteers and 1944 as conscripted soldiers. In total 130,723 Koreans fought in the Japanese military. Utsumi Aiko, "Korean 'Imperial Soldiers,'" 203-4. The report, "Utilization of Koreans in the War Front" noted that the United States had captured "several thousand" Korean males who had served in the Japanese army, mostly as military or civilian laborers.

organizations for information. From the interrogation reports we learn that U.S. interests centered on the following areas: distinguishing between Korean patriots and collaborators; ascertaining Korean attitudes toward the Japanese and foreign occupation; mapping Korea's transportation and communication infrastructure; and understanding the daily living conditions that the Korean people endured. Interrogators also sought information to minimize the threat of a Japanese-Korean conflict—would the Korean people seek revenge against their former colonial subjugators? What measures should occupation authorities take to minimize this possibility? Another inquiry queried the interviewees' attitudes toward Koreans who had collaborated with the Japanese colonial administration. While it was expected that all Japanese would eventually be repatriated, this line of questioning sought assistance to ensure a smooth and peaceful transition from colonial to Allied occupation, even if it meant herding Japanese and others into concentration camps to prevent a bloodbath.

Those interviewed generally believed that Japanese living in Korea would not be safe once the war ended. They differed in their estimates of the degree to which Koreans would seek revenge. One informant who remarked that Koreans "would turn against [the Japanese] at the first opportunity" advised that they be "placed in protective custody in internment camps…to avoid mob rule."[47] This opinion was rather tame compared to the following:

> The Korean population in general is extremely hostile to the Japanese. Nearly all Koreans would take the first chance to massacre Japanese citizens. So many Koreans have been killed by the Japanese that the population would be eager for revenge.

This informant's advice seemed to advance the need for foreign occupation as a prevention measure.

> Japanese residents of villages and small towns, therefore, should be put in larger internment centers during and immediately after hostilities. They would not be safe in such internment centers unless they were guarded by foreign troops. Though the Koreans would want to kill the Japanese in these centers, they would probably not be very

[47] Yi, ed., *Haebang chŏnhusa charyojip*, 161. Interview conducted on December 20, 1944.

> resentful against any foreign troops that prevented their doing so. All the Japanese in such internment centers, however, should be removed from Korea as soon as possible. It would be necessary to repatriate all the Japanese in Korea, not only to satisfy the Koreans but also for the good of the Japanese themselves, because if they were to be released from the internment centers after some time they would be killed.[48]

Another informant advised the occupation administration to focus on certain groups, rather than the Koreans as a whole. Koreans were generally not hostile toward the Japanese. However, there were "certain groups which hate the Japanese because they have been hurt by them in some way." It was these groups that the occupation forces should quickly seek to control before their anger encouraged mob attacks on Japanese.

> [The] subject recommends that special efforts be made to prevent Koreans from gathering together to form large crowds, as it is then that trouble starts. Even during any national celebration that may be held, subject warns, when it might be thought that all Koreans would be in the mood for enjoyment rather than violence, there will be agitators who will try to rouse the people to attack any Japanese who may be near.[49]

Finally, a fourth opinion suggested that, rather than toward the Japanese, Koreans might vent their anger and frustration toward the foreign occupying troops.

> The Koreans have been under Japanese rule, and their experiences would probably cause them to resent any foreign rule…. Japanese and Koreans should be separated after the war to save embarrassment on both sides. Undoubtedly after the war the Japanese would migrate to the larger cities. This they would do primarily for their own protection and because they feel that the Koreans would retaliate for the cruel treatment which was given them.

This informant also admitted that while Koreans were "in general hostile toward Japanese," it was not necessarily essential that all colonizers be forced to return to repatriate.

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[48] Ibid., 174. Interview conducted on January 2, 1945.
[49] Ibid., 188. Interview conducted on January 17, 1945.

> The Koreans would like to see the Japanese removed from all responsible positions, including that of landlord…. Japanese should be repatriated, primarily because of the fact that these Japanese were sent by their own Government and that they represent the military group in one way or another. In fact the Japanese have been so favored in Korea that it would be really impossible to let them stay. However, … every Japanese should not be forced to leave, if he wants to stay in Korea and if the Koreans want him.[50]

Comments by informants, no doubt influenced by their colonial-era experiences with the Japanese, all demonstrated the concern that Korean grudges against the Japanese were deep enough to cause them to seek revenge should the occupation fail to take proper precautions. As we shall see later, these concerns manifested in more ways than even these Koreans could have possibly imagined at this time.

U.S. interrogators were also concerned over the safety of Koreans who had collaborated with the Japanese. To what extent would these people need protection? One subject felt that many Koreans would empathize with those who held lower rank positions: they "would not be disliked as strongly as those who have accepted high positions under the Japanese."[51] A second informant concurred with this opinion but offered a more developed assessment as to which Koreans would be most endangered: the office that they held under the Japanese would determine the extent to which they may require protection.

> Some Koreans held posts of provincial governors and vice-governors. With some exceptions these office holders were outwardly respected by the population but in reality were held in low esteem by the majority
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> ….
>
> The most hated class of Korean public servants were members of the police, both uniformed and secret police. Many Koreans were employed in both branches of the service, and particular dislike was felt for members of the secret police who cooperated most closely with the authorities to the detriment of the people, and whose members were quite well know to the public…. Minor employees of the post office, the fiscal

[50] Ibid., 204-205. Interview conducted on January 23, 1945.
[51] Ibid., 178. Interview conducted on January 2, 1945.

> department of the government, the railroads, etc. held their positions as a means of livelihood and no resentment was generally felt toward them.

Educators fell into the class of Koreans who, although employed by the colonial bureaucracy, retained the respect of the Korean people. Rather than exploit opportunity these Koreans simply worked to secure a decent life.[52]

These comments offered hints toward the kinds of problems that occupation officials might experience should they fail to quickly purge Koreans in high-ranking positions. However, as suggested above, collaboration would prove to be a concept as difficult to define as it was to judge. Determining the collaborators who were guilty of a punishable crime from those who merely collaborated to survive proved to be a rather difficult hair for Koreans to split. Their attempts to address this issue developed into a subjective activity of separating the excusable act from the traitorous one. The lax handling of this issue by USAMGIK—it exerted little effort to purge such people and blocked Korean attempts to bring them to justice—contributed to the anti-American sentiment that rose within a diverse range of Korean political groups who saw USAMGIK as sacrificing the interests of the Korean people to protect ulterior motives.[53]

Information gleaned from these interrogations apparently influenced subsequent reports drafted to prepare the U.S. for Korea's occupation. One such report that appeared in April 1945, the "Joint Army-Navy Intelligence Study on Korea (Including Tsushima and Quelpart [Chejudo])," considered Korean attitudes toward the Japanese, and advised that occupation authorities move with prudence when dealing with issues that concerned the Koreans and Japanese.

> The Koreans remain as a whole generally hostile to the Japanese authorities, and acts of violence against both individual Japanese who have given neighboring Koreans special cause for grievance and also against the Japanese in general are not unlikely. Under such

[52] Ibid., 168-9. Interview conducted on December 21, 1944.
[53] For discussion on Korean collaboration see Koen De Ceuster, "Through the Master's Eye: Colonized Mind and Historical Consciousness in the Case of Yun Ch'iho (1865-1945)," *Bochumer Jahrbuch zur Ostasienforschung* 27 (2003): 107-131, and Mark E. Caprio, "Loyal Patriot or Traitorous Collaborator? Reassessing Yun Ch'iho's Colonial Activities in Contemporary Japan-Korea Relations," *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* (e-journal, December 2006).

> circumstances, Koreans would be apt to resent violently any protection afforded to the Japanese by the Allies, and immediate internment of Japanese, especially those in small towns and rural areas, may well be advisable as a safeguard against the outbreak of violence.

This report framed the issue of Korean collaboration within the context of those Koreans employed by the Japanese police force, most of whom were either occupied "subordinate positions or are too pro-Japanese to be trustworthy." Thus, it advised, the police force would have to be completely reorganized.[54]

As mentioned above, from early on interest rose over the possibility that Koreans could assume a role in the Allied forces' war effort. This topic was the focus of the report, "Utilization of Koreans in the War Effort," issued about the same time as the Joint Army-Navy Intelligence Study summarized above. This report, compiled by the Office of Strategic Services (OSS, which was absorbed by the Central Intelligence Agency [CIA]), considered whether Koreans could either be organized into a fighting unit, perhaps as second-generation Japanese-Americans had in Europe, or be used as a fifth column to conduct espionage, sabotage, and propaganda work within the Japanese empire. It also noted that members of the Korean Provisional Government (KPG) regularly lobbied U.S. Government officials to use Koreans in the war effort. In September 1943, for example, the KPG applied to the Lend-Lease Administration for "arms, clothing and medical supplies, as well as for financial aid," to equip between 500 and 1000 Korean soldiers in China. To this government in exile, a positive response by the U.S. would have signaled Allied recognition of the KPG as Korea's legitimate government.[55] The United States remained skeptical over the possibility of using Koreans in the war effort. "Utilization of Koreans" noted that the OSS had attempted to train Koreans for undercover tasks but to date "no effective results of this experiment have as yet appeared." It did leave open the possibility that "steps be taken…to utilize some of the available Koreans in the war effort against Japan" as well as by a military government in a postwar occupation of Korea.

The U.S. saw even less potential in the KPG, despite pressure from its Chinese

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[54] Joint Intelligence Study Publishing Board, "Joint Army-Navy Intelligence Study of Korea, 290.
[55] State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee, "Utilization of Koreans in the War Effort," in Yi, ed., *Haebang chŏnhusa charyojip*, 254-255, 257.

allies to recognize this political body. Acting Secretary of State Frank P. Lockhart explained the reasons behind the U.S. reluctance in a letter to Chairman of the Korean Commission in the United States, Syngman Rhee, who had written President Harry Truman requesting that Korea be granted a seat at the United Nations Membership Conference scheduled to convene the following June in San Francisco. The president extending an invitation to Rhee again would have signaled U.S. recognition of the Korean government in exile. Lockhart's task was to explain to the rather persistent and often stubborn Rhee why the U.S. was unwilling to take this step.

> The "Korean Provisional Government" has never had administrative authority over any part of Korea nor can it be considered representative of the Korean people of today. Its following even among exile Koreans is limited. It is the policy of this Government in dealing with groups such as the "Korean Provisional Government" to avoid taking action which might, when the victory of the United Nations is achieved, tend to compromise the right of the Korean people to chose the ultimate form and personnel of the government which they might want to establish. Such a policy is consistent with this Government's attitude toward all people under Axis domination or liberated therefrom.[56]

Lockhart's response neglected to mention another important reason that prevented the United States from recognizing the KPG: its tendency toward factionalism. Indeed, soon after this body's formation in 1919 it quickly divided over the question of how best to seek liberation from Japanese rule, with one faction supporting diplomatic means and the other militaristic means. At least one informant confirmed in interviews the U.S. government's concern that the KPG lacked support of the Korean people. She felt, however, that if the Allied forces were to recognize the organization its popularity would increase among Koreans.

> The people of Korea are informed about the activities of the Korean Provisional Government and harbor mixed emotions of gratitude and suspicion towards them.

[56] Syngman Rhee's May 15, 1945 letter ("The Chairman of the Korean Commission in the United States") and Frank P. Lockhart's June 5, 1945 response ("The Acting Secretary of State to the Chairman of the Korean Commission in the United States (Rhee)") are found in *FRUS* vol. VI, 1028-31. The KPG was initially formed in 1919, in the aftermath of the March First Independence Movement, and selected Rhee as its first president.

> Subject said that jealousy and lack of coordination mark the relations between the Korean Provisional Government in Chungking and its counterpart in America. She believes that popular support would be extended [toward] such a government body provided it enjoyed the confidence of the United Nations [Allied powers].[57]

The fact that the KPG was forced to operate from beyond Korea's borders also hurt the organization's ability to gain support, and might even have acted as a source of friction with Koreans who remained at home. This was suggested by at least one informant who predicted that the KPG would make "a great effort to win the support of various Korean groups" if it gained United Nations' backing, before adding, "…it is very doubtful that it could succeed, as it would meet with extremely strong opposition from the local leaders who have been on the spot throughout the Japanese occupation."[58]

This same informant offered a piece of advice that suggested the importance of the U.S. backing an indigenous group, be it the KPG or another political group: the foreign occupying force arriving in Korea with a Korean filter through which to pass its directives to the Korean people. It would be best, this informant advised, for the U.S. to avoid presenting its ideas directly to Koreans at meetings. Rather, it should "inoculate your confidential leaders as to [a particular idea's] merits" before presenting it to the larger group. After it was ready to present a particular idea at a meeting, the U.S. should "make it appear that it comes from the crowd, the majority, from the Koreans themselves and not from the foreigners."[59] But first it had to nurture a trusting relationship with Koreans who enjoy the Korean people's respect. The United States decisions not to employ Koreans in the war effort and not to recognize a political body such as the KPG left the occupation forces without the Korean voices it needed to explain its policies, and carry its administration directives, to the people. The KPG certainly had its limitations. Yet, it was the political body that the U.S. knew best. With U.S. backing it could have provided the occupation administration with the indigenous body that USAMGIK needed to deliver its directives to the Korean people, at least until elections could be organized.

The same can be argued regarding the U.S. refusal to employ Korean troops. Entering Korea with a loyal contingent of Korean soldiers that had been battle tested in

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[57] Yi, ed., *Haebang chŏnhusa charyojip*, 162. Interview conducted on December 20, 1944.
[58] Ibid., 202. Interview conducted on January 17, 1945.
[59] Ibid., 198.

the trenches alongside their American counterpart would have provided the occupation with a loyal, U.S. trained group to help maintain order in southern Korea. This group would certainly have faced a much better chance at gaining the respect of the Korean people because first, it would have had U.S., rather than Japanese, training, and second, it would have fought on the side of the victors rather than the vanquished. In addition, their Korean language ability would also have filled the critical communication void that the U.S. faced from the time of its arrival. Without these indigenous support systems the occupation administration turned to those with the experience for assistance: the Japanese and their Korean collaborators, a decision that dramatically increased the violence and disorder in southern Korea from the days prior to USAMGIK's arrival.

