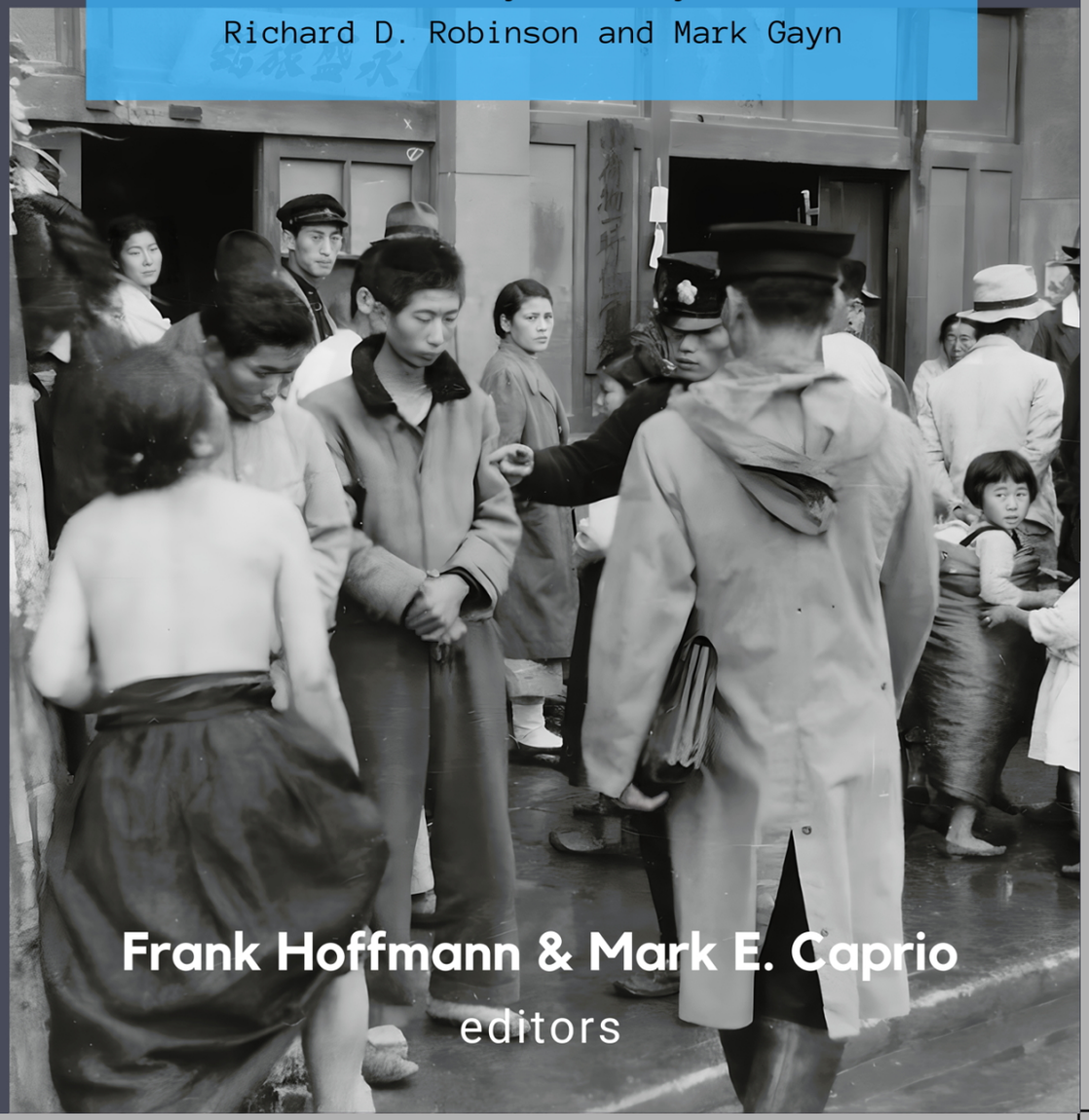
Witness to Korea 1945–47

The Unfolding of an Authoritarian Regime

With key texts by
Richard D. Robinson and Mark Gayn



Frank Hoffmann & Mark E. Caprio
editors

PREVIEW

edition

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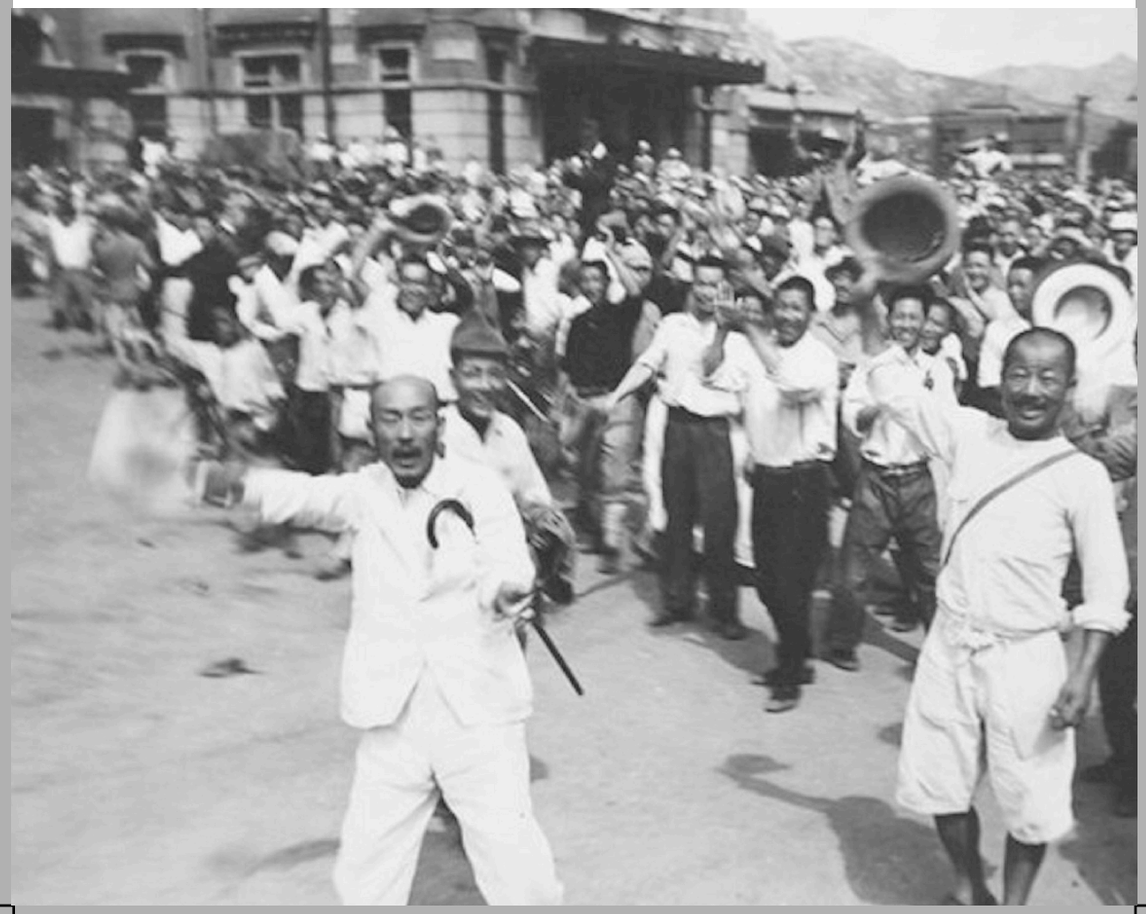

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Witness to Korea 1945–47

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12.Arrests are carried out on a vast scale, & street arrests, such as one shown here, are frequent. The police halted 3 students, & tied their wrists with a thin twine, pending their removal to police station. One of the 3 was with his wife & child (strapped to her back, on extreme left) & mother. Latter, in protest, tore offher bodice & proceeded to scream & plead with police. Police behavior was noted in United Nations' pre-election report as one of things to watch for. Another was the activities of private armed forces maintained by such men as Syngman Rhee, Kim Koo and others.
CREDIT MARK GAYN

Front cover image: detail of a press photo by Mark Gayn, Seoul, South Korea, fall 1946; above reproduced in full with Gayn's 1948 cutline. In a stunning but for this agitated period emblematic scene, we see unexpected nudity as the last resort of protest by an extremely distressed mother worrying for her son's safety at the hands of police. Gayn's image frame yields a remarkably striking composition. Much like Velázquez, he graciously captures the gazes and movements connecting those present in the unfolding neocolonial drama he witnesses. Yet, the restrictive, politically circumscribed, and censorship-constrained atmosphere of 1940s America made its publication untenable.

Contents

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We would also like to express our appreciation to several institutions that have provided access to their libraries and archives. The Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library at the University of Toronto, the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University, the Hoover Institution Library & Archives at Stanford University, and the C. V. Starr East Asian Library, University of California, Berkeley, deserve special mention.

Last, but certainly not least, we very much enjoyed working with our copy editor James P. Thomas. Himself a Korea expert, he was always there to discuss issues related to this project. His interactive approach and amazing diligence and perseverance played an important role in the book's successful completion.

Frank Hoffmann
Mark E. Caprio

At Long Last

John Merrill

I first encountered Richard D. Robinson's (1921–2009) manuscript, "Betrayal of a Nation," some fifty years ago at Harvard University.

I was writing a master's paper on pre-Korean War political violence in Korea. My professor was Gregory Henderson (1922–1988), a former foreign service officer who had served in Seoul and published a seminal work on Korean politics.* One day, as we were discussing my research, he told me about Robinson and his manuscript on the U.S. occupation of Korea. I fired off a note to Robinson right away explaining my research and asking about getting a copy.

A few days later it arrived. Robinson, it turned out, had retooled himself as a Middle East specialist, gotten a Ph.D., and was teaching International Business at MIT right down the river. Henderson was right. The manuscript was an inside, tell-all account of the occupation that proved extremely useful. When I finished my master's paper, I wrote to thank him and get permission to donate it to Harvard's Yenching Library. Over the years, Robinson's manuscript served as an important source for scholars researching the occupation (1945–1948) and the Syngman Rhee years (1948–1960). A translated version was published in Korean in 1988.

During WWII, Robinson was trained as a Japanese area officer. When Tokyo surrendered, he was suddenly plunked down in Korea. His job was to follow public opinion and maintain contact with Korean political figures. This experience prompted him to write a manuscript

* *Korea: The Politics of the Vortex* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968).

highly critical of the occupation and its policies—especially its failure to promote democracy and implement social and economic reform. He submitted his manuscript to multiple publishers, but without success, given the political climate of the times.

Robinson left Korea in mid-1947 under something of a cloud. He had uncovered a plot by Korean rightists to provoke an incident that would draw American troops into a confrontation with the Soviets in northern Korea. The plotters hoped the confrontation would eventually bring about reunification. Although occupation authorities wanted to bury the plot, Robinson refused to let it go and was nearly court-martialed. After destroying his manuscript to avoid further complications, he and his wife left Korea by freighter. On the long voyage, he managed to retype the entire manuscript.

In addition to Robinson's account, this volume contains the long Korea chapter from Mark Gayn's (1909–1981) *Japan Diary*. From 1945 to 1947 Gayn worked for the *Chicago Sun* as its bureau chief for Japan and Korea. But he also wrote for other major newspapers and popular magazines. He visited Korea with two fellow journalists just after a wave of strikes and other disturbances in the fall of 1946. Gayn's diary reinforces Robinson's portrait of the occupation—and is even better in conveying its determination to tightly control the press.

The "original sin" of the American occupation was to see Korea as just an extension of Japan, rather than a liberated country. Spurning approaches by the left-leaning People's Committees (Inmin Wiwŏnhoe), which had broad popular support, occupation authorities took their guidance from an army field manual on governing defeated enemy territories. After a hare-brained attempt to retain "experienced" Japanese officials and their Korean trainees, the military government reverted to relying on Korean police who had worked for the Japanese and a highly unrepresentative "translators' government" of English-speaking Koreans.

Haphazard occupation policies soon led to an escalation in violent incidents. Popular unrest exploded in the fall of 1946. Hundreds of police were killed and American tactical troops had to be called out to control the unrest. The scale of protests and violence prompted concern that the situation was spiraling out of control. Fearing that the

American position might become untenable, policymakers decided to disengage. With the U.S.–Soviet Joint Commission at an impasse, Washington referred the Korean issue to the newly established United Nations to provide political cover for bailing out. Soviet disagreement with this development sealed the division.

In April 1948, armed struggle broke out on Cheju-do, Korea's largest island off the southwestern tip of the peninsula. Then, in mid-October, the unrest spilled over onto the mainland as a regiment of South Korean forces rebelled at the mainland port of Yŏsu as they were about to embark for the island. The situation was touch and go for some time. Although the uprising was eventually suppressed, fleeing rebel soldiers scattered into the nearby Chiri Mountains where they continued to hold out. Erupting just a month after the ROK's establishment, the rebellion rattled the new Syngman Rhee government.

The failed policies of the occupation cast a long shadow. Once Syngman Rhee's (Yi Sŭng-man, in office 1948–1960) new government gained its footing, it launched an all-out offensive, determined to punish the North. According to ROK military histories, Rhee personally ordered an amphibious attack on a naval base guarding the approaches to P'yŏngyang. American officials were infuriated but could do little more than complain. Rhee's forces also initiated battles between whole regiments along the 38th Parallel. The South even used partisans to infiltrate into the North by sea. One unit was captured and its surviving members put on trial in P'yŏngyang.

While Rhee indulged himself in endless bluster and bravado, Kim Il Sung (Kim Il-sŏng, in office 1948–1994) was busy preparing to attack—pitching to Stalin (in office 1922–1953) a war to liberate the South, mobilizing the population through a massive fund-raising campaign to buy Russian tanks and planes, and channeling repatriating Korean veterans of Mao's (head of state 1949–1959) forces into the Korean People's Army. In the end, Rhee's foolhardiness only helped Kim win Stalin's approval for eliminating a serious threat to the communist regime in the North.

From a historiographic perspective, the incomplete and corrupted history of the occupation years has continued to also make the current situation more difficult to understand. The consequences of this are

nowhere more telling than on the question of the origins of the war itself. Though the conflict is usually said to have started by a surprise North Korean attack in June 1950, its origins stretch back much farther—to the division of the peninsula, the collapse of the U.S.–Soviet Joint Commission, and the establishment of rival regimes, each with its superpower patron and each determined to unify the peninsula on its own terms.

Korea remains a potential flashpoint. Like the question of the origins of the war, American claims about P'yŏngyang's nuclear buildup are only partially correct. Washington officials have bought into an oversimplified view of the nuclear issue. By and large, they are oblivious to how U.S. actions, such as wartime saturation bombing of North Korea and stationing nearly a thousand tactical nuclear weapons in South Korea for several decades, have spurred P'yŏngyang's nuclear push. The perverse action–reaction dynamic we helped set in motion continues to be a prime driver of North Korea's nuclear program.

Together, the Robinson and Gayn accounts present a fuller, much more critical view of the occupation than traditional, airbrushed accounts. An abysmal failure by most standards, the occupation was successful mostly in terms of strategic denial—preventing the southern half of the peninsula from falling under Soviet control.

Richard D. Robinson and Mark Gayn: A Whistleblower and a Journalist

Frank Hoffmann

The accounts of Richard D. Robinson (1921–2009) and Mark Gayn (1909–1981) are the most substantial, intense, and critically engaging descriptions of immediate post-liberation southern Korean politics written in English before 1950. Despite differences in literary genre—one an academic essay, the other a journalistic diary—both texts combine razor-sharp political analysis with the authors' personal eyewitness observations. Both examine the early Cold War politics of the U.S. Army Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK, 1945–1948) and the support of right-wing politicians, and both authors were consequently attacked by McCarthy (1908–1957) and his ilk. Robinson's report makes him a whistleblower in today's terms. A slightly edited 1960 version of his second 1947 manuscript (he had burned the original before departing Korea for fear of being court-martialed by the U.S. Army), it is published here for the first time in English. By contrast, Gayn's journalistic diary, published in 1948, quickly became a bestseller and was soon translated into Japanese, Russian, Polish, and later Korean.

Prelude

In May 1980, following the assassination of South Korea's long-term dictator by his own secret service agency director, the country experienced the extremely violent crackdown of the Kwangju Democratic Uprising and, in turn, the installation of a new fascist boogeyman. That same week German TV aired a special report on the events. Looking

back, I remember sitting in the living room late at night with my father as we watched the stunningly gruesome footage in complete silence. Upon rising to leave the room, my father, a former paratrooper in the Nazi Luftwaffe at age seventeen, seemed both upset and triumphant. "You reproach me and leave us, only to go study *that* country—*that* country, where paratroopers slaughter their own people like cattle? If that's not fascism, then I don't know what is." He couldn't have been right—yet he was. The Kwangju Massacre revealed just how little had changed since the 1940s, how the framework of suppression, its enforcers, and its tactics of legitimization were still intact.

Two or three months later, by then in Hamburg, I found myself in M. Y. Cho's (1931–2006) office at the Institute of Asian Affairs. A North Korea expert, gifted essayist, and the wittiest of all political analysts focusing on Asia, Dr. Cho kicked me out of his office in anticipation of the arrival of a man he called "a real VIP journalist." That journalist was Mark Gayn, just in from Tokyo, where he had met with South Korean activists and witnesses of the Kwangju Massacre. As I was on my way out, Gayn walked in, wearing a long gray raincoat on this perfectly sunny and cheerful summer day. Immediately detecting my surprise, he turned to me with a hawkish gaze, making a self-deprecating joke about needing to conceal his youthful body from public sight. Moments later I was out the door. Forty-five years later, I still vividly recall his lively, curious eyes. "That was Gayn's last trip," Dr. Cho told me later. "He's dying of cancer."

Decades on—May 1998—at the opening of an exhibition of North Korean paintings at Harvard's Korea Institute, two strikingly tall men rushed in. Towering over me, one, a now retired historian, introduced the other as Richard D. Robinson: "He was in Korea with the U.S. Army Military Government when some of your paintings here were produced," adding that I *must* read Robinson's fascinating "Betrayal" manuscript that the Harvard-Yenching Library would have. (Only I never got around to reading it until Mark Caprio shared his copy with me a few years ago.) When we met, Dick, as Robinson liked to be called, was already retired from MIT, no longer lived in Massachusetts, and was only visiting Cambridge to handle some family business. Drawn by his continuous interest in post-war Korea, he visited our exhibition

after reading about it in a university newsletter. During the brief stroll through the show, he demonstrated an especially keen interest in the earlier paintings, the ones from the 1940s and 1950s. He told me he had been to northern Korea just once and had seen only works of political propaganda, not art. Eager to describe his role in Korea and account for his interest, he explained with a grin that he had served with U.S. military intelligence—"working with the bad guys"—which at the time sounded to me like a mix of remorse and mockery, or perhaps a joke that former soldiers make. I could not say at the time. We took two or three photos in front of a 1948 Soviet-style socialist realist worker portrait by one of the show's most prominent painters, and that was the last I saw of him.

Richard D. Robinson

Richard Dunlop Robinson was twenty years old when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor in December 1941 and the United States joined the fight against the Axis Powers. Robinson had grown up in the city of Yakima in Washington state, but at the time he was living in Seattle as a law school student at the University of Washington. In February 1942 he was drafted into the U.S. Army; a few days later, on his 21st birthday, he arrived at Harvard Business School to participate in a quasi-military training program. Although he published short articles in the *Harvard Crimson* during his two years there,[1] Harvard did not exactly impress him. Half a century later he described his stay at the school back then as "uninspired and non-inspirational," a place with "an elitist, holier-than-thou attitude."[2]

At the end of the accelerated war-time program Robinson was awarded a master's degree in business, and after completing officer's training, he was soon assigned to serve as a longshoreman in the Army's Transportation Corps at the Port of New Orleans in Louisiana. However, feeling out of place in this position and wanting "to do something

[1] See the *Harvard Crimson*, February 26, March 5, March 12, and March 19, 1943.
[2] Richard D. Robinson, "A Personal Journey through Time and Space," *Journal of International Business Studies* 25, no. 3 (Fall 1994) (hereafter cited as Robinson, "A Personal Journey"): 435.

of greater value—and perhaps, risk,"[3] he somehow managed to arrange a transfer to a program tasked with preparing personnel for the planned military government of Japan once the country surrendered. As part of the program, in addition to economics and administrative training, Robinson studied Japanese at Harvard and finally at the Army Language School in Monterey, California, completing nearly two years of study—with decent success. "At one point I was even classified officially as an 'interpreter,'" he wrote in an autobiographical sketch. "There would have been a lot of surprised—and puzzled—Japanese!"[4]

Like Edward W. Wagner (1924–2001), who had completed similar training and would later establish the Korean Studies program at Harvard, Robinson was briefly stationed in Japan before arriving in Korea on November 21, 1945. He barely spoke Japanese and knew no Korean whatsoever. Only twenty-four years old but serving as an army officer in the U.S. Army Military Government in Korea, he assumed a leading role as deputy director of the small Office of Public Opinion[5] in the Department of Public Information until his discharge on August 8, 1946.[6] Ostensibly, the Office of Public Opinion existed to provide feedback from the Korean populace to USAMGIK leadership on policy and prospective political trajectories. In practice, it also helped enforce USAMGIK's heavy-handed censorship and exert control over the press. The very month Robinson joined the Office, for example, the Korean daily *Maeil sinbo*, a paper highly critical of USAMGIK,[7] was ordered to cease publication on the pretext of a financial investigation the Office had initiated.

[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid., 436.
[5] At times, the Office was also referred to as the Bureau of Public Opinion.
[6] Regarding the work of the Office of Public Opinion and Robinson's role, see the M.A. thesis by Song Chae-gyŏng, "Migunjŏng yŏronjosaro pon Han'gugŭi chŏngch'i-sahoe tongyang (1945–1947)" [Political and social trends in Korea as seen through the U.S. Military Government Opinion Poll (1945–1947)], M.A. thesis (Seoul National University, 2014).
[7] A full month before the arrival of U.S. troops in Korea—on the eve of Korea's liberation from colonial rule by the Soviet 25th Army—the Japanese governor-general of Chōsen, expecting a Soviet takeover, arranged for the newspaper to be run by Korean journalists close to the communists. Once an important wartime propaganda organ for the colonial government, the paper soon became the most significant critical voice against the U.S. Military Government.

Under Robinson's lead, the Office of Public Opinion ran a survey indicating that by late March 1946, only 51 percent of southern Koreans in the Seoul area preferred the U.S. occupation to Japanese colonial rule.[8] Robinson pinned this grim number on USAMGIK's support for far-right politicians—appointed by them to command the brutal Japanese-trained police—and on the military government's dire economic policies, particularly the botched distribution of food. Another major cause of discontent was trusteeship itself, widely perceived as just another form of colonial occupation. Americans and Soviets alike—including Robinson—considered trusteeship a necessary measure for a newly liberated but politically and economically fractured society. Decades later, in a long interview with Korean TV journalist Kim Hwan-gyun—partially aired on KBS in January 2004 (see fig. 5) and quoted at length in Kim's essay "Why *Betrayal of a Nation* Is Banned in the United States"—Robinson distanced himself from that view. Drawing a parallel to the unwarranted U.S. invasion of Iraq then under way, he remarked: "Right now the Iraq War is happening and anyone who criticizes it is considered unpatriotic."[9] His critique underscores how thoroughly the U.S. has entrenched neocolonial practices since 1945, forging alliances with military juntas and fascist dictators to sustain its imperialist hegemony. Officials consistently justify covert and military interventions as democratization efforts, rebranding them since the Cold War's declared end as "humanitarian interventions"—Bricmont's *Impérialisme humanitaire*. But U.S.-led invasions continue to be followed by failed nation-building efforts. In August 2021, we thus watched panicked Americans and their allies flee Afghanistan—long dubbed the "Graveyard of Empires," where the Soviets had already been defeated in the 1980s. All too predictably, the subsequent U.S. venture to forge a client state had also failed, while critics were muzzled and whistleblowers like Chelsea Manning (b. 1987) court-martialed. After two decades of spin and propaganda, one of those responsible, the "War Czar" himself, the former Assistant to the President and Deputy National Security Advisor for Iraq and Afghanistan,

[8] See Robinson, "A Personal Journey," 436. In his "Betrayal," 134, he has it as 52%.
[9] Richard D. Robinson, quoted in Kim Hwan-gyun, *Pigŭgŭn haengjinŭrobut'ŏ sijak toenda: tak'yument'ŏrisŭt'ŭ Kim Hwan-gyunŭn malhanda* [A tragedy begins with a march: Documentarian Kim Hwan-gyun speaks] (Koyang: Tŭllin Ach'im, 2004) (hereafter cited as Kim, *Pigŭgŭn haengjinŭrobut'ŏ sijak toenda*), 81.

confessed to the *New York Times*: "We were devoid of a fundamental understanding of Afghanistan—we didn't know what we were doing. [...] We didn't have the foggiest notion of what we were undertaking."[10] Tellingly, even the opium-and-heroin trade to the West that flourished through the U.S. occupation fell off only after the Taliban's return.

Read against this neocolonial playbook—ally strongmen, manage optics, sideline critics—Robinson later recounted that his survey of USAMGIK's popularity resulted in his 1946 discharge. A read-through of his report suggests it may have been his political analyses—and not the unfavorable data—that raised the eyebrows of USAMGIK leaders such as Archibald V. Arnold (1889–1973), military governor of southern Korea. According to the 1st lieutenant (now 25 years old), the "reported rising public dissatisfaction with Military Government"[11] could not be reversed, "unless the Military Government follows these general policies"[12]—the lieutenant's very own general policies, that is. Robinson had written the piece at a time when a wide range of political options and solutions still seemed viable, two days before the Joint Soviet–American Commission began its work and before USAMGIK's clampdown of the left. Point three of Robinson's "general policies" instructed USAMGIK to convince Koreans that America's interest in Korea was "solely that of seeing it become a free, democratic, enlightened nation, with whatever economic system it sees fit to choose, *whether it be capitalism, socialism, or communism*. Why? Because it is our own interest as well as that of the Korean people."[13] John R. Hodge (1893–1963) himself, commander of all U.S. forces in Korea, and a man who even asserted the need to personally censor a military propaganda paper like *Stars and Stripes*,[14] lacked the slightest grasp of such a liberal agenda (although he

[10] Douglas Lute (b. 1952), quoted in the *New York Times*, December 9, 2019.
[11] Richard D. Robinson, "Suggested MG Public Relations Policy" (March 18, 1946), reprinted in *Migunjŏnggi chŏngbo charyojip: Simin soyo, yŏron chosa pogosŏ, 1945.9–1948.6* [Collection of intelligence materials from the U.S. Military Government period: Reports on civil unrest and opinion polls, September 1945–June 1948], vol. 2, comp. Hallim Taehakkyo, Asia Munhwa Yŏn'guso (Ch'unch'ŏn: Hallim Taehakkyo, Asia Munhwa Yŏn'guso, 1995), 407.
[12] Ibid., 410.
[13] Ibid., 409.
[14] See "John R. Hodge to W. J. Niedergruen" (June 1, 1948), reprinted in *Migun-*

reportedly respected some of Robinson's other work). But Robinson did not stop there. As Chŏng Yong-uk (aka Chung Yong Wook), a historian at Seoul National University, elucidated in his substantive essay addressing Robinson's work and historiographic approach: "By May 1946, his policy proposals became more concrete. In his 'Recommendations' report, Robinson highlighted the confusion and inefficiency of military government policy by dividing the problem into four areas: politics (coping with the far-right and the far-left), the police, rice distribution, and land reform, and he came up with specific corrective measures for each area." When his superiors failed to react to his policy recommendations, "Robinson again raised the issues of police brutality and the role of the police in Korean politics to USAMGIK leadership with renewed urgency in his 'July Report.'"[15]

Back in Washington, a few liberal-minded policymakers in the State Department, including John Carter Vincent (1900–1972) who headed the State Department's Office of Far Eastern Affairs, had already cautioned General Hodge in Korea not "to give any Korean group, such as the Kim Koo [Kim Ku, 1876–1949] Group arriving from Chungking [Chongqing, China], or any Korean individual, such as Dr. Rhee [Yi Sŭng-man, aka Syngman Rhee, in office 1948–1960], the impression that we were supporting such a group or individual as against any other Koreans."[16] As shown in the exchanges between the State and War Departments and the generals and their staff in Tokyo and Seoul,[17] all

jŏnggi chŏngbo charyojip: Haji (John R. Hodge) munsŏjip, 1945.6–1948.8 [Collection of intelligence materials from the U.S. Military Government period: Hodge (John R. Hodge) Document Collection, June 1945–August 1948], vol. 2, comp. Hallim Taehakkyo, Asia Munhwa Yŏn'guso (Ch'unch'ŏn: Hallim Taehakkyo, Asia Munhwa Yŏn'guso, 1995), 518. See also Mark Gayn, "Japan Diary: Korea," in this volume, 417.
[15] Chŏng Yong-uk, "Rich'adŭ Robinsŭnŭi Han'guk hyŏndaesa ihae" [Richard Robinson's understanding of contemporary Korean history], in *Haeoe hakcha Han'guk hyŏndaesa yŏn'gu punsŏk*, vol. 2, ed. Han'guk Chŏngsinmunhwa Yŏn'guwŏn (Seoul: Paeksan Sŏdang, 1999) (hereafter cited as Chŏng Yong-uk, "Rich'adŭ Robinsŭnŭi Han'guk hyŏndaesa ihae"), 18.
[16] [John Carter Vincent], "Memorandum by the Director of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs (Vincent) to Colonel Russell L. Vittrup, War Department" (November 7, 1945), in *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers 1945*, vol. VI, *The British Commonwealth, The Far East*, comp. United States Department of State (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1969), 1114.
[17] Bruce Cumings provides an extensive discussion of these exchanges; see Bruce

such advice on building a middle-of-the-road democratic society was either rejected or plainly ignored. As a prominent example, in the circumstances surrounding Syngman Rhee's return from the U.S. to Korea and USAMGIK's support for him, Bruce Cumings has pointed out that "Hodge, MacArthur, Goodfellow, and Rhee conspired against established State Department policy."[18] The justification for such deviation from State Department policies was the inflated "threat of communism," or, in Cumings's terms, "a classic expression of 'nationalist' containment policy" towards the Soviets that "abjured more sophisticated policies designed to win Soviet adherence."[19] Just a few years later, the early Cold War policies practiced in Korea—so pointedly described by Robinson and Gayn—had become the new normal. The aforementioned John Carter Vincent, for example, was wrongly accused by communist witch-hunter Joseph McCarthy of being a member of the Communist Party and consequently forced to resign from the State Department.

Robinson was not the only one within USAMGIK pushing for fairer, more democratic structural change in Korea. Leonard M. Bertsch (1910–1976), a lawyer and Harvard Law School graduate whom Robinson highly respected, dove headfirst into the country's culture and politics and sought to bring together right and left in Korean politics. That explains why Robinson included Bertsch's article as a form of afterword in the last chapter of his "Betrayal" manuscript.[20] Because Bertsch was isolated as a liberal within the reactionary U.S. Military Government, his efforts had already begun to waver by the fall of 1946 and completely collapsed with the assassination of Yŏ Un-hyŏng (aka Lyuh Woon Hyung, 1886–1947) on July 19, 1947. Then just a 1st lieutenant like Robinson, Bertsch was summarily "disposed of" just as

Cumings, *The Origins of the Korea War: Liberation and the Emergence of Separate Regimes, 1945–1947* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981) (hereafter cited as Cumings, *The Origins of the Korea War*), 183–87, 509–10.

[18] Ibid., 189.

[19] Ibid., 186.

[20] Chapter X was added in August 1958 as part of some modest manuscript revisions. (Additionally, a "Preface," dated January 1960, was later included to supplement the brief "Introduction" from the fall of 1947.) Bertsch and Robinson, however, also had significant disagreements, such as over the issue of Japanese repatriation. Bertsch believed it was executed far too rapidly, despite taking half a year to complete.

Robinson.[21] As Bruce Cumings sagaciously summarizes the situation, future South Korean president Syngman Rhee "could wait out Leonard Bertsch's studied attempt throughout the summer and fall of 1946 to bring Left and Right together in the middle. The middle could not hold, of course; but within the Occupation and the State Department, neither could the American liberal, anti-Rhee elements. Such people, whether in Korea or elsewhere, ran the risk throughout the postwar period of being accused of playing into the hands of the communists."[22]

Although Robinson was perceived to be stepping over the line with his "Opinion Poll" report and was then discharged from the Office of Public Opinion on August 8, 1946, albeit not before being promoted to captain, he was clearly wanted elsewhere. He immediately started to work for the so-called Historical Section of military intelligence at the XXIV Corps headquarters. Now a civilian employee of the War Department, he worked as a military historian, a position that, he later recounted, alerted him to the ins and outs of the U.S. Military Government's machinations. As he put it, "In my capacity, which gave me access to top-secret political/economic analyses of events in South Korea and the opportunity to meet and interview key Korean actors, I had much reason to note the deliberate falsification of reports regarding the impact of the U.S. occupation upon South Korea." He also noted how provocations from the south, initiated by right-wing politicians such as Syngman Rhee and Kim Ku, that had caused "incidents contributing to the outbreak of the Korean War [1950–1953] in 1950 were omitted from the official account of the U.S. occupation."[23]

Robinson was concerned and alarmed. Witnessing his internal attempts to change the minds of higher-ranking USAMGIK officers being either ignored or harshly rejected—and realizing that the American public had been intentionally misled—he did what seemed the moral imperative: he went public. *The Nation*, New York's liberal weekly, was one of the very few American periodicals that had already published highly critical articles on the situation in Korea. In spring 1947, the

[21] See Gregory Henderson, *Korea: The Politics of the Vortex* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968) (hereafter cited as Henderson, *Korea: The Politics of the Vortex*), 419, footnote 73.

[22] Cumings, *The Origins of the Korea War*, 431–32.

[23] Robinson, "A Personal Journey," 436–37.

Nation ran Robinson's startling exposé in its March 1 issue—a date symbolic of Korea's anti-colonial struggle. It was entitled "Korea: An American Tragedy."[24] Other critical assessments had also appeared elsewhere, including a chapter on Korea in *No Peace for Asia*, a 1947 book by Harold R. Isaacs (1910–1986), which characterized the U.S. Army Military Government in Korea as "bumbling and inefficient" with "no policy about anything"—a "military government, under a military governor general, supported by an army of occupation" that looked to Koreans "like anything but 'liberation.' [...] This was not freedom nor did it look like any prelude to freedom. What Koreans wanted was a government of their own."[25] But Robinson's article, by sharp contrast, identified its author as "a member of the American occupation forces" and disclosed classified information. This made Robinson what today we would call a whistleblower. From the U.S. military's perspective, the publication of Robinson's piece in the *Nation* was considered an act of treason. Among other things, the article disclosed the brutal rape of three Korean women by four U.S. soldiers,[26] General Hodge's policy to "maintain in office notorious Japanese collaborators" such as the directors of the Korean police force, and, as a particular eyesore for USAMGIK leadership, all of the details about Rhee's planned coup d'état (including ousting Hodge), becoming the leader of southern

[24] Will Hamlin [pseud.], "Korea: An American Tragedy," *Nation* 164, no. 9 (March 1, 1947): 245–47.

[25] Harold R. Isaacs, *No Peace for Asia* (New York: Macmillan, 1947), 96. Isaacs wrote for *Newsweek* and was a former socialist and Trotskyist who had lived in China and Southeast Asia for many years. He was one of a small group of American journalists whom Robinson had guided through Korea for USAMGIK. Isaacs later joined MIT's political science faculty, while Robinson joined its business school.

[26] The Korean public had already been informed about the barbaric rape—one of the women had held her infant as she was being raped—that occurred on board a train from Mokp'o to Taejŏn on the night of January 7, 1947. A Korean journalist had directly confronted General Hodge regarding the incident during a press conference. Coming so soon after the Moscow Conference, the announcement of the trusteeship, and protests by Koreans across the political spectrum, USAMGIK tried desperately to censor further reporting and to keep such negative developments from being reported back home in the United States. See *Haebang chikhu chŏngch'i sahoesa charyojip*, 7: *Chuhan Migun pangch'ŏptae charyojip (2)* [Collection of political and social materials from the immediate post-liberation period, vol. 7: United States Army Forces in Korea, Counter Intelligence Corps resource collection (2)], comp. Chŏng Yong-uk (Seoul: Tarakpang, 1994), 217–22.

Korea, proclaiming a separate South Korean state, and finally bringing North Korea under his rule by any means necessary, even by instigating a war between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Soon enough, Robinson realized that his choice of "Will Hamlin" as his *nom de plume* for the article was a mistake. "Will" was the name of his father, William D. Robinson (1873–1965), and "Hamlin" was the name of his older brother as well as his mother's middle name. His choice of pseudonym is iconic, for it directly connects his act of insubordination to the very core of his ethical upbringing.

(Fig. 1) The Robinsons in 1936: William D. Robinson, Richard, Marion H. Robinson, and oldest son Hamlin.

(Fig. 2) Robinson with Soviet soldiers at the 38th parallel, winter 1945/46.

There is no question that the underlying moral impetus behind Robinson's *Nation* article and his later attempts to publish "Betrayal of a Nation" was his ethical understanding of society, coupled with his own presumption of taking moral action therein. His exchange of letters with his father showcases his willingness to assume such a high personal risk. Indeed, the very last book that Robinson ever co-authored and co-edited was a volume of his father's writings and ser-

mons.[27] His father, the minister of a Congregational church in Washington state, embodied the roles of both an idealist and a pragmatist. An outspoken critic and progressive thinker, he was not restrained by Christian theology. According to his son, he "did not really believe that any religion or belief system embodied an exclusive *truth*."[28] In his writings, he often focused on ethical behavior and social responsibility in business—themes his son Richard would later explore in academia. Reverend Robinson also did not shy away from political controversies. In a bold critique from 1913, he called out Fordist industrialists, proclaiming, "It is not enough any longer that we insist that employers as a class shall be honest and decent, or even that they shall institute lunch rooms and model tenements for their employees. [...] The time has come when those in control of business should give their minds and energies to the working out of an economic system which will establish more just conditions."[29] As an antidote, he advocated for "inaugurating a system of social control that shall be just and fair."[30]

Days before World War II (1939–1945) ended in Europe, Robinson's father wrote his son a letter criticizing the early signs of the emerging Cold War and questioning the U.S. hypocrisy and self-righteousness in viewing other cultures and political systems: "People say that [...] 'Russia will not cooperate with us.' Isn't that a curious statement? Isn't it just as true to say that we will not cooperate with Russia? We have such an easy way of assuming that what we think, or want, is the absolute standard of rightness."[31] Later, he wrote to his son, then in Korea: "In politics, we are lagging way behind. [...] We are afraid of losing whatever privileged position we may have or think we have."[32] In

[27] See Richard Dunlop Robinson and Patricia Elliott Swanson, eds., *In the Process of Creation: The Spiritual Philosophy of Dr. William Dunlop Robinson, 1873–1965* (Gig Harbor: Hamlin Publications, 2004) (hereafter cited as Robinson and Swanson, eds., *In the Process of Creation*).
[28] Ibid., 14
[29] W. Dunlop Robinson, *An Idealist at Large* (Boston, New York, and Chicago: Pilgrim Press, 1913), 22–23.
[30] Ibid., 48.
[31] Letter by William D. Robinson to his son Richard, May 1, 1945, in Robinson and Swanson, eds., *In the Process of Creation*, 20.
[32] Letter by William D. Robinson to his son Richard, February 11, 1946, in Robinson and Swanson, eds., *In the Process of Creation*, 22.

another letter, following the outbreak of the Korean War four years later, his father wrote to Richard, by then in Turkey, "I wonder if the people of Korea would be much worse off under communism, provided it were their own communism. Is that treason?"[33]

Just weeks after the publication of Robinson's *Nation* article, his own colleagues in military intelligence and the FBI were onto him. As a military historian Robinson had access to all sorts of intelligence reports and could thus follow up on any attempts to uncover the identity of the article's author. "There were several investigations," his widow Carol told me. "And in one of these investigations on his piece in the *Nation* he himself was part of the group investigating that case. So, he had to investigate himself. Dick found that hilarious!"[34] Back home in the United States, the War Department's Intelligence Division also continued its investigation. After the *Nation*'s managing editor J. King Gordon (1900–1989) failed to divulge anything about "the case" during an interview with an agent in the Intelligence Division, one of Gordon's colleagues was approached and urged to get the requisite information. The Intelligence Division's Security Group finally discovered that it was Richard's brother, Hamlin Robinson (1915–1982), who had mailed a draft of the article to the *Nation*. Although the investigation was formally never "conclusive," by late spring 1947, Richard D. Robinson was then—unsurprisingly—labeled un-American and a communist sympathizer by the Army.[35]

Robinson, though, was fundamentally just a dedicated researcher committed to his liberal values and ethical principles. His social democratic ideals were considered mainstream in many parts of the world. Yet, even the latest edition of the U.S. *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* still lists terms such as "commie," "communist," "Bolshevik," "Stalinist," and "extremist" as synonyms for "social democrat," underscoring the deeply

[33] Letter by William D. Robinson to his son Richard, July 14, 1950, in Robinson and Swanson, eds., *In the Process of Creation*, 26.
[34] Carol A. Robinson in a conversation with Frank Hoffmann, September 27, 2020.
[35] See "Identification of 'Will Hamlin,'" RG 319, Army Intelligence Project Decimal File, 1946–1948, Box 243, National Archives and Records Administration. For summaries on the investigation, see Chŏng Yong-uk, "Rich'adŭ Robinsŭnŭi Han'guk hyŏndaesa ihae," 23–26; and Chŏng Yong-uk, *Migunjŏng charyo yŏn'gu* [Research on U.S. Military Government Source Materials] (Seoul: Sŏnin, 2003) (hereafter cited as Chŏng Yong-uk, *Migunjŏng charyo yŏn'gu*), 167–69.

Robinson as Textbook Case of McCarthyism

Box 243 of group RG 319 at NARA also contains several attachments, primarily copies of letters that led to the second of several investigations mentioned by Carol A. Robinson. A second set of copies of partially identical documents at the Hoover Institution Library & Archives (Box 149, Alfred Kohlberg Papers) complements this collection. These now declassified files constitute a textbook case of McCarthyism.

Richard D. Robinson's letter in reply to Alfred Kohlberg (April 1, 1947):

"I can truthfully say that the reports of the IPR on this part of the world have been notable for their accuracy, your opinion to the contrary notwithstanding. I would like to add that Communist witch hunts such as the one you are now conducting are driving a good portion of the world under the shadow of Soviet Communism. The Far East is the horrible example. A constructive progressive democracy is the only answer. Your answer of suppression has been disproved historically so many times that I refuse to admit its validity."

Alfred Kohlberg's second letter to Richard D. Robinson (April 10, 1947):

"[…] that is the position taken by Mr. Henry Wallace [1888–1965] […]. I think Mr. Wallace has in mind that a progressive democracy is the type now prevalent in Eastern Europe, Northern Korea and Communist China."

Alfred Kohlberg's letter to Harold J. Noble (same day, April 10, 1947):

"I have never heard of this Mr Robinson previously, but I fear if his interpretation of the history of our occupation of Korea is published, it may not be exactly pro-American. Possibly you would like to forward this to GHQ in Tokyo."

Harold J. Noble's letter to General John R. Hodge (April 14, 1947):

"No reasonable man could charge Robinson with Communist affiliation for refusal to believe Kohlberg's charges, or for refusing to give him his proxy. But a reading of his letter would raise these questions: (1) does the man see events in Korea with any clarity? (2) doesn't his inability to recognize IPR slant on Far Eastern Reporting rasie [*sic*] doubt as to his objectivity as an historian? (3) does not the intemperance of his language raise a reasonable doubt as to his sympathy with the policies and program of the American authorities in Korea? (4) and if the answers to 1, 2, and 3 are 'yes' shouldn't he be investigated for security reasons?"

Surveillance report on Richard D. Robinson by CIC Special Agent William F. Walter (May 31, 1947):

"Investigation was initiated […]. SUBJECT […] is using his position to aid, and abett [*sic*] interests, whose concern, and functions, are inimical to the successful completion of the United States Forces efforts of establishing a sound, and stable Government in Korea. […] SUBJECT has many interests outside duty hours […]. SUBJECT has also attended a party given on grounds of the Russian Consulate […]. SUBJECT is usually invited or sponsored through his acquaintance with Theodore Pick […]. SUBJECT, and his wife have been taking lessons in Russian language from one Madame Yakovleva […]. Madame Yakovleva is known to be a Communist. […] SUBJECT is seen often with his wife in the company of various enlisted personnel, driving about the city of Seoul. […] Investigation is being initiated in United States, to determine exactly the status of SUBJECT is [*sic*] connection with the Institute of Pacific Relations […]."

These sources show that **Alfred Kohlberg** (1887–1960)—to many "the man behind McCarthy"—had waged a fierce smear campaign against the anti-colonial Institute of Pacific Relations (IPR), a leading international NGO with broad liberal and left-wing participation, and its journal, *Pacific Affairs* (cf. Caprio, 471). Kohlberg was a wealthy New York textile importer, a militant anti-communist, and the architect of the pro–Chiang Kai-shek China Lobby. As discussed later in the section on Mark Gayn (pp. 41–44), he also pressed for a new investigation into the Amerasia case—the journal's editorial staff overlapped with the IPR's under one roof. Following his lead, Joseph McCarthy turned the Amerasia affair into his own political showcase. **Robinson**, then an IPR member, had rejected Kohlberg's "Communist witch hunts," calling instead for a "constructive progressive democracy" in Korea. Stung by the young U.S. military government historian's forthright defense of democratic reform in Korea, Kohlberg forwarded the exchange to **Harold J. Noble** (1903–1953), the ultraconservative son of a Korea missionary, then serving as an adviser to USAMGIK. General John R. Hodge promptly took the bait and ordered Counter Intelligence Corps special agent **William F. Walter** (1913?–2001?) to investigate Robinson—an inquiry that, as Walter's report shows, quickly ballooned into a hunt for even the faintest trace of subversion. The campaign persisted: on September 30, 1953, at the height of the McCarthy era, Kohlberg again petitioned the U.S. Department of Defense, branding Robinson "incompetent" and appending the same 1947 correspondence.

entrenched irrationality of a continuing Cold War-era doctrine of military interventionism. "A deep, abiding, and often unexamined 'consensus,'" as Cumings puts it, "is so rooted in the United States that it is not a matter for conscious reflection, and therefore Americans conceive of themselves as people without ideology."[36] This is by design, Chomsky posits, finding its foundation in *manufactured consent*,[37] skillfully propagated by the American mass media as system-supportive doctrine—aptly explained by the Gramscian hegemonic framework: coercion, *internally* operating through manufactured consent and *externally* through force.

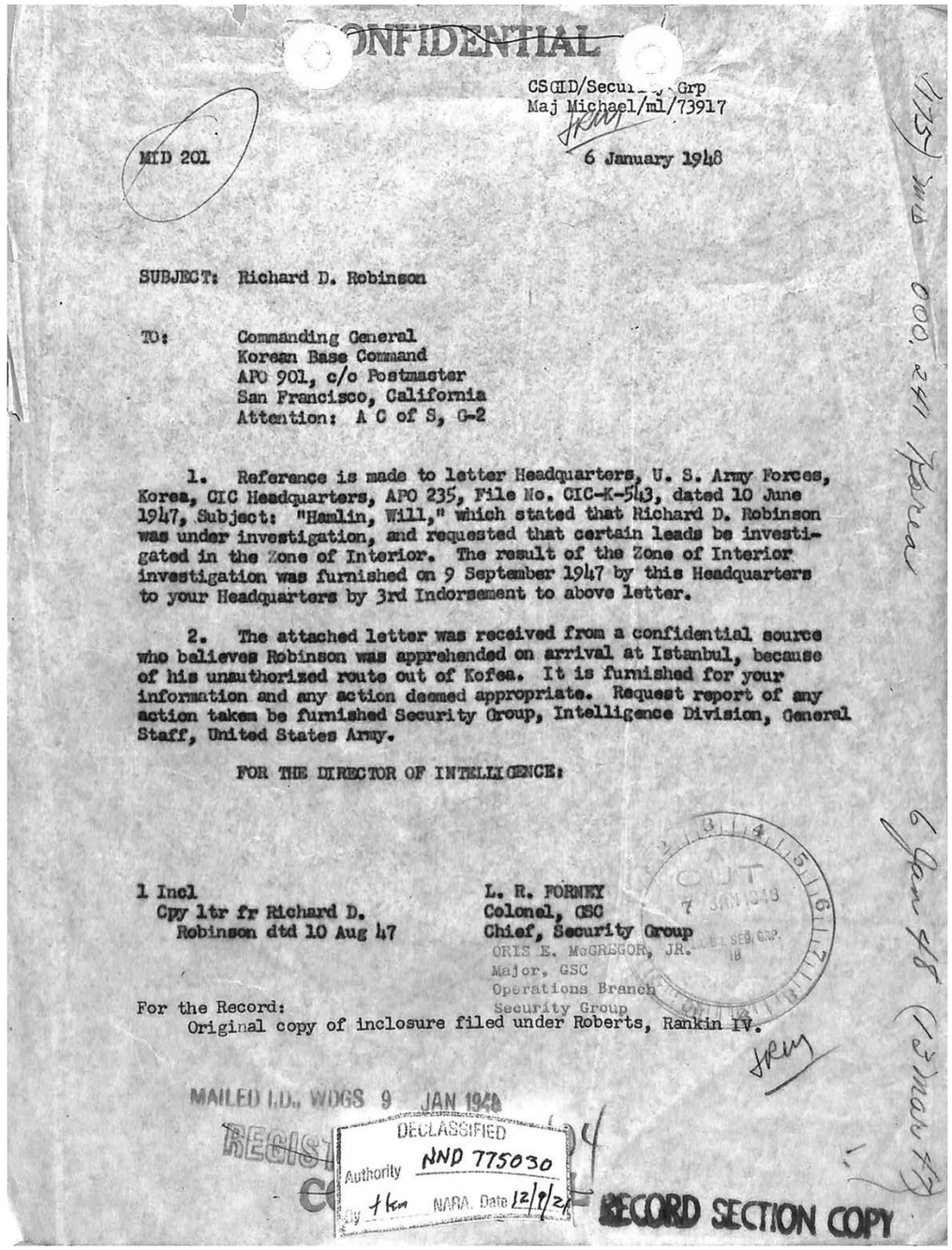
By April 1947, Robinson had been joined by his wife. The military's Counter Intelligence Corps (Army CIC)[38] then assigned a special agent named William F. Walter to monitor him as well as Theodore L. Pick (1912–?), a Paris-born, left-leaning U.S. Army officer who was acquainted with the couple. Their activities and social interactions were under round-the-clock surveillance.[39] Friends of the Robinsons were also subjected to background checks and interrogations. As shown in one of the reports NARA declassified for me in 2021 (fig. 3), the interest of military

[36] Bruce Cumings, *Parallax Visions: Making Sense of American–East Asian Relations at the End of the Century* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1999), 4.

[37] See Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988).

[38] On the CIC's role as an exclusive intelligence service for right-wing militaries, see Chŏng Yong-uk's detailed article, "Haebang chikhu Chuhan Migun pangch'ŏptaeŭi chojik ch'egyewa hwaldong" [Organization and activities of the USAFIK Counter Intelligence Corps immediately after liberation], *Han'guk saron* 53 (June 2007): 443–84. The CIC was indeed such a handy tool for an authoritarian government that, upon the announcement of its withdrawal from Korea in 1948, Syngman Rhee hired American CIC personnel to organize his own "Korean Research Bureau" modeled on the CIC (see ibid., 460–62).

[39] See the two agent reports by Wm. Walter [William F. Walter], "Subject: Robinson, Richard D. (WDC) Chief Historian, XXIV Corps, APO 235" (May 30 and May 31, 1947), RG 319, Army - Intelligence Project Decimal Files, 1946–1948, Box 243, Identification of 'Will Hamlin,' National Archives and Records Administration. In several of his otherwise very accurate studies, Chŏng Yong-uk misreads the abbreviation "Wm." (for William) as "Wynn" and thus misidentifies the CIC agent. CIC did not have a special agent named Wynn Walter. William F. Walter, on the other hand, is listed as a CIC agent in Korea in "Appendix 1: Personnel of the 971st CIC Detachment," reprinted in *Haebang chikhu chŏngch'i sahoesa charyojip*, 10: *Chuhan Migun pangch'ŏptae charyojip* (5) [Collection of political and social materials from the immediate post-liberation period, vol. 10: United States Army Forces in Korea, Counter Intelligence Corps resource collection (5)], comp. Chŏng Yong-uk (Seoul: Tarakpang, 1994), 133.



~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

CSGID/Secu[illegible] Grp
Maj Michael/ml/73917

MID 201

6 January 1948

SUBJECT: Richard D. Robinson

TO: Commanding General
Korean Base Command
APO 901, c/o Postmaster
San Francisco, California
Attention: A C of S, G-2

1. Reference is made to letter Headquarters, U. S. Army Forces, Korea, CIC Headquarters, APO 235, File No. CIC-K-543, dated 10 June 1947, Subject: "Hamlin, Will," which stated that Richard D. Robinson was under investigation, and requested that certain leads be investigated in the Zone of Interior. The result of the Zone of Interior investigation was furnished on 9 September 1947 by this Headquarters to your Headquarters by 3rd Indorsement to above letter.

2. The attached letter was received from a confidential source who believes Robinson was apprehended on arrival at Istanbul, because of his unauthorized route out of Kofea. It is furnished for your information and any action deemed appropriate. Request report of any action taken be furnished Security Group, Intelligence Division, General Staff, United States Army.

FOR THE DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE:

1 Incl
Cpy ltr fr Richard D. Robinson dtd 10 Aug 47

L. R. FORNEY
Colonel, GSC
Chief, Security Group

ORIS E. McGREGOR, JR.
Major, GSC
Operations Branch
Security Group

For the Record:
Original copy of inclosure filed under Roberts, Rankin IV.

MAILED I.D., WDGS 9 JAN 1948

DECLASSIFIED
Authority NND 775030
NARA Date 12/9/21

RECORD SECTION COPY

(Fig. 3) Robinson under continued scrutiny by the Army, even after leaving Korea for Turkey. Report by Chief of Military Intelligence Division L. R. Forney to Commanding General, Korean Base Command, APO 901, "Richard D. Robinson," January 6, 1948.

intelligence continued even after their move to Turkey.[40] As Jeremy Kuzmarov poignantly argued, the surveillance and harassment carried out by the U.S. Army and the FBI against the Robinsons and their friends was "the military's attempt to silence internal critics."[41]

In July 1947, Robinson ended his tenure as a military historian. More precisely, when his contract with USAMGIK expired on July 15, he simply let it lapse. He subsequently fled Korea with his wife.[42] While their escape may not have been as dramatic as Edward Snowden's (b. 1983) decades later, there are clear parallels. In 2004, Robinson himself elaborated : "Because I was only twenty-six years old, my fear was somewhat tempered. Yet, I felt a sense of crisis. I could be arrested or even jailed for my actions. [...] Regardless, I knew I had to leave Korea soon. [It was all] because I opposed the policies of the U.S. Military Government. I wouldn't describe it as coercion, but the threats were real enough that I felt compelled to leave Korea."[43]

The Robinsons finally boarded a ship to Turkey, the SS *Flying Enterprise*. At a stopover in Kobe, Japan, the U.S. Army tried to arrest Richard, but the skipper refused to hand him over.[44] In a September 1947 summary report titled "Soviet Union Espionage Activities," Colonel John N. Robinson (1893–1978), a World War I West Point graduate of no relation to Richard D. Robinson who had assumed a leading role in Korea as chief of staff of the XXIV Corps at the time, boasted in militaristic jargon how his office "has taken aggressive [...] action to *eliminate* all Americans from *contamination* by the Russians"

[40] The CIC document from January 1948 (fig. 3) that demonstrates the ongoing surveillance of the couple and USAMGIK's interest in Robinson, was routed through the Presidio in San Francisco to later reach the CIC in Korea: Chief of MID L. R. Forney to Commanding General, Korean Base Command, APO 901, "Richard D. Robinson" (January 6, 1948), RG 319, Army - Intelligence Project Decimal Files, 1946–1948, Box 243, Identification of 'Will Hamlin,' National Archives and Records Administration.

[41] Jeremy Kuzmarov, *Modernizing Repression: Police Training and Nation-Building in the American Century* (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2012), 85.

[42] Kermit, his son, told me that this is exactly how his father described their rather adventurous run from the U.S. military to his children—as a flight. (Phone conversation between Kermit H. Robinson and Frank Hoffmann, September 3, 2020.)

[43] Richard D. Robinson, quoted in Kim, *Pigŭgŭn haengjinŭrobut'ŏ sijak toenda*, 80.

[44] See Robinson, "A Personal Journey," 437–38.

(italics mine).[45] Part of the colonel's information in his short account was, ironically, derived from Richard Robinson's earlier report on the very same subject.[46] Adding insult to injury—and not without a touch of dark comedy—the Robinsons found themselves on the colonel's "watchlist" of suspected spies, situated right between an Orthodox Russian priest and a high-ranking officer of the Soviet secret police: "ROBINSON, Richard and wife – On good terms with Russians. (Now en route St. Roberts College, Constantinople)."[47]

Robinson and his wife stayed at the Bosporus for nearly a decade before returning to the United States in 1956.[48] Initially, they lived in an Istanbul slum,[49] surviving for a while on various part-time teaching jobs. Later, Richard received a fellowship from the Institute of Current World Affairs (ICWA) to live in Ankara and other cities. This allowed him to analyze and write about human rights, politics, and economics in Turkey and adjacent areas. During that time, he also received a scholarship to study at SOAS in London for nine months. As a result, he returned to the United States as a foremost scholar on politics and economics in Turkish and Middle Eastern affairs. After teaching some courses at Harvard, he eventually became a professor of International

[45] Colonel John N. Robinson, "Soviet Union Espionage Activities" (September 19, 1947), RG 319, Office of the Chief of Military History, Investigative Records Repository, Russian Activities in Korea, Box 104, Case ZF016117, National Archives and Records Administration (hereafter cited as John N. Robinson, "Soviet Union Espionage Activities"), [2].

[46] See R[ichard] D. Robinson, "Soviet-Communists-Inspired Espionage in South Korea" (July 1947), RG 332, USAFIK, XXIV Corps, G-2, Historical Section, Box 77, U.S.–U.S.S.R.: The Communist, the Russians, and the American thru Rightist Plots & Miscellaneous Politics, 1946–1947, National Archives and Records Administration.

[47] John N. Robinson, "Soviet Union Espionage Activities," attached "Watchlist," [2].

[48] He and his family, however, had been able to visit the U.S. for his lectures at Harvard Business School as early as October 1952. See Robinson's academic CV: "Robinson, Richard Dunlop," in *Who's Who in International Business Education and Research*, eds. William Shepherd, Iyanatul Islam, and Sankaran Raghunathan (Cheltenham and Northampton: Edward Elgar, 1999), 326–29; Robinson, "A Personal Journey," 442–43; "SS *Exeter*, List of in-bound passengers arriving in Boston, October 13, 1952," in Massachusetts, U.S., Arriving Passenger and Crew Lists, 1820–1963, Roll A3604, Arriving at Boston, MA, 1944–1954, ALL 18, National Archives and Records Administration.

[49] See Robinson, "A Personal Journey," 439.

Management at MIT's Sloan School of Management. Some of his books, including *The First Turkish Republic* (1963) and *International Business Management* (1973, rev. ed. 1978), even became standard reference works.

The original "Betrayal" manuscript, completed in early 1947, did not survive Robinson's departure from Korea. Fearing apprehension before boarding, he destroyed it and rewrote the work during the three-month sea voyage to Turkey "from notes, a journal, and memory. The title it bore was *Betrayal of a Nation*."[50] As he noted in the Introduction, the original typescript—now destroyed—had been "several times the length of the present volume."[51] Under McCarthy-era pressures, he delayed seeking publication for years. In 1958 he finally submitted the manuscript to Arlington Books, a nascent nonprofit publishing house in Cambridge, Massachusetts; its editor in chief expressed strong interest and began the editorial process.[52] But publishers were not immune to political pressures either, and—potentially due to official censorship—the project was abruptly halted. Five years later, trusting the liberal spirit of the Kennedy years, Robinson submitted the manuscript to Harvard University Press, which summarily rejected it on the grounds that "it is essentially unpublishable, or it is still too early to publish such an account."[53] In the end, a scholar who would go on to publish roughly twenty academic books saw his candid firsthand account of the U.S. military blocked by the narrow confines of Cold War orthodoxy.

There seem to have been at least two, if not three, versions of the revised "Betrayal" manuscript. Gregory Henderson (1922–1988) may have been the first to extensively reference Robinson's work in his groundbreaking 1968 study *Korea: The Politics of the Vortex*.[54] (Both men were at Harvard at the time and knew each other well.) Henderson's

[50] Ibid., 438.
[51] Robinson, "Betrayal of a Nation," in this volume, 68.
[52] Three letters, one with concrete suggestions for revisions by Arlington Books editor in chief Thomas A. Bledsoe to senior editor William R. Polk, and two letters by Bledsoe to Richard D. Robinson, dated August 11 and 13, 1958, in the personal archive of Carol A. Robinson, prove that the editing process had been initiated.
[53] Letter by Harvard University Press associate director Mark Carroll to Richard D. Robinson, Cambridge, May 8, 1963, personal collection of Carol A. Robinson.
[54] See Henderson, *Korea: The Politics of the Vortex*, XII, 408, 413, 416–22, 424, 449, 450, and 456.

references do not match the pagination of the 1960 manuscript, the source text used in this volume. Henderson may have used Robinson's first rewrite, as he explicitly identifies 1947 as the year the manuscript was written. In 1973, toward the end of the Vietnam War, when the U.S. government and military were under public scrutiny for their deception and spread of misinformation, at a time when interest in the history of U.S. engagement overseas was hotly debated in the press and at colleges and universities worldwide, Mark J. Scher also extensively referred to and even quoted Robinson in a biting article titled "U.S. Policy in Korea 1945–1948."[55] Bruce Cumings also employed the "Betrayal" manuscript for his 1975 dissertation, which was later to be reworked into the first volume of his influential *Origins of the Korean War*. So did Joungwon Kim for his monograph *Divided Korea*,[56] published by Harvard University Press. That same year, John Merrill, who authored the foreword to this volume, drew from the work for his own important research and, fortunately, arranged for a copy of the manuscript to be kept at the Harvard-Yenching Library.[57] From its perch on the shelf there, it found its way to a wider but more or less exclusive readership of historians and Korean studies specialists interested in post-liberation Korea.

In 1988, amid the rise of the South Korean pro-democracy movement, Robinson's book manuscript was finally published—not in its original English but as an unauthorized Korean translation titled *Migugŭi paeban: Migunjŏnggwa Namjosŏn* (America's betrayal: The U.S. Military Government and southern Korea)[58] (see fig. 4).

[55] See Mark J. Scher, "U.S. Policy in Korea 1945–1948: A Neo-Colonial Model Takes Shape," *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 5, no. 4 (December 1973): 17–27.
[56] Joungwon Alexander Kim, *Divided Korea: The Politics of Development, 1945–1972* (Cambridge: East Asian Research Center, Harvard University, 1975).
[57] See John R. Merrill's letter to Richard D. Robinson (Assonet, April 19, 1975), attached to Richard D. Robinson, "Betrayal of a Nation," unpublished manuscript, 1960, Harvard-Yenching Library, Harvard University.
[58] Rich'adŭ D. Robinsŭn, *Migugŭi paeban: Migunjŏnggwa Namjosŏn* [America's betrayal: The U.S. Military Government and southern Korea], transl. Chŏng Mi-ok (Seoul: Kwahakkwa Sasang, 1988). Until 2003, Robinson himself was unaware of this Korean edition. The aforementioned journalist Kim Hwan-gyun presented him with a copy in early 2004. Robinson placed a Post-It note in this copy; it reads: "in Korean *Betrayal of America*." The Korean title, though, might more accurately be translated as *America's Betrayal*, particularly given the heated, anti-American intellectual climate prevailing at the time of its publication.

(Fig. 4) 1988 Korean edition of Robinson's book, published as *America's Betrayal*.
(Fig. 5) Richard Robinson in an interview with Korean journalist Kim Hwan-gyun, aired on KBS TV in January 2004.

Despite being the subject of considerable attention and often cited as a primary source in Korea, the work sparked criticism due to its stance on trusteeship. Although Robinson understood the Korean objection to trusteeship, he did not fundamentally reject the idea, which, along with left-versus-right political polarization, was naturally key to post-liberation Korea (as extensively discussed in his "Betrayal of a Nation"). His perspective did not stray far from the typical post-World War II Western consensus, which saw trusteeship as a necessary step toward independence. Hardly any prominent Western figures, regardless of their political leanings, challenged the necessity of trusteeship during the early months of U.S. and Soviet occupations. Korean critics, of course, had valid objections to such neocolonialist interventions. From January of 1946, the persistent and intense Korean protests began to influence opinions among politicians, administrators, and journalists.[59] Among them was Edgar Snow (1905–1972)—later self-exiled due to McCarthy's attacks. After spending two months in Korea during the winter of 1945/46, the biographer of Mao (head of state 1949–1959) and noted chronicler of the Long March, critiqued that the "[p]rolonged joined trusteeship is both unnecessary and unwelcome." He proposed that both the U.S. and Soviet forces withdraw, suggesting the formation of "a resident joint advisory commission" with "the right of Allied

[59] See e.g. Gordon Walker's report in the *Christian Science Monitor*, January 3, 1946.

intervention."[60] Amid the global wave of decolonization, with nations like India gaining independence from colonial rule after 1945, Snow's proposal illustrates that even critical Western minds offering alternatives could not fully escape endorsing elements of Western supervision, thus maintaining an interventionist stance.