THE PRO-JAPANESE BIAS IN USAMIGIK POLICY

The United States' decision to initially retain the Japanese and their Korean collaborators until Koreans could be trained critically (and perhaps even fatally) compromised its stated mission: to liberate the Koreans from Japanese colonial rule. Korean backlash caused the U.S. to soon rescind this directive and replace the former colonial administration with direct military rule. However, the damage had already been done, and Koreans, particularly those who calculated the U.S. occupation mission as a short-term transition effort to accept Japanese surrender and leave, soon tired of USAMGIK presence. U.S. intentions to exploit experience made sense at the practical level; it worked in Japan where SCAP used the Japanese government as a filter to issue directives to the Japanese people. Though generally successful, where this scheme fell apart—when SCAP directed Japanese to issue directives that affected Japan's foreign residents[60]—informs us of the problems involved with adopting a similar approach in southern Korea. USAMGIK, in late 1946, would eventually pull together an interim legislative assembly to prepare for general elections to be held in May 1948. Had USAMGIK organized this assembly at the initial stage of its rule it might have been more effective in spite of its limitations, as it would have represented a substantial step toward

[60] Japan's Koreans and Taiwanese populations were generally uncooperative throughout the seven years of U.S. occupation in Japan. One example of Japan-based Korean insubordination was the 1948 "riots" over SCAP's decision to close their ethnic schools. I address this incident in my "The Cold War Explodes in Kobe—The 1948 Korean Ethnic School 'Riots' and US Occupation Authorities," *Japan Focus* (http://www.japanfocus.org/) (November 2008).

full Korean sovereignty.[61] However, it being organized after USAMGIK's initial plan to employ colonial-era officials failed weakened its effectiveness. Opposition groups, appalled by the conservative bias of this body, also saw in the group the heavy influence of the colonial-era collaborator. This bias greatly influenced the discussion and legislation that sought to bring these Koreans to justice.[62]

Japanese influence in Korea's postwar occupation began during the three-week transition period that followed the emperor's broadcast and preceded the XXIV Corp's arrival. During this period the colonial government took steps to ensure their safe exodus from Korea by recruiting Koreans to form a transition government. As they initially believed that the Soviet Union would occupy the whole Korean Peninsula they sought more liberal Koreans to undertake this task. Yŏ Unhyŏng, who had endured several stints in Japanese prisons, accepted the Japanese proposal on August 14 only after Governor General Abe Nobuyuki agreed to the following conditions: the release of all political and economic prisoners; a three-month guarantee of food provisions in Seoul; absolutely no Japanese interference in his state building and political activities; absolutely no Japanese interference in his organizing youth and students; and absolutely no interference in his efforts to train laborers and farmers.[63]

Yŏ had a long, but checkered, relationship with the Japanese that dated back to 1919, when he was invited to Tokyo in the aftermath of the Japanese inept handling of the March First Independence Movement. In Tokyo the Japanese government gave him access to a number of high-level officials to discuss his views on Japanese colonial rule.[64] Japanese officials saw Yŏ's invitation as part of an effort to co-opt the Korean opposition and to rejuvenate international and domestic support for their efforts. In addition, the government-general instituted a reform package that increased education opportunities, opened the media to the Korean people, and designed ways for the two peoples to learn

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[61] For discussion on this assembly see Kim Kut'ae, *Mi Kunchŏng ŭi Hanguk t'ongch'i*, 278-79.
[62] One report described this assembly as consisting of 90 members, of whom 45 were elected and 45 appointed by USAMGIK. Among the elected members, "31 were rightists, 13 were independents, and 2 were leftists." "Report of Special Interdepartmental Committee on Korea (Draft" (undated), *Internal Affairs of Korea*, vol. 9, 147.
[63] Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, 71. Yŏ was actually the Japanese second choice, the first being Song Chin'u, a landlord suspected of having collaborated with the Japanese during the wartime years. See Cumings, (ibid., 473-74.)
[64] For an excellent study of these meetings see Kan Doksun, *Yŏ Unhyŏng hyōden 1: Chōsen sanichi dokuritsu undo* [A critical biography of Yŏ Unhyŏng 1: Korea's March First independence movement] (Tokyo: Shinkansha, 2002), chap. 7.

about each other, among others.[65] In August 1945 the Japanese once again turned to Yŏ, this time to employ his moderate politics to negotiate with the Soviet occupiers Japan's smooth exodus from the Korean Peninsula. Lacking an alternative to Yŏ, and being privy to news of Japan's impending surrender, the Japanese readily acquiesced to his demands.[66] He immediately began to organize the Committee for the Preparation of Korean Independence (*Chosŏn kŏn'guk chunbi wiwŏnhoe*, CPKI).

Soon after, the Japanese learned that the United States and the Soviet Union would divide the occupation duties at the 38th parallel and they withdrew their support for Yŏ, whose politics and activities now served to strengthen their case that communists were overrunning the Korean Peninsula. The Japanese informed the U.S. that communists were overrunning the peninsula. The U.S. advised the Japanese to maintain their positions to maintain peace and order, at least until the U.S. military arrived.[67] Conservative Koreans continued the assault on Yŏ after USAMGIK established its offices in Seoul. They advised the U.S. administration that the CPKI, along with the KPR were communist. Separately they also warned that the Korean People's Republic (*Chosŏn inmin konghwa'guk*, KPR), where Yŏ served as vice-chairman, had been organized by a "group of pro-Japanese collaborating Koreans." Somehow, as Bruce Cumings notes, USAMGIK was unable to square the contradiction of Yŏ being both "communist" and "pro-Jap."[68]

Yŏ continued his political efforts even after the Japanese betrayed him. He focused on forming a centralist transition government that would be palatable to both the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Yŏ had much to offer USAMGIK. He was well educated, a Christian, and could speak English. His moderate view—a "populist" in Bruce Cumings' view—would have proven most useful for calming southern Korea's political turmoil, but also for reunification negotiations with northern Korean leaders. However, Yŏ, was not prepared to act as the mouthpiece for USAMGIK directives. U.S. officials also found his politics too far to the left, and thus inappropriate for this role even though his name

[65] The new governor general, Saitō Makoto explained Japan's purpose in his "A Message from the Imperial Government to the American People: Home Rule in Korea." *The Independent* (January 31, 1920): 167-9. For analysis of these reforms see Frank P. Baldwin, Jr. "The March First Movement: Korean Challenge and Japanese Response." Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1969; and Caprio, *Japanese Assimilation Policy in Colonial Korea*, chap. 4.
[66] Listed in ibid., 45. See also Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, 70-73.
[67] Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, 127
[68] Ibid., 141-42.

appears on membership rosters (always as a minority member among conservatives) of various advisory committees. Though not a card-carrying member of the Communist party, Yŏ had traveled to Moscow in 1921 to attend the Congress of the Toilers of the Far East,[69] and again after the war to meet with the northern Korean leader, Kim Il Sung. U.S. reports, while acknowledging his membership to be at best "nominal," argued that his relations with the left-wing Korean Peoples Republic demonstrated the radical foundation of his politics.[70]

The order to retain Japan's colonial administration, however, came from Tokyo. Almost a week prior to the XXIV Corp's arrival General Douglas MacArthur, as Commander in Chief of he United States Army Forces in the Pacific, and head of the U.S. Asian Occupation operations, issued Proclamation No. 1. Here MacArthur declared his authority over the Korean people: "By virtue of the authority vested in me as Commander in Chief, United States Army Forces Pacific, I hereby establish military control over Korea south of 38 degrees north latitude and the inhabitants thereof…" The conditions that followed mirrored the arrogance that the commanding officer displayed in declaring his own legitimacy. Article III reflected the spirit of Japan's Peace Preservation Law (*chian ijhō*) of 1925 in that it empowered governing authorities to determine the legality of a particular action after the fact, rather than concretely specifying illegal acts in advance:[71] "All persons [are to] obey promptly all my orders and orders issued under my authority. Acts of resistance to the occupying forces or any acts which may disturb public power and safety will be punished severely." This article would be employed often in attempts to control the activities of extremists. But it was Article II, which ordered Japanese and pro-Japanese Koreans to maintain their posts, that many Koreans felt

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[69] Ibid., 474. Cumings offers biographical information on Yŏ in his "Conclusion: Liberation and Reconciliation in Korea," in *Korea Under the American Military Government, 1945-1948*, edited by Bonnie B. C. Oh, 151-63 (Westport: CT: Praeger, 2002). For Yŏ's activities under the U.S. Occupation see Lim Ch'ŏl, "Dokuritsu, tōtsu, 'shinpōteki minshushugi' wo motomete Mongyang: Yŏ Unhyŏng (Yŏ Unhyŏng's dream of independence, unification, and 'progressive democracy') in *Nijū seki wo ikita Chōsenjin: 'Zainichi' kara kangaeru*, edited by Lim Ch'ŏl, Sŏ Kyŏngsik, and Ch'oe Kyŏngdal, 9-35 (Tokyo: Taiwashobo, 1998).

[70] See, for example, United States Army Military Government in Korea, Bureau of Public Information, "Political Trends 20" (February 10, 1946), *G-2 Periodic Report: Purok* [Supplement], (Seoul: Institute of Asian Culture Studies, Hallym University, 1990), 59.

[71] This law, which rendered illegal any act that led to the disruption of peace and security, was used to round up suspected people days before Sunjong, the last Korean emperor was buried on June 10, 1926. The ROK government would issue a similar law in 1948 when it passed the National Security Law, which remains active to this day.

revealed USAMGIK's true feathers.

> Until further orders, all governmental, public and honorary functionaries and employees, as well as all officials and employees, paid or voluntary, of all public utilities and services, including public welfare and public health, and all other persons engaged in essential services, shall continue to perform their usual functions and duties, and shall preserve and safeguard all records and property.[72]

The State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee rescinded this directive one week later, blaming the mistake on Commanding Officer Lieutenant General John R. Hodge rather than MacArthur. It instructed: "the recent report that the U.S. Commander in Korea has decided temporarily to retain the Japanese Governor-General and other Japanese officials in Korea has already had an unfortunate effect on our position in Korea and is contrary to the general intent and policies…"[73] Four days later, acting Secretary of State Dean Acheson informed President Harry S. Truman that the Joint Chiefs of Staff issued a directive "looking to the immediate removal of [these high-level Japanese officials]."[74]

The damage, however, was irreversible. MacArthur's shortsighted directive along with Hodge's expression of gratitude toward the Japanese administration and police for keeping the peace (despite their having killed a number of Koreans in the process) demonstrated to Koreans that the U.S. administration favored their erstwhile enemy over the Koreans they had come to liberate. Hodge continued to pour more oil onto this fire. On one occasion he was reported to have labeled Koreans the "same breed of cats" as the Japanese.[75] He also instructed the Koreans that they would have to "demonstrate to the democratic nations of the world and to me…your capacities and abilities as a people."[76] Yet, Koreans may also have rightfully questioned the "authority

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[72] "Proclamation No. 1 by General of the Army Douglas MacArthur," (September 2, 1945), *FRUS*, vol. VI, 1043-4.
[73] "Memorandum by the Acting Chairman of the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee," (September 10, 1945), ibid., 1044.
[74] "Memorandum by the Acting Secretary of State to President Truman," (September 14, 1945), ibid., 1047.
[75] Quoted in Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, 138. Hodge, ever critical of the American press in Korea, claimed that he was misquoted. Yet this quote received wide coverage in the press and remains a part of his administration's legacy.
[76] Quoted in ibid.

[that] vested in [MacArthur]" the power to "establish military control" over any part of Korea. Many saw the change from "government-general" to "military government" as representing two sides of the same coin. The Americans governed from the same imposing building that the Japanese used as their government-general headquarters; the police housed their prisoners in the same eerie jail used by the Japanese police to torture their prisoners. Indeed, they may have jested, if Hodge did not sleep in the very bed that the recently ousted Governor-General Abe had used, they probably claimed the same room as their living quarters.

The USAMGIK administration may have excused former Japanese officials of their governing duties, but as a memo penned by political advisor H. Merrell Benninghoff attests, their services and advise were still very much in need.

> The removal of Japanese officials is desirable from the public opinion standpoint but difficult to bring about for some time. They can be relieved in name but must be made to continue [to] work. There are no qualified Koreans for other than the low-ranking positions, either in government or in public utilities and communications. Furthermore, such Koreans as have achieved high rank under the Japanese are considered pro-Japanese and are hated almost as much as their masters. The two most difficult problems at present are: The Koreans continue to be subject to Japanese orders, and conditions in the police department and among the rank and file of the police are bad. It is believed that the removal of the Governor General and the Director of the Police Bureau, both Japanese, accompanied by wholesale replacements of police personnel in the Seoul area will mollify irate Koreans even though the government itself is not strengthened thereby.[77]

Indeed, U.S. officials continued to seek guidance from Japanese on a number of issues. Tsuboi Sachio, a high-ranking member of the Japanese police force whose duties included interrogating Korean communists, recalls his repatriation being delayed to allow him to cooperate with the Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC, later to be absorbed by the CIA).[78] As seen in many Japanese controlled areas in East Asia, the postwar period saw

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[77] "The Political Adviser in Korea (Benninghoff) to the Secretary of State," (September 15, 1945), *FRUS*, vol. VI, 1049-1050. This report was dated September 13, 1945.
[78] Tsuboi Sachio, *Aru Chōsen sōtokufu keisatsu kanryō no kaisō* [Memoirs of a Korean government-general police bureaucrat] (Tokyo: Sōshisha, 2004), 149.

the Japanese military, against whom the Allied forces had fought so hard to defeat, now riding shotgun to help Allied forces squelch nationalist uprisings that emerged to fill the political void created just after Japan's defeat and before their former Western colonizers returned.[79] The people of southern Korea witnessed one version of this twist of irony the very day that the XXIV Corps arrived as Japanese soldiers lined the parade route to "protect" U.S. troops from the Korean masses.[80]

Often it was the Koreans who required protection from the Japanese. USAMGIK began to disarm the approximately 180,000 Japanese soldiers and military police soon after it had settled in. It ordered them to register at designated locations to turn in their weapons in preparation for their repatriation. Accounts of this process note that these Japanese were generally cooperative. Pictures show the soldiers passively laying down their weapons at the feet of occupation soldiers.[81] A rather large number, however, refused to report. Some seeking to escape possible punishment or humiliation changed their clothing, their name, and their profession and posed as civilians.[82] Others organized into rogue gangs that committed acts of terror to disrupt occupation operations.

Information carried in the September 13, 1945 edition of the General Staff Section 2 [G-2] Periodic Reports (from now G-2 Periodic Reports)[83] reflected the conflicting behavior of Japanese soldiers. On the one hand, these reports noted that the disarmament "of 75% of the Japanese troops in the In'chon-Seoul area had progressed in a surprisingly smooth manner. In many incidences the units lined up and laid their weapons and equipment at their feel without hesitation." This report added that among the remaining 25 percent were Japanese who had been allowed to "retain small arms for their own

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[79] This theme runs through Ronald H. Spector's *In the Ruins of Empire*.

[80] Hodge apparently ordered the Japanese to keep Koreans away from the American soldiers so as not to "hinder the landing operation." Cumings, *Origins of the Korean War*, 137-38.

[81] By February 15, 1946, exactly six months after the emperor's message, a total of 178, 732 Japanese soldiers had been returned to Japan, 17 remained as prisoners of war, and 529 others awaited repatriation. The numbers of POWs and remaining troops dipped to 16 and 509, and remained there for some unspecified reason until May 1946, as calculated daily in the G-2 Periodic Reports.

[82] The customs offices appeared to attract former Japanese soldiers, as the United States military discovered in October 1945 when it found 12 such soldiers who had falsified their employment records working at the Inch'ŏn Customs house. G-2 Periodic Reports (October 5, 1945), 115-16.

[83] This was the information branch of the XXIV Corps. Park Chan-pyo, "The American Military Government and the Framework for Democracy in South Korea," in Oh, ed., *Korea Under the American Military Government*, 125. G-2 Periodic Reports are found in the four-volume set *Mi Kukgun tonggun saryŏngbu G-2 iril chŏngbu yoyak* (Far East Command, U.S. Army G-2 Daily Intelligence Summary) (Seoul: Institute of Asian Culture Studies, Hallym University, 1999).

protection…" This same report also recommended caution:

> The returning to civilian life of these military personnel may present a serious problem, in that many of them are wandering aimlessly through the streets, some still in uniform and armed. In addition…many instances of desertion have occurred in the Japanese army and the fact that some of these may be perspective trouble-makers cannot be taken lightly.[84]

From October 1945, G-2 Periodic Reports carried frequent updates on ex-*kenpeitai* and civilians, both Japanese and Koreans, who had joined underground gangs. The first such report, issued on October 1, announced the arrest of eleven gang members—nine men and two women. It listed the group's purposes as follows: to collect information and weapons; to assassinate U.S. military personnel and prominent Koreans to create confrontation between Koreans and Americans, and, if necessary, to sacrifice their lives for the cause.[85] Further inquiry revealed that these Japanese, along with many others not yet in custody, collected weapons and ammunition with the intention of carrying out a "wave of terrorism aimed against Koreans."[86]

Over the next few months USAMGIK made more arrests and interrogated more Japanese connected with these gangs. Contradictions and conflicts in testimony complicated efforts to separate the guilty from the innocent. An October 6 report that summarized the results of the CIC's interrogation of Nishihiro Tadao was particularly revealing. Nishihiro helped fund an underground organization headed by a Korean, Kim Ke Cho (alias Nakamura), that operated a string of dance halls, cabarets, theaters, hotels, and other recreation venues designed to attract U.S. occupation personnel business. His organization also provided prostitution services. Nishihiro raised illegal funds to distribute to Japanese and Korean organizations on the peninsula, and channeled this money through organizations such as the Japanese Relief Society (*Nipponjin sewakai*), which organized to protect Japanese and facilitate their repatriation. One activity of this organization was to introduce Japanese to alternative (and illegal) passage home. On one occasion Nishihiro contributed 2 million yen to this organization with the understanding

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[84] G-2 Periodic Reports (September 13, 1945), 11. This edition also noted in a section titled "Secret Organizations" that "approximately 100 Kamikaze personnel are at large and that [Japanese General Kosuki] is much concerned about it" (ibid., 12.).
[85] G-2 Periodic Reports (October 1, 1945), 97-98.
[86] G-2 Periodic Reports (October 5, 1945), 114.

that 600,000 of this money would be passed on to Kim.[87]

Subsequent reports revealed the violent nature of these groups. Two days later G-2 Periodic Reports announced the arrest of a Saitō Toshinaru, the alleged leader of the group of Japanese whose arrest was reported on October 1, in connection with the murder of one Korean and the wounding of another. Saitō, apparently rather cooperative, informed his interrogators that his group was but a "small clog in a much larger" organization. He listed other Japanese who were involved in the murder of Koreans, and estimated that at present there were roughly 700 armed ex-*kenpeitai* roaming the streets of Seoul.[88] Information on the activities of such organizations increased as the police made more arrests. Information gained from the interrogations of Sagoya Yoshiaki, Yoshi Saki, and Fujimoto Amiri who were arrested on September 29 in connection with opium sales offers us a window into the range of activities conducted by these underground organizations, as well as the type of people who joined them. In addition to finding 990 kilos opium, police also collected a cache of Japanese weapons that included 76 pistols and 3000 rounds of ammunition. The prisoners informed that they had obtained the weapons from the Japanese military and planned to use them in their terrorist activities.[89] Sagoya admitted to coming to Korea after serving a ten-year prison sentence for his involvement in the 1931 assassination of Japanese Prime Minister Hamaguchi Osachi.[90]

The Military Government initially believed that the arrest of Major Kawai Chudo, announced on October 21, would prove to be an important break in this investigation. Kawai headed the Seoul division of the *kenpeitai* and, according to Saitō, was the ringleader of this extended network of undercover gangs. A week earlier, G-2 Periodic Reports had announced that Kawai had been spotted in Taejŏn with his mistress awaiting repatriation when he suddenly disappeared.[91] The military police finally caught up with him and he was brought to Seoul for questioning. However, his interrogators were never able to squeeze enough evidence from him to warrant bringing him to trial. He claimed that his activities were innocence and that Saitō had framed him out of revenge for Kawai's ordering his arrest in August 1945 after Saitō had instigated trouble between Koreans and Japanese. The major also argued that, rather than Japanese, it was the

[87] G-2 Periodic Reports (October 6, 1945), 118.
[88] G-2 Periodic Reports (October 9, 1945), 124.
[89] G-2 Periodic Reports (October 10, 1945), 128.
[90] G-2 Periodic Reports (October 13, 1945), 143.
[91] G-2 Periodic Reports (October 15, 1945), 151-52.

communists and members of the Soviet Consulate who was responsible for the violence in southern Korea.[92] Unfortunately, Kawai fades from the pages of the G-2 Periodic Reports before we learn of his eventual fate. We might assume that the military government released him with a stern warning that quick repatriation would be in his best interests, a procedure that occupation officials often employed in the cases of such Japanese whose guilt they suspected, but could not prove.

Saitō (or Kawai)'s organization was but one of a number of illegal gangs terrorizing Korean streets. On October 21 G-2 Periodic Reports carried information on yet another such organization run by a Hokuma Hitomi. The goals of his organization mirrored that of others: to disrupt occupation efforts in southern Korea; to assassinate famous Korean leaders; to create strife between the Soviet Union and the United States; and to circulate false rumors and reports on the conditions in northern Korea. Hokuma's group also sought to encourage Japanese soldiers who remained in Manchuria to rise up against the American military stationed there. His interrogation revealed that this particular organization had been formed in June 1945, months prior to Japan's surrender. Hokuma maintained the ideal that Japan would one day rise again to greatness.[93] Like Kawai, he too denied being its leader. His role was but a section chief within a larger network headed by a Uki Yoshimiju.[94]

Like the character of Kawai, these people also disappear from the G-2 Periodic Reports before we learn of their fates. In total U.S. officials interrogated 60 Japanese—16 of whom were released for lack of evidence. Of the remaining gang members, 28 received prison sentences that ranged from three months to five years of hard labor. Some of the guilty were imposed fines of up to 75,000 yen. We might expect that Saitō, who pleaded guilty to murdering at least one Korean, faced prison time and a possible fine. After serving their terms they were to be immediately returned to Japan, although we might suspect that these prisoners may have been prematurely released to Japanese custody either after the formation of the ROK or before the outbreak of war on the Korean Peninsula.[95] The U.S. Military Government's decision to forgo investigation or trial of

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[92] G-2 Periodic Reports (November 30, 1945), 355.
[93] Hokuma's confidence that Japan would return to its military greatness was an idea often heard in the weeks following Japan's surrender, and may have been one of the reasons that Japanese soldiers squirreled weapons in man-made caves along the Korean coast.
[94] G-2 Periodic Reports (October 26, 1945), 199.
[95] G-2 Periodic Reports (November 29), 351; (December 5, 1945), 379.

those who pleaded innocent, and to simply urge them to quickly repatriate, suggests these cases to be of relatively low priority. Evidently USAMGIK had more pressing matters to consider. The sooner these troublemakers were off Korean soil, the easier its job would be.

Korean groups exploited these incidents in their publications that criticized USAMGIK and its policies. One leaflet circulated around Seoul by the Propaganda Committee of the KPR (*Chosŏn inmin kong hwa'guk*) questioned why, after almost one month, the United States had yet to complete its most important task: clearing Korean streets of armed and violent Japanese.

> It has already long since the United States entered, but still now Japanese soldiers with weapons roam about in the street; Japanese imperialist devils, at their last gasp, doing such barbarous acts as setting fires, discharging rifles, killing by thrust, throwing bombs and so on by night, crawl in the city of Keijo [Seoul]. Oh! What hateful acts they are.[96]

Koreans responded by forming rival gangs to protect their fellow Koreans from these Japanese. These gangs also harassed Japanese and intimidated Koreans that they considered to be national traitors. The Public Peace Committee (PPC) in North Kyŏngsang Province, for example, declared its purpose for organizing as countering Japanese aggression and replacing the Japanese police and military forces. USAMGIK, however, soon ordered the group to disband. The PPC challenged General Hodge's decision asking whether the commander was prepared to dispatch military troops to protect the Korean people from the Japanese who continue to "plunder our land."[97] The Youth Peace Preservation Corps (*K'ŏnguk ch'ŏngnyŏn ch'iandae*), organized by the CPKI, carried a similar purpose. It mobilized 2,000 young Koreans to counter a police force that remained staffed by colonial-era officers.[98]

G-2 Periodic Reports reveal the activities of these "peace preservation groups" to be anything but peaceful. In October 1945, in the Pusan area, the Public Peace Party

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[96] G-2 Periodic Reports (October 13, 1945), 143-44. This leaflet was dated September 30.
[97] "Letter to Hodge from the PPC" (September 16, 1945), *John R. Hodge mŭnsŏjip, 1946.6-1948.8*, vol. 3, Seoul: Institute of Asian Cultural Studies, Hallym University, 1995), 16-18.
[98] For descriptions of various peace preservation groups see Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, 74-75.

(*ch'iandae*) "seized all Japanese males over 17 years of age and all Japanese military personnel, and jailed them." This "Communist-inspired group" (the police uncovered a communist flag among its possessions) was driven to act when USAMGIK neglected to appoint even one member of the local People's Committee to an advisory committee.[99] The Young Men's Suicide Alliance (*Kyŏrsi ch'ŏngnyŏn dongmaeng*) organized for similar purposes. Led by a Kim Il Sei as an "underground organization with terrorist intent," this group often beat and robbed Japanese civilians, and assaulted Koreans who dealt with Korea-based Japanese in any positive way.[100]

Koreans subjected Japanese residents to more sporadic acts of violence and intimidation. They detained and kidnapped them, robbed them in their homes, and on occasion even murdered them. Korean laborers also used force to gain from their former Japanese employers both back and future wages. One report told of 300 Korean laborers kidnapping their former boss at Hitachi Iron Works and, after beating him, leading the executive from bank to bank to squeeze from him a total of three million yen, of which they were able to collect but one third.[101] On another occasion Koreans repatriated from Japan attempted to collect 2,500 yen each from the Japanese mayor of Kunsan, who had arranged their forced passage to Japan in the first place.[102]

Finally, Koreans targeted Japanese out of revenge for colonial-era injustices. In November 1945 police arrested four Korean members of the House Destroyed Sufferers League (Korean not provided), for kidnapping a Japanese women. The Koreans had planned to hold the woman hostage until her husband transferred ownership of their home to them. The bilingual (English and Korean) sign found at the League's headquarters read: "Keep Out – This house is occupied with the support of [military government] by one of the sufferers who had his house destroyed by the Japanese government in Seoul."[103]

Reports authored by General Hodge frequently praised the repatriation efforts being made on both sides of the East/Japan Sea. While generally correct—most Koreans and Japanese appear to have returned to their homeland with discomfort, but without

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[99] G-2 Periodic Reports (October 19, 1945), 166-67.
[100] G-2 Periodic Reports (November 12, 1945), 270. Kim Il Sei attended the Japanese Military Academy but deserted and fled to the Soviet Union (ibid.).
[101] G-2 Periodic Reports (October 2, 1945), 101.
[102] G-2 Periodic Reports (October 6, 1945), 119.
[103] G-2 Periodic Reports (November 21, 1945), 327.

disturbing incidence—there was also the underside of this story that Hodge chose to ignore. At a July 1947 press conference the commanding officer gushed over U.S. successes, but glossed over the troubles that his own reports frequently documented: "We got the Japanese out without one incident. We had 186,000 armed Japs here, and had no trouble with them at all. They got out in about six weeks. Then we followed with about 500,000 civilians, plus many more who came down from the North."[104] The October 25 G-2 Periodic Report, which carefully documented the legal repatriations in and out of southern Korea, reported at around the six-week mark that the U.S. had repatriated just over 100,000 Japanese troops, far short of Hodge's claims. The news carried in this report also addressed many of the problems that USAMGIK was having with uncooperative Japanese. On this particular day it reported on the plight of Major Kawai—then being transported to Seoul on suspicions of leading an underground terrorist organization. This report also described a poster found just one block from the U.S. Military headquarters distributed by the Great Virtue With Blood Group (*Tai'i hyŏlmaeng dan*) that suggested U.S. efforts to be even more violent than those of the Japanese: "MP's are using night sticks on the streets and in private homes. Even Japanese Imperialists never did this. This is not American liberalism. We are not savages like Africans as you think."[105] The majority of the 700,000 Japanese residents in southern Korea, as well as their Korean neighbors, perhaps remained distanced from disturbances caused by either Japanese or Koreans. However, news of this violence carried out between Japanese and Koreans no doubt caused people concern over their personal safety, and forced them to make adjustments to their daily lifestyles. This news was hardly encouraging to Japan-based Koreans contemplating whether to return to Korea, and offered them one more important reason to remain in Japan until things cooled down.

The problems discussed above return us to the concerns that U.S. interrogators displayed in their wartime interviews with Koreans over the safety of Korea-based Japanese in liberated Korea. Should USAMGIK have incarcerated Japanese to prevent the violence that broke out following Korea's liberation? Korean liberation did not explode into the bloodbath that some predicted, and the violence that did break out was relatively mild when compared to other places in Japan's former empire. Unique to Korea was the cumulative effect that this violence carried in the years leading up to the Korean

[104] "Press Conference" (July 23, 1947)," *John R. Hodge mŭnsŏjip*, vol. 3, 249.
[105] These news items are found in G-2 Periodic Reports (October 25, 1945), 191-95.

War. The failure to pacify it at this early stage enabled the violence to gain momentum as political divisions deepened. How much of this violence could have been prevented had the USAMGIK arrived with plans to quickly establish the mechanisms of control and repatriate Japanese is a question that, though perhaps impossible to answer, cannot go ignored. USAMGIK's inability to sweep from southern Korea the residue of "Japanese-ness"— the Japanese that remained at their posts, the lingering presence of Japanese nationals, and the armed Japanese *kenpeitai* who roamed Korea's streets—resulted in part from its relaxed attitude toward Korea's former colonial occupiers, which quickly sapped any credibility that Koreans may had bestowed upon their liberators in early September 1945. Japanese repatriation was completed within a year of liberation, save for pockets of Japanese whose skills kept them employed in both northern and southern Korea. As Japanese targets dwindled Korean opposition stepped up attacks on their colonial offspring—pro-Japanese collaborators that USAMGIK continued to maintain in positions of influence.

THE PRO-JAPANESE COLLABORATOR ISSUE

It has only been until just recently that the Korean people have been able to seek true closure to issues surrounding colonial-era collaboration. The common word used by Koreans for "collaborator," *ch'inilp'a* (Japanese *shin-Nichiha*), literally means the "faction of Japan-friendly" Koreans. Soon after liberation, Koreans began to take action to curb the activities of people believed to have benefited by assisting the Japanese colonizers in their operations. Their repeated efforts to initiate these investigations stalled until just at the end of the Cold War, when from the early 1990s Korean groups began to compile lists and publish books that examined the crimes of these people.[106] The Korean government also began pursuing this issue from the early 2000s, under the Roh Moo Hyun administration. In 2005 it published a list of over 3,000 Korean collaborators.[107] Why did it take Koreans so long to properly address this issue? One reason was political division as the two extreme groups envisioned solution to this issue differently. A second reason was U.S. policy, and particularly its desire to see the ROK and Japan united in the

[106] See, for example, Panminjok munje yŏn'guso, ed., *Ch'inil p'a 99 in* [99 members of the pro-Japanese group], 3 vols., (Seoul: Tosŏch'ulgwan dol pyegge, 1993, 2002).
[107] Kim Cheong-won, "List of 3,090 Pro-Japanese Collaborators Made Public," *Korea Times* (on-line edition, August 29, 2005).

defense against its new postwar enemy, communism. And finally, the infiltration of suspected collaborators into the Korean government over the decades that followed liberation, and the influence that these regimes wielded which enabled them to block or dilute investigations to uncover their activities, prevented any advancement toward bringing closure to this issue.