Asserting his paternalistic views, at the Teheran Conference (November 27–December 2, 1943), Franklin D. Roosevelt (in office 1933–1945), the New Deal president known for providing labor unions and socialists with a platform—often causing irritation among the French and British due to his lack of support for *their* colonial claims during the war—told Soviet leader Joseph Stalin (in office 1922–1953) "that the Koreans are not yet capable of exercising and maintaining independent government and that they should be placed under a 40-year tutelage."[61] The underlying racial prejudice that influenced Roosevelt's decisions, particularly his racist attitudes towards Asians, is widely acknowledged today. In a conversation with Stalin at the subsequent Yalta Conference (February 4–11, 1945), for example, he remarked "that the Indochinese were people of small stature" and, as a result, "not warlike."[62] Three decades later, those very people of small stature would stunningly turn the tables in a major conflict against the U.S. giant. The American president raised the issue once more and continued to advocate for an extended period of trusteeship, now suggesting that "in the case of Korea the period might be from twenty to thirty years," comparing it to "the Philippines where it had taken about fifty years for the people to be prepared for self-government."[63]

The Philippines remained at that time both practically and formally a U.S. colony, seized by brute force at the turn of the century and

[60] Edgar Snow, "We Meet Russia in Korea," *Saturday Evening Post* 218, no. 39 (March 30, 1946): 118.
[61] Roosevelt, as referenced by Wilson Brown, "Minutes of a Meeting of the Pacific War Council" (January 12, 1944), in *Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers: The Conferences at Cairo and Teheran 1943*, comp. United States, Department of State (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1961), 869. FDR's widely publicized anti-colonial stance—cf. Caprio, p. 445—clashed with his actual policies.
[62] Roosevelt, as referenced in "Roosevelt–Stalin Meeting, February 8, 1945, 3:30 P.M., Livadia Palace," in *Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers: The Conferences at Malta and Yalta 1945*, comp. United States, Department of State (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1955) (hereafter cited as FRUS 1955), 770.
[63] Roosevelt, as referenced ibid.

subsequently subjected to carrot-and-stick tactics. These approaches involved systemic torture and the relentless murder of Filipino prisoners of war, while the colony's elite, the wealthy *hacendado* class, was bribed into collaborating with the U.S. colonial government. Ultimately, the U.S. role in the Philippines mirrored the Japanese approach in Korea, employing a similar colonial framework of suppression. While Roosevelt did not explicitly endorse conventional colonialism, he still assumed that Koreans, like all formerly colonized peoples, were incapable of self-governance. His comparison of Korea to the Philippines appears presumptuous and inadvertently revealing, particularly as he was a fifth cousin of U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt (in office 1901–1909) and the husband of his niece, Eleanor. Theodore Roosevelt had been responsible for the secret 1905 Taft–Katsura agreement that allowed Japan to colonize Korea in the first place, expressly in exchange for Japan's agreement not to challenge U.S. control over the Philippines.

Secret deal-making between the two colonizers, Japan and the United States, did not stop there. In April 1941, Washington made a new bid to sacrifice the independence of China and Korea. Now it was FDR's government proposing a secret treaty with the Japanese, adding Manchuria to their colonial portfolio. Effectively nullifying the Stimson Doctrine, the U.S. offered full diplomatic recognition of their puppet state Manchukuo and promised "not to enter the European war" in return for—once again—a "guaranty of the status quo in the Philippines."[64]

In 1945, Stalin recognized that FDR envisioned a semi-colonial arrangement that would violate basic egalitarian and socialist principles, and stressed that the period of trusteeship would have to be short-term.[65] In general, however, the Soviet dictator also agreed with Roosevelt's proposed arrangement. Only after Japan's capitulation, at the Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers (December 16–26, 1945),

[64] Ambassador Eugen Ott's (1889–1977) telegram to Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop (1893–1946), "The Ambassador in Japan to the Foreign Ministry," no. 454 (Tokyo, May 5, 1941), in Germany, Auswärtiges Amt, and United States, Department of State, comps., *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918–1945, from the Archives of the German Foreign Ministry*, Series D (1937–1945), Vol. XII, *The War Years, February 1–June 22, 1941* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1962), 712. Preliminary talks were held by FDR's long-term secretary of state, Cordell Hull (1871–1955), and Japanese Ambassador Nomura Kichisaburō (1877–1964).
[65] See *FRUS* 1955, 770.

with Harry S. Truman (in office 1945–1953) as the new U.S. president, did the United States reduce the number of years for a trusteeship to no more than ten years and finally accept the Soviet's counterproposal for a period of up to five years.[66] In his work, Robinson seems to have been unaware of FDR's earlier suggestions and the full historical background but still finds it shocking "that the United States had proposed a ten-year trusteeship for Korea" and then "wrongly charged them [the Soviets] with having sponsored a Korean trusteeship while" claiming that "the Americans championed the cause of immediate independence."[67]

Another topic that drew criticism for Robinson during the late 1980s, moving from trusteeship, was his stance on land reform. In an April 1946 internal report, he forcefully stated that "land reform is needed, and needed badly," arguing that "a feudalistic state such as Korea today cannot at the same time be a democratic state."[68] But despite his strong convictions, and then still harboring hopes for a future united democratic Korean government, he ultimately suggested that the "Military Government should give merely a strong recommendation to the Korean government, when such is established."[69]

As discussed earlier, Robinson's article in the *Nation* and his later book manuscript were not the product of spontaneous generation. One significant factor was his liberal family background. In February 1946, his father reassured and possibly even inspired him: "It takes considerable courage to be honest. [...] I sympathize with you because just now

[66] Whereas Roosevelt had envisioned a three-power trusteeship consisting of the United States, the U.S.S.R., and China, thus excluding both of the major European colonial empires of France and Britain, Truman, in agreement with Stalin, wanted to include the United Kingdom, as confirmed by Stalin in late May 1945. See G. M. Elsey, "No. 250: Memorandum by the Assistant to the President's Naval Aide (Elsey)," in *Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers: The Conference of Berlin 1945*, vol. I, comp. United States, Department of State (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1960), 310; Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs: Years of Trial and Hope*, vol. 2 (Garden City: Doubleday, 1956), 317.
[67] Robinson, "Betrayal of a Nation," in this volume, 92.
[68] Richard D. Robinson, "Possible Objections to the Proposed Ordinance for the Sale of Japanese Agricultural Property South of 38° North Latitude" (April 7, 1946), RG 332, USAFIK, XXIV Corps, G-2, Historical Section, Records Regarding the Okinawa Campaign, USAMGIK, U.S.–U.S.S.R. Relations in Korea, and Korean Political Affairs, 1945–48, Box 37, Dept. of Transportation: Railroads of Korea, etc., National Archives and Records Administration, 173.
[69] Ibid., 177.

you are tied up with the army. The military mind is not trained for honesty or truth, but for winning whatever contest it is engaged in."[70]

The second essential factor, however, apart from his idealistic–humanistic background and approach (which at once defined the limitations of his political analysis), was that the sources and motivation for the article and book manuscript also derived from his daily work in and for the Military Government itself. In his first position as army officer and deputy director of the Office of Public Opinion in Korea, Robinson reported directly to U.S. military leaders and provided policy recommendations, including repeated proposals for changes in the court system and suggestions for a major police reform. In one report he wrote: "It is pointless to defend the police system as it stands. [...] It all stems from a lack of any definite commitment on the part of MG [Military Government] [...]. It is suggested that a determined effort be made to cleanse the police house [...]."[71] In another 1946 report, an "Investigation of the Police," he makes ten concrete recommendations to the U.S. Military Government "to reform the police along more democratic lines."[72]

Robinson did not just report on injustice and human rights violations in his anonymous *Nation* article and his book manuscript. He also courageously incorporated any evidence he had uncovered into his official reports and proactively engaged when opportunities arose. A poignant example of this is the torture case that occurred in a Pusan police station in July 1946, as described in "Betrayal of a Nation." In his book manuscript, he recounts, "I arrested the torturers on the spot and preferred charges against them for misuse of police authority. The act very nearly netted me a court-martial. [...] The only thing that saved me from court-martial was newspaper publicity and the intervention of

[70] Letter by William D. Robinson to his son Richard, February 11, 1946, in Robinson and Swanson, eds., *In the Process of Creation*, 22.
[71] Richard Robinson, "Ineffectiveness and Confusion Encompassing the Administration of MG," RG 332, USAFIK, XXIV Corps, G-2, Historical Section, Records Regarding the Okinawa Campaign, USAMGIK, U.S.–U.S.S.R. Relations in Korea, and Korean Political Affairs, 1945–48, Box 38, Report of Directory: New Korea Co. to USAMGIK, etc., National Archives and Records Administration, 3.
[72] Richard D. Robinson, "Investigation of the Police" (July 30, 1946), RG 332, USAFIK, XXIV Corps, G-2, Historical Section, Box 26, USAMGIK: History of National Economic Board 1946–1948, etc., National Archives and Records Administration, 7.

friends with General Hodge, General Lerch's superior."[73] A review of the report Robinson references, declassified in 2002, further corroborates his actions and reporting during that time.[74]

Robinson was equally forthright in his official reports regarding USAMGIK's top leaders. This shows, for example, in an interview report featuring Economic and Agricultural Adviser Arthur C. Bunce (1901–1953)—"known by all as a 'New Deal' liberal,"[75] as Hodge noted with both spite and relish. Robinson quoted Bunce, a highly respected authority on Korean economics in his view, as saying "that the General [Hodge] is driving South Korea directly into the hands of the communists" and "that to support Dr Rhee, Kim Koo, and the extreme Rightist group would be a disastrous policy and only lead ultimately to civil war in Korea"[76] (see fig. 6). That statement, featured in an official report, likely made its way to Hodge's desk as well.

Whenever and wherever the young man could, he would highlight the injustices and instances of mismanagement that he observed. One of his final reports before fleeing Korea for Turkey was a memo on the looting of significant artworks between November 1945 and May 1946 by Lieutenant Colonel Maurice Lutwack (1906–1979) of Buffalo, the U.S. military governor of Kyŏnggi Province. This is the *they're-nice-pack-'em-up* case reported on by Mark Gayn as well.[77] Robinson wrote

[73] Robinson, "Betrayal of a Nation," in this volume, 192–93.
[74] See Richard D. Robinson, "Report on Trip Through the Provinces with American Correspondents," RG 332, USAFIK, XXIV Corps, G-2, Historical Section, Records Regarding USAMGIK, U.S.–U.S.S.R. Relations in Korea, and Korean Political Affairs, 1945–48, Box 41, National Archives and Records Administration, 2. See further Robinson, "Betrayal of a Nation," in this volume, 306–7.
[75] "John R. Hodge to Douglas MacArthur" (January 9, 1948), reprinted in *Migunjŏnggi chŏngbo charyojip: Haji (John R. Hodge) munsŏjip, 1945.6–1948.8* [Collection of intelligence materials from the U.S. Military Government period: Hodge (John R. Hodge) Document Collection, June 1945–August 1948], vol. 1, comp. Hallim Taehakkyo, Asia Munhwa Yŏn'guso (Ch'unch'ŏn: Hallim Taehakkyo, Asia Munhwa Yŏn'guso, 1995), 427.
[76] Richard Robinson, "Interview with Dr. Arthur C. Bunce, Member of the American Delegation to the Joint–Soviet–American Commission, Economic Advisor to the CG" (January 23, 1946), RG 332, USAFIK, XXIV Corps, G-2, Historical Section, Box 69, Records Regarding the Okinawa Campaign, U.S. Military Government in Korea, U.S.–U.S.S.R. Relations in Korea, and Korean Political Affairs, 1945–48, National Archives and Records Administration.
[77] See Mark Gayn's Korea chapter in this volume, 423–24.

33-A

INTERVIEW WITH DR ARTHUR C BUNCE, MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN DELEGATION TO THE JOINT-SOVIET-AMERICAN COMMISSION, ECONOMIC ADVISOR TO THE OG, 23 JANUARY, 1946

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2. Re Hodge's political policy. Bunce feels very strongly that the General is driving South Korea directly into the hands of the communists and their fellow travelers. He has argued the point with the General but to no avail. Bunce furthery feels that if a walkout from the legislature comes about, it will be about the final blow for the American occupation. Bunce has sent off a letter to the State Department, with Hodge's concurrence, saying in essence that to support Dr Rhee, KimKoo, and the extreme Rightist group would be a disastrous policy and only lead ultimately to civil war in Korea. Rather, he feels it should be imperative that Hodge's present "middle of the road" policy be maintained. However, he pointed out that unless the General receives some outside help and backing there was danger that he would not continue his present middle of the road policy.

3. MacArthur and Korea. Bunce had just returned from Tokyo where he had talked with Acheson and tried to obtain audience with Mac. He definitly received the impression that Korea was considered by SCAP to be a lemon and that Mac's name must not be tainted by any direct relation with the Korean mess. One of Bunce's objectives had been to interest Mac in coming to Korea and lending his prestige to the Interim Legislature and Dr Kim Kyu Sik's efforts. He got no where. MacArthur is stying clear of Korea. SCAP is supersensitive to any criticism of MacArthur, and it is felt that by associating directly with the Korean situation he would open himself up to some. Hodge is definitly to be the goat. Bunce was very bitter on this attitude of SCAP.

I AND H JOURNAL Mr Richard Robinson

(Fig. 6) *"... the General is driving South Korea directly into the hands of the communists ..."* One of Richard D. Robinson's candid reports for the U.S. Military Government, here a summary of a January 1946 interview with Arthur C. Bunce, a New Deal' liberal, like himself.

that "it was well known that" the governor "had looted Kyonggi-do of some 4,000 cases of Oriental goods and objects of art."[78] To be sure, in terms of size, the spoils easily compared to the massive art collection of 4,263 plundered masterpieces amassed by Nazi leader Hermann Göring (1893–1946). Although the Purple Heart recipient was apprehended, stripped of his duties, and removed from the office of provincial governor,[79] Lutwack's massive crime was kept classified and never made public. In fact, not a single article about it can be found today. After leaving the army, Lutwack frequently delivered public talks and lectures on Korea, where he bombastically dished out political and strategic advice—both solicited and unsolicited—often interjecting condescending remarks about the country.

In his secondary role as a military historian, Robinson would once again primarily work on assigned tasks. A good example is his 17-page summary report from July 1947, which was devoted to Soviet espionage in southern Korea, with a focus on the Soviet Consulate in Seoul. This was likely his last extensive report before leaving Korea for Turkey.[80] But his chief task as U.S. military historian during the last twelve months of his stay was to conduct research and write major parts of what was planned to become the official history of the U.S. military occupation and government in southern Korea. Yet, this "History of the United States Army Forces in Korea, 1945–1948"[81] was never fully completed.

[78] R[ichard] D. Robinson, "Rumors for the Record as of 3 July 1947," RG 331, SCAP, Adjutant General's Section, Operations Division, Miscellaneous Branch, International Travel Office, Historical Journals, May 1946–May 1948, Entry 1888, Box 10128, National Archives and Records Administration. Because the U.S. Army had attempted to cover up that and other criminal cases, Robinson was forced to use the term "rumor" in his official report. His later "Betrayal" manuscript contains several examples for looting; the Lutwack case, however, is noted only briefly and without revealing the former colonel's name; see Robinson, "Betrayal of a Nation," in this volume, 301–2.

[79] Lutwack's appointment as governor was terminated on April 25, 1946; see Headquarters United States Army Military Government in Korea, Office of the Military Governor, "Removal Number 83," *Official Gazette, USAMGIK* (May 18, 1946): [1], reprinted in *Migunjŏng ch'ŏng kwanbo / Official Gazette, United States Army Military Government in Korea*, vol. 2 (Seoul: Wŏnju Munhwasa, 1991), 462.

[80] See p. 23, footnote 46 in this essay.

[81] Historical Section, Headquarters XXIV Corps, US Army Forces in Korea, "History of the United States Army Forces in Korea, 1945–1948," 3 parts., manuscript.

Chŏng Yong-uk, who amassed and compiled a significant collection of USAMGIK sources over the past few decades and published numerous scholarly studies on related topics, also conducted extensive research on the writing of the "History of the United States Army Forces in Korea, 1945–1948," with a particular focus on Robinson's role in the process.[82] Chŏng has shown that Robinson authored the bulk of Part Two, half of it alone (i.e., volumes 2 and 4) and the other half with two different co-authors (i.e., volumes 3 and 5). In little more than a year, Robinson produced a staggering 1,100 pages on post-liberation Korean politics and Soviet–American relations.

Internally, Robinson was highly respected and credited for his work. Just two weeks after his article appeared in the *Nation*, but before he was exposed as its author, the Historical Section's chief historian James O. Sargent (1921–1976), Robinson's immediate superior (and his contemporary in age), recommended him for a major promotion: "His long study of Russo–American relations in Korea was commended by General Hodge and taken by the General to Washington. [...] Mr. Robinson possesses admirable qualifications for his position and rating. His services have been sought by other sections in Corps and Military Government," Sargent acknowledged. "In an effort to persuade him to stay with the historical program and because the Section realizes its need of him, Mr. Robinson has been promised a promotion to P-5."[83]

To draft the history using primary sources, Robinson and his colleagues capitalized on their full security clearance and access to G-2 and other intelligence reports. Although Robinson did all that was requested of him, the carefully crafted, multivolume official history ultimately had to navigate through several stages of what can only be

Each of the three parts of the typewritten manuscript consists of several volumes. A first unauthorized reprint was finally published in 1988 by Tolbegae: *Chuhan Migunsa / HUSAFIK*, 3 parts in 4 vols. (Seoul: Tolbegae, 1988).

[82] See Chŏng Yong-uk, *Migunjŏng charyo yŏn'gu*, 155–212; Chung Yong Wook, "From Occupation to War: Cold War Legacies of US Army Historical Studies of the Occupation and Korean War," *Korea Journal* 60, no. 2 (Summer 2020): 14–54.

[83] James O. Sargent, "Justification of Civilian Personnel, Historical Section" (March 17, 1947), reprinted in *Haebang chikhu chŏngch'i sahoesa charyojip*, 1: *Yaksayu (1)* [Collection of political and social materials from the immediate post-liberation period, vol. 1: An outline history (1)], comp. Chŏng Yong-uk (Seoul: Tarakpang, 1994), 558.

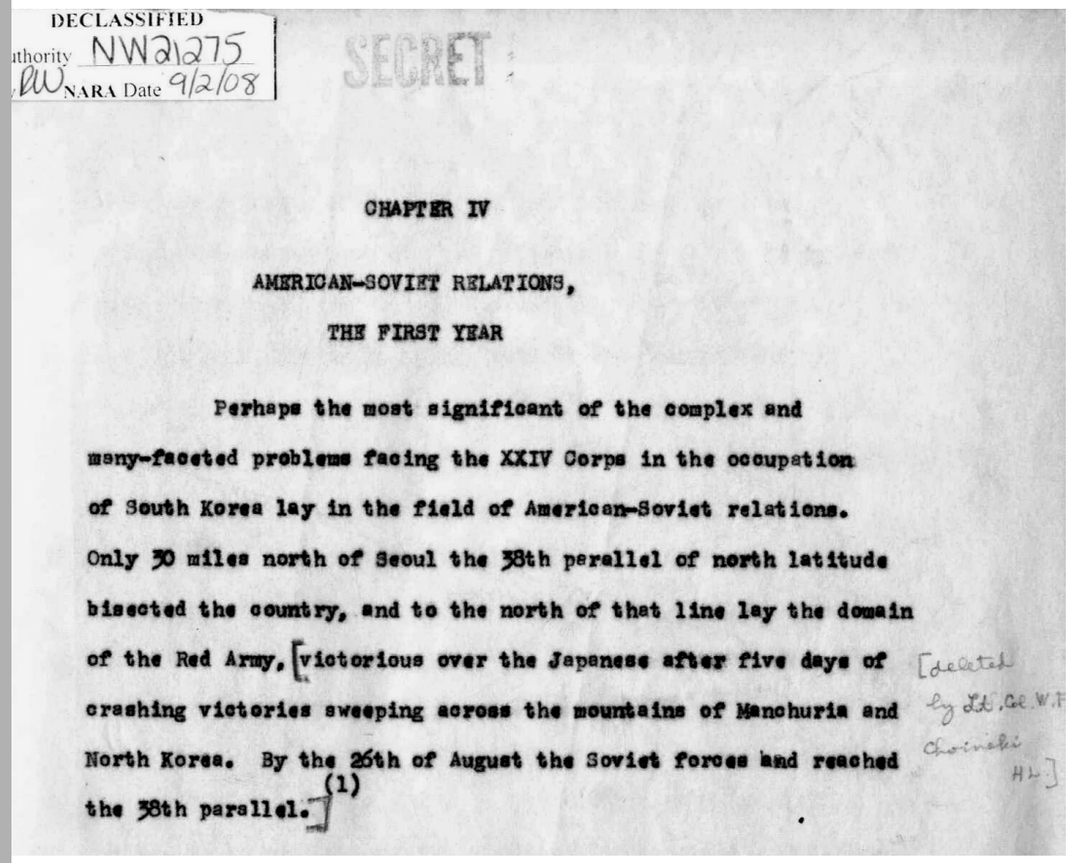
described as a ludicrous internal censorship process (see fig. 7). In a letter addressed to the Historical Division at the Pentagon—a letter that also introduced Robinson—Section Chief Sargent lamented, "after a chapter is written it has to go through a long process of criticism and with many regrets I have fallen heir to several chapters which were virtually criticized out of existence."[84] Following this, Colonel William J. Niederpruem (1887–1972), chief of General MacArthur's (1880–1964) troop information program and responsible for overseeing the Army's entire history project and print censorship activities in MacArthur's empire, directly reprimanded Robinson's section chief, stating that an academic historical-critical approach and evaluation was entirely off the table: "It does not come within the scope of any account written by a subordinate echelon to pass judgement on the actions or policies of its higher command."[85] In one of his studies, Chŏng Yong-uk thoroughly examines this extensive censorship process.[86] He shows that, inevitably, the United States Army Military Government in Korea and the War Department in Washington routinely flouted their own convoluted regulations whenever anything in their "patriotic" narratives fell short of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer silver screen standards.

"The 'History of the United States Army Forces in Korea' does not reflect the facts properly, so there is room for distortion," explained Robinson in his 2004 interview. "The official history of the U.S. military occupation of southern Korea—most elements of which are classified as top secret—is very prejudicial and also inaccurately described. The veracity of that history was destroyed because all historical records were written under explicit orders not to criticize

[84] Letter by James O. Sargent to John M. Kemper, September 17, 1946, reprinted in *Haebang chikhu chŏngch'i sahoesa charyojip*, 1: *Yaksayu (1)* [Collection of political and social materials from the immediate post-liberation period, vol. 1: An outline history (1)], comp. Chŏng Yong-uk (Seoul: Tarakpang, 1994), 555.

[85] Letter by W. J. Niederpruem to Albert Keep, May 16, 1946, reprinted in *Chuhan Migunsa / History of the United States Army Forces in Korea*, vol. 1, ed. Kuksa P'yŏnch'an Wiwŏnhoe (Seoul: Sŏnin, 2014), 20.

[86] For Chŏng's discussion of the censorship process, see Chŏng Yong-uk, "*Chuhan Migunsa*ŭi p'yŏnch'an kyŏngwiwa naeyong kusŏng" [Compilation process and content composition of *History of the United States Army Forces in Korea*], in *Chuhan Migunsa / History of the United States Army Forces in Korea*, vol. 1, ed. Kuksa P'yŏnch'an Wiwŏnhoe (Seoul: Sŏnin, 2014), 32–36.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CHAPTER IV

AMERICAN-SOVIET RELATIONS,

THE FIRST YEAR

Perhaps the most significant of the complex and many-faceted problems facing the XXIV Corps in the occupation of South Korea lay in the field of American-Soviet relations. Only 30 miles north of Seoul the 38th parallel of north latitude bisected the country, and to the north of that line lay the domain of the Red Army, [victorious over the Japanese after five days of crashing victories sweeping across the mountains of Manchuria and North Korea. By the 26th of August the Soviet forces had reached the 38th parallel.(1)] [deleted by Lt. Col. W.F. Choinski HL]

(Fig. 7) Heavy censorship of Robinson's chapters in the "History of the United States Army Forces in Korea, 1945–1948"—a passage about the victory of the Soviets over Japan in Manchuria and their occupation of Korea (prior to that of the U.S. Army) is promptly marked for deletion by later CIA operative W.F. Choinski.

anything related to the United States."[87] In his "Betrayal" manuscript, he adds that "of all the words written on the occupation of Korea [...] at least seventy-five percent were either outright fabrication or highly inaccurate."[88] The military never released the tightly censored, sanitized history to the American or Korean public—even in that cleansed adaptation—as it was judged to reveal too many insider facts concerning its authoritarian, neocolonial playbook in Korea. It was therefore just reproduced in typescript, accessible to only a few high-ranking military

[87] Richard D. Robinson, quoted in Kim, *Pigŭgŭn haengjinŭrobut'ŏ sijak toenda*, 66.
[88] Robinson, "Betrayal of a Nation," in this volume, 66.

officers and the Intelligence Community. In "Betrayal of a Nation," Robinson distills the essence of Part Two of this official "History" while piercing the veil of military censorship, offering a candid account that frames America's imperialist encroachment and unravels the neocolonial dynamics reshaping post-war Korea, thereby exposing a troubling reality beyond all the fabricated narratives of democratic liberation.

Mark Gayn

Born as Mark Julius Ginsbourg, Mark Gayn stood out not only as a journalist in the rich tradition of American muckraker journalism but also as an exceptional analyst. Gayn was a man who breathed life into the narratives of his skillfully crafted reports. A true master at the art of interviewing, he possessed an unpretentious demeanor and engaged with individuals from all walks of life. Whether they were intellectuals, administrators, villagers, workers, revolutionaries, soldiers, generals, fascists, or war criminals, he conversed with people of diverse colors, nationalities, and convictions. Fluent in Russian, English, Chinese, and French, he had a remarkable ability to put everyone at ease. His mastery lay in weaving ironic and revealing twists into his descriptions, often achieved by skillfully using his interviewees' own words to expose their motives and true intentions, or to shed light on the disparities between official narratives and lived realities.

Gayn[89] was born to Russian–Jewish parents in Manchuria, something that was not easily forgiven in the United States during the 1940s, 50s, and 60s.[90] Following years of schooling in Harbin, Vladivostok,

[89] A concise, well-evidenced outline of Gayn's life, apart from various obituaries (e.g., Montreal's *Gazette* on December 18, 1981, and the *New York Times* on December 24, 1981), was written by Graham Bradshaw in a pamphlet for an exhibition at the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library. See Graham Bradshaw and Margery Pearson, "Journey from the East: The Life and Times of Mark Gayn," exhibition pamphlet (Toronto: Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, 1986), 1–4. The other major source is Gayn's own early autobiographic book: Mark J. Gayn, *Journey from the East: An Autobiography* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1944).
[90] Typically, conservatives such as Joseph C. Keeley (1904–1968), the biographer of a mastermind of the Cold War, branded Gayn and other foreign-born liberals as "people with strange backgrounds." Joseph Keeley, *The China Lobby Man: The Story of Alfred Kohlberg* (New Rochelle: Arlington House, 1969), 95.

and Shanghai, he left Asia in the fall of 1929 at the age of twenty to study in California. After graduating in 1933 with a B.A. from Pomona College in Claremont, a suburb of Los Angeles, and, a year later, with a B.Sc. from the School of Journalism at Columbia University in New York, Gayn soon became one of the brightest stars in American journalism. Upon completing his studies at Columbia, he returned to Shanghai as a special correspondent for the *Washington Post*. For some time, until the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937–1945), he also worked for Japan's Domei News Service. However, with the outbreak of World War II in Europe, he returned to the United States and applied for U.S. citizenship (see fig. 8). Although he legally changed his surname from Ginsbourg to Gayn in June 1940, his alien status did not change, which prevented him from serving in the U.S. military, not only upon being drafted in October 1940 but also after the law was changed a year later.[91] In November 1943 he was finally granted U.S. citizenship.[92]

Mark Gayn's personality and political viewpoint were profoundly shaped by his family background, linguistic acumen, and diverse cultural and political experiences. The eldest of three boys, his early years were spent in Barim (aka Balin), a tiny town in Manchuria, nestled near the Mongolian border and known for its railway station. At eight years old, his family moved to Harbin with its large, wealthy Russian émigré population, where he attended Western schools. Then, from 1923 to 1926, he experienced his formative teenage years in Vladivostok, amid the tumultuous takeover by the Bolsheviks. Following this, his family moved to a unique extraterritorial enclave—Shanghai's International Settlement. Later, they relocated once again, this time to southern California, and then to New York City. By his early twenties, he had pretty much *seen it all*—more than what most people encounter in a lifetime.

In his autobiography *Journey from the East*—who writes an autobiography in their mid-thirties?—Gayn describes his early life in great

[91] See the draft card of Mark Julius Gayn, no. 2513 (October 16, 1940), WWII Draft Registration Cards for Missouri, 10/16/1940–03/31/1947, Record group: Records of the Selective Service System, 147, Box 114, National Archives at St. Louis.

[92] See the index card for Mark Julius Gayn, no. 5573026, Soundex Index to Petitions for Naturalization Field in Federal, State, and Local Courts Located in New York City, 1892–1989, National Archives at New York City.

460093

ORIGINAL
(To be retained by clerk)

No.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

DECLARATION OF INTENTION

(Invalid for all purposes seven years after the date hereof)

HFL

STATE OF NEW YORK
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK } ss.:

In the DISTRICT Court
of UNITED STATES at NEW YORK, N.Y.

I, MARK JULIUS GINSBOURG
(Full true name, without abbreviation, and any other name which has been used, must appear here)
now residing at 308 W. 11th St. New York, N.Y.
(Number and street) (City or town) (County) (State)
occupation Writer(free lance), aged 31 years, do declare on oath that my personal description is:
Sex male, color white, complexion fair, color of eyes dark brown
color of hair brown, height 5 feet 7½ inches; weight 165 pounds; visible distinctive marks none
race Hebrew; nationality Russian
I was born in Statiin Barim, China, on April 21, 1909
(City or town) (Country) (Month) (Day) (Year)
I am not married. The name of my wife or husband is
we were married on (Month) (Day) (Year), at (City or town) (State or country); she or he was
born at (City or town) (State or country), on (Month) (Day) (Year), entered the United States
at (City or town) (State), on (Month) (Day) (Year), for permanent residence therein, and now
resides at (City or town) (State or country). I have no children, and the name, date and place of birth,
and place of residence of each of said children are as follows:

I have not heretofore made a declaration of intention: Number , on (Date)
at (City or town) (State) (Name of court)
my last foreign residence was Shanghai, China (City or town) (Country)
I emigrated to the United States of America from Shanghai, China (City or town) (Country)
my lawful entry for permanent residence in the United States was at San Pedro, California (City or town) (State)
under the name of Mark J. Ginsbourg, on October 10, 1939 (Month) (Day) (Year)
on the vessel Laxa Maersk (If other than by vessel, state manner of arrival)

I will, before being admitted to citizenship, renounce forever all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state, or sovereignty, and particularly by name to the prince, potentate, state, or sovereignty of which I may be at the time of admission a citizen or subject; I am not an anarchist; I am not a polygamist nor a believer in the practice of polygamy; and it is my intention in good faith to become a citizen of the United States of America and to reside permanently therein; and I certify that the photograph affixed to the duplicate and triplicate hereof is a likeness of me.

I swear (affirm) that the statements I have made and the intentions I have expressed in this declaration of intention subscribed by me are true to the best of my knowledge and belief: So help me God.

Mark Julius Ginsbourg
(Original signature of declarant without abbreviation, also alias, if used)

Subscribed and sworn to before me in the form of oath shown above in the office of the Clerk of said Court, at New York
this 25 day of April, anno Domini, 19 40. Certification No. 2-711636 from the Commissioner of Immigration and Naturalization showing the lawful entry of the declarant for permanent residence on the date stated above, has been received by me. The photograph affixed to the duplicate and triplicate hereof is a likeness of the declarant.