As suggested in the wartime interrogations, decisions to determine which Koreans were guilty of collaboration would not come easy. However, those questioned appeared to agree that the most notorious collaborators would have to be purged from their positions of influence and be made to pay for their crimes. USAMGIK eventually replaced most Japanese government-general officials shortly after arrival. It retained, however, many known collaborators in government offices, police stations, and other places of importance as directed by MacArther's Proclamation No. 1.

The decision to retain the services of these Koreans was not one that most Koreans particularly supported; like the retention of Japanese officials this too stimulated much infighting among Koreans and verbal and physical attacks against U.S. policy and the Korean cohorts who worked for USAMGIK. Korea's initial attempts began before the United States military arrived. Yŏ Unhyŏng, in forming his transition group, stipulated that collaborators and other national traitors were to be left off the committee and relieved of their positions.[108] He demonstrated his resolve by swimming out to greet the incoming U.S. military with a list of Koreans who he felt assisted Japan in its colonial and wartime efforts.[109] U.S. policy decisions however, deprived him of the chance to oversee these purges. Instead, indications suggest that these Koreans managed to increase their political influence in southern Korea. This concern was conveyed to General Hodge in a letter sent one month after his arrival by a Kim Myun'un who detailed to him how collaborators increased their influence in Seoul municipal politics.

> In these days, there are many appointments and dismissals of the officials in Kyongki [Kyŏnggi] Province. The advisers of every bureau and the acting directors of the government, chiefs of some counties and some police stations were newly appointed. In SEOUL City Hall many new officials were also appointed as directors of the sections. By what standard were they selected? Among those are a few men who are respected by the

[108] Lim Ch'ŏl, "Dokuritsu," 22.
[109] Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, 140.

> people. But many of them occupied the seats of directors through the power of money and many others are found to be the pro-Japanese. Especially, the new directors of the SEOUL City Hall are all those who have been familiar with the Japanese.

Kim then explained how these Koreans managed to extend their influence and protect their interests.

> At first a pro-Japanese man was appointed director of a high office. Then successively, many of the group had the chance to become officials of high rank because the first man recommended the others of the group. There are many persons who are learned and honest and have good careers, but they are still yet to be selected.
>
> Some of the previous officials of the SEOUL City Hall opposed a group of pro-Japanese in the same building to try [to] make a new ideal place under the American Military Government, but on the contrary, they were denounced by the pro-Japanese and were dismissed from the hall. The pro-Japanese group acted so skillfully that even the American officials of the Military Government were deceived by them. Even now the group of pro-Japanese wield their influence upon our society and so it is just the same as it was under the Japanese Government.[110]

Occasionally the warnings were more blunt, particularly when they came as a reaction to senseless remarks made by U.S. officials. The Seoul-based Korean Young Men's Volunteer Corps (Korean not given) answered an alleged claim by Major General Archibald V. Arnold that Koreans who fought against Japanese imperialism were "swindlers," "actors," and "puppet players" by demanding on a handbill that the USAMGIK "close" down and return home: Koreans "have no faith in you" as up until recently you refused to "dismiss those Fascist Jap officials" and hired "slaves of Jap Imperialism who are betrayers of their own race."[111]

Wartime interrogations suggest that U.S. officials understood the importance of the collaboration issue and its potential to encourage conflict in postwar Korea if not handled correctly. However, as with the Korea-based Japanese issue, USAMGIK policy

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[110] This translated letter, written on October 15, 1945, is found in *John R. Hodge mŭnsŏjip*, vol. 1, 27-28.
[111] G-2 Periodic Reports (October 30, 1945), 214.

increased, rather than suppressed, their influence. Granted, separating the collaborator from the patriot was perhaps an impossible task given the circumstances. U.S. officials were familiar with a number of prominent Korean collaborators, such as the late-Chosŏn era reformer and educator Yun Ch'iho. They also sensed that Koreans did not favor the Japanese police force, and particularly its Korean staff. Yet, beyond the most obvious cases the U.S. faced the problem of determining which other Koreans had collaborated beyond the point of simply cooperating to survive. If the weight allotted to this issue in these interrogations reflected the weight that it would be given under occupation rule, the collaborator issue was not very high on USAMGIK's priority list. Like the underground gangs issue, it was not one that this administration was willing to devote much in the way of human and capital resources. As the Cold War intensified, the value of these Koreans grew to be one of the U.S. administration's most important assets, particularly as its Northeast Asian policy shifted toward strengthening a U.S.-Japan-ROK bloc to combat the communist other.

Koreans, as well, struggled with the collaborator question. Political groups compiled lists of actions that they deemed to be traitorous behavior. Those who worked to develop guidelines to establish guilt struggled with the questions of just what actions constituted serious collaboration, which Koreans should be charged with a crime, and even whether the very term of "collaborator" was appropriate in Korea's case. Not surprisingly, as we saw with KDP accusations against the KPR, Koreans often used the collaboration issue for political gain. We see one early example of this struggle in an October 1945 diary entry written by a "cosmopolitan Korean who died in 1946." This entry was appended to a March 1948 memo sent by Acting U.S. Political Advisor William R. Langdon to the U.S. Secretary of State. Langdon noted that the document, which he titled "A Korean Discusses Koreans," summarized the author's "thoughts on the pro-Japanese question."

> There are hundreds of able and useful men who are denounced and ostracized as pro-Japanese. But who are the self-righteous denouncers? Most of them are the very fellows who, up to the "Noon of the 15th of August, 1945", bowed to the East, repeated the Japanese national oath, and shouted banzai for the Tenno [Emperor], on every public occasion in schools, in churches, in factories, in Government and great business offices, in department stores and in wedding and funeral gatherings. Most of [them] Japanized

> their names. Why did they do these pro-Japanese things? Simply they had to or go to jail. Why do they, then, throw first stones at others? For two reasons: (1) To throw dust into the eyes of people to cover up their unsavory past; (2) to extort money from the fears and worries of certain persons for party and personal pockets.

The diarist then denounced the very concept of "collaborator": it was "absurd to stigmatize anybody for having been pro-Japanese." During Japan's colonial rule, Korea "was a part of Japan, and so recognized by other powers including America." He continued:

> If so, the Koreans were Japanese, willy nilly. Then, as the subjects of Japan, what alternative could we, who had to live in Korea, have but to obey the orders and demands, however arbitrary, of the Japanese regime? If we had to send our sons to battlefields and our daughters to factories, could we refuse to do anything that the militarists commanded? Therefore, it is nonsense to denounce anybody for what he did under the status of a Japanese subject.

He called for a "general amnesty…to enable so-called pro-Japanese [to] live in peace and to save them from the blackmailing patriots…. [who brag about how] they had saved Korea from the Japanese militarism …[but] had no more to do with the liberation of Korea than the man in the moon."[112]

The language and general tone ("willy nilly," "man on the moon"), the biblical reference (throwing the first stone), and the few facts we learn of the author's identity (he kept a diary in English and died in 1946) reveal the diarist to be most certainly Yun Ch'iho (1864-1946). Yun's interesting life enabled him to participate and lead many of Korea's major late-nineteenth century reform movements. After Japan's annexation of Korea was brought to trial as one of the organizers of an alleged plot to assassinate Governor General Terauchi Masatake. During the war he served as guest of honor—he proudly led the *banzai*s—at ceremonies held to induct soldiers into the Japanese military.

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[112] Anonymous, "A Korean Discusses Koreans" (March 19, 1948) *Internal Affairs of Korea, 1945-1949*, vol. 3, 62-64. Yun's diary was published as *Yun Ch'iho Ilgi* [Yun Ch'iho diaries], 11 vols. (Seoul: Kuksa p'yeonch'an wiweonhoe, 1973-1986). This published version ends on October 7, 1943.

Yun's diary, written mostly in English, is instructive in the detailed and often witty commentary that he delivered on the key events that transpired in Korea between the 1880s and the 1940s. His arguments regarding the appropriateness of the terms "collaborator" and "pro-Japanese" were certainly self-reflective: Yun's wartime activities—his name value among Koreans provided Japan with perhaps its most valuable Korean endorsement for its colonial and war efforts—earned him prominent spots on all of the collaborator lists discussed above.[113] His claim that Japanese pressure forced many Koreans to comply drew from his personal experience of being arrested, tortured, and imprisoned by the colonial police. The Japanese continued to hound him even as he promoted their war efforts. Many Koreans like Yun—but not all, as evident by Yŏ's rejection of Japanese overtures—who chose to remain in Korea under Japanese colonial rule, realized that survival meant cooperation; the situation, they believed, would not change much in their lifetime. Cooperation meant assisting the Japanese war effort. But did this render them guilty of collaboration?

USAMGIK's decision to maintain these Koreans at their posts, however, blocked quick resolution of this rather difficult problem. This decision was understandable from a practical sense. These Koreans were most experienced in the skills that the occupation administration needed to maintain order, establish a sovereign Korean government, and promote economic development. Their familiarity with the Japanese language and culture were indispensable qualities urgently needed to promote strong Japan-ROK ties. If the U.S. occupation in Japan could exploit the talents of its erstwhile enemy in Japan, then why not also the talents of Japan's offspring in southern Korea? Yet, from a political standpoint this decision made much less sense as it demonstrated U.S. favoritism toward Korea's colonial subjugator. It also exposed the occupation administration to criticism from the growing population of Koreans opposed to its presence in their land. It further encouraged the idea that the U.S. maintained an extended vision of resurrecting Japan as a regional economic and military power at Korea's expense.

Opposition groups frequently reminded USAMGIK of this mistake in the

[113] For discussion on Yun Ch'iho and collaboration see Caprio, "Loyal Patriot or Traitorous Collaborator?"; Hyung-chan Kim, "Portrait of a Troubled Korean Patriot: Yun Ch'i-ho's Views of the March First Independence Movement and World War II," *Korean Studies* 13 (1989): 76-91; and De Ceuster, "Through the Master's Eye."

handbills that they distributed across southern Korea. One such reminder came in February 1946 when the Korean Democratic Front (*Minjujuŭi minjok chŏnsŏn*, KDF), a left-leaning coalition that united both the extreme Korean Communist Party and the more moderate Korean People's Party (*Chosŏn kukmindong*),[114] issued criteria at its inaugural meeting for fulfilling the "ardent demand of [the Korean] people today"—determining which Korean were collaborators and national traitors. The KDF connected the importance of its mission to the "world-wide fight to eradicate the remnants of fascism." It believed that the establishment of an independent Korean state rested on the successful completion of this mission. Chaos in public sentiment would prevail should the KDF fail to provide "clear and concrete stipulations regarding the pro-Japanese Koreans and national traitors." Their statement then distinguished between "pro-Japanese Koreans"—people who had "consciously collaborated with Japanese imperialism," and "national traitors"—people who "even after the liberation of Korea have positively destroyed the construction of democracy, piloted and guided terroristic gangs, and committed and instigated terroristic action against democratic organizations," before specifying the crimes of each category. Pro-Japanese collaborators included the following:

a. Traitors who sold Korea to Japanese imperialism in 1910.
b. Titled persons, advisers, and councilors of the government-general's Privy Council, and government-appointed members of province and prefecture councils.
c. High officials in the Japanese administration.
d. High officers of the Japanese police and gendarmerie.
e. Malignant elements of Japan's military, secret and political police.
f. Those who conducted secret espionage for the police.
g. Extreme malignant elements of the administration, judicature, and police "who became the target of people's grievances."
h. Theoretical and political leaders in Japan's coalescence movement, including those who helped with the recruitment of soldiers and assisted in the movement to Japanize Korean names.
i. Koreans responsible for war industries.

[114] Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, 236-37.

j. Korean leaders of fascist organizations.

National traitors were guilty of the following crimes:

a. People who organize, join, or assist terrorist gangs for the purpose of demolishing democratic organizations or assassinating democratic leaders.
b. People who inflict harm on patriotic leaders through their speeches, radio broadcasts, and publications.
c. Officials who arrest, jail, and slaughter democratic leaders without reason and who destroy democratic institutions.
d. People who cause unfortunate incidents by providing USAMGIK with false information.
e. People who illegally profit by buying large amounts of commodities from Japanese imperialistic troops and repatriating Japanese, and constantly disturb the national economy by participating in black markets that ruin the livelihood of the masses.[115]

USAMGIK officials apparently did not pay this document much heed, even though (as they had translated the document) they were obviously aware of its contents. In USAMGIK's push toward the Koreanization of Korean politics we sense a gradual shift in support of centralist Koreans to conservative, rightwing political elements. This incorporated into Korea's political circles, according to Bruce Cumings, more Koreans known among U.S. circles to have been colonial-era collaborators.[116] It also coordinated closely with U.S. occupation policy changes in Japan that they encouraged a reversal from SCAP's initial goals that replaced democratization and demilitarization with economic recovery and national security. SCAP demonstrated this change most vividly by purging leftist elements and de-purging conservative Japanese, shelving its plans to dismantle the *zaibatsu* conglomerates, and initiating discussion with Japanese on reviving its military capacity. In southern Korea, USAMGIK established a number of advisory committees to legitimize its policies and to prepare Koreans for their eventual

[115] Korean Democratic National Front, "Text of the Korean National Front's Statement on the Pro-Japanese Korean Collaborators and National Traitors," (February 1946) English translation found in *Internal Affairs of Korea, 1945-1949*, vol. 2, 67-69.
[116] Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, 159-69.

sovereignty. These efforts failed for a number of reasons. Among the most important was the conservative bias of these groups, which represented but a minority strand of southern Korea's political rainbow.[117]

The shift in USAMGIK policies became particularly evident in the aftermath of the December 1945 Moscow Conference that brought representatives from the U.S., Great Britain, and the Soviet Union to the Soviet capital to resolve outstanding wartime issues including Korean reunification. At this meeting the three parties reconfirmed their commitment to reuniting the Korea by trusteeship, and proposed a five-year tenure that would nurture the peninsula to unified independence. The success of their efforts depended on these powers guiding northern and southern Korea to forming a coalition government capable of working together to promote unity among Koreans. This meant searching for ways to include or neutralize the politics of extremists on both sides of the thirty-eighth parallel. Yet, news of this agreement encouraged political groups in southern Korea to deepen the political divide that separated them: while the decision gained leftist support, it drove rightwing parties to the streets of southern Korea in protest. From this time anti-trusteeship protests and demonstrations came to occupy more space in the G-2 Periodic Reports.

The three Allied powers signed the Moscow Declaration on December 27; its contents reached southern Korea's "unofficial press" within a few days. These newspapers "vehemently condemned" the decision to employ trusteeship for a number of reasons: First, Koreans objected to the idea that occupation armies would remain on Korean soil for another five years. Also the tone of the policy resembled to closely the protectorate policy that the Japanese forced upon Korea from 1905 prior to their annexation of the peninsula. This press called the decision an "insult to Korea" and likening it to "international slavery." It vowed that Koreans "will gain [their] independence …with our blood," even if they had to go to war to attain this right. In Seoul and elsewhere, the trusteeship issue encouraged even more fighting between Koreans. Opposition groups also confronted U.S. military police that tried to halt their "unauthorized demonstrations." Many Koreans employed by USAMGIK quit their jobs.