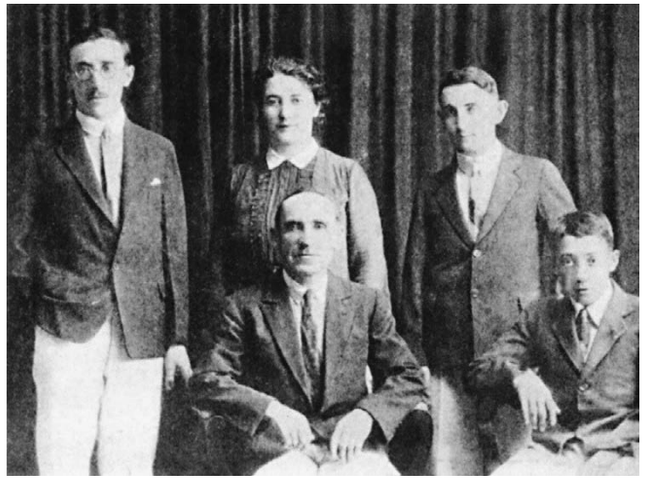
(DO NOT ATTACH PHOTOGRAPH TO THIS COPY OF DECLARATION)

GEORGE J.H. FOLLMER
[SEAL] Clerk of the U.S. DISTRICT Court.
By , Deputy Clerk.

Form 2202—L-A
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE
14—2623
U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

No. 290868

(Fig. 8) Mark Gayn's, aka Mark Julius Ginsbourg's, application for U.S. citizenship ("Declaration of Intention"), April 25, 1940.



(Fig. 9)
The Ginsbourg family in Shanghai in the late 1920s. Mark is on the left with his youngest brother Sam sitting on the right.

detail. He indicates that his father, a manager of several large sawmills, had moved from Russia to Manchuria for political reasons—specifically, due to being an outspoken critic of the czar and the brutal monarchy that was "rotten to the core."[93] Gayn writes that his father had "actively protested against government" and "collected money for the peasants and gathered signatures and petitions of protest."[94] In 1903, such actions would normally have warranted placement "on the blacklist of the secret police,"[95] forcing him to relocate across the border to Manchuria. Then again, according to the memoir of Mark's youngest brother, Sam Ginsbourg (aka Jin Shibo, 1914–1979), a staunch Maoist who spent his adult life in mainland China, their father's decision to leave the Jewish ghetto was instead influenced by the suppression of Jews in southern Byelorussia and economic opportunity.[96] Sam describes how their father tracked the economic completion over the construction of the Trans–Siberian Railway and later the Chinese Eastern Railway, so that "[h]e never stayed in any one place for longer than a year or two," and always "dragged his family after him."[97] This nomadic existence was necessitated by the father's work as a timber manager, leading the

[93] Gayn, *Journey from the East*, 11.
[94] Ibid., 12.
[95] Ibid., 13.
[96] See Sam Ginsbourg, *My First Sixty Years in China* (Beijing: New World Press, 1982), 1.
[97] Ibid., 2.

Ginsbourg family to reside deep in the Manchurian countryside for the first eight years of Mark's life. The family would have been regarded as middle or even upper-middle class by income, enabling them to afford a "long list of tutors and governesses," as Mark recalls: "They were German, Russian, English, and American, old and young, dull and stimulating."[98] But the father, engrossed day and night with his lumber business, was not particularly close to his children, as Mark and Sam both attest. Their mother, on the other hand, was very caring, while also passionate about her own education. Even after giving birth to three children, she completed a university education and became a successful dentist, all while raising them.

As a child, teen, and young man, Gayn witnessed bandit attacks, two revolutions, international wars, occupations, economic depressions, and famines—nearly all of them steeped in divergent political ideologies. Between 1923 and 1926, his family's life transitioned from comfort in Harbin to dire poverty in Vladivostok, already under Bolshevik governance. Initially, they couldn't afford shoes or coal for heat. But like his mother and brothers, Mark adapted to the new situation relatively well: "My adjustment from a life of comfort to one of acute discomfort was painless, for I had the miraculous adaptability of youth."[99] Later, his father moved the family to Shanghai, and then followed his son Mark to California. Only the youngest son, Sam, preferred to remain in China.

In June 1945, Gayn, then in his mid-thirties and a U.S. citizen working as a journalist in New York, was arrested by the FBI in what became known as the Amerasia spy case. *Amerasia* was a specialized journal published by Philip J. Jaffe (1895–1980) and another editor for the Institute of Pacific Relations, mostly to be read by students of East Asian affairs. An officer in the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the wartime precursor of the CIA, had noted that "a striking parallel existed between the text of an article which appeared in the January 26, 1945, edition of *Amerasia* magazine [...] and a document"[100] that he had

[98] Gayn, *Journey from the East*, 60.
[99] Ibid., 104.
[100] Senate Reports, No. 2108, 81st Congress, 2nd Session, Serial 11375, *State Department Employee Loyalty Investigation: Report of the Committee on Foreign Relations Pursuant to S. Res. 231* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1950) (hereafter cited as *State Department Employee Loyalty Investigation*), 97.

prepared for the OSS, a document classified as "Secret."[101] On March 11, 1945, OSS agents in New York thus entered *Amerasia's* Manhattan headquarters on Fifth Avenue—without any search warrants.[102] The OSS then reported the intelligence it found to the FBI, which proceeded to search and install bugs in Gayn's apartment and the offices of several other journalists working with or for the Institute—again without any search warrants.[103] Although Jaffe, Gayn, and four others were arrested by the FBI, the charges were soon dropped. Without a doubt, the Institute's journalists had referenced classified government documents. Foreign Service officer John S. Service (1909–1999) even admitted to having shared classified papers with Gayn and Jaffe. That, however, was a standard practice at the time, as he explained during the committee hearings.[104] Other copies of classified documents in Gayn's possession had been shared by officers of the Office of War Information (OWI) through an informal agreement,[105] and the articles published in *Amerasia* had in fact passed conventional wartime pre-publication censorship.

The Amerasia case served as a dress rehearsal for the Cold War and the subsequent spread of McCarthyism. Pursuing Alfred Kohlberg's lead, McCarthy took on the case. By claiming that the U.S. State Department had been infiltrated by communist spies in his Wheeling speech of February 9, 1950, Joseph McCarthy took charge of probing and turning the Amerasia case into a major *cause célèbre*. This led to a vigorous and extensive investigation and debate in Congress. But the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations closed the case, concluding: "It has been charged widely, by Senator McCarthy as well as by others, that the Amerasia case is the key to an espionage ring in the State Department. The evidence clearly establishes that this is not true."[106] That outcome was an embarrassment for the FBI and the

[101] The text in question was printed on page 23 of the unsigned *Amerasia* article "Britain's Postwar Plans: The Case of Thailand," *Amerasia* 9 (January 26, 1945), 19–29.
[102] See *State Department Employee Loyalty Investigation*, 97 and 123–24.
[103] See ibid., 134.
[104] John Service himself was fired in 1951 but in 1956 rejoined the State Department after the Supreme Court had ruled that the decision to fire him was illegal. See his obituary in the *New York Times*, February 4, 1999.
[105] See *State Department Employee Loyalty Investigation*, 115–18.
[106] Ibid., 137.


THE PITTSBURGH PRESS

Amerasia Case Skeleton Rises to Haunt U. S.

PHILIP J. JAFFE
Publisher fined $2500.

EMANUEL S. LARSEN
He didn't contest charge.

ANDREW ROTH
Government dropped charge.

JOHN STEWART SERVICE
State Dept. job regained.

KATE LOUISE MITCHELL
Uncle's firm hired prosecutor.

MARK GAYN
Writer not indicted.

(Fig. 10) Amerasia case as dress rehearsal for the Cold War: photos of four liberal journalists and two State Department employees attacked by McCarthy and his associates, with Mark Gayn on the far right. *Pittsburgh Press*, May 1, 1950.

Department of Justice. The majority of Congress and the general public perceived their actions in the case as an attack on press freedom. As a result, the use of the 1917 Espionage Act to indict members of the press for publishing classified government information fell out of favor. Yet, the very same act that was used against Mark Gayn and other *Amerasia* journalists in the 1940s was unearthed by the Justice Department in the first Trump era to go after WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange (b. 1971), first covertly and then publicly.[107]

Gayn was forever marked as a traitor, as mainstream *Newsweek* reporter Charlotte Ebener (1918–1990) discovered while touring Korea with him. "I never suspected I would be labeled 'Communist' by the Army just because I was on the same planes, trains, and jeeps with Gayn,"[108] she complained, thereby astutely distancing herself from a colleague whom McCarthy had branded as a communist and a spy. In the 1950s, as McCarthy continued his agitation and decisively ignored the decision of the Committee on Foreign Relations, the Amerasia case became the cornerstone of his political career, bringing hardships upon all the journalists and diplomats involved. As a result of his arrest, intimidation, and subsequent actions reminiscent of Nazi-style *Sippenhaft* (kin punishment), Gayn felt forced to leave the U.S. in late 1952 and settled permanently in Canada.

Since then, American authors swayed by conspiracy theories and disinformation have continued to refer to Gayn as a "Russian spy." Such

[107] See *New York Times*, May 24, 2019.
[108] Charlotte Ebener, *No Facilities for Women* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955), 66.

thinking rests solely on the 1945 Amerasia case, which is now generally understood as an instance of journalistic use of classified OSS, Navy, and State Department documents to report on U.S. foreign policy, not as espionage.[109] The crudest example of what such speculation produced is perhaps Dick Russell's *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, a massive, stultifying cocktail of badly connected conspiracy stories. Tying every conceivable secret service and espionage scandal across the globe to the assassination of John F. Kennedy (in office 1961–1963) and Lee Harvey Oswald (1939–1963)—and that over several decades—Russell patches together page after page of the strangest, most insidiously manipulative speculations and inventions about the "Mysterious History of Mark Gayn"[110] to advance the specious claim of "possible Nagell–Oswald–Gayn connections."[111]

Becoming his most widely read publication, Mark Gayn's *Japan Diary*,[112] spanning over 500 pages, was published in November 1948 by William Sloane Associates and achieved tremendous success.[113] In style and political outlook, Gayn's masterful prose reflects his personal, political, and diverse cultural background. Unremittingly critical and invariably entertaining at the same time, the book became a bestseller that was reviewed in many newspapers and journals, praised by liberals while being denounced by conservatives. It was and continues to be quoted in scholarly circles on issues related to the U.S. military occupation of Japan and Korea. More than ninety pages of Gayn's journalistic diary, republished in this volume, chronicle his three-week stay in Korea (October 15–November 8, 1946), in the company of Charlotte Ebener and *New York Times* journalist Foster Hailey (1899–1966).[114]

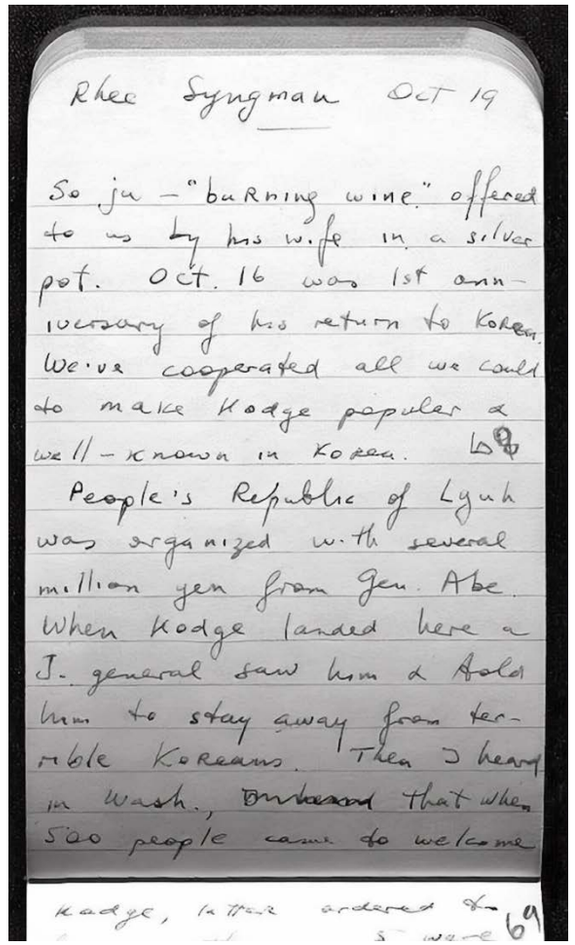
[109] Three decades later, when the two investigative journalists Bob Woodward (b. 1943) and Carl Bernstein (b. 1944) uncovered the Watergate scandal, they emerged unscathed. Yet, as mentioned, another four decades later, Julian Assange, neither a U.S. citizen nor a resident, found himself on the U.S. Justice Department's most wanted list. The "2025 World Press Freedom Index" thus ranks the United States 57th, worse than Sierra Leone and Romania, but still slightly better than Gambia, Uruguay, or South Korea. See Reporters Without Borders (RSF), "2025 World Press Freedom Index," accessed May 8, 2025, https://rsf.org/en/index?year=2025.

[110] This is one of Russel's subtitles; see Dick Russell, *The Man Who Knew Too Much: Hired to Kill Oswald and Prevent the Assassination of JFK* (New York: Carroll & Graf / Richard Gallen, 1992), 115. Most of Russell's imagined conspiracies involving Mark Gayn appear on pages 113–33 and 143–45.

[111] Ibid., 120.

[112] Mark Gayn, *Japan Diary* (New York: William Sloane Associates, 1948).

[113] Attempts to publish an eight-part article series based on the 1946 Korea tour in the *Chicago Sun* had been rejected. *The New Republic* would later publish one of these reports ("Cold War: Two Police States in Korea," September 15, 1947).


Rhee Syngman Oct 19

So ju – "burning wine" offered to us by his wife in a silver pot. Oct. 16 was 1st anniversary of his return to Korea. We've cooperated all we could to make Hodge popular & well-known in Korea.

People's Republic of Lynh was organized with several million yen from Gen. Abe. When Hodge landed here a J. general saw him & told him to stay away from terrible Koreans. Then I heard in Wash., embassy that when 500 people came to welcome

Hodge, latter ordered the

(Fig. 11) Handwritten entry for October 19, 1946, in Mark Gayn's journal.

Gayn had arrived in Tokyo as the *Chicago Sun*'s bureau chief for Japan and Korea in December 1945, but this was his first trip to Korea. His *Japan Diary*, based on a handwritten journal (see fig. 11) now accessible as part of the Mark Gayn Papers in the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library at the University of Toronto, is not his only publication that addresses post-liberation Korea. Before and after his trip to Korea, he also published several longer and shorter articles about the situation on the peninsula in various papers.[115] His article in *PM* that predicted a civil war in Korea, for example, was quoted and referenced at length

[114] See Mark Gayn, "Japan Diary: Korea," in this volume, 342.

[115] See e.g. his long front-page article on the early days of US occupation and Korean politicians in the LA based Korean community paper *Korean Independence* of November 21, 1945, or his critical reports in the liberal, New York based newspaper *PM Daily*: November 11, 1946 (on mass protests against US-let election procedures), November 2, 1947 (a full-page story "'Liberators' Turned Zones Into Military Bases"), November 3, 1947 (an article predicting civil war in Korea), and November 4 (a report on the failure to carry out land reform in southern Korea).

by Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko (1909–1989) in his 1947 address to the United Nations.[116] Two weeks after Gayn's return from Korea, he received a letter from the *Sun*, which, he writes, was recalling him home "and announcing what is in effect a dissolution of its foreign service."[117] Gayn left Japan in early 1947 and shortly afterward settled in Paris to report on Europe, mostly Eastern Europe.

In the midst of the Korean War the Soviets published a slightly abridged Russian language edition of his *Japan Diary* (see fig. 12c).[118] The abridgements are mostly due to censored passages about Soviet figures and political observations liable to give Russian readers food for thought. In his diary entry for October 15, Gayn quotes a U.S. Army officer's accusation that the Russians had stripped North Korea of its industrial machinery and that many Koreans "had fled from the Red Terror in the Soviet zone." In the short entry for October 17, Gayn quotes Leonard M. Bertsch, the abovementioned political advisor to General Hodge, who astutely observed that if a free election were held across Korea, "the Communists would get 20 per cent of the votes in our zone, and five in the Russian zone. The people here would be voting not *for* the reds, but *against* us." In the entry for November 6, Gayn quotes an unidentified Russian characterizing General Hodge's Soviet counterpart, General Chistyakov (1900–1979), as a militarist "no different from any of yours." All such nonconformist observations were omitted from the Russian edition.[119] A Polish edition, *Dziennik japoński*, would follow in 1954 (fig. 12d),[120] published under contract with Gayn.[121]

[116] See Andrei Gromyko, "Address by Andrei Gromyko before the General Assembly on the Resolution Establishing the United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea" (November 13, 1947), in *Korea, 1945 to 1948: A Report on Political Developments and Economic Resources with Selected Documents*, comp. Department of State (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1948), 59.

[117] Mark Gayn, *Japan Diary* (New York: William Sloane Associates, 1948), 446. Cf. Oliver Elliott, *The American Press and the Cold War* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 50.

[118] Mark Gein [Mark Gayn], *Iaponskii dnevnik* [Japan diary], an abridged translation by I. Boronos, D. Kunina, and N. Loseva, with an introduction by A. Varshavskii (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo inostrannoi literatury, 1951).

[119] Compare ibid., 400, 405, 481, with the 1948 U.S. edition of Gayn's *Japan Diary*, 350, 355, and 431 (or our edition in this volume, 345, 350, and 427).

[120] Mark Gayn, *Dziennik japoński* [Japan diary], transl. Kazimierz Błeszyński (Warsaw: Książka i Wiedza, 1954).

[121] See the Polish book contract and cover letter (dated May 16, 1956), Box 97, Folder 31, Mark Gayn Papers, MS Coll 00215, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto.

(Fig. 12) Various editions of Gayn's *Japan Diary*:
(a) original American edition, 1948, (b) first volume of first Japanese edition, 1951, (c) Russian edition, 1951, (d) Polish edition, 1954, (e) partial Korean translation, 1988, and (f) a follow-up *Shin Nippon nikki* [New Japan diary] published in 1982.

Along with the 1951 Russian edition, the book was also translated into Japanese by Imoto Takeo (1904–1963) and published that same year in a two-volume edition to outstanding success (see fig. 12b). Almost overnight, it ranked third among the best-selling books in Japan and continued to be widely read decades later. Several other Japanese editions, including some by Tuttle Publishing, which also later republished the English language version, would follow. However, those

editions are not to be confused with Gayn's final book, arranged by himself but published posthumously in 1982 as *Shin Nippon nikki* [New Japan diary][122] (see fig. 12f), a kind of sequel to the *Japan Diary* covering the later postwar period.

In South Korea, as with Robinson's "Betrayal of a Nation," an unauthorized translation of *Japan Diary* was published amid the prodemocracy movement of the 1980s. Also similar to Robinson's publication, the book is quite rare, long out of print, and today can only be found in academic libraries. Back then, I bought a copy for a friend. Like reprints of Cumings's *Origins of the Korean War* and other critical texts questioning the legitimacy of the current and prior regimes, this book was an under-the-table publication that bypassed the censorship review and was sold at a bookstore right in front of Yonsei University's main gate. (In fact, the young bookstore owner would find himself in and out of police custody on a weekly basis.) A second print in 1989 seems to have followed a more conventional process. Both Korean editions, however, titled *Haebanggwa migunjŏng: 1946.10–11* [Liberation and the U.S. Army: October–November 1946][123] (see fig. 12e), consist of an excerpt, namely the translation of Gayn's long Korea chapter.

Mark Gayn's journalistic diary is dedicated to his wife Sally, also a Russian immigrant, whom he married in September 1941. A year prior, he had entered into a deathbed marriage with another woman, Julia, a friend from Shanghai; she died of tuberculosis shortly after their wedding. Sally also passed away several years later, a mere two weeks before the book dedicated to her was published. Gayn was then still in Greece. Two years after that, he remarried once again, this time to Suzanne Lengvary (aka Suzanne Lengvary-Gayn, 1921–2020), a Hungarian actress twelve years his junior. They had met in Budapest, though Gayn was stationed in Paris for four years.[124] His hilarious recollection of their

[122] Maku Gein [Mark Gayn], *Shin Nippon nikki: Aru jānarisuto no ikō* [New Japan diary: A journalist's posthumous writings], transl. Kuga Toyoo (Tokyo: Nippon Hōsō Shuppan Kyōkai, 1982).
[123] Mak'ŭ Kein [Mark Gayn], *Haebanggwa migunjŏng: 1946.10–11* [Liberation and the U.S. Army: October–November 1946], transl. Kkach'i Editorial Board (Seoul: Kkach'i, 1986).
[124] Anthony Wu, who worked with Suzanne's estate after she died in 2020 and sorted out photos and papers that would later go to the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library collection at the University of Toronto, wrote a highly informative blog post on Suzanne and Mark Gayn. See Anthony Wu, "Reporting East Asia: The Collection of Suzanne and Mark Gayn," updated April 17, 2021, accessed August 28, 2023, https://anthonywuart.com/post/reporting-east-asia-the-collection-of-suzanne-and-mark-gayn.

wedding day poignantly illustrates his sense of humor and his take on "actually existing socialism" (Bahro)—as a bittersweet slapstick of socialism's theoretical potential:

> We were married in Budapest, Hungary, by a portly magistrate who [...] wore a broad red ribbon across his chest. He stood under fly-specked portraits of Stalin, Marx and Rakosi, wished us well, and urged us to "fight for world peace." Later in the day, after a wedding lunch with a few friends, I hurried off to cover the trial of an American and a Briton accused of espionage with the flimsiest of evidence. Still later, Suzanne and I saw an important Soviet hit play, "The Wild West." It featured under-dressed women and zoot-suited men engaged in lewd dancing and fighting, typical, the program said, of life in North America. In the triumphant climax, Wall St. imperialists, plotting to install a Missouri haberdasher as the nation's fuehrer, were caught red-handed by U.S. "revolutionary workers."[125]

Although Mark Gayn had by then been a U.S. citizen for several years, his new wife Suzanne was not allowed to enter the country or gain citizenship due to her alleged communist sympathies. In response to such McCarthyism witch-hunts, the couple emigrated in 1952 to Canada and both became Canadian citizens.[126] Gayn began working for the *Toronto Daily Star* but also wrote for papers like the *Chicago Daily News* and *Le Monde*, and published in important weeklies such as the *Nation* and the *New Republic*. In 1959, he became a staff writer for the *Star* and its Eastern Affairs expert, and in 1966 he opened a Hong Kong bureau for the *Star* as a base to cover the Vietnam War, only returning to Canada in 1972. Occasionally, he would also publish articles in the *New York Times* (e.g., a major cover story in 1972 on a visit to North Korea).[127]

[125] Mark Gayn, with Suzanne Gayn, "Why We Chose Canada," *Star Weekly Magazine* (May 9, 1959): 10. The play is Alexander Afinogenov's (1904–1941) "Vesterny."
[126] See ibid., 10–11.
[127] See Mark Gayn, "The Cult of Kim," *New York Times Magazine* (October 1, 1972): 16–17, 20, 24, 26, 28, 31–32, and 34.

As we learned, Gayn had moved to the United States in 1929, just as the Great Depression unfolded. For a few months in 1933, he himself experienced the life of an unemployed, homeless man living in an old battered Dodge, driving from day job to day job.[128] Let me quote a passage from his early autobiography that vividly conveys his standpoint as a progressive journalist living through those troubled years. His biting portrayal of American society starts with a line about the bourgeois home–car–refrigerator trinity, a symbol of the gilded cage of political talk that never dares to touch the nation's sociopolitical fabric—bold and loud, yet trapped inside an imperial teacup coliseum. It brings to mind Reynolds' ridiculously innocent yet incisive "Little Boxes Made of Ticky-Tacky," her sly anthem about conformist middle-class life. But as we proceed, Gayn shows how his political outlook extends to his own life in the ticky-tacky empire; America almost seemed to be winning his favor:

> They had their little houses, their cars and refrigerators [...]. Each of these was a symbol of economic independence and a certain social status. For generations their mentality had been molded to admire and venerate the virtues and achievements of capitalism, of private initiative, of self-made men. Both psychology and the bank account had made them bourgeois to the core, and they would have resisted bitterly any encroachments upon their possessions and capitalist prerogatives. But the depression—gradually and inexorably—was depriving them of their property. And with their changed economic status came a change in mentality. [...] There were seeds of revolution and violence [...] in the hearts of countless men in countless Hoovervilles and silent, gloomy industrial towns spread over America's face. I did not like it, and my heart was heavy. [...] Capitalism had to act quickly if it was to survive at all and if America was to remain the land of promise. To me, and to millions like me, Roosevelt was the new Messiah.[129]

Gayn evidently placed his hopes on Roosevelt's New Deal policies, envisioning a just and socially balanced society underpinned by a reformed capitalism with strong social foundations. His political convictions were entirely transparent, manifest in every substantial article he ever wrote.

[128] See Gayn, *Journey from the East*, 191.
[129] Ibid., 192–93.

Drawing from his firsthand encounters with various political systems, he consistently reflected on these experiences. Despite his deep grasp of political theory, he kept his distance from engaging in ideological debates over politics. But for a General Hodge, an Alfred Kohlberg, and later a Joseph McCarthy, any continuation of New Deal policies—which they obtusely imagined as inching towards Soviet-style communism—constituted an unacceptable threat to the American way.

The cases of both, Gayn and Robinson, underline Masuda Hajimu's argument that "it would be a mistake to view the period between 1945 and 1950 simply as a prelude, a transitional period, leading to the era of the Cold War and McCarthyism."[130] With the GOP's bicameral victory and New Dealers' ouster in the midterm elections of 1946, at the very latest, the Cold War was on. Historians Wada Haruki, Gar Alperovitz, and Martin Sherwin, however, have long argued that the uranium bombing of Hiroshima and the later plutonium bombing of Nagasaki started the Cold War in August 1945. Three weeks prior, Truman's secretary of state had speculated that with the dropping of the A-bombs, Japan might "surrender before Russia goes into the war and this will save China"[131]—meaning that Manchuria and Korea would be occupied by the U.S.-backed, right-wing Guomindang regime (led by Chiang Kai-shek, aka Jiang Jieshi, in office 1928–1975), not by the Soviets. One of the ultimate goals in deploying the A-bombs was thus to hasten Japan's capitulation in order to deter Stalin and contain *the Soviets* in East Asia. The gradual Japanese attempts to negotiate surrender through the still-neutral USSR were intentionally ignored.[132] (Yet, the obliteration of two more medium-sized cities—two among many others—did not primarily prompt Japan's surrender; rather, it was Stalin's August 8 declaration of war and the rapid Soviet advance into Manchukuo.) The Korean War later solidified this new Cold War framework and empowered McCarthyism.

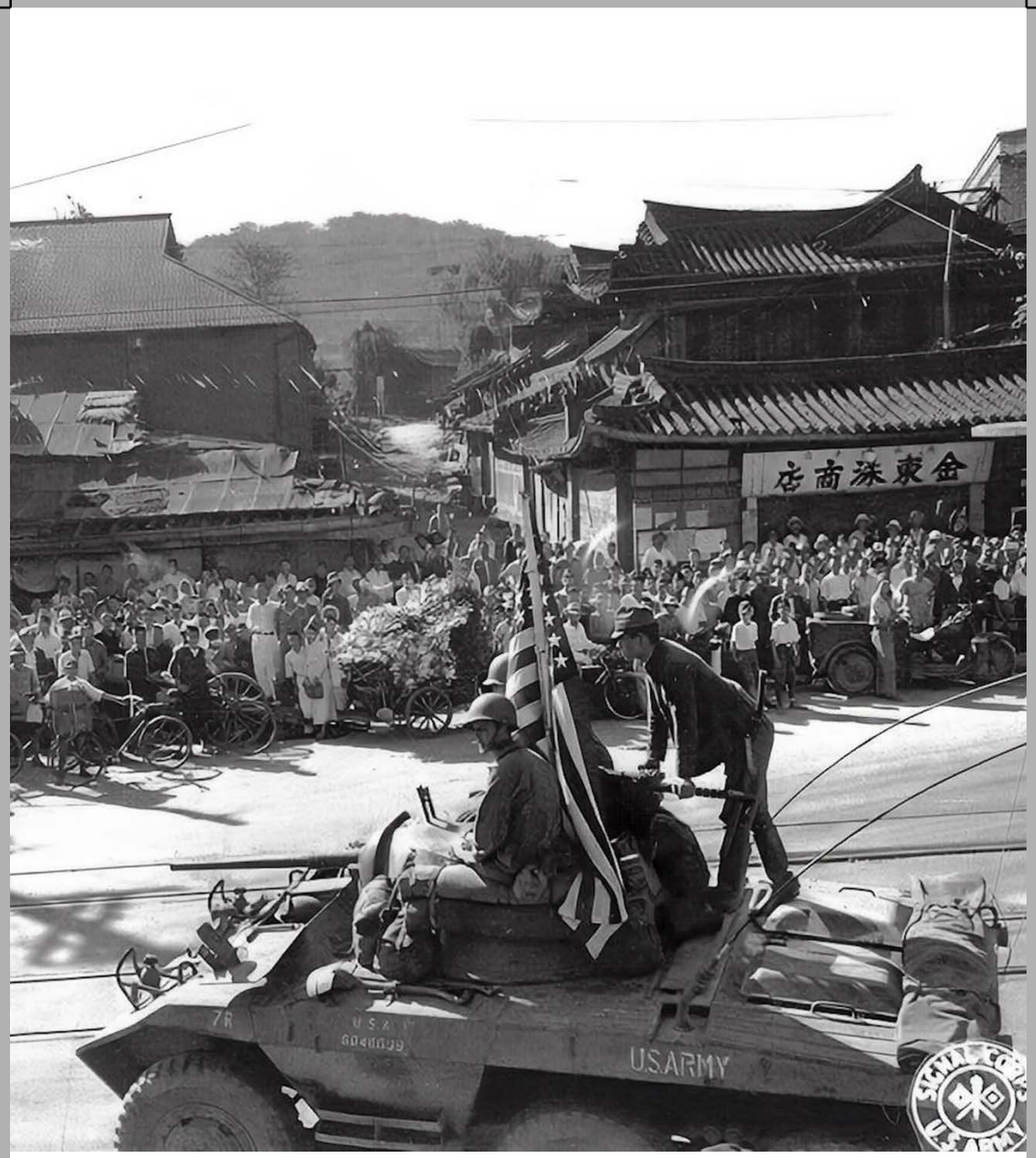
[130] Masuda Hajimu, *Cold War Crucible: The Korean Conflict and the Postwar World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015), 54.
[131] James F. Byrnes (on July 20, 1945), quoted in Michael Schaller, *The United States and China: Into the 21st Century*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 256.
[132] See "Magic" intercept of message from Japanese Foreign Minister Tōgō Shigenori (1882–1950) to Ambassaor Satō Naotake (1882–1971) in Moscow, "Magic"–Diplomatic Summary, War Department, Office of Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, no. 1204 (July 12, 1945), Top Secret Ultra, Record Group 457, "Magic" Diplomatic Summaries 1942–1945, Box 18, Records of the National Security Agency/Central Security Service.

Betrayal of a Nation

Richard D. Robinson

(Fig. 13) August 26, 1945, Koreans look on as Soviet troops parade through P'yŏngyang to disarm the Japanese Army and set up their administrative headquarters. The 25th Army had begun entering northern Korea on August 11, just four days before Japan declared its surrender, reaching P'yŏngyang on the 24th.

(Fig. 14) P'yŏngyang, July 1946, procession to celebrate the implementation of the new Labor Law. The vast, framed Kim Il Sung portrait and the meticulously orchestrated harmony in aesthetic and rhetoric of the banners epitomize the Stalinist project in Korea.



(Fig. 15) September 8, 1945, a U.S. Army M8 armored car enters Seoul, guided by a Japanese Army officer, his imposing *shin guntō* sword attached to his waist. After General Hodge's XXIV Corps had landed in Inch'ŏn, an American reconnaissance platoon under Lt. George Foley arrived in Seoul that same day. Four days prior, Brigadier General Charles S. Harris had arrived with another reconnaissance party at Kimp'o Airfield to prepare the formal surrender of all military forces in southern Korea. He had been instructed by Hodge that "Korea … was an enemy of the United States [and] therefore subject to the provisions and the terms of surrender." On top of this, Hodge had stipulated that "initially … the present [Japanese Colonial] Government of Korea will be recognized as the lawful Government." (Photo: Alexander Roberts)

(Fig. 16) Oil portraits of Stalin, British premier Clement Attlee, U.S. president Truman, and Chiang Kai-shek displayed on the wall of the Corean Association for the Progress of Fine Arts (Chosŏn Misul Kŏnsŏl Ponbu) in the fall of 1945. The short-lived art society—founded three days after Japan's surrender to the Allied Forces and dissolved on November 20, 1945—is emblematic of the weeks immediately following liberation. The association's program mandated political neutrality in an attempt to represent Korean culture of all political stripes, and its members included all the major modern Korean artists on the left and the right. Only some well-known pro-Japanese collaborators, such as Pae Un-sŏng (who had studied and lived in Berlin and Paris), were excluded. From October 20th to 29th, the society's headquarters held an *Art Exhibition for the Celebration of Independence and the Welcoming of the Allied Forces*. In the weeks that followed—particularly after the December 1945 Moscow Conference decision on "a four-power trusteeship of Korea for a period of up to five years" (p. 88)—the initial enthusiasm for their liberators vanished. Rightist artists like Ko Hŭi-dong quickly became politically engaged, supporting Syngman Rhee, while leftist artists formed their own groups.