[117] Kim Kut'ae argues the Koreanization (*Han'gukhwa*) process as a shift from direct to indirect U.S. administration. Kim, *Mi Kunchŏng ŭi Hanguk t'ongch'i*, chap, 5. See also Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, chap. 7.

Posters and handbills appeared "everywhere; all bitterly assailing the announcement."[118] A report compiled by USAMGIK over a year later reveals that Korean indignation did not die easily.

> Political situation continued tense during period with disorders over wide areas growing with intensity and frequency consisting chiefly of attacks by Rightists on Leftists and vice versa. Southern area seemed most disturbed, where 66 cases of disorder during second week July were reported. National police reported 14 attacks on police stations during month ending June 10. Cases of violence which received press notice were: Throwing of hand grenade with some fatalities in Pusan theater on 6th during performance by Leftist actors; anti-trusteeship demonstration at Pohang on 9th requiring intervention of US military personnel; smashing by Rightist crowd on 7th of all windows of a Seoul YMCA building during Leftist meeting there and counter-attack by Leftists; invasion on 15th by Rightist gang of four Leftist newspaper offices in Seoul and wrecking of their printing machinery; beating in front of Capital on 9th by unknown gangs of group which had come from south Cholla [Chŏlla] to uphold revival of their provincial governor.[119]

Koreans also targeted Japanese institutions as they held Japan responsible for the Korean peninsula's miserable plight. On December 29, 1945 a group of Koreans attacked Japanese workers at the Seoul chapter of the Japanese Relief Society; later they bombed its offices. The attackers threatened to return soon if the Japanese did not move their offices.[120] USAMGIK would eventually side with the opposition to advertise trusteeship as an idea originally proposed by the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration, as an idea favored only by communists.[121]

Attacks intensified as deepening political divisions drove USAMGIK policy farther toward Korea's conservative elements. After Japanese repatriation neared completion, leftist groups intensified their attacks on institutions of power that

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[118] G-2 Periodic Reports (December 30, 1945), 496-97.
[119] "From CG USAFIK to State Department Info CINCFE (Cite ZEOL 962). Hodge Sends for Jacobs and Langdon" (July 24, 1947), *Internal Affairs of Korea*, vol. 1, 361.
[120] G-2 Periodic Reports (December 31, 1945), 499.
[121] Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, 220. See also Choi Sang-Yong, "Trusteeship Debate and the Korean Cold War," in *Korea Under the American Military Government*, 13-40.

traditionally employed Koreans believed to be either collaborators or national traitors. These Koreans began to see them as part of the problem rather than solution. A January 1946 editorial titled "Sweep away the Dregs of Imperial Japan" (Ilche chanjae rul ilso hara) blamed Korean inability to retain its sovereignty on the occupation's apparent unwillingness to deal with the problem of Japanese collaboration.

> Government officials in office today are mostly those who committed various cruel acts of behavior during the period of Japanese Imperial rule. It is thus natural that they retreat from their proxy offices, or else the masses will never gain any confidence in the government…. To contribute to redress this chaos, to bring order to society, to revive peace, and to build a state of good fortune, [Koreans must] sweep away Imperial Japan—that is the residue of Imperial Japan—and replaced it with capable people. The right person must be deployed for the right job. This is how the government, as a government, will build dignity among its people.[122]

The sentiment behind this editorial articulated a message found on a poster displayed by the Secret Killing Party (*Amsaldan*) in Taejŏn directing people to strike down Vice-Governor Wang Insil and demanded that the "pro-Jap…mixed Jap-Korean" Deputy Police Chief Park "take [his] father's memorial stone and go back to Japan." G-2 Periodic Reports over the period of January 19 to 26, 1946 presented a sample of this violence. During this week, the reports carried news of raids on police facilities in South Kyŏngsang and North Chŏlla; of government officials in North Kyŏngsang twice being attacked; and of USAMGIK military personnel in Taejŏn, Seoul, Inch'ŏn, and Hungdok being fired upon by distraught Koreans. Additional news of raids on subversive groups, infighting between rival political groups, and verbal and more acts of violence out of protest over the trusteeship proposal also reached the G-2 Periodic Reports.[123] Attacks on USAMGIK facilities and personnel confirmed what General Hodge suspected in December 1945, that the Korean people came to link more closely Japanese and U.S. interests to the troubles that divided their country. The commanding officer remarked as

[122] "Ilche chanjae rul ilso hara" (Sweep away the Dregs of Imperial Japan) (January 18, 1946), *Yŏngnam ilbo*.
[123] G-2 Periodic Reports (January 19-26, 1946), 553-91. I do not list these items to demonstrate this week as extraordinary, to the contrary it was rather typical, but to provide an example of the range of violence and disorder then taking place in southern Korea at this time.

follows: "Every day of drifting [on the unification issue] makes our position in Korea more untenable and decreases our waning popularity and our effectiveness to be of service. The word pro-American is being added to pro-Jap, national traitor, and Jap collaborator."[124]

Warnings issued by opposition groups to prevent Koreans from assisting Japanese, many of which were directed toward the collaborator and the post-liberation national traitor, further confirmed Hodge's trepidations. The following message, found on a leaflet distributed by the "Comrades Office" (Korean not given) in October 1945, may have influenced the general's fears.

> The remainders of the Japanese Imperialism and the racial traitors, who revolted against the Korean race, are flattering to the foreign power and doing a reactive conspiracy. It is because there are the gangsters dreaming but to fill their own pockets, as the Japanese cat's paw that had sucked the Korean people's blood before, that a foreign power came to concern the home political affairs of Korea…. Let us sweep out the remainders of the Japanese people of Seoul; who are the followers that dare buy the Japanese property? There is no purchasing of robber's goods. Let us kill the Japanese and the racial traitors.[125]

Conservative groups answered these aggressive attempts to harass Korean purchasers of Japanese property by calling them on their hypocrisy—They criticized Koreans for activities in which they themselves had engaged and profited. Just who were Korea's traitors, they asked. One intercepted letter, posted by the National Traitors Clean-up Death Band (*Minban suk chung kiulsatae*) to a Pak Kunyung, care of Korean Communist Party headquarters, ended with a death threat.

> The many crimes against the working class people of Korea which you and your party have committed are of a very serious nature. Your condemnation of plundering of Japanese property is laughable as it is a fact that you, yourself, have become rich by this very means. If you were truly interested in improving the lot of our people, you would be

[124] "General of the Army Douglas MacArthur to the Joint Chiefs of Staff" (December 16, 1945), *FRUS* VI, p. 1145. MacArthur appended Hodge's "Conditions in Korea" to this message.
[125] G-2 Periodic Reports (October 21, 1945), 188-89.

> working with them producing the things in need, rather than making speeches and leading the luxurious life you now enjoy. We, the Death Band, recognize you and your party as national traitors obstructing our independence, and as a result we intend to clean ("this means killing") you up.[126]

Evident here was division over how pro-Japanese activity was to be defined, both prior to and following Korean liberation. After commencing operating in February 1947, the southern Korea Interim legislative assembly (*Nam Chosŏn kwado chŏngbu*) almost immediately initiated discussion on two controversial bills, the Election Bill and the Pro-Japanese National Traitor Bill. These bills were linked by the former's aim to disfranchise collaborators and national traitors. Before they could deny collaborators their suffrage rites, they had to decide how to determine who the collaborators were. An April 23, 1947 summary of the bill carried in the G-2 Periodic Reports published one early attempt at doing just this.

> First reading was given a revised Pro-Japanese National Traitor bill as proposed by the Drafting of the Laws Dealing with Collaborators, Traitors, War Criminals, and Profiteers committee. In the revised bill the categories of guilt are established for pro-Japanese. First category would include those who participated in signing the treaty of annexation in 1910, lawyers and members of noble families…, and those who have been members of the Japanese Diet. Second category would include those who converted from the Korean Independence movement to cooperate with the Japanese, military and civil officials who directly or indirectly prosecuted Korean revolutionists, leaders of organizations whose purpose was to hinder the independence movement …, those who instigated people to destroy public installations and murder people in order to hinder rehabilitation and those who prosecuted fellow-countrymen while using foreign power as a shield for their activities.[127]

Over the next few months this assembly squabbled over how to define "traitor." The details of this dispute suggest that the sessions served more as a delay tactic to gain more favorable terms, or even to have the deliberations canceled all together, than a

[126] G-2 Periodic Reports (December 2, 1945), 367.
[127] G-2 Periodic Reports (April 23, 1947), 68.

concerted effort to reach consensus on this thorny question. In late April 1947, for example, the assembly dedicated an entire session debating whether the Korean king was Korea's "number one traitor."[128] Later that month it set up a five-person sub-committee to draft the final revision of the bill, a move that suggests progress. G-2 Periodic Reports, however, noted this decision, the formation of a group that included a lawyer for the royal family, a member of the Internal Affairs and Police Committee, and the USAMGIK favorite Chang Myŏn, represented "a complete victory for the rightists."[129] This subcommittee almost immediately watered down the criteria by recommending that the Korean king be excluded from traitor lists and that penalties be relaxed for those found guilty under the bill's provisions.[130]

Finally, on May 8 a draft of the bill was read before the entire committee, with each article receiving separate consideration. The debate over the first article, the definition of "traitor," reveals that the assembly retained its partisan divisions. It easily approved the article's basic premise: a traitor was "any person who injured the Korean country and people, or who hampered the independence of movement by close cooperation with Japan and other foreign countries." But leftists and rightist bickered over the interpretation of "other foreign countries," with the former arguing that it meant the United States and the Soviet Union, the latter as "possible future enemies of Korea."[131]

Eventually, the Interim Legislative Assembly passed both the Election Bill and the Pro-Japanese National Traitor Bill, only to find that their support placed their lives in danger. Many who voted for the legislation made special requests to be allowed to arm themselves. They were particularly concerned that members of the Korean police force, one of the more powerful groups that the bills would affect, would seek retaliation. Yŏ Unhong, the brother of soon-to-be assassinated Yŏ Unhyŏng, feared that Cho Pyŏng'ok,

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[128] The assembly did not specify which king was the focus of the deliberation. G-2 Periodic Reports (April 29, 1947), 87.

[129] G-2 Periodic Reports (May 2, 1947), 98. The American-educated Chang Myŏn later served as Ambassador to the United States and ROK prime minister in 1960. Bruce Cumings writes that U.S. documents almost always described him as "intelligent, capable, reasonable and docile, lacking the strong nationalism that characterized so many other Koreans." Bruce Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun: A Modern History* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997), 346.

[130] G-2 Periodic Reports (May 6, 1947), 108. After this subcommittee submitted their proposal to a higher committee they reopened the debate on the fate of the royal family. G-2 Periodic Reports (May 8, 1947), 117.

[131] G-2 Periodic Reports (May 9, 1947), 121.

head of the national police, would form a political party as a backlash to this legislation. Yŏ also claimed that the police had compiled a blacklist of the legislators who had voted in favor of the two bills.[132]

News of the Pro-Japanese National Traitor Bill disappeared from G-2 Periodic Reports around this time. A rather extensive report that reviewed the conditions in southern Korea since liberation, however, picked up the story. This report, that appeared in September 1947, briefly summarized the spirit of the bill—to identify and punish national traitors, collaborators, and profiteers—and identified the penalties to which those found guilty could be subjected: loss of franchise for five years and even death. It then expressed USAMGIK's gravest concern: "The law contains many loose and dangerous clauses, one of the worst of which provides that the State may dissolve any organization which has any pro-Japanese members. This provision in the hands of an autocratic government would invite abuse." From this report we learn that the Interim Legislative Assembly had voted to approve the "Special Law on Pro-Japanese, National Traitors, and Profiteers" on July 2. Yet, the bill failed to gain the approval of USAMGIK, which retained the right of veto over all legislation proposed by this assembly. It thus remained in limbo.[133] In addition to demonstrating a lack of trust in this assembly (half of which it had appointed), USAMGIK's exercise of its veto privilege also delayed, and rendered as all but meaningless, Korean attempts to sweep away this important detritus of Japanese colonial rule. The process managed to anger both right and left extremists: its attempt to bring collaborators to justice angered conservatives, many of whom were suspect of such activity; their failure to pass anti-collaboration legislation with teeth angered liberals who sought a generous definition of collaboration and heavy punishments meted out to the guilty.

Members of the assembly protested USAMGIK's use of its right of veto by

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[132] G-2 Periodic Reports (July 8, 1947), 342. This particular report carried a number of similar concerns. Yŏ Unhyŏng was assassinated on July 19, 1947. Yun Ch'iho probably had people like Police Chief Cho in mind in his criticism of pro-Japanese Koreans who suddenly transferred their support to the Americans after Japan's defeat. Cho managed the Poin Mining Company from 1937 to 1945. After liberation, as a member of the KDP, he informed the USAMGIK of the pro-Japanese communists in Yŏ Unhyŏng's CPKI mentioned above. Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, 95, 141.

[133] "Report on the Occupation of South Korea Since Termination of Hostilities," in Yi, ed., *Haebang chŏnhusa charyojip*, 519. For discussion on the limitations of the Interim Legislative Assembly see Kim Kut'ae, *Mi Kunchŏng ŭi Hanguk t'ongch'i*, 333-35.

issuing a list of questions to deputy military general Brigadier General G. C. Helmick, who responded by addressing his concerns to assembly chairman, Kim Kyusik. His response, which did little to relieve Korean concerns, touched upon a number of germane concerns. Helmick began by briefly outlining four reasons behind his decision: The difficulty in determining the guilty; the fear that the law may by used as a tool of vengeance; the assembly not fully representing the "entire Korean nation"; and the law, by including both colonial era and postwar era crimes together, attempting to do too much. The general also agreed to explain his concerns directly before the assembly, provided they submit questions to him in advance.[134] The Korean rebuttal attacked the U.S. lack of trust in its legislative procedures: The accused would all have their day in court and their fate would be determined by evidence rather than vengeance. It further reminded the general that USAMGIK had appointed half of its members to ensure that the diverse views of the Korean people were adequately represented. By Helmick's claim no law that the legislative body had passed to date held legitimacy "because [they were] enacted by members representing only part of the people?"[135] In the minds of the assemblymen, if the pro-collaboration bill did not reflect the will of the majority of the Korean people then neither did any of the other legislation that they had passed to date.