(Fig. 17) Taegu, October 1, 1946, a general strike in protest of the U.S. military government's mismanagement of rice collections and its forceful suppression of the railroad strike then underway. Post office workers in sympathy with the railroad strikers demand the use of Korean language and the "Elimination of Japanese telegrams!" (Photo: Yi Yun-su)

(Fig. 18) Taegu, October 2, 1946, the 10.1 Taegu Uprising of 1946 in full swing. Police and demonstrators exchange fire in central Taegu while the U.S. Army supervises the mass arrests of protesters. The uprisings spread to the Chŏlla and Ch'ungch'ŏng provinces and to Cheju Island. 92 policemen and hundreds of civilians were killed. (Photo: Yi Yun-su)

(Fig. 19) Seoul, May 1946, the militant right-wing P'yŏngan Youth Association (P'yŏngan Ch'ŏngnyŏnhoe), a precursor to the Northwest Youth Association (Sŏbuk Ch'ŏngnyŏnhoe), mobilizes its youth to vandalize the offices of the communist *Haebang ilbo* newspaper.

(Fig. 20) Seoul Stadium, March 1, 1947. The March First Day rally is organized by the Korean Youth Party (Chosŏn Ch'ŏngnyŏndang). At lower right, members of the small paramilitary Founding Youth (Kŏnch'ŏng) display the group's fascist insignia: an eagle whose upper half resembles the Hitler Youth's eagle (itself modeled on the Nazi Party's *Parteiadler*) and whose lower part—a perched eagle clutching a fasces—echoes fascist Italy. The participants' white shirts symbolize traditional Korean culture but also link them to the fascist terrorist White Shirts Society (Paegŭisa), whose member An Tu-hŭi—while also an agent of the U.S. Army's Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC)—would later assassinate Kim Ku.

(Fig. 21) Seoul, March 1, 1947—"Nationalist forces, regarded with favor by China's Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek and the American State Department, clash with Korean communist elements who look to Soviet Russia for approval," commented the speaker for *Pathé News*, a British newsreel at the time, adding that "General MacArthur ... declared that the setting-up of an independent Korea was out of the question."

(Fig. 22) Seoul, June 14, 1947, Generals Hodge, Shtykov, and Lebedev convene at a Joint U.S.–Soviet Commission meeting. (Photo: Acme Newspictures)

Editorial Note

Richard D. Robinson's "Betrayal of a Nation" is published here for the first time in English. Robinson completed a first, more extensive draft in mid-1947. Right before leaving Korea with his wife, he burned that manuscript, fearing he would be searched and court-martialed by the U.S. Army. The text published here is an edited and annotated version of his rewritten, shorter manuscript which he generated immediately afterward, on his journey to Turkey, and which he then slightly revised between 1958 and January 1960, also adding one more chapter (ch. X).

We see this work as a mix of a history by a passionate advocate of social change and a primary source document by a critical U.S. Military Government and Military Intelligence insider and eyewitness. A publisher in 1947 or 1960 would certainly have done more heavy-handed editing than is seen here. But we were committed to a light editing approach, treating the original text as a unique, historical document of the post-World War II era. We thus left all antiquated terms, a few awkward constructions, and a bit of somewhat clumsy grammar in place. For the same reason we did not change Robinson's capitalization of "communist" and his explanation for it (p. 68). With very rare exception, our editing was limited to correcting obvious spelling and grammatical errors (of which there were plenty). We also either corrected and annotated or just annotated mistranslations of organization and political party names (mostly replacing these with more conventional renderings that are commonly used in academic works today). We further, with the usual exceptions, replaced all spellings of Korean and Chinese names and terms with transcriptions according to the McCune–Reischauer and Pinyin systems (Hanja can be found in the glossary) and added, if known, the dates for all mentioned persons in brackets.

Two figures Robinson refers to in his manuscript could not be identified with certainty and a third was too large to reproduce here. All three have been left out. All of Robinson's own footnotes are marked with an asterisk (*), while editor-added footnotes are indicated by Arabic numerals. To complement the text, we have added the ten preceding photographs and their captions (figs. 13–22).

The editors

Betrayal of a Nation

Richard D. Robinson

IN MEMORIAM

Dedicated to the memory of Yŏ Un-hyŏng, assassinated on July 19, 1947, in Seoul, Korea—the victim of tragically unenlightened American foreign policy. As a great liberal democrat championing the cause of his people, he fought totalitarianism and opportunism on both the right and left. And, for that reason, he died .....

"It has been the one song of those who thirst after absolute power that the interest of the state requires that its affairs should be conducted in secret. ... But the more such arguments disguise themselves under the mask of public welfare, the more oppressive is the slavery to which they will lead. ... Better that right counsels be known to enemies than that the evil secrets of tyrants should be concealed from the citizens. They who can treat secretly of the affairs of a nation have it absolutely under their authority; and as they plot against the enemy in time of war, so do they against the citizens in time of peace."

— Spinoza, *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*

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PREFACE
(1960)

The reader will not get many pages deep before he realizes that this book was written in the latter part of 1947. It was just after my wife and I had made a hurried exit from Korea aboard the ill-starred SS *Flying Enterprise* bound for Turkey that I was able to sit down and write out an account of those tragic first two years of the American occupation of South Korea. At that time there was virtually no interest in Korea among the American public, and precious little knowledge. (The alumni bulletin of a well-known New England college referred to Korea as an island off the coast of China!) Even those publishers who believed my story doubted that a book on Korea would sell. They were possibly right. So, after many futile attempts to peddle the manuscript, it was laid away to rest.

The war in 1950 generated great public interest in Korea, of course, but publication of such a book as this during those bitter years would have merely served to confuse issues and perhaps even to further the interests of the enemy. The manuscript remained on the shelf gathering dust. It was not until 1958, almost exactly eleven years after the volume's completion, that any further effort was made to find a publisher.

Very few changes have been made in the original text. The only major one has been the addition of the final chapter, felt necessary to bring the sequence of events within the compass of easy memory of the reader, specifically up to the outbreak of war in Korea in 1950. Too well known to bear repeating here is the ebb and flow of battle in the Korean War, the seemingly endless conference at P'anmunjŏm, President Rhee's [Yi Sŭng-man, aka Syngman Rhee, in office 1948–1960] attempted disruption of the conference by the release of 26,000 North Korean prisoners, the uneasy truce, and finally the liquidation of virtually all vocal opposition to President Rhee within South Korea.

The true significance of my story is the light that it may shed on these later events, a story which to this date has not been told to the American public.

Harvard University
January, 1960

Richard D. Robinson

INTRODUCTION
(1947)

> Those who find American public opinion responsible for Pearl Harbor accept an entirely false theory. Enlightened public opinion is based on accurate public information. The American people, if kept well informed of their real diplomatic position, do not need an incident to unite them. If foreign policy and diplomatic representations are treated as exclusive, secret information of the President and his advisors, public opinion will not be enlightened.
>
> — *Investigation of the Pearl Harbor Attack.*
> 79th Congress, Document Number 244

If the Pearl Harbor investigation proved nothing else, it proved that democracy is only so strong as the truth that is within the minds of men. During the years of World War II military necessity dictated that certain information be withheld from the public, even that of a diplomatic and political nature. Although this point of view apparently still

prevails in many official circles, and secret diplomacy remains very much in vogue, the argument as to the necessity of much of the secrecy is an exceedingly dubious one. In order for Congress to pursue an intelligent course through international despondency, it is essential that the public be much better informed than it is as to the machinations of American foreign policy in all parts of the world, whether that policy be right or wrong, victorious or defeated. This, our authorities make all too little effort to do. The result is an inaccurate press and a misinformed public, a dangerous state of affairs for a democracy. I would estimate, for instance, that of all the words written on the occupation of Korea (1945–1947), at least seventy-five percent were either outright fabrication or highly inaccurate. Congress, itself, obtained a dangerously warped story. It is with this thesis in mind that I write on the subject of Korea. In so doing, I admit to the use of a good deal of still classified information.

Some would call the stark truth in such matters a breach of faith an indication of weakness and disloyalty, even treason, but for myself, I prefer to call it a responsibility to the people of our republic, a responsibility which should be felt by all public servants who see things going awry within their bailiwicks. The American Military authorities in Korea ignored this responsibility. Accurate information relating to Korea was highly classified and not available for public consumption, in most instances for no valid military or security reason. Even the basic political policy document for Korea was stamped "top secret" and kept in a carefully guarded safe. Why? Apparently, the reason was to be found in the deep-seated fear that both our civilian and military authorities felt toward the public—perhaps for good reason; if our activities in South Korea had been reported accurately in the contemporary press, events—and people—might have been altered. But as it was, secrecy prevailed and the American press indulged in fantastic flights of fantasy in reporting events in Korea. These inaccurate press accounts were not without their international repercussions.

Almost any criticism leveled against the military authorities in Korea was considered treason by the powers-that-be. I myself heard Lieutenant General John R. Hodge [1893–1963], the commanding

general of the United States Army Forces in Korea (USAFIK),[1] say as much to his assembled staff. The policy was to hide everything in the guise of classified military information which could possibly be construed as critical. Mistakes were rarely admitted to anyone. The official American military history of the occupation, classified "secret" for the most part, was highly prejudiced and inaccurate. I should know; I wrote a good share of it. It told the story in half-truths only, for it was written upon explicit orders not even to imply criticism of anything American. One could rant and rave as much as he wished against the Soviet Union and her doings in North Korea, but not one word could he insert in the record indicating that the American Command in South Korea was anything other than perfect in word and deed. In other words, it is a propaganda document for the benefit—and misdirection—of future historians. If the truth were known, the American occupation of South Korea was incredibly bungled by an incompetent, and corrupt administration—all in the name of American democracy. The claim that the Soviet administration of North Korea was worse than the American regime in South Korea is a doubtful rebuttal, even if we stipulate the truth of the claim—which, I think, we may.

I write not as an outsider, but as one who worked for almost two years as a member of the American forces in Korea, first within the Department of Public Information in Military Government and then as a War Department historian for the occupation in the Intelligence Section of XXIV Corps Headquarters, the highest echelon of command in American-held South Korea. All significant documents pertaining to Soviet–American relations in Korea and to local political developments crossed my desk—from published materials to top secret intelligence reports. To the best of my knowledge, the following is the unbiased truth of what took place during the first two years of our occupation of South Korea.

[1] Hodge served as the commander of the occupying U.S. Armed Forces, while Major General Archibald V. Arnold (1889–1973) initially headed the U.S. Army Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK), followed by Archer L. Lerch (1894–1947), and finally William F. Dean (1899–1981). Outranking Arnold, Lerch, and Dean, Hodge appointed them to the highest political positions in occupied Korea. Yet, Hodge could not act independently either; he had to report to the higher-ranking General Douglas MacArthur (1880–1964), the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers in Tokyo.

The original of this book was several times the length of the present volume, nearly every statement being fully documented from indisputable sources. Unfortunately, General Hodge and his detachment of Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC) agents evidenced such obvious displeasure over this proposed revelation of American mistakes and misdeeds in Korea that the volume was burned to avoid personal incarceration. Would that I had had more courage. This present work is a reconstruction of the more complete version. Fortunately, I was able to take with me a file of the *Seoul Times*, an outspoken daily news sheet published in English in the Korean capital, a very complete day-by-day personal journal, and a few other documents.

The story told here is essentially that of two heroes and two villains playing on a congested stage in front of a most disconcerting audience. The two heroes are the two leading Korean liberal democratic leaders, Yŏ Un-hyŏng [aka Lyuh Woon Hyung, 1886–1947]—now dead—and Dr. Kim Kyu-sik [aka Kimm Kiusic, 1881–1950]; the villains, Communist* leader Pak Hŏn-yŏng [1900–1955] and extreme rightist Dr. Syngman Rhee. The unholy congestion on the stage is a myriad of lesser Korean politicos all clamoring for attention. And as for the audience—politically unconscious Koreans pack the main floor; Americans blink stupidly from the box seats; and hackling ill-mannered Russians hoot unmercifully from the galleries. Such was the occupation of South Korea as the play played on to its inevitably tragic finish.

Aboard U.S.S. *Flying Enterprise*
The Indian Ocean
September 8, 1947

Richard D. Robinson

* The word Communist is used in this book only to refer to Soviet-recognized Communist groups and individuals. It is not used in reference to independent leftists, even those holding Marxist convictions.

CHAPTER I:
THE BEGINNING

To paraphrase Kipling in the Korean vein, "North is North, and South is South, and never the twain shall meet." Without realizing the disaster which would follow in the wake of his pen, some poor befuddled strategist once drew a line across a map of Korea, that peninsula of 28 million people and 85,228 square miles* dangling down off the coast of northeast Asia between the Japan and Yellow Seas. The line he traced was the 38th parallel of North latitude. North of that border lay the domain of the Red Army, victorious over the Japanese after five days of crashing victories in a sweep down across Manchuria and the mountains of North Korea. By August 9, 1945 the Soviets were waiting impatiently along the 38th parallel for their American comrades to approach from the South. Well over a month elapsed before such a meeting was effected.

Men and Policy

Meanwhile, on Okinawa, "chaos reigned"—so read the official War Department history until General MacArthur's headquarters changed it. No thought whatsoever had been given to the occupation of Korea by American policy makers. Military Government personnel and Japanese linguists had been trained by the hundreds for the occupation of Japan, but the case of Korea had been virtually overlooked. Apparently, the War and State Departments ignored the fact that the occupation and administration of liberated Korea, a former Japanese colony, would require specially trained personnel. The Japanese had exploited the country thoroughly and relentlessly for nearly forty years. Few Koreans had held high positions in government or business, and those who had were *persona non grata* with the rest of the Korean population. Acceptable trained Korean personnel were few and far between.

* Slightly larger than Minnesota but with a population eleven times as great.

The Americans who finally formed the occupying force consisted of veteran combat soldiers of the XXIVth Corps headed by Lieutenant General John R. Hodge, a man of exemplary battle record but, as it developed, having little appreciation of the delicate domestic and international political situation in which Korea was enmeshed. Appended to this combat force as an afterthought were a few Military Government officers and men, sent out to the Pacific from their training center at Monterey, California.[2] These men had been trained specifically for the occupation of Japan. Many were Japanese linguists and had put in at least a year studying all things Japanese. A few of the more fortunate were told that they were going to Korea rather than to Japan prior to sailing from the States. Other shiploads were diverted from Japan at the last minute. These were our trained "experts" who arrived in Korea to guide the Korean people through the difficult years of readjustment. I was one of these "experts." More fortunate than most, I had known where I was going before leaving the United States and had had time to read one outdated book on Korea, the only volume I could find on the subject in the Monterey library. No orientation literature was available at the military government training school in Monterey.

General Hodge's political advisors were little better. He was assigned a third-rate State Department "expert" who was of little assistance.[3] At last, in desperation, the general picked a Navy commander,

[2] During the Pacific War, the U.S. military operated Japanese language training centers at various universities across the United States to train people in code-breaking and postwar occupation operations.

[3] Hodge's first political advisor was H. Merrill Benninghof (1904–1995), the son of Baptist missionaries in Japan. Benninghof spoke fluent Japanese and from the early 1930s had served as the U.S. Vice Consul in Yokohama. He later worked as a diplomat in the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo, until December 1941, when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. Bruce Cumings notes that although Benninghof was undervalued by many, as by Robinson, in fact he had an important role in the State Department from 1943 to 1945 in planning the U.S. Korea postwar policy. His tenure in Korea was short. Some time in 1946 he was transferred to Manila, where he served as Consul General, and later to Dairen, then under Soviet control, where he assumed the same role. Hodge's second political advisor was William R. Langdon (1891–1963). Langdon also spoke Japanese and had more experience due to his long diplomatic career in the Far East. He was named U.S. consul general in Seoul sometime in 1946.

the son of a former American missionary in Korea, as his advisor. The sole reason for the appointment was that the general had overheard him speaking Korean to a sidewalk vendor and reasoned that he must know something of Korea if he could speak the language. Unfortunately, many of the close Korean friends of American missionaries in Korea proved to be the well-dressed, English-speaking, wealthy, ultra-conservative business men—those who had contributed to the missions. Many of these men had made their fortunes during the Japanese regime and were considered as Japanese collaborators by the rest of the Korean populace. The political philosophy of the newly found political advisor was simple: everyone was fer or ag'n the status quo, and those who were ag'in it were Communists. He was quoted around XXIVth Corps headquarters as having referred to President Truman [in office 1945–1953] on one occasion as a blankety-blank Communist. This was the man who introduced General Hodge to Korean politics.[4]

[4] Robinson is undoubtedly referring to George Zur Williams (aka U Kwang-bok, 1907–1994), who was, aside from Harvard-educated Yi Myo-muk (aka Myo-Mook Lee, 1902–1957), immensely influential in the very early days of the U.S. occupation period. Back in 1945, one of Robinson's colleagues described Williams as "a little condescending and rather intolerant of opposition" (p. 140). The young man had grown up in Korea as the son of Frank E. C. Williams (1883–1962), a Methodist missionary and the founder of a Christian school in Kongju. He then completed high school and medical school in Colorado. During the war Williams served as a medical officer with the rank of lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Navy. He was the military surgeon of the fleet commander who transported Army units under Lieutenant General Hodge to Korea. The well-known political scientist Chong-Sik Lee (aka Yi Chŏng-sik, 1931–2021), formerly at the University of Pennsylvania, interviewed Williams in 1988. Yi reports that "on the day Lieutenant General Hodge landed in Inch'ŏn on September 8, he accidentally discovered Korean-speaking Navy Lieutenant Colonel Williams at the Inch'ŏn pier and immediately appointed him as his special assistant" (p. 319). So, indeed, Williams was Hodge's and Arnold's right-hand man for all things Korean from day one. He spoke Korean fluently and was close to many prominent Koreans. The only others Hodge had at his fingertips were Americans who spoke broken Japanese, like Robinson, and second-generation Japanese Americans. Williams stayed in Korea for only a few months, but during these months he created what many Koreans at the time referred to as the "interpreters' government" (*t'ongyŏkkwan chŏngbu*), a power network with a mafia structure. With the blessing of Hodge and Arnold, he helped over 50, mostly ultraconservative second-generation American missionaries into USAMGIK advisory positions, along with some first-generation ones like his own father. On top of that he and Yi Myo-muk arranged for fascists and extreme right-wing Koreans

And what of the policy for Korea, you say? There was none. It was known that the American forces would accept the surrender of Japanese forces south of 38th degrees North Latitude and evacuate Allied prisoners of war. Beyond that, no one knew anything, least of all General Hodge and his staff. Later it turned out that the War and State Departments knew little more, and what little they did know they failed to pass on to those in Korea responsible for implementing the policy. Let us review for a moment.

The first indication the Korean people had that their desires were being considered by the Great Powers was at the Cairo Conference in November 1943. The so-called Cairo Declaration, to which Great Britain, China, and the United States were signatories, stated, "The aforesaid three great powers, mindful of the enslavement of the people of Korea, are determined that in due course Korea shall become free and independent." This was sufficiently vague so as to be subject to diverse interpretations. The Korean people chose to interpret it as promising independence shortly after the end of war in the Pacific—perhaps a few days after—and on that basis they renewed their campaign of non-cooperation with their Japanese masters. Actually, the Cairo Declaration without a Soviet stamp of approval was like a check that required the signature of a fourth partner before becoming valid. That endorsement was forthcoming at the Potsdam Conference in the summer of 1945 when the Soviet Union gave its unqualified approval to the Cairo Declaration.[5]

to get positions of power, such as chief of police. And it was again Williams who, after having travelled through the countryside to interview many Koreans, had advised Hodge to bring back Syngman Rhee as a political leader. See "Interview with Commander Williams, Special Assistant to General Arnold" (October 13, 1945), in *Haebang chikhu chŏngch'i sahoesa charyojip, 1: Yaksayu (1)* [Collection of political and social materials from the immediate post-liberation period, vol. 1: An outline history (1)], comp. Chŏng Yong-uk (Seoul: Tarakpang, 1994), 137–40; Yi Chŏng-sik, *Taehan Min'gugŭi kiwŏn: haebang chŏnhu hanbando kukche chŏngsewa minjok chidoja 4-inŭi chŏngch'ijŏk kwejŏk* [The origins of the Republic of Korea: The international situation on the Korean peninsula before and after liberation and the political trajectory of four national leaders] (Seoul: Ilchogak, 2006), 319–21. See also Harold Sugg, "Watch Korea," *Harper's Magazine* 194, no. 1160 (January 1947): 40–41.

[5] Stalin gave his consent to the Declaration during his subsequent meetings with Roosevelt and Winston Churchill in Teheran the following week.

This was the only real statement of policy General Hodge had in his possession when he received word on August 10, 1945, that he was to direct the occupation of South Korea. At that time, General MacArthur's headquarters erroneously notified him that the occupation of Korea was to be a four-power affair (Great Britain, China, USSR, and the US). It was known, however, that the United States would accept the surrender of Japanese military and naval forces south of 38 degrees North Latitude as the Soviets had already done to the north. Just what the occupation zones for the other powers would be was not known by MacArthur's headquarters, and for good reason; they were to have none.

The 38th Parallel

The quest on of the 38th parallel presented an enigma from the beginning. At the outset it seemed to be merely a tactical demarcation between the Soviet and American forces. In repeated statements designed to dispel suspicions in the Korean mind that all was not quite on the level, MacArthur, Hodge, and Military Government authorities declared that the division of Korea had been determined just prior to the end of the war for purely military reasons. However, as months passed and the 38th parallel increasingly took on an alarming semblance to an international frontier, the Korean public began to speculate. It was known that in the late 1880's, when the Japanese were fearful of expanding Russian influence on the Korean peninsula, the Japanese had proposed to the Russians that Korea be divided at the *39th* parallel into two spheres of influence, the northern part to be exclusively Russia's and the southern, Japan's. The Russians refused the offer, and in 1896 an agreement was reached between the two powers which specified that both parties would respect the independence of Korea and help in the task of rehabilitating the country. The suggestion that Korea be divided into two spheres of influence at the 39th parallel was apparently put forward again sometime just prior to the Russo–Japanese War of 1904–05, but this time by the Russians. However, the Japanese war lords were no longer interested in dividing the spoils. They had visions of seizing all of Korea for themselves, visions which culminated in the Russo–Japanese War from which, much to the

amazement of the Western world, the Nipponese emerged victorious. Soon after this, in 1910 (aptly called the "year of snakes" in the Korean calendar), the Japanese coerced the Korean king into signing a treaty of annexation with Japan which made Korea a part of the Japanese Empire.[6]

It was little wonder, then, that when Korea was divided at the 38th parallel in 1945 older Koreans began remembering this earlier proposed division of Korea along a line of latitude only one degree north of the present division at the 38th. Some began wondering if some secret agreement had not in fact been reached among the Great Powers which provided that North Korea would either become Soviet property or be placed firmly within the Soviet orbit of influence. Dr. Syngman Rhee, Washington representative of the Korean Provisional Government in exile, publicly accused the Allies of awarding all of Korea to the Soviet Union by secret agreement when Korea was not invited to participate in the UNO charter session in San Francisco in the spring of 1945. The suspicion that Russia was to have at least the northern half of the country remained very much alive in the minds of the Korean people and continued to harass the occupation authorities. Alternately, the Yalta and Potsdam Conferences were cited as the locale of a secret agreement to this effect.

Actually, there was considerable reason to believe that the division of Korea originated with the Yalta Conference of February 1945. At that time the Soviet Union specified her willingness to join in the war against Japan,[7] the date being set for her entry at three months after V-E Day. The division of Korea was envisioned solely as a tactical delineation between American and Soviet forces in the event that a large-scale land battle had to be fought on the Asiatic mainland against

[6] Although the national seal was affixed to the annexation treaty, Emperor Sunjong (in office 1907–1910) declined to sign the document in person, as requested by Japan in order to meet modern international treaty standards. Sunjung's name was instead added by Prime Minister Yi Wan-yong (1858–1926), whose name thereafter became synonymous with traitor and collaborator in Korean historiography. Since Korea had already lost its diplomatic sovereignty under the forced Japan–Korea Treaty of 1905, the drafting of the consequential annexation treaty was completely in Japanese hands in any case.

[7] Stalin first mentioned this to Secretary of State Cordell Hull (1871–1955) at a conference of Foreign Ministers held in Moscow in October 1943.

the Japanese. Just why the 38th parallel was chosen as the division was open to speculation. The strange thing about it was that no one seems to know. The most likely story came from a high State Department official in Korea to the effect that the partition at the 38th originated from a longstanding American–Soviet agreement governing the movement of submarines in adjacent waters, American boats not being allowed north of the 38th parallel either in the Sea of Japan or the Yellow Sea. Thus, the present division of Korea was merely a land extension of this previously-established operational line.[8]

According to the same State Department official, there was a distinct possibility that there was no definite agreement at all as to the partitioning of Korea until just prior to the formal surrender of Japan, at which time the United States was planning to occupy all of Korea. It was calculated by army strategists that three large landing forces would be necessary for such an operation in view of the sizable Japanese military establishment in Korea. Originally, the Tenth Army under Lieutenant General Joseph W. Stilwell [1883–1946] had been assigned the task. However, by reason of MacArthur's requirements for the occupation of Japan, the necessary shipping for the movement of an army to Korea was not available. This shortage of shipping necessitated a rapid change of plans, and MacArthur, over a strenuous objection from Secretary of State Byrnes[9] telephoned from Washington, suggested to the Soviet military authorities that they occupy Korea north of the 38th. The Russians readily fell in with the idea. Apparently, this agreement was reached by telephone, and no records were existent. The reader now knows all—I repeat all—the information on the subject known to the highest officials in Korea in 1945–1947. At best, it was speculation. In any event, it is safe to say that the partitioning of

[8] Today we know that the plan to divide the Korean Peninsula at the 38th parallel was initially proposed by the U.S. and then accepted by Stalin. Two young officers—Colonels Dean Rusk and Charles Bonesteel—suggested this line of division during a short discussion at a State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee session just days before the Japanese Emperor's August 15 surrender broadcast. They were aware that Soviet troops were preparing to enter the peninsula and could soon occupy all of Korea, while American troops would take several weeks to get there. The main U.S. objective was to keep Seoul in the American zone. The 38th parallel, dividing Korea in almost equal zones of occupation, was thus the best result the U.S. could hope for.

[9] James F. Byrnes (1882–1972).

Korea was not envisioned originally as anything other than a mere tactical delineation between the Soviet and American troops, such division to be dissolved by mutual action soon after the occupation of the country had been completed. (Suffice to point out that after fourteen years, the frontier at the 38th parallel remains.[10])

It has been mentioned that originally Stilwell was to direct the Korean occupation, but that the XXIVth Corps was finally assigned the job rather than the Tenth Army. The shipping shortage was a factor in this decision, but it may not have been controlling. When it became known that Stilwell was to go to Korea, Chiang Kai-shek [Jiang Jieshi, in office 1928–1975] was reported to have objected violently to the idea. Chiang dispatched a letter to MacArthur saying in essence that if Stilwell were assigned to direct the Korean occupation, he (Chiang) would make it as rough for him as he could. Apparently, Stilwell was not considered as being sufficiently in love with the Guomindang [aka Kuomintang, Chinese Nationalist Party] to be trusted in Korea, China's eastern flank.[11] Since the days when the Dragon Throne demanded annual tribute from the Korean kingdom, China had watched affairs in Korea with a jaundiced eye. As of 1945, an unfriendly Korea would have substantially added to the worries of Chiang's government.

The Fog of War

The fog of war hung heavy as the Americans started for Korea in late August 1945. Even as the XXIVth Corps began its movement from

[10] With the Korean War coming to a halt through an armistice in 1953, the warring sides adjusted the 38th parallel slightly to create a Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) that separated, and continues to separate, North and South Korea.

[11] Chiang voiced his objections regarding Stilwell in an August 2, 1945, aide-mémoire that he submitted to Ambassador Patrick J. Hurley (1883–1963), who quickly forwarded it on to Washington (*Foreign Relations of the United States*, vol. VII, *The Far East: China*, 144–45). This was the second time Chiang had intervened to replace Stilwell, who objected to the Chinese leader's dictatorial and brutalizing methods. In response, Chiang had sent complaints to Roosevelt and, later, to Truman. In October 1944 Roosevelt had Stilwell replaced by General Albert C. Wedemeyer (1896–1989) as the commander of all U.S. forces in China. But Stilwell, in his new position as commander of the Tenth Army stationed on Okinawa, as announced on August 11 and laid out in the plan for Operation Blacklist, was now to occupy Korea. A few days later Truman ordered MacArthur to send someone else. The choice fell on Hodge.

Okinawa to Korea, General Hodge was inquiring of MacArthur's headquarters where the Russians were. He was promptly informed that no one knew precisely, but there was a distinct possibility that Soviet forces had moved southward across the 38th parallel and occupied Seoul, the capital city of Korea. The American forces were instructed further by MacArthur that, in the event Soviet troops were in fact found occupying the Seoul area, the landing should be delayed until contact could be made with the local Soviet commander. If an international incident appeared possible from an American landing, the matter was to be referred back to the Supreme Commander.

The first contingent of Americans to set foot on Korea was a small advance party which flew in about September 1 to make arrangements for the surrender ceremony, the location of XXIVth Corps headquarters, and kindred matters. The choice of personnel for this party was an unfortunate one. No sooner had the group arrived than it took over a suite of rooms in the Chosun Hotel[12] in Seoul—the largest and plushiest hotel in Korea—and threw a big party for ranking Japanese military and government officials. Koreans who approached the Americans to discuss their plight were summarily shown the door with a minimum of courtesy. The affair turned into a glorious drunken brawl with the Japanese, which lasted for several days. The episode did little to get Korean–American relations off to a good start.

On September 8, 1945, the main body of the American occupying forces landed on the sticky mud bank fronting the city of Inch'ŏn, the major west coast port in the American zone and the seaport of Seoul. In spite of the many reports from Japanese sources that Seoul had been occupied by the Russians, no Soviet forces were found and the landing proceeded on schedule. The following day, the 9th, General Hodge and his staff landed and drove triumphantly into Seoul to accept the formal surrender of the Japanese military and naval commanders in the Throne Room of the pretentious Capital Building.[13] At 4 PM the 36-

[12] Located in Sogong-dong, central Seoul, near the current Lotte Hotel; following liberation, the hotel's English name, "Chosen Hotel," was Koreanized to "Chosun Hotel" (with a 'u'). It was officially renamed as such in 1949 and is now called the Westin Chosun Hotel.

[13] The Capital Building—the former Japanese colonial Government-General

year-old Japanese rule of Korea was at an end. A few words, the stroke of a pen, and a nation was reborn—at least, so thought the Korean people on that jubilant autumn day. The Americans were greeted as heroes.

Those first few days everyone was engaged busily in trying to get his bearings. American intelligence officers were frantically gleaning information about the country, elementary information which should have been given to General Hodge well in advance of his landing in Korea. Delay and doubt ensued. Japanese officials were kept momentarily in office.[14] Trained American personnel were not readily available to take over the direct administration of government, and trained Korean personnel were not readily available. At the same time, the Korean and American press was clamoring for immediate evacuation of the Japanese from Korea. To have given way to such pressure would have meant plunging Korea into immediate chaos. To prove the evil intent of General Hodge, one over-zealous American newspaper correspondent quoted the general as having told his troops prior to landing in Korea that Koreans were the "same breed of cat" as the Japanese. What the correspondent failed to say was that the general was referring only to those Koreans who had collaborated voluntarily with the Japanese in selling their countrymen down the river. This alleged remark by the general renewed the clamor for the immediate removal of all Japanese from official positions. On September 18, President

Building—was built from 1916 to 1926 in German Neoclassical style. Much of Kyŏngbokkung Palace was demolished to make way for the construction of this new building, which served as headquarters of the country's colonial administration. After Korea's liberation the building was first used by U.S. occupying forces, then by the Korean government as the first seat of the National Assembly, and was finally converted into South Korea's National Museum. Then, to commemorate the 50th anniversary of liberation in 1995, the South Korean government had the Capital Building torn down to reconstruct demolished parts of the Kyŏngbokkung.

[14] General Douglas MacArthur declared this in his Proclamation No. 1, issued on September 7, 1945. Article II ordered all personnel to remain at their posts; see "Proclamation No. 1 by General of the Army Douglas MacArthur" (September 7, 1945), in *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers 1945*, comp. United States Department of State, vol. VI, The British Commonwealth, The Far East (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1969), 1043. That basically kept the former colonial structure and all the Japanese government officials in place.

Truman stated: "Such Japanese as may be temporarily retained are being utilized as servants of the Korean people and of our occupying forces only because they are deemed essential by reason of their technical qualifications."[15] The statement did little to quell the mounting criticism. MacArthur soon ordered the American Command in Korea to replace all Japanese in government positions as rapidly as possible "consistent with the safety of operations." By the end of January 1946, after five months of occupation, only 60 of the original 70,000 Japanese administrators remained.[16]

While this wholesale governmental reorganization was going on, the political life of the Korean people, pent up for at least forty years, burst forth in a frenzy of activity. General Hodge commented on September 11, 1945 that the situation was "chaotic, with no central theme except a desire for immediate independence." That this was not quite accurate is indicated in the following chapter. Three days after his landing in Korea, the general, in a laudable effort to calm the populace and at the same time secure much needed intelligence as to political organization and leadership, called a meeting of representatives of all political parties. In part the general said:

> I am a man of the people, born on a farm in the United States. I fought in World War I, and have led troops in the Pacific at New Guinea, on Leyte, in the Philippines and on Okinawa. I tell you this so that you may know where my sympathies are in this nation's disputes.

[15] It was actually Dean Acheson (1893–1971) who penned Truman's September 18 statement four days earlier: Dean Acheson, "Memorandum by the Acting Secretary of State to President Truman; Annex: Draft Statement Prepared for President Truman" (September 14, 1945), *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, 1945*, vol. VI, *The British Commonwealth, the Far East* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1969), 1048; full text, 1048–49.

[16] The "Removal" bulletins issued by the Office of the Military Governor provide a listing of those Japanese government employees and advisers in higher positions. The first Japanese to be released of his duties was the Governor of Kyŏngsangnamdo on September 28, 1945 ("Removal Number 2"). With the exception of a former museum director who stayed longer (see p. 300, footnote 94), the process took seven months. The last five Japanese advisers were released on April 30, 1946 ("Removal Number 83"). See Headquarters United States Army Military Government in Korea, Office of the Military Governor, "Removals," reprinted in *Migunjŏng ch'ŏng kwanbo / Official Gazette, United States Army Military Government in Korea*, vol. 2 (Seoul: Wŏnju Munhwasa, 1991), 266–497, especially 266 and 462.

> The Cairo Conference promised Korea independence "in due course." That means that when Korea shows that she is able, she will become self-governing. That cannot be accomplished in one day, or two days, or a few weeks. It will take some time.
>
> If too soon, it will result in a breakdown in the nation. And that is not what you want.
>
> I want you to take back to your groups the counsel of faith. ... young people of all nations like to go out into the streets and march. But the enthusiasm of parades is often misunderstood. I ask you to keep down your demonstrations in number and size. . . . The best demonstration is that of good citizens working at their tasks.

In concluding his speech, the general announced that he planned to interview personally all of the major political leaders. He likewise asked that all parties turn in written statements as to their platforms so that he could ascertain their wishes. So far so good on the domestic front.

Meeting the Russians

Meanwhile, the Americans had established contact with the Soviet Command in North Korea, the 25th Soviet Army with headquarters in the city of P'yŏngyang. This army was a subordinate unit of the Soviet 1st Far Eastern Front just as the American XXIVth Corps was subordinate to General MacArthur's headquarters or, as it was officially known, SCAP (Supreme Commander, Allied Forces in the Pacific[17]). The initial contact which the Americans made with the Soviets in Korea was with the Soviet consul-general, Alexander S. Poliansky [1903–?], and his staff in Seoul.[18] Curiously enough, the Soviet Consulate had been allowed by the Japanese to function all during the war apparently with little interference or restriction. There was some suggestion that the consulate had engaged in subversive activities against the Americans in these early days and had distributed Communist literature. But, the basis for that charge was very insecure, the source of the information being Japanese intelligence reports.

[17] Also understood to stand for Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers.
[18] Poliansky, his family, and his staff of diplomats spent the entirety of World War II in Seoul.

Poliansky's first request of the Americans was to fly to Japan to replenish his funds from the Soviet Embassy in Tokyo. The request was granted, as were likewise subsequent requests for permission for other official trips to Japan and North Korea. Later, in the spring of 1947, the Soviet Consulate in Seoul was ordered closed by the American Command following a refusal by the Soviet Government to allow the United States to establish an American Consulate in P'yŏngyang.

Before the American landing at Inch'ŏn, there had been recurrent rumors to the effect that the Russians had moved with force into areas south of the 38th parallel, possibly even into Seoul itself. However, it soon developed that the Russians were not in Seoul—nor had they ever been there—but that they had in fact entered some South Korean towns lying closer to the 38th parallel. One such place was Kaesŏng, Korea's ancient capital, which was first occupied by American troops late in September 1945. Upon arrival there, the Americans found individual Russians wandering about but no units. By questioning the inhabitants, U.S. Intelligence ascertained that prior to the arrival of the Americans there had been quite a number of Russians in the town and considerable looting had taken place—probably no worse, one hastens to add, than the looting by American troops in other places. The few Russians still in the town were politely but firmly asked to get back on their own side of the fence. The town was cleared without incident.

American newspaper correspondents followed the movement to the border like hounds on a scent. Although warned by army public relations officers, according to Richard Johnston [1910–1986] of the *New York Times*, that the Russians were "hostile," a group of American correspondents made a foray north of the 38th from Kaesŏng on the same day the Americans first arrived in the town. By all reports, the Russians received them with open arms and cries of "Amerikanskiy tovarishch" [American comrade]. A gay night was had by all. The following evening groups of Russians began appearing at the roadblock which the Americans had established the previous day just north of Kaesŏng. The Soviets could not understand why the Americans refused them a welcome after they had given the American press such a big party the night before. However, they were turned away without incident.

As the Americans occupied one frontier town after the other along the 200-mile frontier, it was found that the Russians had established some eighteen or twenty border outposts. Each was manned by at least a squad of Russian soldiers heavily armed with tommy guns. All movement across the border had been stopped with the exception of those Koreans on foot who managed to bypass the Russian guards under cover of night or by circling through the mountains. It was though a tourniquet that had been applied around the collective Korean neck. Food from the agricultural south could not be used to feed the hungry in the north, and coal and manufactured products of the industrial north could not be brought south to ease the lot of the shivering people of South Korea. The economy of Korea was amazingly well balanced if it could but operate as a unit. But with nothing moving across the 38th parallel, the life blood of the country was effectively choked off and everything thrown out of kilter. This was what the closing of the 38th parallel meant to the people of Korea. For that, the Russians can be blamed, for from the beginning the American Command was ready and willing to open up the border for commerce and travel.

As a matter of fact, within a few days after the American landing in South Korea, General Hodge requested of Poliansky, the Soviet consul in Seoul, that he forward to the Soviet Commander in North Korea, Lieutenant General Chistyakov[19] [1900–1979], a suggestion that liaison officers be exchanged between the two commands in order to expedite negotiations toward the end of effecting an early union of North and South Korea. Chistyakov acceded. Forthwith, liaison detachments were exchanged. No sooner done than the Soviet Commander notified the American Command that the exchange of liaison officers had been premature and that no inter-command negotiations could be carried out until agreement had been reached by their respective governments. For this reason, the Russians were precipitously withdrawn from Seoul, and it was strongly implied that a reciprocal withdrawal of the American officers from P'yŏngyang would be desirable under the circumstances. The desire was complied with. This sudden termination was frustrating to General Hodge who had envisioned the rapid unification of Korea on a local level. Obviously, the Russians

[19] Ivan Mikhailovich Chistyakov.

intended to settle nothing on a local level until so directed from Moscow. Those directions were not forthcoming until after the Moscow Conference of the Big Three Foreign Ministers of the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union in December 1945.[20]

On the Frontier

When the Soviet liaison officers had first arrived in XXIVth Corps headquarters early in October, they brought with them a strongly-worded protest from the Soviet Command on the subject of alleged violations of the 38th parallel by American aircraft. The security-conscious Russians were nervous about American planes flying over them and continued to be so. Protest after protest came in from the Soviet Command citing alleged violations committed by American aircraft. Again and again it was explained to the Russians that many of the American pilots had never flown into Seoul before and that the Seoul airfield was so close to the 38th parallel that a slight error in navigation put the planes over North Korea. Apparently, the Russians were suspicious of these "lost" American planes, and as a matter of fact they had good reason to be so in some cases. Some of them were reconnoitering intentionally just as were Russian planes over South Korea. The Americans were slow to object, but when a Soviet plane crash landed south of Kaesŏng, a city lying just south of the parallel but well within the American zone, the American Command retaliated in kind and initiated a letter to the Russians protesting the violation of the parallel and inquiring as to why the plane had been over South Korean territory. A mistake in navigation was the explanation, and shortly thereafter permission was given to tow the smashed plane north across the border.

[20] The Moscow Conference of the Big Three Foreign Ministers (December 16–26, 1945) brought the foreign ministers of the United States, Soviet Union, and Great Britain together to decide on issues pending from the recently concluded war. For Korea the ministers established a plan to form a Joint Commission to determine which democratic political parties and social organizations to consult with and how to form a united Korean provisional government, followed by a permanent government. This plan, entailing a period of trusteeship, came to evoke massive opposition among large segments of the population in Korea.

So it was that the pattern was set. Every petty infraction of the 38th parallel occasioned an exchange of letters between the Soviet and American generals. The entire occupation was punctuated by caustic letters flowing back and forth across the border citing violations by one party or the other. Most of these violations were so petty that they smacked of the ridiculous. For instance, a North Korean policeman came south and stole a South Korean cow. This act started a whole chain of events which finally led to an exchange of letters between the two generals. It was General Hodge's idea that local commanders along the border, both American and Soviet, should be delegated sufficient authority to negotiate local differences on the ground; for instance, disputes about the exact location of the 38th parallel, the return of the South Korean's cow, and the like. Furthermore, the general envisioned sort of a neutral zone between the two commands instead of an exactly fixed line. But, such was not to be the case. The Russian Command was loath to delegate such weighty responsibilities to local commanders, nor could it accept the idea of a neutral zone when Moscow had directed that it should occupy North Korea south to the 38th parallel. That meant an exact line and not a vague neutral zone.

As a matter of fact, this exact demarcation of the 38th parallel gave both commands considerable trouble. It was only in 1947 that the 38th parallel was accurately surveyed and marked by a joint Soviet-American survey group. Before that time, countless disputes arose as to whether a particular spot was north or south of the all-important invisible line. In the first place, the American and Russian maps differed as to its exact location. There was the port of Yŏngdŭngp'o located on a minute point of land northwest of Seoul. Like the much larger Ongjin Peninsula to the west, the point of land on which Yŏngdŭngp'o lay was bisected by the 38th parallel so that it could be reached only by water or by transgressing on Soviet-controlled territory—at least, so it appeared on American maps. However, when a detachment of American troops attempted to land at the town in October 1945, the Russians shooed them away on the ground that their maps showed the port to be north of the parallel and thus within their zone of occupation. The Americans withdrew, and General Hodge considered the matter so trivial as not to merit further debate.

A slightly different situation arose in the case of the Ongjin Peninsula. This piece of land likewise situated northwest of Seoul, projected southward from the Korean coast in such a way that it was severed from the mainland by the 38th parallel. To reach it by land from the American zone, one had to trespass in North Korea or go by water. As soon as this was ascertained, the American Command requested permission to use a road through North Korea for purposes of supplying the detachment of American troops stationed on the peninsula. After considerable delay, permission was forthcoming to so use the road three days a week at a specified hour. Russian guards would convoy the Americans back and forth. And that was the way it was done.

The Moscow Conference

At an early date it became painfully obvious to all concerned that the Russians were in no hurry to unify the country or negotiate anything on a local level. Perhaps they were motivated by a deep-seated suspicion of American intentions in Korea, the backdoor stoop of the Soviet Union. In any event, the Russian Command refused to accept any American sponsored overtures to negotiate. In December 1945, the matter of Korea was referred to the Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers, participated in by Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and the United States.

It was not until the Moscow Conference was actually sitting that anyone in Korea knew that the subject of Korea was definitely on the agenda. The decision on Korea was awaited with baited breath. The word trusteeship, the same word under which the Japanese had launched their hated regime in 1910,[21] was heard frequently. Korean

[21] Rather, Koreans were reminded of the year 1905, when Japan turned Korea—assisted by the U.S. through the Taft–Katsura Agreement—into a protectorate (*pohoguk*, Jap. *hogokoku*). A survey of newspapers and magazines from the fall of 1945 removes any doubt that a majority of Koreans, both left and right, directly associated the term *sint'ak t'ongch'i* USAMGIK used to translate "trusteeship" with *pohoguk*, protectorate. More tactful Soviets and Koreans north of the 38th parallel, on the other hand, used the gentler Russian term *opeka* (*опека*) or the Korean word *hugyŏn*—both meaning guardianship—for the very same thing, while reserving the imperialistic sounding *sint'ak t'ongch'i* to reference the U.S. and later the UN in southern Korea.

politicians without exception began muttering, and General Hodge warned our State Department repeatedly against the use of the word and advised against the whole idea of a trusteeship. On December 26, an unconfirmed report came in that the Soviet Union had insisted on a trusteeship for Korea, and the United States, on immediate independence. By December 28, it was known in Korea that the Moscow Conference had risen and the official communique or some explanation would soon be forthcoming. American personnel were cautioned against discussing the Moscow Decision until its official text had been received.

It was not until December 29, three days after the Moscow Conference, that the official communique was finally in the general's hands, and then it was too late. No amount of explaining was going to stop the rumblings of discontent sweeping the country. Late on the afternoon of December 29 General Hodge held a dramatic conference with the Korean press in which he attempted to explain away the trusteeship clause. He announced, in essence, that within two weeks the Soviet and American authorities would set up a joint commission. This commission would in turn assist in establishing a provisional democratic Korean Government. This Korean Government, according to General Hodge, could then decide for itself whether or not it wished continued assistance from the Allies in the form of technical advisors and law enforcing troops, but such assistance was not to exceed five years in any event. This, announced the general, had been wrongly termed a "trusteeship." It was further indicated that if the provisional Korean Government so desired, all Allied forces would be withdrawn and the sovereignty of Korea recognized without delay.[22] Up to this point Hodge had been given no hint that the United States had reached an understanding with the Soviet Union on the subject of a Korean trusteeship, not only at the recently-adjourned conference in Moscow, but before that at Yalta.

Unknown to anyone concerned with the initial occupation of Korea, the two Allies had agreed informally early in 1945 at Yalta that a trusteeship should be established over Korea while it was being prepared for assuming the status of an independent democratic nation.

[22] Part of the Hodge speech is quoted in Caprio's essay in this volume, 448–49.

Such a period of foreign tutelage was obviously necessary in the face of the acute lack of trained Korean political, administrative, business, professional, and technical personnel, Japanese having filled most of these posts for almost two generations. Moreover, the Korean economy was that of a much-exploited colony geared directly to Japan's war effort. It would have to be reorganized from stem to stern if it were to be divorced from Japan and stand alone. For these reasons, President Roosevelt [in office 1933–1945] and Marshal Stalin [in office 1941–1953] had reached an understanding on the subject. It was known that on one occasion, at the Cairo Conference in 1943, the subject was broached informally by the United States to Generalissimo Chiang, and his concurrence was secured.[23] That these negotiations had taken place was unknown to War and State Department officials in Korea until well after the Moscow Conference of December 1945. In the meantime, the American Command in South Korea caused itself considerable embarrassment by unknowingly issuing statements contrary to the actual fact.

In the text of the Moscow Decision on Korea, given in full below, the actual word "trusteeship" is mentioned only twice.

> 1. With a view to the re-establishment of Korea as an independent state, the creation of conditions for developing the country on democratic principles and the earliest possible liquidation of the disastrous results of the protracted Japanese domination in Korea, there shall be set up a provisional Korean democratic government which shall take all the

[23] Research by Xiaoyuan Liu, who also examined Chinese records on the Cairo Conference, suggests that Chiang and Roosevelt most likely harbored strong differences over the idea of trusteeship for Korea's future after liberation. Roosevelt had seemingly entered the November 23, 1943 meeting expecting Chiang's support on trusteeship, while the Chinese leader supported the idea of Korea's immediate independence after the war. The following passage, taken from the Chinese log, is vague over whether the two sides actually agreed to such a plan: "[The two leaders agreed that] Korea should be granted its independence after Japan's defeat. ... As for the method of helping Korea achieve freedom and independence, the two sides had an understanding that China and the United States should cooperate in assisting the Koreans." Chinese log of the conference, quoted in Xiaoyuan Liu, *A Partnership for Disorder: China, the United States, and Their Policies for the Postwar Disposition of the Japanese Empire, 1941–1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 142; see also 141, 143–44.

necessary steps for developing the industry, transport and agriculture of Korea and the national culture of the Korean people.

2. In order to assist the formation of a provisional Korean government and with a view to the preliminary elaboration of the appropriate measures, there shall be established a Joint Commission consisting of representatives of the United States command in southern Korea and the Soviet command in northern Korea. In preparing their proposals the Commission shall consult with the Korean democratic parties and social organizations. The recommendations worked out by the Commission shall be presented for the consideration of the Governments of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, China, the United Kingdom and the United States prior to the final decision by the two Governments represented on the Joint Commission.

3. *It shall be the task of the Joint Commission, with the participation of the provisional Korean democratic government and of the Korean democratic organizations to work out measures also for helping and assisting (trusteeship)** the political, economic and social progress of the Korean people, the development of democratic self-government and the establishment of the national independence of Korea.

*The proposals of the Joint Commission shall be submitted, following consultation with the provisional Korean government for the joint consideration of the Governments of the United States, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom and China for the working out of an agreement concerning a four-power trusteeship** of Korea for a period of up to five years.

4. For the consideration of urgent problems affecting both southern and northern Korea and for the elaboration of measures establishing permanent coordination in administrative-economic matters between the United States command in southern Korea and the Soviet command in northern Korea, a conference of representatives of the United States and Soviet commands in Korea shall be convened within a period of two weeks.

* Italics are the author's.

The italicized portions of the "Decision" certainly implied that the imposition of some sort of trusteeship was a foregone conclusion, not something to be left up to the discretion of a provisional Korean Government, as had been stated by General Hodge in his December 29 press conference.

The blunder of the foreign ministers in Moscow in using the word "trusteeship," the very same word[24] the Japanese had used for their hated regime, was an obvious one. A dozen other terms might have been used—guardianship, period of assistance, guidance, transitional period or the like. But no, it had to be trusteeship, and that hit a psychological trigger in the Korean mind which made the public lose all reason. As wave after wave of resentment swept the country, dangerous tension began building up in Seoul. On December 29, crowds of surly Koreans milled in the streets. Armed American troops tried to disperse them. Most of the shops were closed. There was little laughter or joy in the Korean heart. At noon all Korean translators and interpreters employed by Military Government held a mass meeting to decide whether or not they would strike. Fortunately for Military Government, the decision was postponed, and before any further action could be taken the Military Governor very shrewdly declared a ten-day holiday for all Korean employees. Without interpreters and translators, Military Government would have been like a great blinking owl whose whooo's were neither heard nor understood by the rest of the inhabitants of the Korean woods.

Tension continued to mount. All Americans were ordered to stay off the streets after eleven in the evening. But it was not until December 31 that the pent-up emotion broke loose. Army intelligence had issued warnings of an impending demonstration. Tanks and some light artillery had been brought into the city during the previous night just in case. During the morning of the 31st rumors of coming violence and terrorism were on everyone's lips. All American military personnel were ordered to stay on 24-hour duty. The morning's press conference at Military Government was another dramatic session; the air fairly crackled. General Hodge had received a radiogram from the State Department confirming his interpretation of the Moscow Decision.

[24] It was not the same phrase, but the meaning came close. See p. 85, footnote 21.

Again it was patiently explained that the so-called "trusteeship" would not be imposed on Korea without the consent of the provisional democratic Korean Government soon to be established, and even if a trusteeship were established, it would be nothing more than an advisory mission to aid the Korean Government.[25]

The explanations were too late. Thousands upon thousands of people poured into the central part of Seoul. Korean flags flew from every building. The day was bitterly cold, but still the people came—old and young. At two in the afternoon the demonstration started; a great mass of madly cheering people marched past the Capital gates. The city rang with a chorus of "manse!" (Long live Korea!) calls from a hundred thousand throats. The hills echoed with the plaintive melody of the Korean national song, sung, incidentally, to the tune of "Auld Lang Syne." But despite the crowds and tremendous patriotic fervor of the people, there was no violence or disorder. General Hodge had wisely given orders that there would be no attempt to break up the demonstration. There were roving patrols of armed troops, but these were carried in closed trucks where they were out of sight and would not incite the people. Throughout South Korea similar demonstrations were held. In North Korea, the Moscow Decision had not yet been made public.

As the fervor gradually subsided in South Korea and word got out to the country that the imposition of trusteeship was yet to be decided, life returned to normal. During these troubled days, the American Command let it be known on several occasions that it favored Korean independence, that it had so advised Washington from the beginning, and that a demand for immediate Korean independence had been the American stand at the Moscow Conference. General Hodge had reason for believing that such had indeed been the case. However, on January 27, less than a month later, the Soviet news agency TASS issued a long communique to the Korean press through General Terenty Fomich

[25] On December 31, 1945, Hodge tried to explain this to the Korean people in a press conference and even appealed to Washington to "kill the trusteeship idea," while Syngman Rhee and Kim Ku (1876–1949) reacted by organizing large-scale demonstrations and declaring USAMGIK to be illegitimate. See *Chosŏn ilbo*, December 31, 1945, and James I. Matray, "Hodge Podge: American Occupation Policy in Korea, 1945–1948," *Korean Studies* 19 (1995): 24–25, 36.

Shtykov [1907–1964],[26] head of the Soviet delegation to Joint Soviet-American Conference then in session in Seoul, categorically denying these charges. Rather, TASS stated, it had been the United States which had first proposed trusteeship, such trusteeship to be ten years in duration, and that the Soviet Union had favored immediate independence. The compromise reached was a five-year trusteeship. Moreover, TASS claimed, it had been at Soviet insistence that a clause was included in the Moscow Decision calling for the early establishment of a provisional democratic Korean Government.[27] General Hodge radioed frantically to the State and War Departments for either confirmation or denial. Meanwhile, public relations officers in Military Government censored the TASS report so that it was not broadcast over the Seoul radio station. The Korean press immediately found out about it and raised the free speech issue in a conference with American authorities on January 29. The Americans had claimed repeatedly that there was no such thing as censorship of legitimate news in South Korea. General Lerch, the Military Governor, stated that, no request to broadcast the TASS release had been received and, therefore, it could not have been censored.[28] However, to my personal knowledge,

[26] A protégé of the Soviet ideological leader Andrei Zhdanov (1896–1948)—for years the most powerful man after Stalin and a kind of Soviet counterpart to America's Joseph McCarthy (1908–1957)—Shtykov was clearly the man in charge of North Korean politics and influenced all related decisions during the entire period from 1945 to 1950. It was then up to Nikolai Georgiyevich Lebedev (1901–1992), head of the Soviet Civil Administration in northern Korea, to implement Shtykov's directives in the political and administrative system. We should mention that Shtykov left a detailed diary that covers the period he was involved in Korean politics, although part of this record did not survive. A Korean translation was published at the end of 2004. This is supplemented by Lebedev's memorandum, published in a Korean edition in 2016. See *Shwittŭikkop'ŭ ilgi, 1946–1948* [The Shtykov diary, 1946–1948], comp. Chŏn Hyŏn-su (Kwach'ŏn: Kuksa P'yŏnch'an Wiwŏnhoe, 2004); and *Rebedep'ŭ pimangnok* [The Lebedev memorandum], ed. Kim Yŏng-jung (Cheju: Haedong, 2016).

[27] This report is found in "TASS Statement on the Korean Question" (January 23, 1946), reprinted in Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the U.S.S.R., *The Soviet Union and the Korean Question (Documents)* (Moscow: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the U.S.S.R., 1948), 7–10.

[28] For USAMGIK censorship, see the *History of the United States Armed Forces in Korea*, part 2, chapter 1: "Relations with the Korean Press," online version at https://db.history.go.kr/item/level.do?itemId=husa (accessed September 19, 2024).

such a request had been made, and Military Government authorities had ordered that the TASS statement be killed. It all looked to the Koreans very much as if the United States had something to hide.

By this time, answers to General Hodge's radios to Washington had been received. Yes, it was true that the United States had proposed a ten-year trusteeship for Korea, and further, that the proposal had been based on understandings reached at Yalta and subsequent occasions. The American Command in Korea then found itself in the unenviable position of being forced to call itself a liar, which it did as diplomatically as possible. General Hodge informed the State Department that it would be of interest to him to know what the American policy in relation to Korea was, that he—in theory, at least—was supposed to implement. The Department was also reminded of the fact that the Korean press had access to Associated and United Press services, and that statements from Washington should be coordinated with what was said in Seoul.

Public opinion polls run by Military Government at that time indicated that with this exposure of apparent duplicity on the part of the United States Government, American prestige in Korea had hit a new low. If the Koreans were confused, the Russians must have been more so. The American Command had wrongly charged them with having sponsored a Korean trusteeship while the Americans championed the cause of immediate independence. It is probably fair to say that this bit of double play may have jeopardized the entire course of Soviet–American cooperation in Korea. The Russians, already suspicious of American objectives in Korea by reason of the political mumble jumble in South Korea,* no doubt felt that their worst suspicions had been confirmed; the Americans were attempting to increase their own prestige and influence in Korea at the expense of the Soviet Union, even if that meant torpedoing the Moscow Decision. 1946 had gotten off to an inauspicious beginning, not only internationally, but also in the realm of domestic Korean politics.

Here it is noted that *Proclamation No. 2*, issued on September 17, 1945, subscribed "the death penalty in cases of any act against the occupying forces or any act which might disturb the peace," which included press reports that criticized the U.S. administration.

* Refer to Chapter II.

CHAPTER II:
INTRODUCTION TO KOREAN POLITICS

Korean politics were so intimately involved in the play of international forces upon Korea that it was difficult to separate one from the other; they were part and parcel of the same struggle. Although to the American newcomers the Korean political scene initially seemed to present nothing but an unfathomable jungle, it was not long before the tangle was resolving itself and falling into a relatively simple pattern.

Political life in Korea—as in many places—rested on a struggle between the right and left. There was little support for any middle-of-the-road movement. The liberals, the social-democrats, the moderate socialists were very much in the minority and without mass popular support. The Korean people were not sufficiently well educated nor interested in governmental affairs to understand such democratic philosophies or to make such a system as they espoused operative. It will be shown later that both right and left were totalitarian.

To speak of democracy in such an environment was perhaps unrealistic. But neither the State Department nor the American military authorities in Korea seemed to doubt. The Russians, on the other hand, realistically started in North Korea with the apparent assumption that democracy was impractical and would only mean the enslavement of the Korean people by the dominant economic interests. The Russians, therefore, ruthlessly began to destroy these interests; the American began by currying their favor. Both powers mouthed democratic phrases while patiently pursuing undemocratic policies.

Soon after the beginning of the Korean occupation the myriad of political parties cluttering up the scene shook down until there existed four major parties on the left and three on the right. On the left were the Korean Communist Party [Chosŏn Kongsandang] under Pak Hŏnyŏng, the Korean People's Party [Chosŏn Inmindang] headed by Yŏ

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Korean Youth Vanguard [Chosŏn Ch'ŏngnyŏn Chŏnwidae].[68] On April 20, 1947, the pair were horribly tortured and finally murdered. The bodies were discovered, and the police were forced to act by the pressure of public opinion. In July, well after public interest had cooled, the sentences were announced. Kim Tu-han, the ringleader, received a fine of 20,000 yen (about $200 by comparable purchasing power) *or*—I repeat, *or*—imprisonment for 160 days. In other words, for a rightist to torture and murder, the price was $100 per head—cheap enough at half the price. No one doubted their guilt. By way of comparison, I cite a few sentences meted out of leftists. On April 5, 1947, two men received two years each for "disturbing the general peace." On the same date, two others received sentences of two and one years, respectively, for fomenting an "illegal" strike. On November 16, 1946, two men received six months at hard labor each for *attending* an "unauthorized speech." At the same time, three others were awarded similar sentences for the possession of "illegal" handbills. On November 9, 1946, 23 strikers were given sentences ranging two months to four years each. On November 7, 1946, a sentence of two years at hard labor was meted out for "organizing a strike against Military Government." Another received 90 days for an "unauthorized meeting;" another 90 days for "demonstrating against Military Government." On October 4, 1946 "writing against United States Military Government" netted the unlucky author one year at hard labor. And so it went.

Dozens of other cases could be cited as evidence in condemnation of the Korean police and in demonstration of the support awarded them by the American Command. Suffice to say that by the end of 1946 it was plain to all but the most stupid that South Korea was a police state. American Military Government no longer ruled; the Korean police was in power, and the Korean people hated them at least as

[68] It should be noted that Kim Tu-han himself had earlier been a leading member of the Korean Youth Vanguard group he now fought. Kim was the son of Kim Chwa-jin (1889–1930), an early anarchist and the most successful military leader of Korean partisan troops in Manchuria fighting the Japanese. During colonial times Kim Tu-han had made a name for himself as a fist fighter and gangster boss in Seoul. From 1947 he seems to have been one of Rhee's hatchet men to organize assassinations, deliver threats, etc. He later became a parliamentarian and member of the Rhee and Park governments.

much as they had hated their Japanese forebearers. At the top of the organizations stood Cho Pyŏng-ok and Chang T'aek-sang, appointed upon the advice of American missionaries and supported completely by General Hodge, but, nevertheless, two of the most venal men it has ever been my pleasure to know. I once asked a close political advisor to General Hodge why the general insisted that these two men continue to hold power. He thought for some moments and then answered that it was probably a combination of things but important among them was the fact that they had been loyal to the American Command and had fought against the Communists at every turn. The political advisor paused and then added, "But the greatest factors are the inability of the military mind to admit a mistake, and General Hodge's own stubborn bull-headedness." When Roger Baldwin, the above-mentioned director of the American Civil Liberties Union, visited Korea in mid-1947 and objected most strenuously to the antics of the Korean police in the name of American democracy, General Hodge radioed the War Department that Baldwin had apparently been "taken in by Communist propaganda." Hodge admitted, however, that "Baldwin appeared to be reasonably fair *despite the cause which he espouses*."* The general was obviously still oblivious to the effects of the policy which he had been pursuing. But we are ahead of our story; the scene is the fall of 1946.

The 1946 Fall Riots[69]

On September 24, 1946, O Pyŏng-mo, the representative of the South Korean Railroad Workers Struggle Committee to Improve Labor Conditions [Namjosŏn Ch'ŏldojongŏbwŏn Taeugaesŏn T'ujaengwiwŏnhoe] made the following announcement to the press:

* Italics are the author's.

[69] What Robinson calls the 1946 Fall Riots is also referred to as the 10.1 Taegu Uprising of 1946 (*Taegu 10.1 sagŏn*), Taegu October Incident, and Autumn Uprising of 1946. Bruce Cumings, using the name Autumn Harvest Uprisings, discusses these at length in the first volume of his *Origins of the Korea War*. See Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korea War: Liberation and the Emergence of Separate Regimes, 1945–1947* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 351–81 and 548–52.

We presented the following demands on September 14 to the responsible officials of the Transportation Department,* to which they promised to reply by September 21.[70] We have not yet received any official reply, and we feel that they are only trying to postpone the date of an answer. We started to walk out on Tuesday [the 24th][71] because we do not expect to receive any official reply under normal working conditions.

The demands:

1. We demand four hops of rice per laborer per day and three hops per day for our families.

2. We oppose the daily payment system. [Previously, a monthly salary system had been used. The new daily payment system had been instituted recently to minimize absenteeism.]

3. We demand an increase in the living cost allowance by 800 yen per month and an extra 600 yen per month for family allowance. [At the most this would be $4 and $3, respectively, on the basis of comparable purchasing powers.]

4. We oppose the planned cut in the number of employees. [An economic measure proposed by Military Government.]

5. We demand lunch every day as formerly.

6. We demand enforcement of a democratic labor law.*

On the morning of September 25 workers in the large Pusan railroad yards walked off the job. Engines were driven into the sheds and their fires extinguished. Rail transportation was quickly paralyzed throughout South Korea. The strike spread like wildfire from one industry to another. The Printing Union struck in sympathy, and only

* The Korean railroads were a government corporation operated under the Department of Transportation in Military Government.

[70] Since the US Military Government functioned as the workers' employer, the railway worker's union negotiated directly with the head of the Department of Transportation, Lieutenant Colonel Arthur J. Cornelson (1909–1996); Cornelson rejected all demands. The resulting nation-wide "September General Strike" that originated from this labor strike was therefore directly aimed at the US Military Government.

[71] All insertions in brackets in this quote are in Robinson's original typescript.