The assembly failed to overturn the USAMGIK's veto and Koreans had to wait another year, until the establishment of the ROK government, to deliberate a new pro-Japanese collaborator bill. It is thus difficult to ascertain the extent to which Helmick's concerns were warranted.[136] However, comments by political adviser Joseph E. Jacobs suggested that the general may have exaggerated the problem. In a report that he issued to the U.S. secretary of state, Jacobs argued that the bill as it stood would have brought punishment upon few, if any, Korean collaborators: The assembly, which was heavily influenced by rightists who "had been largely men of substance under the Japanese, strove to draft a law in such broad terms that only notorious collaborators no longer living or, if living, hiding in shame, would have been affected." Jacobs added that

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[134] "Helmick to South Korea Interim Government" (November 20, 1947), *Internal Affairs of Korea*, vol. 11, 193-94.
[135] "Questionnaire" appended to "Helmick to Kim Kyusik, Chair, Korean Interim Legislative Assembly" (December 5, 1947) in ibid. 199-201.
[136] Timothy Brook's consideration of this issue suggests they were. See his *Collaboration: Japanese Agents and Local Elites in Wartime China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), chap. 1.

it was mostly the minority of leftists who wanted the law to "end the day politically for those who had prospered under the Japanese." He further claimed that assembly chairman, Kim Kyusik, had confided in him that the law was "primarily for the record, purely to save national 'face,' purely to prove to history that there was no legal break in the continuity of Korean national independence."[137]

Koreans finally passed collaborator legislation as the National Traitors Act in August 1948, just days before the first ROK government was inaugurated. Under this legislation, 33 Koreans were found guilty of treason including wealthy landowners (such as Kim Yŏnsu who had also served as Counsel-General of Manchuria),[138] members of the Japanese bureaucracy (such as Ha Pannak who rose in the ranks of the Japanese police), and academics (such as Ch'oe Namsŏn, a Korean historian who had taught at a Japanese university in Manchuria).[139] This number did not come close to the number of Koreans that would have faced trial should the original Special Law on Pro-Japanese, National Traitors, and Profiteers had passed, or who would appear on pro-Japanese lists from the early 1990s. This legislation also lost its effectiveness soon after its passage, and was all but forgotten after conventional war broke out across the Korean peninsula from June 1950.

Even if USAMGIK's concerns over the difficulty in bringing collaborators to trial were justifiable, its disruption of the process demonstrated to Koreans its support for the Japanese element, and by extension the conservative element of Korea's diverse political sector. Conservatives held the majority in the Interim Legislative Assembly and, based on U.S. reports and correspondence, were instrumental in delaying and weakening legislation that targeted colonial-era collaboration. What purpose did these efforts serve? One possibility reason involved the Election Bill that was also enacted around this time, as the assembly's definition of "collaborator" determined which Koreans would lose their suffrage rights. Passage of the original bill would have severely weakened the conservatives' most important support base, the police and local political figures, as well

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[137] Joseph E. Jacobs, "Law on Pro-Japanese, National Traitors, and Profiteers" (letter to secretary of state, July 19, 1947), *Internal Affairs of Korea*, vol. 11, 204-06.
[138] Carter J. Eckert notes that this position was "honorary" in his *Offspring of Empire: The Koch'ang Kims and the Colonial Origins of Korean Capitalism, 1876-1945* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991), 248.
[139] "Developments Relative to Implementation of the National Traitor's Act" (February 18, 1949), Ibid., 528-29. These pages contain a list of the 33 Koreans arrested under this act.

as the potential influence they might wield over their constituents. These elements were also in positions to either check or unleash violence at this critical juncture of ROK history. The delayed passage of this bill eliminated this potential.[140] The debate, and U.S. efforts to block passage of this bill, coincided with SCAP's "reverse course" in Japan that compromised the democratic process in Japan to return conservative politics to its government. In southern Korea USAMGIK policies ostracized liberals in favor of conservatives like Syngman Rhee, whose party dominated the national elections held in early May 1948.

"THINGS JAPANESE" AND THE DANGEROUS JAPAN/EAST SEA

As we saw in the last section, certain groups identified as traitorous attempts by Koreans to gain possession of Japanese land or belongings. These groups did not take into account that people sought Japanese possessions for different reasons, such as to obtain basic living necessities that they needed and the Japanese were forced to leave behind. Koreans with more violent motivations found value in items such as the Japanese weapons that escaped USAMGIK detection. Also of value were those items that could be sold on the burgeoning black markets that arose in both Japan and southern Korea just after the war ended. These markets, fueled by the active smuggling operations that also transported people and cash between the two countries, caused shortages in southern Korea that contributed to rising inflation.[141]

Japanese cruel treatment of Koreans not withstanding, the colonizers did strengthen the peninsula's transportation, communication, and industrial infrastructure, while contributing to Korean ideas on modernity during their four decades of colonial rule.[142] Japanese settlers also contributed to the changing Korean landscape by building

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[140] "Report of the Military Government on the holding of elections in South Korea on 10 May 1948 leading to the establishment of a Korean National Assembly and Government under the United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea" (undated but probably December 1948) *Internal Affairs of Korea*, vol. 11, 160.

[141] The Japanese also contributed to this soon after defeat by flooding Korea with newly printed currency to allow Japanese to pay off their Korean employees prior to their repatriation.

[142] Daqing Yang's research is useful in understanding Japan's development of these networks in Korea as well as in Manchuria and China. See, for example, his "Colonial Korea in Japan's Imperial Telecommunications Network," in *Colonial Modernity in Korea*, edited by Gi-Wook Shin and Michael Robinson, 161-88 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999). Shin and Robinson's volume offer a number of examples of how this "colonial modernity" developed during Japan's period of colonial rule.

homes and importing from Japan furniture and other items needed to furnish their houses and improve the quality of their lives in Korea. The abrupt end of the war forced them to leave many of these possessions behind. USAMGIK, for its part, was slow in setting policies to resolve property-ownership issues; Koreans used its indecision to take matters into their own hands, which produced yet another cause of confrontation.

Fault for the indecision on this issue lay more with SCAP and other U.S. authorities than with USAMGIK. SCAP's first attempt to address this problem appeared in the "Basic Directive for the Administration of Civil Affairs." This document offered little guidance except to direct the occupation administration to

> seek out and take title to all Japanese public and private property interests of any type and description located in Korea. You will provide full reports to your Government, through the Chiefs of Staff, on such property interests which will be held for ultimate disposition in accordance with detailed instructions to be forwarded to you.[143]

Yet, as late as December 1945 no such instructions had arrived. As noted by Acting U.S. Political Advisor in Korea William R. Langdon's telegram to the U.S. Secretary of State, USAMGIK's silence on this issue created uneasiness among the Korean people, particularly when their counterpart in the north had moved so swiftly to resolve this issue.

> The Government should make a clear-cut statement very soon that all Japanese private and movable property in our Zone is being held in trust by us for the future Korean government to dispose of in any way it cares to. In the Russian zone, this type of property has been disposed of without consulting us and, unless the British, Chinese or ourselves are entitled to any Japanese plant in Korea for reparations purposes, no reason is seen why such a statement cannot be made at an early date. Due to the indeterminate status of this matter, the Korean people are kept uneasy and suspicious.[144]

In February 1947, as Major General Archer L. Lerch suggested in a letter to the newly

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[143] "Basic Initial Directive to the Commander in Chief, U.S. Army Forces, Pacific, for the Administration of Civil Affairs in Those Areas of Korea Occupied by U.S. Forces" (undated) *FRUS*, IV, 1091.

[144] "Telegram, Langdon to Secretary of State" (December 14, 1945), in *Internal Affairs of Korea*, vol. 8, 538.

formed Southern Korea Interim Legislative Assembly, USAMGIK still awaited guidance. Here Lerch noted that to date it had "received from Washington only limited authority for the disposal of farm land, small business and property subject to deterioration." While gently reminding this assembly of USAMGIK's veto privilege, he encouraged them to give "immediate consideration" toward drafting recommendations to guide this problem to resolution.[145] Lerch's sense of urgency was perhaps encouraged by the increased tendency for Koreans to turn to violence to resolve ownership dispute controversies.

Koreans involved in this violence often armed themselves with weapons that they bought, accepted, or stole from the Japanese; raids on police boxes increased their cache of weapons. The "Basic Initial Directive" had instructed USAMGIK to "seize or destroy all arms, ammunition, naval vessels and implements of war, including military aircraft and aircraft designed for civilian use..."[146] While the Japanese military generally cooperated in their disarmament, rogue elements kept their weapons or hid them for future use. Japanese civilians obtained arms to protect themselves against revenge attacks by Koreans. Still others exploited USAMGIK's strict gun control policies to sell their weapons on the black market at inflated prices. Among those who kept or hid their weapons were Japanese who anticipated their country's return to the peninsula in the near future.[147] G-2 Periodic Reports often reported discoveries of caches of weapons unearthed (occasionally literally) by USAMGIK, as demonstrated by the following incidents carried in the reports between November 17 and 23, 1945.

> November 17: At Koch'ang, weapons and ammunition were confiscated by US troops from the Police Force and the Boy's Agriculture School on 14 Nov. One grenade launcher, 25 hand grenades, two 31 caliber LMGs, 6 boxes of rifle ammunition, 11 boxes of explosives, 1000 blasting caps, and 2000 feet of hose were taken from the police. 6 LMGs, 3 grenade launchers, 94 Japanese rifles, 60 helmets and belts, 67 separate bayonets, 15 ammunition boxes, and 57 dummy rifles were found at the school.

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[145] "Lerch to Chairman, Korean Interim Legislative Assembly" (February 5, 1947), *F.E. Gillette pogosŏ chŏnbŏndae chaep'an girok, 1946-1948* (F.E. Gillette written reports) 1 (Seoul: Institute of Asian Cultural Studies, Hallym University, 1996), 109-10.
[146] "Basic Initial Directive," 1077.
[147] Intercepted letters carried in G-2 Periodic Reports reveal the belief that the Korean Peninsula would soon be entangled in war either from Japanese returning to reclaim their colonial possession or the U.S. and Soviets going to battle against each other. Either way Japan would participate as one of the belligerents.

November 18: At Mok'po, weapons and equipment were confiscated by US troops from the Japanese commercial school and the elementary school on 17 Nov. 160 rifles, 205 bayonets, and 16 sabers were taken from the commercial school. Two wooden rifles, 3 sabers, 1 bayonet and 50 steel helmets were found at the elementary school. [It was later reported that these weapons had been stored here by Japanese police.]

November 19: On 18 October, US troops confiscated the following items from a Jap arsenal located approximately 2 mi N of Mokp'o: 43 rifles, 300 cases of explosives, 20 light machine guns, 15 mortars and 6 sabers.

November 19: At a school in Chinan, 12 light machine guns and 11 training rifles were confiscated by US troops on 17 November.

November 21: US troops discovered 8,750 rounds of .25 caliber ammunition that had been buried at a former Japanese guard post at Kanggyong. Local civilians state that the ammunition was buried by the Japanese troops prior to the arrival of American forces.

G-2 Periodic Reports also carried news of attacks being carried out with weapons that we might assume had once belonged to Japanese. The November 17 edition, for example, told of one such disturbance in Namwŏn where a mob of 100 Koreans armed with pistols, sabers, and clubs attacked American soldiers. Subsequent arrests related to this incident uncovered still more hidden arms.[148]

We can also assume that these weapons were used in the smuggling operations carried out between Japan and Korea, both to protect their cargo and as the cargo itself. These operations, which attracted the attention of both pirates and military occupation officials, constituted one of many dangers that Japanese and Koreans faced when seeking to return to their homeland.[149] Groups of pirates, who according to one letter that quoted from the newspaper consisted of former *kenpeitai*, combed the waters between Japan and Korea in search of both people to rob and cargo to plunder. This same letter informed that

[148] G-2 Periodic Reports (November 17, 1945), 291.
[149] In addition, on a number of occasions boats reportedly exploded during the voyage, some accidentally after hitting a mine, but others intentionally.

these pirates claimed as their victims more than 10,000 Koreans returning from Japan.[150] Crews on Japanese ship also participated in this terror. One ship carrying Korean refugees sailed into Pusan Harbor with three dead bodies and one wounded passenger. Survivors informed authorities that the Japanese crew had also thrown more thirty Koreans overboard en route.[151] Unauthorized ships attracted greater attention as the passengers were more likely to carry with them cash amounts and items that exceeded the limitations imposed on returnees by occupation regulations. They also were more likely to have on board a cargo of greater value as many of the illegal ships were involved in smuggling operations.

These pirate activities resembled a modern form of the *wako* pirates of centuries past in that both took advantage of breaches in what had once been rather controlled trading networks. Liberation cut southern Korea off from its economic networks, particularly from the energy and natural resources that in the past was supplied by its northern provinces. Severance of these networks created acute shortages in products that southern Korea needed for economic survival, forcing it to seek them elsewhere. Koreans in the south having to accept coal shipments from Japan, despite an abundant supply of coal being available in northern Korean, constituted to some a national disgrace as well as a painful reminder of their divided homeland. Southern Korea's inadequate supply of natural resources contributed to the malnutrition and unemployment problems that its residents faced. This situation provided ideal conditions for black markets to thrive. Many of the markets were stocked with items smuggled across the Sea of Japan/East Sea.

The smuggling and markets exasperated an already dire situation and invited rumors that the operations had USAMGIK support. General Hodge often had to publicly deny such rumors that the U.S. had "shipped grain to China; to Japan; or to America." These statements, he retorted, "were lies, since the Americans have not shipped even one kilogram of grain to any place outside of Korea."[152] They held some truth. Even if USAMGIK did not directly supervise these operations, among its American staff and Korean employees were those who supplemented their incomes by either assisting the

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[150] G-2 Periodic Reports (December 4, 1945, 375-76.

[151] G-2 Periodic Reports (November 15, 1945), 281. One cannot help but wonder why these Koreans survived, a point not mentioned in the report.

[152] For example, Hodge denied that Korean rice was being shipped abroad in "Denying Anti-US Propaganda Rumors (November 11, 1945), *John R. Hodge mŭnsŏjip* 3, 113.

smugglers directly, or turning a blind eye in their operations, as occasionally reported in G-2 Periodic Reports.[153] Suspicions of U.S. direct involvement, and exaggerations of its informal participation, provided more fodder for the opposition to attack U.S. presence and administration in Korea.

Even Hodge had to concede (in the same report) that grains, including rice, were being transported overseas. Yet, rather than accept responsibility, he blamed this smuggling on the Korean people: the grains were being shipped because the Korean people permitted these operations: Agitators tell farmers not to sell their crop to USAMGIK and the farmers sell it to the black markets rather than to the U.S.-organized distribution system. Hodge and F. E. Gillette challenged the Korean people to demonstrate their patriotism by rejecting smuggling to ensure that their fellow compatriots got their fill of rice. Hodge targeted the smugglers: "Any Korean grain taken out of Korea has been taken out by unpatriotic Korean smugglers who do so in violation of all law and regulations and to the detriment of their own nation."[154] Gillette addressed the farmers: "You who are patriotic citizens, loyal to the spirit of your independence loving fathers should be willing to sell all your rice" [to government collectors][155] The crux of the problem, however, lay in the relatively low price set by USAMGIK to compensate farmers for their crop. The black markets simply offered them a better price. Whether these markets sold their rice in Korea or Japan was of secondary concern to farmers struggling to survive. Yet the markets were also but part of the problem.

In addition, southern Korea's rice shortages were also caused by the dramatic rise in population over this period—southern Korea's population alone increased by 3.5 million people, or 22 percent—as millions of Koreans residing abroad repatriated from abroad, and thousands more migrated from the north.[156] These two factors, net rice shortages and rising population—both caused inflated rice prices during the U.S. occupation period.