* The strikers' employer in this case was the Department of Transportation, American Military Government.

a handful of newspapers appeared on the streets of Seoul. Said General Hodge in part on September 28:

> I regret deeply and am much disappointed that the splendid Korean railway workers have been misled by radical agitators into an illegal strike against the Korean Government and the Korean people. I regret that any fine Korean workers have been misled into such a gross violation of good labor practices as to go on strike *without first formally presenting demands* and going into negotiations with their employers and the mediation board.
>
> I have reliable information that the strike has been fomented by agitators to discommode and discredit the American forces in Korea. In view of other information and the vicious propaganda aimed against the United States Forces that has recently been spread by certain groups in South Korea, there is little doubt but that this is the primary aim of the agitators. ...*

By way of proof that General Hodge was giving vent to a falsehood—very possibly an unintentional one, but nevertheless, a falsehood—by charging that no prior demands had been made by the workers before going on strike, I would refer the reader to the September 25, 1946, edition of the *Seoul Times*, a right-wing paper printed in English in Seoul, which quoted the September 14 demands. The fact that both right- and left-wing labor unions were participating in the general strike by the time General Hodge made his statement was indicative of the fact that the strike was not entirely Communist-inspired. The strikers were simply objecting to recent changes made in the method of payment, to a decrease in railroad employment, to inadequate rice rations, to the inadequate cost of living allowance (cost of living having risen several times), and the maladministration of the labor ordinance. These appeals found general approbation among the laboring classes. The strike continued to spread. By September 30, large numbers of electrical workers were on strike, one of their demands being the recognition of the right to make employee contracts by collective bargaining.[72]

* Italics are the author's.

[72] It is estimated that around 250,000 workers participated in what had now become a general strike.

General Hodge's appeal—despite the falseness of it—achieved the desired result. It made the right-wing labor unions suspicious of the motives of the left and, thus, the ranks of labor were split. Soon thereafter, back-to-work orders were issued from rightist headquarters. The left, however, was determined to make the strike an effective one, and pitched battles took place in some areas. The district surrounding the Yongsan Railway Station in Seoul and the Seoul car shops took on the appearance of a battlefield as strikers holding forth in the car foundry tried to turn away returning workmen. At least one railroad policeman was killed and 14 others wounded. In all, sixty persons were injured by gunfire, clubs, and rocks. The Korean police marched in and arrested more than 2,000 strikers. At the same time some 3,000 right-wing labor union members returned to work, guarded by the police and several thousand uniformed thugs belonging to the rightist "Youth" Association. Simultaneously, all the employees of Seoul City Hall walked off the job and issued a declaration stating that they had made their demands one month previous to the mayor of Seoul but had received no answer. On October 2, transportation service within the city of Seoul came to a halt when the tram car motormen and conductors struck. The police announced that of the 2,000 strikers jailed in Seoul up to this time, some 800 had been released when they signified their willingness to return to work. In the meantime, rightist labor headquarters were trying to induce their workers to go back to work. Gangs of their hired thugs, armed with sticks and clubs, roamed downtown streets and industrial areas in Seoul with the announced purpose of breaking up any leftist agitation. The police gave them a free hand. The situation was soon under control in Seoul, but elsewhere trouble brewed.

On October 4, the Taegu Riot broke loose, Taegu being one of the largest cities of South Korea. The Korean police had shot and killed a railroad striker the previous day. On the morning of the 4th, strikers carried the body of the dead man through the streets of Taegu, bouncing it up and down on a canvas stretcher for all to see. A huge crowd collected, sullen and angry. The procession converged on the central Taegu police station. The police attempted to stop the crowd by force of arms, and a brutal battle ensued. Fifty-three policemen were

mutilated and killed, and an undetermined number of rioters met violent death. Even wounded policemen who had been taken to hospitals for treatment were dragged from their beds and slain. The people were hungry for blood. As soon as American troops arrived on the scene, rioting stopped, martial law was declared, and order quickly restored. But the very brutality of the attack against the police was a measure of the frequency and degree of police misdeeds and the temper of the public.

Throughout South Korea the people were rebelling violently against the Korean police. It was a full-fledged revolution. Martial law was declared in two provinces, and 8,000 persons were arrested in one province alone. In the meantime, the rioting spread. There was an attempt to cremate the police chief in Sŏngju, a town one hundred miles southeast of Seoul. At Waegwan, ten miles northeast of Sŏngju, the chief of police, five policemen, and seven rioters were killed. The police station was retaken by police reservists. At Yŏngch'ŏn, rioters burned the post office and police station.

Police retaliation was quick and terrible. Mass arrests took place. Measures were used to exact confessions which would make even the most hardened squirm. The police were nervous and adopted the policy of shooting first and asking questions second. The worst of all occurred in the town of Chŏnju on the afternoon of December 16, 1946. The local left-wing youth groups had asked permission to hold a meeting. The police had granted permission with some misgivings, but specified that the session should end at 4 PM. The stipulated deadline came and went and long-winded speakers were still rattling away. The police moved in, stopped the speakers, and ordered the audience to go home. The spectators began to do so. However, a small group of students decided to form a parade. *According to an eyewitness American CIC report*, the paraders were unarmed and at no time presented a disorderly or threatening appearance; they were merely marching through the streets. The police became nervous in view of past events and quickly threw up a series of street barricades. A large crowd of people returning homeward from the meeting—as well as a number of innocent passersby—were caught between two such barricades. The police ordered them to disperse. Because they were trapped in the middle of a city block, the

crowd could not find an exit. The police began firing into the air. The mob milled around. The jittery policemen lowered their fire into the crowd and followed this with a horseback charge into the screaming people. Clubs and rifle butts flew. When the street was cleared, twenty persons lay dead—including men, women, and children. This incident was reported by CIC to American authorities. No action was taken to discipline the police concerned.

It is admitted that there was considerable truth to General Hodge's charge that the situation had been exploited for all it was worth by Communist agitators. But strangely enough, among the thousands of arrests made during the strike period, not one individual was found who was other than a bona fide resident of South Korea. General Hodge's oft-repeated charge that North Korean agitators engineered the whole thing seemed to be unfounded. Regardless of the truth of some of the general's observations, his method of attack aggravated the situation. He had issued a statement which was not wholly in line with the facts; the strikers *had* presented legitimate demands to their employer, the Department of Transportation, before striking. No action had been taken by the authorities. Only after a second warning did the workers strike. And then, instead of giving the Korean police and right-wing thugs a free hand to beat up strikers and make wholesale arrests, immediate steps should have been taken to mediate the trouble. Because this was not done, the Communists were able to exploit the situation and so fan the temper of the people that the strike became an outright rebellion against the authority of the police. In the one case where such a sane policy was pursued—in South Chŏlla Province, *a Communist stronghold*—very little violence broke out. The police were ordered to stay clear. American-operated sound trucks appealed to the strikers. Mediation was immediate. Despite Communist efforts, the people could not be induced to commit acts of violence.

It was true as General Hodge explained that "sabotage and murder are criminal offenses in all nations of the world and are still to be so considered in Korea." On the other hand, it was General Hodge himself who refused to agree to any reform. On that score, I remember a report submitted by an American Military Government officer after making an exhaustive study of the police situation. This was well before

the 1946 fall strikes. The report was a wholesale condemnation of police activities, adequately supported by case histories. He predicted trouble in Pusan, Taegu, and Seoul where police activity had been particularly obnoxious. Among his final recommendations he suggested: (1) American police supervisors in each province to whom all prisoners would have the right to appeal and who would act as police inspectors; (2) the use of the writ of *habeas corpus*; (3) the right to defense counsel; (4) higher salaries for policemen so as to discourage graft; and (5) the establishment of a civil liberties commission to make continuous investigation of police activities throughout South Korea. Upon reading the report, General Hodge's first comment was, "This man sounds like a Communist."

However, after the Taegu Riot, even the general sensed that all was not quite as it should be in his kingdom, and the Joint Korean–American Conference was hurriedly convened to study the matter.

The Joint Korean–American Conference

On October 24, 1946, General Hodge announced that he had accepted an offer made by the Coalition Committee to serve with American officers and civilian experts as a committee to investigate conditions leading to the recent disturbances in southern Korea. All Koreans and American having knowledge of benefit to the Committee were invited to appear before it. Major General Albert E. Brown headed the American delegation, Dr. Kim Kyu-sik and Yŏ Un-hyŏng, the Korean. Actually, Yŏ did not attend the conference until well along in the sessions, and then only sporadically. By the end of October 1946, the Joint Korean–American Conference was in session. Its agenda included such subjects as enmity toward the police, the presence of former Japanese collaborators in Military Government, the effect of interpreters in government, corruption of some Korean officials, agitators against the best interests of Korea, the rice collection program, and inflation. It was decided that before the Conference reached any conclusions a thorough investigation should be made. It was emphasized that the sole objective of the inquiry was to determine facts and make appropriate recommendations, not to prosecute anyone.

The subject of Korean personnel in Military Government and the Japanese collaborationist issue were discussed at the initial sessions, but it was decided that these subjects should be resolved by the Interim Legislative Assembly soon to be seated. Most of the ensuing sessions of the Joint Conference were devoted to discussion of the Korean police. Among those heard on the subject by the Conference were Colonel William H. Maglin (American advisor to the Director of National Police), Dr. Cho Pyŏng-ok (Director of the National Police), Chang T'aek-sang (Chief of the Seoul Metropolitan police), and Ch'oe Nŭng-jin [1899–1951] (Head of the National Detective Bureau). The real fireworks occurred when the last-named gentleman appeared. Ch'oe had been hurling accusations against Dr. Cho and the police in general via the local press, and he aired his sentiments before the Conference in no uncertain terms. In so doing, he admitted the Japanese collaborationist charges and accused the police of undue brutality, corruption, and political partiality. A few days later the Korean members of the Conference rose in alarm when Ch'oe was summarily discharged from his post upon orders of Dr. Cho. His discharge had nothing to do with his testimony before the Conference, both Dr. Cho and General Lerch chorused. Whereupon, Dr. Kim Kyu-sik condemned the entire proceedings. All they had heard had been police officials telling how well they were doing their jobs, exclaimed Dr. Kim. The American delegation chief, General Brown, replied that anyone was free to appear before the Conference. However, it was obvious to all that to appear before the Conference and give testimony against the police would be tantamount to committing suicide. The upshot was that a secret agreement was reached advising General Hodge to discharge Chang T'aek-sang immediately. This was concurred in by two of the five American delegates as well as the entire Korean delegation, including the moderate right-wing representatives. The Korean delegates further adopted by unanimous vote a resolution asking for the dismissal of Dr. Cho. Kim Kyu-sik appended a note to this resolution explaining that if anyone was to blame for past police excesses it was Dr. Cho, not Chief Chang. The Americans voted unanimously against this second resolution, so it was submitted to General Hodge only as a Korean suggestion concurred in by the moderate right and moderate left. These decisions were not made public.

Further decisions on the subject of the police were made known to the press on December 5, 1946. As a result, General Hodge announced that Military Government had been directed to raise the standard of efficiency of the Korean police. Practical measures would be taken which would gradually eliminate those policemen whose actions were incompatible with the established principles of democracy, announced the General. He went on to say that instructions had been reiterated to the Korean National Police to prevent the abuse of authority and to eliminate brutality and torture. "Special measures [never revealed]* have been taken to prevent utilization of the police for political purposes," the general declared. He finished by promising an improvement in police training standards as well as police salaries.

On the subject of Japanese collaboration, it was stated that Military Government had been directed to search the records of all Korean personnel for possible collaboration with the view that the more notorious collaborators be discharged as rapidly as possible and replaced by patriots. In the remainder of the cases, dossiers were to be prepared and held for future action by the Interim Legislative body which would define exactly what constituted collaboration. It was further announced by American authorities that steps had been taken to improve the agencies disseminating public information so that the smallest farming and fishing villages would be reached by timely, pertinent information from the various departments of the Government. Finally, General Hodge issued a statement to the effect that agitators who had "illegally fomented" the recent riots and who had "deceived the people" were being tried by the courts. At the same time, it was added, those against whom there was no evidence would be released. The cases tried were to be "reduced to the smallest possible number of persons consistent with the preservation of law and order."

This is what General Hodge claimed to have done by way of fulfilling the desires of the Joint Korean–American Conference. What was actually accomplished was quite another matter. The recommended removal of Messrs. Chang and Cho was completely ignored,

* The insertion in brackets is in the author's original typescript.

and the pair continued to hold office. There was no evidence of any measures having been taken to eliminate those policemen whose actions were deemed incompatible with the principles of democracy and humanity. There was no discernible decrease in the use of police brutality and torture or in the utilization of the police as a political weapon. Police salaries still remained at a miserably low level, thereby requiring that policemen indulge in graft to stay alive. There was no record of any search having been made of the files by Military Government to ferret out undesirables from its service, and no dismissals were made on that basis. Actually, all Military Government had to do was to refer to old newspaper files and translate some of the statements made under the Japanese regime by a number of its most trusted officials. (The subject of public information will be treated in Chapter IX.) As for the trial and confinement of strikers and rioters, I would again refer the reader to the files of the *Seoul Times*. Several death penalties were handed out—later, commuted by General MacArthur—as well as numerous sentences of several years of hard labor. As of June 1947, it was estimated by advisors close to General Hodge that there were something like 7,000 prisoners in South Korea who could be classed as political.

Such was the way in which the American Command kept faith with the Korean people, with the Coalition Committee, and in particular with Yŏ Un-hyŏng. It is little wonder that with this American inactivity, the power of the extreme right wing began to grow. The American do-nothing policy which envisioned a Communist threat behind every liberal bush made it impossible for the liberal movement to live. It was caught in the cross fire between the two extremes. Sensing the weakness of American policy, Dr. Syngman Rhee and Kim Ku, in collaboration with the Korean police, began laying plans for insurrection.

CHAPTER VI:
DEMOCRACY AND REVOLUTION

Passers-by had long noted that changes were taking place in the main rotunda of the great domed Capital Building in Seoul. The barren marble grandeur of the place was being marred by bustling workmen. Soon it became apparent that a legislative chamber was being constructed. This was the first public evidence that a legislature was being considered for South Korea. Initially, it had been hoped that the Joint Soviet–American Commission would reach agreement and move to create an interim Korean Government, including the necessary appurtenance of democracy, a legislature. However, with the breakdown of negotiations in May 1946, the American Command began to think in terms of some sort of legislative assembly for South Korea alone. The Coalition Committee took on new importance, for this was apparently the group which should supervise the organization of such a legislative body.

The American Command felt that a legislature was necessary for a number of reasons, among which were: (1) the need for practical training in democratic procedure for Korean politicians, (2) the desire for an all-Korean body to lift part of the responsibility of government from American shoulders, (3) the political advantage to be gained over the Russians who had established no such representative legislative body, and (4) the demands of a restless Korean public who saw Japan well on the road to recovery and democratization. As the political situation in South Korea became more and more tumultuous, Generals Hodge and Lerch became more and more anxious to place the burden of responsibility on Koreans. Such matters as the Japanese collaborationist issue, the Korean police, Communist agitation, and the grain collection program were rapidly draining the last dregs of American prestige. The Joint Korean–American Conference had been a temporary stop-gap measure, but when its recommendations were for all intents and purposes ignored, a new clamor arose. By this time, however, the new Southern Korean Interim Legislative Assembly was

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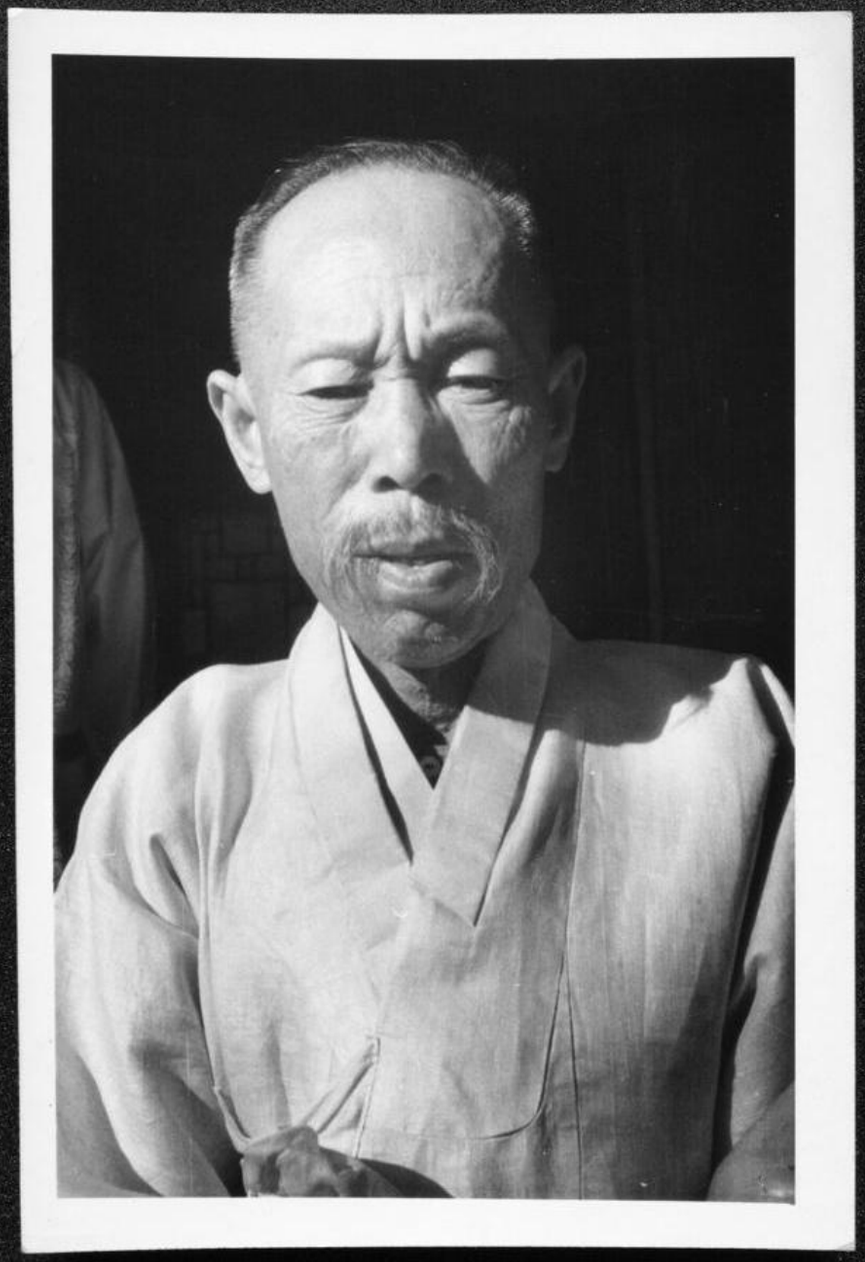

(Fig. 27) Korea is a country of great landlords, who managed to retain their holdings through the decades of Japanese rule, and now vigorously oppose the redistribution of land such as was carried out in Japan under U.S. Army guidance. This landlord owns 20,000 acres of land, serves his guests brandy which he brought from a visit to Paris, has a Japanese-educated son who had turned leftist. CREDIT MARK GAYN

Editorial Note

The following text by Mark Gayn appeared on pages 347 to 443 of his *Japan Diary* (New York: William Sloane Associates, 1948). Gayn's "Korea" chapter actually runs for another forty pages. These additional diary entries, written after his departure, contain no more direct observations and lack some of the vividness and insight of his earlier firsthand accounts from Korea. Accordingly, we have not included these pages in this volume.

Written by a gifted writer and thoroughly edited back in 1948, his book contained only a handful of minor typos requiring spelling or grammar corrections. Gayn made a few factual mistakes and mix-ups, though, which we have either annotated or corrected and annotated. Otherwise, we left the text and its basic formatting intact. However, as with the Robinson text, and with the usual exceptions, we replaced all of Gayn's spellings of Korean and Chinese names and terms with transcriptions according to the McCune–Reischauer and Pinyin systems (Hanja can be found in the glossary). Furthermore, when known, we added dates for all mentioned persons in brackets. All the footnotes in Gayn's text are our editorial annotations.

The preceding five photographs from the fall of 1946 (figs. 23–27) are by Mark Gayn, as are the cutlines reproduced here. (As was usual for press photos until well into the 1980s, these were glued to the reverse of the photos.) Gayn produced these cutlines in the summer or fall of 1948, two years after his visit to Korea. This leads us to speculate that the photos and their accompanying descriptions were intended for inclusion in his book, published in mid-November of that year. However, his New York publisher did not reproduce any photos. Small head-and-shoulders crops of the Syngman Rhee, Kim Ku, and Kim Kyu-sik portraits had already appeared in Gayn's articles in the New York *PM Daily* on November 3, 1947, and May 6, 1948. The other two photos, along with the one featured on this book's cover, have, in all likelihood, never been published before now.

The editors

Japan Diary: Korea

Mark Gayn

October 14, 1946 TOKYO

Leaving for Korea tomorrow, with Charlotte Ebener [1918–1990], of *Newsweek*, and Foster Hailey [1899–1966], of the *New York Times*.[1] A sudden hitch developed three days ago, when Brigadier General A. P. Fox [1895–1984] summoned me to the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, announced that he was sitting as a court-martial officer, and demanded that I reveal the names of my informants for a recent article. The story was a belated report on that fantastic conference in May when a group of colonels objected to purging war criminals from Japan's big business. Headquarters apparently was far less perturbed by what the colonels had to say than by the fact that one of them had talked to a reporter.

I was told that I could inform no one—not even my editor—of the summons, and that I was not entitled to legal counsel. General Fox also

[1] While in Korea, Ebener only published an unsigned, one-column wrap-up on the 1946 Fall Riots: "Korea: Master Plan," *Newsweek* 28, no. 19 (November 4, 1946): 50. Years later she published her own report about their Korea trip. See Charlotte Ebener, *No Facilities for Women* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955), 55–72. Hailey does not seem to have published anything more than the article "Prominent Leftist Arrested in Korea" for the October 21, 1946, issue of the *New York Times*; it is the same story that Gayn renders in lively detail in his diary entry of October 20. But Hailey did include a short chapter on Korea in a later book that also discusses his experiences during this trip and offers a broad political analysis of the peninsula. See Foster Hailey, *Half of One World* (New York: Macmillan, 1950), 40–50.

told me I could not leave Tokyo. I refused to answer any questions without guidance from the *Chicago Sun*, and promptly filed a long report to Chicago. The next morning, the *Sun* notified me it had taken action with the War Department. And yesterday morning thirteen correspondents, led by Russell Brines [1911–1982] of the Associated Press, and Crane [1901–1963] of the *New York Times*, filed into General Baker's [1891–1968] office, and demanded an explanation. The right to protect one's sources of information is one of the basic elements of a free press, and no correspondent is willing to make any concessions on it. Ten minutes after the group left Baker's presence, General Fox telephoned me to tell me I would "no longer be required in this investigation."

KOREA

October 15, 1946 SEOUL, KOREA

The trip from Tokyo, in an old army transport, was uncomfortable and uneventful. I slept most of the way and did not wake up until the plane started coming down to a landing. The airport was buzzing with activity—bombers and transports warming up, fighters taxiing all over the place, trucks, jeeps, bulldozers at work. It was a regular army base with little civilian nonsense about it.

A young lieutenant gave us a lift to Seoul in a sedan. We drove along a wide dirt road, and watched the face of poverty—the straw-and-mud huts sagging at the corners; the bare yards; the lean mongrels lying in the sun; the men with enormous loads of straw and branches on their backs; and the women with jars and bundles finely balanced on their heads. Charlotte and I agreed that, in contrast, China looked well-to-do.

The lieutenant spoke of the Koreans with contempt. He said they were dirty and treacherous. We were watching a flight of fighter planes

cavorting over villages to the west. The planes dived in a mock attack, re-formed in the sky, and then dived on a new target.

"Psychological warfare," the lieutenant said. "That's the only way to show these gooks we won't stand for any monkey business."

Major Buel A. Williamson [1926–2020],[2] the red faced, stout Public Relations Officer to Lieutenant General John R. Hodge [1893–1963], our commander for Korea, made a stab at affability. He made me think of a real estate agent, appraising visitors to his office to see if he would earn a commission. His face fell when I said I did not want to see General Hodge until I had had a chance to look around and understand the picture a little better. Briskly, Williamson made us fill out a long questionnaire, and assigned us to billets.

Hailey and I were put in a room in the Chosun Hotel,[3] a colonels' billet known hereabouts as "Frozen Chosun." Charlotte was sent to a women's billet. The Chosun is a weird compound of a mid-Western, small-town hotel, an army barrack, and a Korean roadside inn. It is large and shabby, filled with the smell of garlic, and serviced by Korean bellhops who understand nothing of what you are saying, but smile hopefully. Both Foster and I went to sleep.

We woke up in time for dinner. Charlotte was already waiting downstairs with two local correspondents, Stanley Rich [1924–2005] of the United Press and Roy Roberts [1887–1967] of the Associated Press. Both are nice, keen boys, and while we ate our dinner, they gave us a general survey of the situation.

The biggest story, they agreed, is the bloody riots which have been sweeping the countryside in our zone. General Hodge has called them "disgraceful agitated riots." There is apparently some reason to think, however, that the economic distress and the universal hatred for the Korean police, which we have taken over from the Japanese,[4] have had

[2] Major Buel A. "Pappy" Williamson. According to one source, Williamson made it a point to brief every visiting reporter before they had a chance to form their own opinions. See Oliver Elliot, *The American Press and the Cold War: The Rise of Authoritarianism in South Korea, 1945–1954* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 43.
[3] See Robinson's "Betrayal of a Nation," in this volume, 77, footnote 12.
[4] See ibid., 78, footnote 14.

something to do with the uprisings. No Americans have yet been attacked, but at least sixty Korean cops have been killed.

Later Charlotte told us of her billet. She was put in a room with a woman who violently objected to Charlotte, on the ground that the room was reserved for CAF 9's. (CAF is a civilian salary rating, going up to 15). Charlotte explained that under army regulations, she was CAF 14. The woman promptly called her darling, told her they had had no water in the house for eight days because the Russians had stolen a turbine on the Yalu River, in North Korea, and warned Charlotte against the Korean servants. They steal everything in sight, she said, to support their relatives who had fled from the Red Terror in the Soviet zone.

"When things come to such a pass," the woman said, "they have to be resolved one way or another. Even if it means war now!"

October 16, 1946 SEOUL

Spent the day making rounds of the XXIV Corps, the Military Government, and the Joint U.S.–Soviet Commission.[5] Discovered, with some surprise, that orders had been sent down the chain of command to give me no information. Two of the men I met especially interested me. One was Lieutenant Leonard Bertsch [1910–1976], the rotund and bespectacled political adviser to General Hodge. A doctor of philosophy from Holy Cross and a lawyer from the Harvard Law School, Bertsch, I suspect, fancies himself as a sort of "American Century" Machiavelli. His primary concern is Korean politicians, and he is saturated with their lore. Bertsch's current assignments in intrigue are two: he is trying to split the Korean Communist Party, and he is promoting a coalition of moderates of both the right and the left.

[5] The Joint Commission was organized per directive of the Moscow Decision of December 1945. The Soviet Union and United States delegations met in Seoul and P'yŏngyang between March and May 1946 and then from May to October 1947 in an attempt to form a unified provisional Korean government to be followed by a permanent government. The Commission's failure delivered the Korean issue to the United Nations Security Council. Discussed in detail in "Betrayal of a Nation," chapters III, VI, and VIII.

Bertsch is a delightful talker, one reason being that he remembers, and quotes, every *bon mot* he has ever uttered.

The other man was Dr. Arthur C. Bunce [1901–1953], a Treasury official on loan to the State Department on loan to General Hodge, with the personal rank of Minister. Bunce spent six years setting up rural YMCAs in North Korea, and he speaks a fluent Korean. The difference between Bertsch and Bunce is vast. Bertsch is immersed in political scheming to the exclusion of all else. Bunce considers Korean problems in terms of social and economic forces. He is the first man I have met here who speaks with genuine affection of the Koreans. He is also the first to lay emphasis on social reform, and not on the Soviet menace.

There is an atmosphere of violence, intrigue, and uncertainty about this place. Seoul may not look it, but it talks and acts like an armed camp on the eve of an insurrection. It is hard to analyze this impression, for it is compounded of things both seen and intangible. Such things as the submachine gun next to my jeep driver, news of yet another uprising, or an officer's lament, "I've got six more months to go. The Russkys will be here before then."

I find that fear of communism, rather than a desire to reform or rehabilitate, forms the solid base of our policy for Korea. I am told that when we came here on September 7 of last year,[6] we found that a progressive Korean government had been formed thirteen hours earlier. Bertsch and many others feel that, with all its defects, the government — known as the People's Republic[7] — could have been converted into a staunch and useful ally. Instead, we branded the People's Republic red, and wasted two precious months driving it underground.

This was more than a functional conflict between our own Military Government and a native government with roots in the resistance

[6] It was on September 7, 1945, that General Douglas MacArthur announced Hodge would be in charge of Korean affairs, but it was only the next day, September 8 (Korean time), that U.S. forces landed at Inch'ŏn and established USAMGIK.

[7] The Korean People's Republic consisted of local government formations that coalesced just after Japan's surrender on August 15, 1945. See Robinson's "Betrayal of a Nation," chapter II, 104–20 in this volume.

movement. Their very ideas were different. The Koreans thought of themselves as a nation liberated. To this day we appear uncertain whether we had come to liberate or to occupy. The Koreans wanted to be rid of the collaborators. We not only kept the collaborators in office (for we were understaffed), but also we actually began our "liberation" by ordering the hated Japanese governor general, his officials, and his police to stay on the job as if nothing had happened. The People's Republic wanted social reform. The Americans vetoed any drastic social or economic changes.

But, having suppressed the People's Republic, we turned to the other extreme. We imported an aged rightist by the name of Syngman Rhee [Yi Sŭng-man, in office 1948–1960] all the way from Washington, and made him and other rightists our counselors, and the bearers of our hope. Rhee, Bertsch assured me, is not a Fascist. "He is two centuries before fascism—a pure Bourbon." Yet Rhee was allowed, and even encouraged, to build up a political machine. Rhee's followers took key posts in our Military Government, from police chiefs to county masters. They also set up a network of mass organizations, from women's clubs to terrorist bands.

Rhee's was a one-track mind: he wanted independence for Korea. But he saw an independent Korea as a feudal land, with himself at the head. He spoke for every Korean when he demanded that the country, now split along the 38th parallel into a Soviet and a U.S. zone, be reunited. But he spoke for no one but the landlords when he opposed land reform, social security, or civil freedoms.

Like many other politicians in East Asia with whom we have allied ourselves, Rhee did not fight Japanese collaborators; he embraced them. They hated the same things he hated, and they saw in him the promise of continued well-being. And since we—General Hodge and the Military Government—depended on Rhee and trusted him, and since we were terribly shorthanded, we condoned a government by collaborators.

"The Koreans in the Military Government," one official told me today, "represent a conspiracy of insufferable corruption. People we now use to govern Korea are rightists who happily did Japan's dirty work. There are now men in the Korean police force who actually were

decorated by the Japanese for their cruelty and efficacy in suppressing Korean nationalism."

We did, I was told, issue a stern order for the purge of collaborators. This was mistranslated so skillfully by our Korean interpreters in the Military Government that when the hour of purge came, it was discovered that in all of our zone the order could be applied to only one official.

I was also told this: One day early last spring, it dawned on our policy-makers on the Potomac that our Korean allies—and our own blunders—were losing us Korean good will at a catastrophic rate. If on September 7, 1945, our men landing in Korea were greeted with hosannas, now a Military Government poll of public opinion showed that the Koreans in our zone preferred the Japanese to us.

Thus our command here was ordered to sever its bonds with the extreme right. Instead, every effort was to be made to form a coalition of moderates, both left and right, who would and could give the Koreans a measure of reform.

The job was delegated to Bertsch, and he cast about for a conservative who could head the coalition. Bertsch's choice fell on Kim Kyu-sik [1881–1950],[8] the U.S.-educated moderate rightist who knew the language of reform, and could even clothe it in fine Elizabethan English. To win over the leftists, Bertsch persuaded the great leader of the wrecked People's Republic, the silver-haired, silver-tongued Yŏ Un-hyŏng [1886–1947],[9] to enter the coalition as co-chairman. The first meeting of Yŏ and Kim took place in Bertsch's own house on June 14, 1946.

Although Bertsch sounded confident, there seemed to be two oversized flies in his ointment. One is the feud between General Hodge

[8] See ibid., 121, footnote 44.

[9] Yŏ Un-hyŏng was an early leader of the Korean communist movement and an important figure in the Korean independence movement during the Pacific War. He was selected by the Japanese on the eve of liberation to form a provisional government body. In July 1947, he was assassinated by a member of the White Shirts Society (Paegŭisa), as was Kim Ku (1876–1949) two years later. Yŏ is discussed at length in "Betrayal of a Nation."

and Major General Archer Lerch [1894–1947],[10] Military Governor. Lerch's men told me Bertsch was "an upstart," with whom "it's impossible to work." The other fly is the inability of the military here to readjust their minds to the new policy. Directive or no directive, they feel that only a "strong man," like Rhee, can stop communism. Bertsch's plan may remain a scrap of paper unless the military, in and out of the Military Government, agree to carry it out.