Other products also attracted smugglers. They also trafficked other foods, equipment, cash, and people. As suggested above, the operations developed partly from

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[153] The October 16, 1946 issue of the G-2 Periodic Reports (p. 123) noted a police report that informed of merchants paying bribes to "water police" to be able to export rice. It was, the report noted, the low living conditions that encouraged police to participate in this illegal activity.
[154] Ibid., 113-14.
[155] "Korean Rice for Koreans," *F.E. Gillette pogosŏ chŏnbŏndae chaep'an girok*, 65.
[156] "Report on the Occupation Area of South Korea," 488.

the stringent restrictions that United States occupations in both Japan and southern Korea placed on returnees: they were limited to 1,000 yen (later raised to 100,000 yen) and any baggage they could carry. Returnees were also able to send up to 500 pounds of unaccompanied baggage and an extra 400 pounds of tools, light machinery, and business equipment, provided they could "establish clear ownership on or prior to September 2, 1945." Anything else had to be left behind, although the remainder of their financial estate could be deposited until the Japanese and the Koreans could establish a financial transfer system.[157] These requirements invited problems, including repatriation by unauthorized (illegal) means. The currency limitation was hardly enough to provide returnees with a fighting chance to restart their new lives in Korea or Japan. Their establishing "clear ownership" of unaccompanied baggage, even if that baggage safely reached its owner's final destination, appears to have been problematic. This system, as it stood, seemed to encourage people to either remain where they were or, if determined or forced to repatriate, seek alternative (and illegal) channels to do so.[158]

Cash confiscations appeared quite frequently in G-2 Periodic Reports suggesting that people were able to sell their possessions prior to returning. Some were able to return with more than their allotted amount by conducting private exchange transactions with people returning in the opposite direction. Others, such as those aboard one detained vessel that carried 1,475,000 yen, attempted to smuggle money on unauthorized modes of transport. U.S. officials gained information on how these smugglers operated through the contents of letters intercepted by U.S. officials. The following letter informed censors of an exceptionally large investment to be transferred.

> It is true that my friend, Mr. Kim Bok Soon, has 500,000 Japanese yen and that one of his friends, who was introduced to me as Mr. Yu Ok Dong, has 6,000,000 Japanese yen. If you can exchange such a large sum of money for Korean Yen immediately, I will take the

[157] "Staff Study Concerning Koreans in Japan" (May 16, 1948), Records of the United States Department of State Relating to the Internal Affairs of Japan, 1945-1949 (Reel 3) Japanese National Diet Library.

[158] Both Koreans and Japanese found ways to circumvent these restrictions. See my "Resident Aliens: Forging the Political Status of Koreans in Occupied Japan." In *The U.S. Occupation and the Transformation of Japanese Politics and Society*, edited by Mark E. Caprio and Yoneyuki Sugita, 179-99 (London: Routledge, 2007), and Mark E. Caprio and Yu Jia, "Legislating Diaspora: The Contribution of Occupation-era Administrations to the Preservation of Japan's Korean Community," in John Lie and Sonia Ryan, eds. *Diaspora Without Homeland: Being Korean in Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, forthcoming).

> responsibility of bringing both the 6,000,000 yen and the 500,000 yen to you. I beg you to answer quickly. Since the larger sum can be exchanged later, I wish that you would exchange the 500,000 Japanese yen immediately.[159]

These letters also revealed ways to smuggle money past border inspectors. One Japanese advised the following to a friend in Seoul: "American soldiers do not inspect Japanese women or girls returning to Japan." This letter also suggested that a present provided to the inspector—in this case a "beautiful fan"—also helped people slip through without being inspected.[160] That people could return with so much cash suggests that Korean and Japanese bankers had already managed to establish the financial transaction system that U.S. occupation officials had promised, but failed to deliver.

More ambitious operators also shipped food products (including rice), medicinal and illegal drugs (opium apparently remained popular), machinery, and even vehicles and other large equipment. The following report reveals the range of materials that one operation got caught transporting between U.S. occupation zones.

> Concerning possible unauthorized shipping, the 6th Div. reports that a 100-ton motor ship, the "KOREA HAWAN", is being held in KUNSAN [Korea] pending investigation to determine if the ship is operating legally. The ship departed Tateyama, Shiba ken [Japan] on 10 April with a cargo of 3 trucks, 2 automobiles, gasoline, bicycles, household furniture, small amounts of pistol ammunition, medical supplies, and small amounts of clothing.

The crew claimed that they had received permission to carry this cargo on the condition that they could provide proof of possession. USAMGIK impounded the ship and detained its crew pending investigation.[161] Eleven days later the military government reported that all four of the Koreans on board were found guilty of various crimes and handed prison sentences that ranged from thirty days to two years. No mention was made of their nine Japanese cohorts.[162] Smuggling operations extended to northern Korea, also considered

[159] G-2 Periodic Reports (February 6, 1946), 630.
[160] G-2 Periodic Reports (January 29, 1946), 599-600.
[161] G-2 Periodic Reports (May 17, 1946), 295-96.
[162] G-2 Periodic Reports (May 28, 1946), 331.

as “illegal trade” by USAMGIK, and into Okinawa, China, Manchuria, and even the Soviet Union.[163]

The smugglers most lucrative cargo was people, primarily Koreans attempting to reenter Japan. Many of these Koreans, not having the finances, jobs, and in many cases the cultural basics needed to restart their lives in Korea, sought to return to Japan illegally. One Korean, apprehended by the CIC in its investigation of Korean Organizations in Japan, revealed that he had paid 750 yen for passage on a black market ship that contained at least 50 other Koreans and Chinese.[164] The human cargo on this particular ship was relatively small when compared to that found on other ships. Some ships carried as many as 200 people on a single trip.[165] Tessa Morris-Suzuki reports that between April and December 1946, as a major cholera epidemic swept through southern Korea, some 17,000 Koreans were apprehended for trying to enter Japan illegally.[166] Many more apparently entered undetected. An August 1948 “Staff Study Concerning Koreans in Japan” estimated that each month, for every 400 Koreans repatriated, another 650 entered Japan illegally.[167]

The remnants of Japanese-ness in Korea greatly influenced the decision facing Japan-based Koreans over where they should continue their lives following the war’s end. Would postliberation Korea extend a warm embrace to their return, or turn a cold shoulder for their having deserted the homeland in its greatest need? News of the battles between Japanese waiting to be repatriated and revenge-seeking Koreans, and later between Korean collaborators and “patriotic” gangs surely could not have given them much encouragement, particularly when so many repatriated Koreans were returning to

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[163] For Okinawa smuggling see Matthew R. Augustine reports on similar operations in occupied Okinawa in his “Border-Crossers and Resistance to US Military Rule in the Ryūkyūs, 1945-1953,” *Japan Focus* (September 23, 2008)<http://japanfocus.org/ products/topdf/2906>.
[164] G-2 Periodic Reports (August 17, 1946), 558.
[165] G-2 Periodic Report (August 21, 1946), 570. As noted in the August 26 G-2 Periodic Report, the traffic of Korean illegal reentry into Japan had been on the increase as of recent, noting that between August 1-9 over 600 arrests had been made. We can assume that among those arrested were Korean smugglers not seeking entry into Japan.
[166] Tessa Morris-Suzuki, “An Act Prejudicial to the Occupation Forces; Migration Controls and Korean Residents in Post-Surrender Japan,” *Japanese Studies* 24, no 1 (May 2004): 11. See also Matthew R. Augustine, “Ekkyōsha to senryōka Nihon no kyōkai henbō: Eirenhō shinchūgun (BCOF) shiryō wo chūshin ni” (Border violators and the Evolving Boundaries of Occupied Japan: Focusing on the British Commonwealth Occupation Force (BCOF) Archival Materials), *Zainichi Chōsenjin-shi kenkyū* (
[167] “Staff Study Concerning Koreans in Japan” (August 16, 1945).

Japan. These uncertainties, coupled with the dangers that lurked in the seas separating peninsula from archipelago, surely caused many to think twice about returning no matter how uncomfortable a life they endured in Japan. Some Koreans were constrained by their success as occupation restrictions prevented many from returning with but a rather small percentage of their estate. Still others, employed by the black markets, or enjoying success through smuggling, found exploiting the remnants of Japanese-ness to be risky, but also profitable.

These and other factors contributed to the creation of a 650,000-strong Korean diaspora within "homogeneous" Japanese society that has developed into Japan's most visual (and often most troublesome) remnant of colonial rule. Many of these Japan-based Koreans, believing they deserved entitlement as a people liberated from Japanese rule, adopted an uncooperative relationship in postwar Japan and gained the reputation as troublemaker and then as communist among the U.S. occupation authorities.[168] Particular events on the Korean Peninsula, such as May 10 elections, diplomatic exchanges by Japan and ROK officials, and later negotiations leading to the 1965 Japan-ROK normalization treaty, brought members of the leftwing Japan-based Korean groups (like the *Chongryun* [General Association of Korean Residents in Japan]) to the streets in protest. As in southern Korea, SCAP and Japanese officials soon concluded that these uncooperative acts were influenced by regional and international communist agendas directed by Moscow to disrupt the United States' democratic occupations in Japan and southern Korea. It has only been of recent that issues surrounding this population have been able to find solution.

THE MARCH TO THE KOREAN WAR AND JAPANESE REMILITARIZATION

A two-part editorial that ran in the *Yŏnhap sinmun* from January 11 argued that developments in Japan further threatened a young ROK state already burdened by the communist threat to its north. The threat from the east, the newspaper explained, came from the substantial increase in the Japanese budget allowed by SCAP to revive Japan's shipping capabilities, an advancement that carried a duel potential—Japan's economic revival, but also its potential remilitarization. It was the second of these potentials that

[168] Kobayashi Tomoko, "GHQ no zainichi Chōsenjin ninshiki ni kan suru ikkōsatu" [One consideration of GHQ's perception of Koreans], *Chōsenshi kenkyūkai ronbunshū* 32 (October 1994), 165-192.

drew the attention of this editorial's author. Postwar efforts were supposed to have swept away Japan's invasion character and capacity. Were they now being revived?[169] The question posed by this editorial was not far off the mark, even if this budgetary increase could easily be justified as essential for Japan's economic recovery. With the "loss of China" to communism and the Korean Peninsula gradually moving toward war, United States officials intensified their efforts to redefine Japan's postwar role in Northeast Asia. Success here required Japan recovering both as an economic and military power, albeit under U.S. direction.

As mentioned above, SCAP in Tokyo, USAMGIK in Seoul, along with conservative elements in both countries, frequently speculated that political unrest in southern Korea and unlawful activities by Koreans in Japan were the local act of a grand plan choreographed by Moscow to disrupt occupation efforts and spread communism in U.S. occupied zones and eventually across Northeast Asia and into other capitalist strongholds. These suspicions were particularly strong from the first half of 1948 as southern Korea prepared to elect its first national assembly, which in turn would elect the ROK's first president. Leftist factions in southern Korea and Japan saw this election as the U.S. solidifying its Korean stronghold in the south at the expense of a unified Korean peninsula. Believing that the U.S. had stacked the cards in favor of conservative parties, leftwing political groups boycotted the election. The weeks surrounding the May 10 election and the August 15 founding of the ROK witnessed an increase in inter-factional fighting in southern Korea that included two major rebellions in Chejudo (April) and Yŏsu (October). Rather than as Koreans rebelling against what they believed to be unfair treatment, the U.S. interpreted their insubordination as part of an international conspiracy against capitalism.

Observers saw this confrontation as one that would lead the U.S. and the Soviets to war. Rumors that a superpower confrontation was brewing over Korea had begun to surface just after liberation. Many predicted World War III to be unavoidable, a conflict that Japanese and Koreans believed would involve a remilitarized Japan. Koreans argued the United States' long-term plan in East Asia being the resurrection of Japan as a hegemonic power. Such rumors continued into the Korean War as the DPRK, along with China and the Soviet Union, accused the United States of ignoring the terms of the

[169] "Ilbon chaemujangsŏl kwa Taehan'guk min'guk ŭi wich'i (The idea of Japanese remilitarization and the ROK's position) *Yŏnhap sinmun* (January 11, 12, 1950).

Potsdam Declaration by employing Japanese soldiers in the fighting.

Many of these rumors were fed by U.S. fears of communists infiltrating southern Korea. With World War II winding down the U.S., with no change of occupying the entire Korean peninsula, established the line of demarcation at the thirty-eighth parallel to halt what a potential communist advance into southern Korea as a bridge leading into Japan. In advancing occupation, the United States restructured a logic used by Japan four decades earlier to justify its actions: Soviet control over the Korean Peninsula would directly threaten its interests in Japan. Upon arrival, the U.S. found that Korean leftists had already begun to establish an extensive network of People's Committees throughout the peninsula. USAMGIK concluded that Korean acceptance of this ideology demonstrated just how politically naïve, and susceptible to political suasion, this people was. Political adviser H. Merrell Benninghoff determined that southern Korea "was ripe for agitators."[170] Already suspicious of Soviet actions in Eastern Europe and elsewhere, U.S. forces preparing to set sail for southern Korea hardly needed Japanese warnings to alert them to the possibility of having to combat communist activity in East Asia, and on the Korean peninsula, as well. While USAMGIK believed reconciliation with northern Koreans remained possible it lent support to centralist efforts; after determining that reconciliation was impossible it shifted its support toward conservatives.

Yet this shift only deepened already existing political rifts, which encouraged further speculation that Moscow had intensified its efforts in southern Korea. General Hodge used a July 1947 "off the record press conference" to link southern Korea's leftist groups to Moscow. Here, Hodge described a communist "master plan," a scheme that involved exploiting the trusteeship issue to create further confusion in southern Korea.

> The Soviet forces in North Korea do not have [troop strength] in their own troops. They do have a [North] Korean Army…. This North Korea army is not an accident. The Communist (Soviet) master plan indicates that they plan a revolution in South Korea—a good, old-fashioned Communist revolution. They can completely break up the railroad system, bridges, and so forth; they can make life miserable for everyone here. They can prepare the way for that through their local 5th column and the following built up because

[170] Benninghoff, "The Present Situation in Korea," *John R. Hodge mŭnsŏjip*, vol. 3 11.

> of this fight around trusteeship. Any man who gets disgusted with this question of trusteeship can join with the Joint Commission cooperators, but he is cast off by the strong Anti-trusteeship group. He then has no one to follow, except the Communist group, but the 30,000 real Communist may control nearly half the population.[171]

He claimed that the Soviet Union smuggled agents into the south by intermixing them with the 250 people who crossed the thirty-eighth parallel each day, but ducked the question of "how many [of these Russian-trained operators] are coming [south]" by simply reiterating, "we know they are coming."[172]

Further investigation is required to determine the extent to which U.S. officials truly believed their rhetoric that the Soviet Union was launching an ideological invasion of southern Korea. That there were northern Korean agents working for the Soviet Union in U.S. occupied southern Korea is probable, just as the United States had its own agents in the north.[173] We must also question U.S. claims that southern leftists were lackeys of their northern counterparts for guidance and direction, particularly since these elements developed so quickly after Japan's surrender.[174] Yet, the U.S. maintained up through the Korean War the claim that the Soviet Union organized a direct line of command that stretched from Moscow to Pyongyang, through Seoul into every corner of southern Korea, and eventually used the smuggling operations to gain access to Japan.[175]

As the Soviet-United States confrontation deepened Koreans in the south increasingly believed that this confrontation would evolve into a major, and perhaps world, war. Older Koreans no doubt maintained strong memories of previous competitions over their land by China, Russia, and Japan that led to two wars just before and after the turn of the century. Soviet, U.S., and even Japanese actions suggested to

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[171] "Press Conference" (July 23, 1947), in ibid., 265.
[172] Ibid., 266.
[173] Wada Haruki reports that South agents were organized in every northern province. Wada Haruki, *Chōsen sensō zenshi* [The complete history of the Korean War] (Tokyo: Iwanami, 2002), 49. G-2 Periodic Reports cite their information sources as North Korean defectors and other unnamed informants in the DPRK.
[174] Bruce Cumings writes that the evidence that southern Korean communists elements were controlled by the Soviet Union is "vague and unreliable." See his *Korea's Place in the Sun: A Modern History* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997), 218.
[175] One example of U.S. discussions on such a Soviet master plan took place during the Kobe school closure "riots" of April 1948. See my "The Cold War Hits Kobe—The 1948 Korean Ethnic School 'Riots'," *Japan Focus* (http://www.japanfocus.org/) (November 2008).

Koreans that this history was being replayed. In November 1945, G-2 Periodic Reports carried the contents of letters intercepted en route from southern Korea to Japan that interpreted tenser relations between the Soviet Union and the United States as a sign that war was imminent. One person wrote "the Russians are using Japanese men between the ages of 17 and 45 to build pillboxes and fortifications on the 38th parallel line. All that we hear is the coming war between America and Russia." Another noted that Japanese were "being used as laborers by Russians to build fortifications in Northern Korea."[176] A few months later yet another intercepted letter mailed within Korea predicted a return to war on the peninsula: "Our small country is the scene of a struggle between the political ideas of the US and Russia, between Democracy and Communism. We might even find ourselves in the midst of the next world war."[177] Surveys conducted by USAMGIK confirmed that many Koreans identified U.S.-Soviet friction as the primary barrier to their country's reunification, and that the two countries would eventually go to war.[178]

Japanese remilitarization occupied a central position in these rumors of war. Interestingly, these suspicions were raised by extremists on both sides: the left as well as the right. These rumors would linger even as the two Korean states went to war in 1950. They occasionally found their way into the G-2 Periodic Reports, particularly in the mail sent by Koreans and Japanese that USAMGIK intercepted. These letters assumed that Japan would join the fighting should war break out between the Soviet Union and the United States. They then accused the U.S. of actively plotting to return Japan to its prewar hegemonic position in Eeast Asia. Occupation officials acknowledged the seriousness of these rumors by addressing them. One report, dated September 19, 1947, commented on "veiled propaganda against the Americans on the part of Extreme Rightist groups," the perpetrators did so to discredit U.S. occupation operations.

I am not attempting to raise the bugaboo of a gigantic Fascist plot to revive the Japanese

[176] G-2 Periodic Reports (November 9, 1945), 259.
[177] G-2 Periodic Reports (February 11, 1946), 647.
[178] For example, a March 16, 1946 survey showed that 34 percent of those interviewed believed that the "quarrel between the Americans and Russians" was the cause behind a decision to postpone the scheduled Joint Soviet-American Commission meeting. "Survey of public opinion in Seoul on the postponement of the Soviet-American Joint Commission meeting" (March 16, 1946), Yi, ed., *Haebang chŏnhusa charyojip*, vol. 1, p. 379. A second survey revealed that an equal number of participants (24 percent) disagreed on whether a Soviet-U.S. war would break out in the near future, with the remaining 52 percent responding that they did not know. "Effectiveness of Japanese and Soviet propaganda in Seoul," ibid., 396.

> ghost of a "Great East Asia co-prosperity Sphere" dressed in new garments and manipulated this time not in the name of the Emperor, but I am hinting that there is cause to wonder if this be not true.

The author, listed as Operations Section Chief Captain FA, then suggested that such Koreans were in cahoots with other extremists.

> Are their close connections between Korean Extremists and Chinese Extremists? Does the reluctance of Korean Extremists to abandon autocratic Japanese methods indicate something more than a resistance to change? Is there a master plan afoot to discredit American democracy while still clinging to American material aid?

Captain FA recognized the drawing power of this discussion; it was heard "among Extremists in all sections of South Korea": "…it was so logically neat and clinching…it is not spontaneous, but rather it has been conceived in the mind of no fool."[179]

The rumors became so strong that General Hodge once again decided that they needed to be addressed. This time he focused on Japan-U.S. relations, rather than whether grains were being exported to Japan. He began by dismissing the possibility that USAMGIK retained former colonial officials in its administration as a "good [Communist propaganda] story….[with] no word of truth in it." Hodge then attacked suspicions that the U.S. aimed to resurrect Japan as a military power.

> "That the United States is building Japan back as a military power." This is a flat falsehood that gains credence among the uninitiated because United States authorities recently announced a humanitarian plan to get the Japanese to where they can feed and clothe themselves and cease to be a burden on the rest of the world's economy. This plan has nothing whatsoever to do with restoring Japanese military power, either physically or potentially.

Hodge next addressed rumors that Japanese were participating in the rebellions taking place in Chejudo by retorting that if they were it was on the side of the communists.

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[179] Office of Civil Information, "Special Report" (September 19, 1947), *Internal Affairs of Korea*, vol. 1, 555.

> "That there are armed Japanese participating in the restoration of peace on Cheju Do." It may be that the Communists who worked up the violent Cheju Do political disturbances imported some Japanese Communists to help in their schemes of murdering their own brothers and sisters. However, I can state categorically that there are no Japanese in the forces of law and order on Cheju Do or elsewhere in the United States zone of Korea.[180]

These suspicions had legs that reached beyond U.S.-occupied territory. As Hodge spoke, Kim Il Sung was pitching his initial ambitions to Soviet officials regarding the possibility of an attack southward. Like the Soviet Union-DORK-China bloc, the U.S. also believed that foreign troop pullout would create a security void that could very well be filled by civil war. The Soviet-controlled north, the U.S. claimed, held the key cards, as indicated in a "Civil Intelligence Section Periodical Summary, published in November 1948. This summary detailed communist plans to organize forces both in the north and the south to prepare for an all-out attack to commence once Soviet troops had retreated. The DPRK held all of the advantages: it had a well-trained military force; it had Soviet as well as Chinese support; it had weapons (first Japanese arms but now Soviet ones); and, this summary claimed, it had a plan—one developed as early as June and September 1947. To the contrary, the ROK and the U.S. were vulnerable to the DPRK's ability to shut down electric power lines, built by the Japanese, to "plunge a great portion of metropolitan South Korea into darkness at will." Indeed, this summary predicted, the war would begin with the DPRK doing just this prior to invading the ROK.[181]

The Soviet Union and China harbored similar fears of a ROK attack, but saw the DPRK military as woefully unprepared should this occur. It had not performed well in skirmishes at the 38th parallel that had increased in frequency as of recent. Furthermore, Soviet, DPRK, and Chinese leadership believed that if war did break out the DPRK military would also have to battle Japanese forces which would return to the peninsula to join the fray.[182] In one May 1949 exchange between Russian representative to the

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[180] "Jacobs to Secretary of State: Press Release by General John R. Hodge" (June 16, 1948), *Internal Affairs of Korea*, vol. 9, 493.
[181] General Headquarters, Far East Command Military Intelligence Section, "Civil Intelligence Section Periodical Summary" (November 15, 1947), ibid., 581-82.
[182] The Soviet Union believed this with greater certainty after it conducted a nuclear test in August 1949 and the Chinese People's Army emerged victorious over the Chinese Nationalists that same

Chinese Central Party Meeting, I. V. Kovalev, and Joseph Stalin, Kovalev revealed Chinese Premier Mao Zedong's concerns of possible Japanese participation in a Korean war triggered that could break out after Soviet and U.S. troops left the Korean Peninsula as scheduled.

> Our Korean comrades think that the United States will soon pull its troops from the Korean peninsula. However, what concerns our Korean comrades is that Japanese troops will be intermixed among the United States troops and the south will attack the north…. Mao said that the possibility that Japanese troops are among the South Korean troops is something that has to be considered. And if they do in fact join then caution must be exercised…. Even if the U.S. military does retreat, and the Japanese do not cross over, the North should hold off its southern advancement. For MacArthur would surely send Japanese military forces and Japanese weapons to Korea.[183]

One year later, in May 1950, Mao posed this possibility to Kim directly during his visit to Beijing. Kim responded that he felt this possibility to be remote, but that their doing so would encourage his troops to fight with more vigor.[184]

To what extent were communist suspicions justified? It was just about this time that Washington, Seoul, and Tokyo suggest that the so-called "Japan Crowd" was gaining influence over the "China Crowd" in Washington politics.[185] Their rise was instrumental with enlisting "reverse course" politics. George Kennan used a March 1948 visit to Tokyo to discuss these changes with SCAP officials.[186] That October U.S. President Truman signed NSC-13/2 that authorized Japan to create a 150,000-strong police force and suggested that Japan might provide "some degree of military assistance to the United

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year.

[183] Correspondence between I. V. Kovalev and Mao Zedong, found in A. V. Torcov, *Chôsen sensô no nazo to shinjitsu* [Truth and riddles of the Korean war], trans. Shimatomai Nobuo and Kim Songho (Tokyo: Soshinsha 2001), 104-105.

[184] A. V. Torcov, *Chôsen sensô no nazo to shinjitsu*, 112.

[185] Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and its Legacy*, trans. Robert Ricketts and Sebastian Swann (New York: Continuum, 2002), describes the Japan Crowd as "proponents of a soft peace [who] argued for a liberalized restoration of the prewar regime that assured the continuity of the monarchy, divested of its anti0democratic features, a demilitarized body politic, and a revitalized industrial economy." He continues by noting that in mid-1947 this group reentered "the arena and, in 1948, engineer[ed] an abrupt policy shift to the right. (203, 204).

[186] Ibid., 460.

States" for self-defense.[187] But did Japan's self defense extend to fighting on the Korean Peninsula should war erupt between north and south? Communist leaders might have interpreted two visits to Tokyo by ROK President Syngman Rhee in October 1948 and February 1950 as opportunities to discuss strategy and Japanese participation should war break out on the Korean peninsula. On these occasions he publicly stated his intention for visiting Japan as discussing with General Douglas MacArthur and Japanese government officials the "possibility of improving relations between Korea and Japan."[188] Rhee also called for his erstwhile enemy's assistance in battling the communist threat (along with his demands that the U.S. allow him to invade north). In Japan, increased support for restoring the Japanese conglomerates (*zaibatsu*) that many accused of being the engine of Japan's fifteen-year war. These activities, coupled with calls for Japan's remilitarization, along with the general anti-communist atmosphere that prevailed in both southern Korea and Japan provided enough reason to speculate that war in Korea could bring the Japanese military back to the peninsula to fight alongside the ROK and possibly U.S. troops.

These suspicions continued even after conventional war broke out in June 1950. On October 25, 1950 the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party directed Andrei Vyshinsky at the United Nations in New York to "support the protest of the government of the DPRK against the use by the Americans of Japanese servicemen in the war in Korea." It further instructed the Soviet Ambassador to the United States in Washington that

> Japanese servicemen participated in battles in the area of Seoul together with American troops, that one Japanese company participated in battles in the area of Chkholvon [In'chŏn] and that a significant number of Japanese are found in the 7th and 8th divisions of the Rhee Syngman troops.

This constituted a "gross violation of the Potsdam declaration" that called for Japan's demilitarization, "and also of Section III of the resolution of the Far Eastern Commission Basic Policy in relation to Japan after Capitulation of June 19, 1947." Even today the full

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[187] Ibid., 468.
[188] "Rhee calls on Japanese to Join Anti-Red Battle," *Nippon Times* (February 17, 1950) in *Migun CIC chŏngbo bogosŏ*, vol. 1.

extent of Japan's participation in the Korean War, beyond its minesweepers being employed to clear In'chŏn Harbor, the advisors it made available to the U.S. military, the based it permitted the U.S. to use in its attacks, and the gains that the Japanese economy made from this war. Whether Japanese soldiers, as they had in China, also join the battles on either side remains an unanswered question.[189]

CONCLUSION

Many factors contributed to the "great disillusion" that many Koreans experienced after August 15, when they spilled out into city and village streets across the Korean Peninsula and around the now vanquished Japanese empire. One important factor was the disillusion that Korea would be free of the detritus of "Japanese-ness," that they could erase the influence of thirty-six years of colonial rule by simply, as one intercepted letter advised, rub off the Chrysanthemum mark from weapons to hide their Japanese origins.[190] Remnants of Japanese colonial rule lingered in many forms; their presence was felt even when the telltale signs of Japanese-ness had been erased. Indeed, as the U.S. occupation of southern Korea progressed Japanese-ness remained more as a memory, an image, or simply as a rumor than in its tangible form, particularly after Japanese expatriates had been returned to Japan.

The stubbornness of this detritus benefited from the support of a variety of agents, the most important being the USAMGIK occupation administration that replaced Japan's colonial government from early September 1945. The U.S. occupation, in assuming its duties in southern Korea, assumed responsibility for clearing the Korean Peninsula of its physical remnants of Japanese rule, and easing Koreans into the process that would move them from colonial to occupation to sovereign rule. As this paper has

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[189] Kathryn Weathersby, "New Russian Documents on the Korean War," CWIHP *Bulletin* 6, 7 (Winter 1995/6). Ōnuma Hisao suggests that this claim may have mistaken the over 200 Nisei American war casualties for Japanese soldiers in his "Chōsen sensō e no Nihon no kyōryoku" [Japanese cooperation in the Korean War], in *Chōsen sensō to Nihon*, edited by Ōnuma Hisao (Tokyo: Shinkansha, 2006), 100. Ōnuma reports that over 5000 Nisei served in the Korean War. For Japan's participation in the Chinese Civil War see Sayuri Guthrie-Shimizu, "Occupation Policy and Postwar Sino-Japanese Relations: Severing Economic Ties," in *Democracy in Occupied Japan*, edited by Caprio and Sugita, 202-04. For Japan's economic gains during the war see Roger Dingman, "The Dagger and the Gift: The Impact of the Korean War on Japan," *Journal of East Asian Relations* 1 (Spring 1993): 29-55.

[190] G-2 Periodic Report, vol. 1 (November 12, 1945), 270. The Chrysanthemum is the mark of the Japanese emperor. This letter was dated August 21 and sent by the Hq. Korean Army District to the Ordinance Bureau in Nanam.

argued, U.S. occupation policy in many ways perpetuated ideas of Japanese-ness in southern Korea, which in turn deepened political rifts that complicated political compromise and reconciliation between political factions. The demilitarized zone (DMZ) is a testament to the failure by the Cold War superpowers to reunify the peninsula that they divided. But it is also a bitter memory of Japan's colonial presence in Korea, both the actual experience of colonial subjugation as well as the residue that it left in its wake. In addition to acting as the physical divide that separates the DPRK and the ROK, the DMZ also acted as a symbolic divide for Koreans in southern Korea, and continues to act as this symbol among Japan's Korean population.

Examining this history first addresses questions related to Korea's process of decolonization, particularly the effect that division and occupation has had on Koreans moving beyond the period of their colonial subjugation. It further considers questions regarding collaboration: What actions constitute collaboration? What criteria should be employed to judge people who abated Korea's colonial subjugators? And, perhaps more importantly, can these people be given a fair trial, considering that they are being charged with treason against a state that in Korea's case was but a memory and an aspiration at the time? Finally, this study begs the question of the effect that assimilation as a colonial policy had on the people's postcolonial history, particularly given the fact that peoples subjugated to this policy, such as Algeria, Korea, and Vietnam, endured bloody wars following their liberation.