Late at night talked Roy Roberts into going for a walk. The streets were still crowded, and there was much more electric light than one sees in Tokyo. We walked down to Ponjŏng,[11] the main shopping street. The shops were closed, and women peddlers, in their brightly colored little jackets and long white skirts, were hurrying home with their bundles balanced on their heads. What amazed me was the number of drunk Koreans and GIs. I saw an American arguing with a Korean. The soldier was holding the Korean by the lapels of his coat and shouting, "I'll show you, you goddamned gook!" The Korean did not seem to be frightened. Roy stepped in and said to the soldier, "Go easy, boy." Then the GIs companions, who were watching from the sidelines, came up and pulled him away. Roy said such incidents are frequent and generate much resentment against the Americans.

At night there was some scattered gunfire outside our wall, and we could see some Korean policemen running down the street with pistols on the ready.

October 17, 1946 SEOUL

After lunch Charlotte and I went to see Bertsch in his office in Tŏksu Palace, where the U.S.–Soviet Joint Commission holds its sessions. When Bertsch came in, a little late, he began to search for a lost button,

[10] Major General Archer L. Lerch, U.S. military governor in Korea from December 1945 to his death in September 1947.

[11] Ponjŏng is the Korean reading of the area's colonial period Japanese name Honmachi, which is now called Myŏng-dong. Gayn and the U.S. Military referred to it as Bun Chong—a five minutes' walk from Hodge's headquarters.

some missing papers, and a mislaid corps insignia. At the same time he conducted a conversation with five different people, making little sense but being very witty. Finally, over the protests of his secretary, whom he called Blossom ("Every woman under seventy is Blossom to me."), we took Bertsch up to the roof.

Bertsch's topic for today was the Communist Party. He said it lost some strength as a result of police repression and the party's approval of Allied trusteeship for Korea, but he thought it still had some 18,000 members in our zone and at least 100,000 active sympathizers.

Like some other officers I have talked to, Bertsch felt that one of the secrets of Communist strength lay in our own mistakes. "If a free election were held today," he said, "the Communists would get 20 per cent of the votes in our zone, and five in the Russian zone. The people here would be voting not *for* the reds, but *against* us."

The Korean Communist Party, Bertsch said, was formally organized in 1922, and admitted into the Comintern in 1926. After that, the party disintegrated into a flock of rival "clubs"—"Tuesday," "The Northwest M-L" (for Marx-Lenin), and "Seoul." In 1937, there was a reorganization, and, as Bertsch put it, "The Seoul Club was anointed as the bearer of the true word."

Sometime this year Bertsch obtained the membership lists of the old factions, and had gone to work trying to split them apart. He sounded well pleased with his handiwork, but from another source I have heard that there had been only one defection from the Communist Party. A small clique of Communists called on Syngman Rhee, and asked for his blessings and cash. If they join up with Rhee, these "converts" will be of little use to Bertsch's coalition.

October 18, 1946 SEOUL

In the morning Bertsch took Charlotte and me to see Kim Kyu-sik, the man he had chosen for head of the new moderate coalition. On the way, Bertsch told us that Kim came of "the standard poor but respectable parentage," studied at Roanoke, Virginia, and taught English literature to the Chinese. Bertsch went to special pains to tell us that U.S.

Army doctors had found Kim to have "a satisfactory life expectancy." I did not grasp the point until much later, when Bertsch, with bitterness, told us of a State Department official here, who, at a banquet, referred to Kim as "Mr. Kim Kyu Sickly." Since Kim is, in fact, no athlete, the pun achieved some irritating fame.

Far in the outskirts, we drove up a steep hill, and stopped before a lovely Japanese-style house, guarded by a Korean policeman and an American MP. Japan-fashion, we removed our shoes, and were taken to a spacious sun room. There were three men already in the room—a Colonel Shaw [1922–1950],[12] Chief of the Labor Division in the Military Government; a natty, young Korean named Mun;[13] and Kim himself.

Kim struck me as a grotesque figure. He is very short, and tremendous around the waist. He was wearing a beautiful gray gown, which made him look feminine, and American zippered felt slippers. His lap was covered with a rug. As we came in, he was filling a two-foot-long reed pipe with a tiny brass head with tobacco out of a GI pouch. Once he began to talk, I was charmed by his cultured and smooth flowing speech.

While Kim talked to Mun, Bertsch was explaining the significance of the conference. This appeared to be another of his Machiavellian shenanigans. The Korean Federation of Labor[14] had been driven deep

[12] William Hamilton Shaw was born and raised in Korea. After returning to the United States to pursue his education, he returned to Korea after the Pacific War to help establish a Korean Naval Academy.

[13] His full name was Mun Ŭn-jong (dates unknown).

[14] Here and throughout the chapter the author consistently mixed up the names of the left and the right-wing labor organizations in his English rendering: Gayn's left-wing "Korean Federation of Labor" would better be termed the National Council of Korean Labor Unions (Chosŏn Nodong Chohap Chŏn'guk P'yŏngŭihoe, short: Chŏnp'yŏng). Organized in early November 1945, it was an all-Korean labor organization that included workers in northern Korea, with a membership of around 600,000 (Gayn reports later in this text that there were 270,000 members in the South). Right from its inception, it fought for a minimum wage, an eight-hour work day, and the prohibition of child labor, among other things. Notably linked to the communist movement (Mao Zedong, Kim Il-sŏng, Pak Hŏn-yŏng were elected honorary chairpersons), it was the one labor organization that represented the overwhelming majority of industrial workers in a single labor organization. Rhee's right-wing "Labor Association," on the other hand, which

underground after last month's strikes, but it still remained a powerful force. Mun, the Federation's only officer still at large, was now being wooed into supporting Bertsch's coalition. Mun, I thought, looked uncomfortable.

When Kim turned to us, he quickly established his own position. He was a moderate rightist. He favored State control of the major industries, farm reform, and social insurance. From this vantage point he proceeded to attack both the right and the left, reserving his sharpest barbs for Rhee. He felt that the United States and Russia blocked the creation of a democracy in Korea by splitting her in two. He thought the rightists were losing popular support by bickering. He believed the leftists, "pre-occupied with sabotage," were missing a golden chance to sweep the country in the election scheduled for the end of this month.

Later, Kim told us a bit about his father, who had served at the court of the Korean kings. Kim himself was born in 1881, spent much of his childhood with American missionaries, and at the age of sixteen was taken to the United States by a rich uncle. After seven years of study, he returned to Korea only to go into exile in 1913. He tried to start a secret officers' training camp in Mongolia, but gave it up when the funds promised by the Korean underground failed to arrive. After that Kim went into business, selling hides in Mongolia, Bibles in North China, and power engines in Shanghai.

Kim's interest in a Korean revolution seemed sporadic. From time to time, he went abroad to plead Korea's case. But most of the time he was either a merchant or a teacher, including a stretch at the ultra-conservative Central Political Institute of the Guomindang [Chinese Nationalist Party, better known as Kuomintang]. In 1942 he was appointed Minister of Information of the so-called "Korean Provisional Government" in Chongqing, which barely stayed alive on a Guomindang subsidy. By November 1945, when a U.S. Army plane

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Gayn mentions and terms the Great Korea Laborers' Association, should be referred to as the (Korean) National Federation of Labor Unions (Taehan Tongnip Ch'ongsŏng Chŏn'guk Nodong Ch'ong Tongmaeng). Also compare "Betrayal of a Nation," 169 and 240–41.

took him to Korea as "a private citizen," he was vice-premier of the government-in-exile.

Over lunch, Bertsch talked excitedly of the greatness which destiny held in store for Kim. I had the impression that, perhaps subconsciously, Bertsch was trying to make up for the drive and excitement that were so conspicuously lacking in Kim. There is a strange relationship between the two men. Bertsch talks as if he were a disciple of Kim the prophet. Yet, now and then, the schemer in Bertsch wakes up, and then Bertsch is a political puppeteer. What is happening, I think, is that each man is using the other for his own ends. Kim is shrewd and ambitious, and he hopes Bertsch may help to make him president of the Korean Republic. Bertsch, apart from the delight of playing god, may also be considering the possibility of becoming an adviser to the Korean Government, headed by his friend Kim.

In the afternoon, Charlotte, Foster, and I went calling on Syngman Rhee.

Like Kim and most of the other self-respecting politicians, Rhee lives in a building put at his disposal by a Korean multimillionaire. An armed policeman opened the gate for us, and we waited in a large compound filled with other armed men, until word came down from the hill. Then we walked up the steep, well-kept path, and halfway up the hill Syngman Rhee met us. He had thought that Bertsch was with us, and sounded disappointed when we said he was not.

In the small western-style living room, whose main decoration was a huge multi-colored pagoda, we had a chance to look Rhee over. He is a thin man, with sparse white hair, pale lips and almost no eyebrows. His eyes are concealed behind thin slits of eyelids, so that most of the time he looks as if he is asleep. (Charlotte, in an irreverent aside, whispered, "Doesn't the old boy look like a mummy?") But Rhee was not asleep. His mind was alert and busy, and his words were vigorous.

He sat erect in his chair and threw bait out, to see what we would bite. He attacked General Hodge, the Communists, and the famous

Moscow decision of 1945,[15] which proclaimed a U.S.–Soviet trusteeship for Korea. When he found out we had seen Kim, he damned him with praise. He alternately praised and attacked the Military Government, and referred bitingly to U.S. Army corruption.

I was trying to understand what makes Rhee what he is. He has been away from his native land for thirty-five out of his seventy-three years, and when he returned he spoke what was described to me as "a Hawaiian brand of pidgin Korean." Yet he is a political boss without peer in Asia, except perhaps for Chiang Kai-shek [Jiang Jieshi, in office 1928–1975]. With what must be a sixth sense, he has mastered the complexities of Korean politics, and he plays the game ruthlessly, skillfully, and to his own advantage.

He had long been a legend and a symbol in Korea, and he has made the legend pay. There is much talk of the "assessments" his agents collect throughout our zone. I was told of a Women's Patriotic Convention in Pusan, at which 1,500 delegates were "assessed" 200 yen each in honor of the great man's visit to the city.

Much like the Japanese and the Germans, Rhee talks in terms of a "Great Korea" and the "Korean Folk." His main political instrument is the *Han'guk* (or Korean Folk[16]) Democratic Party [aka Korean Democratic Party], an organization of landlords and rich collaborationists.

Rhee has a Master's degree from Harvard and a Doctor's from Princeton. Yet his English is labored, and he puts sentences together with an effort. I wondered by what inner strength he had impressed his ideas on General Hodge and men of the Military Government. Listening to Rhee, I thought he was a sinister and dangerous man, an anachronism who had strayed into this age to use the clichés and machinery of democracy for unscrupulous and undemocratic ends. I have been in Korea only seventy-two hours, and it may well be that my impressions are wrong. But I have begun to think that it is not Hodge

[15] See "Betrayal of a Nation," 83, footnote 20, and pp. 85–92.

[16] Gayn's translation is off. *Han'guk* does not imply any sense of "folk;" it is no more than one of two most common names for Korea. In subsequent references to Han'guk Minjudang, we changed the author's translation to Korean Democratic Party which then also matches Robinson's translation.

who is the most important man in the U.S. zone, but this old, pale man with half-closed eyes.

Rhee was now in the middle of a passage on Hodge:

"When General Hodge landed here, a Japanese general saw him and told him to stay away from the terrible Koreans. Then I heard that when five hundred people came to welcome General Hodge, the Korean police fired on them and killed five men. General Hodge has also said that the Koreans and the Japanese are the same breed of cats.[17] It was unfortunate that Hodge got his information from a Japanese general. ... " The door opened, and an Occidental woman came in with a small silver pot. This was Rhee's Viennese wife, who had been his secretary before he married her. She was described to me as "Rhee's greatest liability, because she thinks he is the greatest man in Korea, and he agrees with her." I had expected a fat old ogre. This woman was slim, handsome, and poised. She made small talk, and poured a white liquid out of the pot. This was *soju*, or burning wine.

"This is almost my first anniversary here," said Rhee. "I arrived in Seoul on October 16 of last year. You could call this an anniversary celebration."

We took a sip of *soju* and choked and gasped as it burned our throats. Mrs. Rhee talked of servant problems and the high cost of living.

"Last March," said Rhee, "I went south, and told immense crowds: 'We're trying to save our country from a sell-out. The best thing is to tell every Communist to change his heart. Those who oppose us, let them go home, to their fatherland.' This created a tremendous stir in the south.

"Last May, General Hodge asked me to cooperate with the new coalition. But I couldn't change my stand. So I said I'd stay silent. I've

[17] William R. Langdon (1891–1963), acting political advisor in Korea, claims that Hodge was just referring to Korean collaborators and Korean policemen in Japanese services and, in that context, he said that "Koreans consider them the same breed of cats as Jap policemen." See "The Acting Political Adviser in Korea (Langdon) to the Secretary of State" (November 26, 1945), *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, 1945*, vol. VI, *The British Commonwealth, the Far East* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1969), 1134–35.

now kept silent for five months, even though the program of the [Bertsch] coalition is contrary to the principles of democracy. The men of the coalition, for instance, want to confiscate all land and redistribute it among the sharecroppers. I say land reform must be left to the Provisional Government, when we have one."

I told Rhee I was planning to go south. He produced three large calling cards, and on them wrote notes of introduction. They were to the governors of three provinces.

"All these are my friends," he said. "They'll get *good* information for you."

Dr. Bunce was waiting in the crowded bar of the Chosun Hotel when we got back. He is a charming, mild-mannered man, with a ready store of anecdotes and a tremendous background in world—and Korean—rural economics. Over the dinner, he expressed his conviction that the best way to meet the challenge of communism is through social reform. He is very pleased with the new turn of policy here, and with the coalition. If a progressive regime could be established in Seoul, he said, the Communist administration in the Soviet zone would willy-nilly have to come to terms with it.

October 19, 1946 SEOUL

Once again Major Williamson said he was unable to get a jeep for us, and once again we were sitting disconsolately in the Chosun lobby when a Korean delegation came in to see Foster, in the apparent belief that he was publisher of the *New York Times*. They wanted to know if we were in Foster's entourage, and when I said no, their faces fell. They rose just as fast when they discovered we met Rhee yesterday. The delegation, two men and a woman, came in behalf of one of Rhee's numerous political satellites, the Representative Democratic Council [of South Korea], which, local wits told me, was so called because it was neither representative nor democratic.

The delegation was led by a fat and voluble man with a shining Phi Beta Kappa key. He said, "I am Pak, Brown '05, you must've heard of me," and to make him happy I said yes, indeed I had.[18] With him was a shabby looking man who once studied at the University of Iowa, and a Mrs. Kim Sŏn [1896?–?], who said she represented the Women's Patriotic Association and the Women's Nationalist Party,[19] both of the Rhee camp.

The trio talked of the subversive Communists and the treacherous nationalists, who once worked with Rhee but were now forming their own little cliques. It soon appeared that there were wheels within wheels in Rhee's machine. All three readily agreed that the banker who had given his house to Kim Kyu-sik was enjoying wealth "generally regarded as ill-gotten." But there was disagreement when it came to the multimillionaire who had given his house to Rhee.

Brown '05 said, "He's a nouveau riche, an economic upstart. Why, he made his fortune in the last six or seven years, as a Jap contractor."

His male companion agreed: "The man is wallowing in wealth."

But Mrs. Kim Sŏn dissented. "No," she said sharply. "He's a patriot. He also has a very fine mind."

The men beat a hasty retreat, and Mrs. Kim Sŏn proceeded to tell us the story of her grandfather, whose land in North Korea once

[18] Brown '05 was Paek Sang-gyu (aka Sangkyu Pak and later Pack Sang Kyu, 1880–1957), a wealthy Korean landlord and economics scholar. (Why he was enrolled under the name Pak at Brown University in 1902 is unclear. Paek later changed the spelling to Pack, most likely due to the proximity of the pronunciation of his name to that of the English verb *pack*.) It was also Paek who, together with Yŏ Un-hyŏng's younger brother Yŏ Un-hong (1891–1973), greeted General Hodge on September 8, 1946, on his landing at Inch'ŏn Harbor. Paek and Yŏ acted as representatives of the Preparatory Committee for the Establishment of a Korean State (Chosŏn Kŏn'guk Chunbi Wiwŏnhoe), the first major political coalition aimed at forming an independent state after liberation. (See also Robinson's "Betrayal of a Nation," 107.) General Hodge, however, did not want to discuss any self-governing options with Paek and his committee. Paek then became the vice president of the Korean Red Cross and a member of the National Assembly. In 1951 Paek was abducted to the North, where he, like many other prominent former South Korean personalities, was given an office in the Council for Promotion of Peace and Unification of Korea (Chae Puk P'yŏnghwa T'ongil Ch'okchin Hyŏbŭihoe).

[19] Full names: Korean Women's Patriotic Association (Taehan Yŏja Aeguktan) which, after the March First movement, was established in California, and Korean Women's Nationalist Party (Taehan Yŏja Kungmindang).

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Democracy, Authoritarianism, and Culpability in Southern Korea: Gayn and Robinson on the U.S. Military Government

Mark E. Caprio

The dreadful shortcomings of United States military occupations in Iraq and Afghanistan over the last two decades bear uncanny resemblance to the more distant occupation of southern Korea after Japan's defeat in the Pacific War. The occupation that was imposed on Korea was ill prepared to deliver the independence that Koreans had been promised earlier. Mark Gayn (1909–1981) and Richard D. Robinson (1921–2009) were astute observers of the policy failures of that occupation. Although they went to southern Korea under very different auspices, both arrived at the same assessment independently: U.S. policies in Korea were not advancing the development of a democratic sovereign nation—at least not in a way that served the interests of the Korean people.

The history of U.S. administration over southern Korea remains almost completely unknown to Americans, among whom little is known about Korea before the U.S. entered the Korean War (1950–1953). Most Americans blithely accept their government's reason for going to war: halting the so-called "domino effect" or the spread of Soviet communism across Asia and Eastern Europe. It was feared that if southern Korea fell to such forces, it would trigger communist revolutions across Asia. As recent scholarship has shown, U.S. failures during the occupation and war that followed helped sow the seeds of popular unrest that eventually evolved into the civil war that erupted between north and south. The "peace" that followed was only delicately protected by an unstable armistice signed in July 1953 by the U.S., China, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)—excluding the Republic of Korea (ROK).[1]

The post-war trusteeship or "guidance" that Koreans would be forced to endure before they could claim true independence left deep divides within Korea. It was President Franklin D. Roosevelt (in office 1933–1945) who promoted the idea of trusteeship before and during the November 1943 Cairo Conference with British Prime Minister Winston Churchill (in office 1940–1945, 1951–1955) and Nationalist Chinese leader Chiang Kai-shek (Jiang Jieshi, in office 1928–1975). At the end of the meeting, they jointly entered into the Conference Communiqué a plan for a post-liberation occupation of Korea before it would gain independence. Although this document dealt exclusively with Asia's postwar fate, unfortunately, during the conference no real consideration was given to Korea's post-liberation plight—except a brief part of a dinner discussion between Roosevelt and Chiang on November 23. The three leaders and their staffs focused instead on military strategy in South Asia and Europe. Yet, on the final day of the conference, as they rushed to complete the document in time for Roosevelt and Churchill's scheduled departure for Teheran to meet with Joseph Stalin (in office 1922–1953), the British inserted a short imprecise phrase, "in due course," to qualify the timeframe in the promise for independence to Koreans. British intentions behind this insertion had more to do with protecting their colonial interests, in the face of burgeoning independence movements, than with Korea's future.[2]

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[1] Most prominent among these scholars is Bruce Cumings who made this argument in his two-volume *Origins of the Korean War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981 and 1990). See also John Merrill, *Korea: The Peninsular Origins of the War* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1989).

[2] The complete sentence read "The aforesaid three great powers, mindful of the enslavement of the people of Korea, are determined that in due course Korea shall become free and independent." Previous versions of this document had offered the words "at the earliest possible moment," which President Roosevelt then changed to "at the proper moment," before the British replaced that with the phrase "in due course." For the two American drafts and the British draft of the Cairo Communiqué, see *Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers: The Conferences at Cairo and Teheran 1943*, comp. United States Department of State (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1961) (hereafter cited as *FRUS 1943*), 399–404.

That phrase took on a life of its own when the Communiqué was released to the public in December, after Stalin had approved it. The duration of the trusteeship and designation of states to participate in it remained unclear at the time. Members of various Korean independence movements scattered throughout China, the U.S. and elsewhere made inquiries regarding this duration; but their concerns went unheeded, most probably because the Allies themselves did not know how long it would last. Postwar planning committees better understood the second issue. Prospective participants might include China, Great Britain (or a Commonwealth nation such as Australia), and possibly the Soviet Union—should it enter the Pacific War—in addition to the U.S.

Except for an occasional report on Korean matters and interviews that the State Department conducted with people familiar with Korea, there was very little tangible planning for Korea's post-liberation administration. The U.S. even had trouble deciding on the members of the occupation team. U.S. Government officers like Richard Robinson were deployed to Korea only at the very last minute, even after many had already boarded a ship bound for Japan, having been trained specifically for that occupation.[3] Robinson notes that when Lieutenant General John R. Hodge (1893–1963), the commanding officer of the forces entering Korea, assumed his duties in Korea in early September 1945, he had little information about Korea and little instruction on how it was to be administered,[4] much less how the U.S. would negotiate the peninsula's reunification with the Soviet administration occupying northern Korea.

[3] Donald Stone Macdonald (1919–1993) explained a similar experience in an interview. Macdonald made it to Japan only to learn that he was being transferred to southern Korea where he was stationed in Kwangju. To prepare for his Japan assignment he had taken a six-month Civil Affairs Training course at Harvard University. His efforts to inform himself about Korea were limited to a small part of a single volume that he found in the ship's library, an antiquated pre-World War I travel guide by T. Phillip Terry, *Terry's Japanese Empire, Including Korea and Formosa* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1914). See Charles Stuart Kennedy and Donald S. Macdonald, "Interview with Donald S. MacDonald" (January 25, 1990), manuscript, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, accessed January 24, 2022, https://www.loc.gov/item/mfdipbib000734/.

[4] See Richard D. Robinson, "Betrayal of a Nation" in this volume, 70–71.

Franklin Roosevelt pushed trusteeship as a way of preparing formerly occupied peoples for admission into the international community as sovereign states. The president's disdain for colonialism, which he saw as a major cause of both world wars, fueled his crusade to bring it to an end. His support for a peoples' right to self-determination drew from the Fourteen Points speech of January 1918 by Woodrow Wilson (in office 1913–1921), its most famous proponent.

At the time, Wilson's speech spurred colonized peoples in a number of contexts to take to the streets to demand this right, which brought much bloodshed but little advancement toward their independence. The principles he included in this speech would later inform the text of the Atlantic Charter drafted by Roosevelt and Churchill at their initial summit in August 1941; they would in turn influence the Cairo Communiqué and future Allied declarations made at the Yalta and Potsdam conferences. Yet, Roosevelt concurred with Wilson that without a period of trusteeship, liberated peoples might likely revert to practices that were the basis for their being subjected to foreign occupation in the first place. This is how the necessity of trusteeship for Korea was explained by Sumner Welles (1892–1961), who served from 1937 to 1943 as Roosevelt's Undersecretary of State and was a prominent member of the president's brain trust:

> These words "in due course" have created much disquiet among certain Korean patriots. It must be clear, however, that, after a ruthless domination and exploitation such as the Korean people have suffered at the hands of Japan during the past thirty-seven [*sic*] years, a certain period of time must necessarily elapse before the last vestiges of Japanese rule can be wiped out and the independent economy of the country can once more be set up. The Korean people will need sufficient time to strengthen the atrophied muscles of self-government. It is equally clear that some friendly hands must be available to render the assistance required until all the mechanics of self-government can be supplied by the Korean people themselves.[5]

[5] Sumner Wells, *The Time for Decision* (New York and London: Harper & Brothers, 1944), 300.

As Welles indicated, Koreans deeply felt that trusteeship was unnecessary in their case. Even after foreign armies arrived on their shores, many Koreans believed that their presence on the peninsula would be short lived, or last just long enough to facilitate the evacuation of Japanese elements. The Korean people would then be able to determine their own fate as an independent state. This idea was reflected in a plan drafted by the *Voice of Korea*, a newspaper published by Koreans in Washington, D.C., just weeks after the U.S. 24th Corps arrived to assume its occupation duties in southern Korea. The newspaper, citing President Harry S. Truman's (in office 1945–1953) declaration that the building of a great nation had begun, reasoned that the sooner this nation is built the better for the Far East and the world. It continued by outlining the following schedule:

> [A]n unrestricted opportunity should be given to the leaders of the various Korean organizations to compose their differences and form a provisional government. Under proper conditions, it could be done within a month from now. Within 90 days of its formation a general election should be held to choose a permanent government under the supervision of the Allied Command. Within 60 days thereafter, with the exception of those who are hired by the Korean government, all occupation forces should be withdrawn.[6]

The two occupations in northern and southern Korea, however, lingered for three years until the two Korean states were formed on the peninsula in late 1948. Prior to this development, the Allied powers had drafted a plan in Moscow in December 1945 to consolidate northern and southern Korea into a unified government. This was at a meeting among the foreign ministers of the United States, Soviet Union, and Great Britain to discuss unresolved wartime issues. The three officials proposed that the two parties that occupied the Korea peninsula form a Joint Commission to initiate a process toward guiding the Korean people toward independence. An excerpt from the "Moscow Decision" reads as follows:

> The proposals of the Joint Commission shall be submitted, following consultation with the provisional Korean government for the joint consideration of the Governments of the United States, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom and China for the working out of an agreement concerning a four-power trusteeship of Korea for a period of up to five years.[7]

[6] "America's Responsibility," *Voice of Korea*, September 24, 1945.

This period of trusteeship-assisted provisional administration was to help the Korean people form a permanent government as a sovereign state.

Most Koreans spoke out against the idea of trusteeship as soon as the Moscow Decision was made public. In particular, the southern Korean press overwhelmingly denounced it in their headlines.[8] However, Moscow declared that Korean political entities which objected to trusteeship would be ruled ineligible for consultation with the Joint Commission; this quickly generated support for the process among many of Korea's leftists and moderate rightists.

However, the extreme right continued to resist, and began to rally their constituents against it. Richard Robinson addresses the role of Syngman Rhee and other extreme right-wing Koreans in opposing the

[7] For a complete text of the Moscow Decision, see "The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Harriman) to the Secretary of State" (December 27, 1945), in *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers 1945*, vol. VI, *The British Commonwealth, The Far East*, comp. United States Department of State (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1969) (hereafter cited as *FRUS 1945*), 1150–51. Robinson provides a full text of the provisions that concerned Korea in his "Betrayal of a Nation," 87–88.

[8] These are examples of the headlines that appeared in southern Korean newspapers following the release of the Moscow Decision on Korea: "Chŏn ilbon wiim t'ongch'ijie kukche sint'ak t'ongch'i" [From the Japanese Mandate to an international trusteeship], and "Sint'ak t'ongch'i sŭnginŭn maegugida! Maejogida!" [The recognition of trusteeship is a betrayal of the nation! Betraying one's own people!], *Chungang sinmun*, December 29, 1945; "Kwanggo, moyokchŏk sint'ak t'ongch'ie hyŏlchŏn haja!" [Public notice: Engage in a bloody battle against the scornful trusteeship], *Taegu sinbo*, December 31, 1945; and "Sint'ak t'ongch'inŭn chugŭmŭi kil!" [Trusteeship is the road to death], *Minju chungbo*, January 1, 1946. For a discussion of Korean reactions to the Moscow Decision see Sŏ Chung-sŏk, "Kungnae tongnip undong seryŏgŭi haebang hu kukka kŏnsŏl pangyang—Yŏ Un-hyŏngŭi Inmin Konghwaguk Inmindang sint'ak t'ongch'i kwallyŏn munjerŭl chungsimŭro" [The Influence of the domestic independence movement and trends in national reconstruction after liberation: With focus on Yŏ Un-hyŏng's People's Republic, the Korean People's Party and trusteeship issues], *Taedong munhwa yŏn'gu* 56 (2006): 289–321.

(Fig. 28)
Seoul Stadium, December 31, 1945. Citizens rally against the four-power trusteeship agreed to at the Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers.

Moscow Decision.[9] Comments by General Hodge also did not help matters. In an attempt to explain the Moscow Decision to the Korean people, he presented a rather optimistic, but misleading, message in his December 1945 radio broadcast that directly refuted the Soviet view of absolute support.

> Despite the piecemeal so-called "Interpretative" releases written hurriedly by persons who never saw Korea except on a map and who do not know Korea or Koreans, there is nothing in the communique that says that there has to be a "Trusteeship" established for Korea or that says that one definitely will be established. It does provide that after the establishment of the unity of Korea and after the Korean Government has been established, the two-power commission will consult with the Korean Government about and make recommendation to the four great powers concerning a four-power "Trusteeship" for a period of up to five years. There is nothing in the wording of the statement which leads me to believe that there will be a four-power "Trusteeship" forced upon the Koreans against their will. There is everything in the wording of the statement to make me believe that the plan set forth is designed to give full aid and protection to Korea in reestablishing itself as an independent nation. After careful study of the full statement in all its details I see nothing to the provisions that Koreans need to fear.[10]

To complicate matters further, Hodge's broadcast came at a time when rumors had spread that it was the Soviets, rather than the Americans, who had pushed for trusteeship at the Moscow meeting. The Soviets retorted that they had proposed an up to five-year trusteeship for Korea as a counterplan to an initial U.S. proposal that would have subjected Koreans to up to ten years of trusteeship.[11]

In May 1949, the *Voice of Korea* argued that the three years of divided occupation of the Korean peninsula was unnecessary because steps had already been taken to allow Koreans the chance to form their own transitional government at the time of Japan's surrender. The newspaper criticized the U.S. for disrupting this process by failing to

[9] Kim Haeng-sŏn discusses the influence of Syngman Rhee and the anti-trusteeship movement on the Joint Commission process in his article, "Miso Kongdong Wiwŏnhoe chaegaerŭl chŏnhuhan uikchinyŏngŭi tongyanggwa yangmyŏnjŏnsul" [Trends and two-faced tactics of right-wing groups around the time of the resumption of the U.S.–Soviet Joint Commission], *Hansŏng sahak* 14 (2002): 35–66.

[10] "Text of Radio Broadcast Delivered by General Hodge on Moscow Pact" (December 30, 1945), included in the January 2, 1946 *Periodic Report*; reproduced in *HQ, USAFIK G-2 Periodic Report / Chuhan Migun chŏngbo ilchi (1945.9.9–1946.2.12)*, vol. 1, comp. Hallim Taehakkyo, Asia Munhwa Yŏn'guso (Ch'unch'ŏn: Hallim Taehakkyo, Asia Munhwa Yŏn'guso, 1988), 506. Robinson discusses Hodge's speech in his "Betrayal of a Nation," 86. Hodge's statements had been preceded by a November 1945 report by his political advisor William R. Langdon (1891–1963) who argued that trusteeship was inappropriate for the Korean situation. For Langdon's report see "The Acting Political Advisor in Korea (Langdon) to the Secretary of State" (November 20, 1945), in *FRUS 1945*, 1130–33.

[11] The Soviet Union explained this and other inconsistencies in "TASS statement on the Korean Question" (January 23, 1946), reprinted in *The Soviet Union and the Korean Question (Documents)* (Moscow: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1948), 7–10.

recognize the efforts of Yŏ Un-hyŏng (aka Lyuh Woon Hyung, 1886–1947), whom the Japanese had chosen for this purpose.[12]

> There might have been no need at all for the Americans and Russians to occupy Korea. As a matter of fact, before the occupation forces entered the country, the Japanese in Korea had already surrendered the government to the late Lyuh Woon Hyung [Yŏ Un-hyŏng], a great liberal and the most popular leader throughout the country. Instead of allowing the people who survived the Japanese oppression at home to re-establish Korea as an independent state, the Allied Powers imported horses of different colors from abroad to dominate the political race in the North and the South.[13]

The newspaper continued by expressing a wistful aspiration that further destruction be prevented. As the "damage had already been done" the primary consideration at hand became finding a way to "prevent the Korean people from being thrown into a holocaust."[14]

Un-Democratic Military Administrations in Post-liberated Korea

Throughout the wartime period, the United States repeatedly withheld formal diplomatic recognition from any specific Korean political group living in exile, claiming that doing so would skew the Korean people's postwar determination for political leadership. This decision frustrated intensive efforts by Korean Provisional Government leaders, particularly Kim Ku (1876–1949) in Chongqing, China and Syngman Rhee in Washington, D.C. However, it became clear from the first day of occupation that the preferences of the U.S. and Soviet administrators

[12] It was actually the Japanese colonial administration in Korea that—believing that it would be the Soviet 25th Army that would occupy the peninsula—selected Yŏ to form a transitional government. Yŏ's leftist connections, it reasoned, might be useful in negotiating safe passage for Japanese nationals returning to Japan. But as soon as the Japanese learned that the U.S. would occupy southern Korea, they withdrew their support for Yŏ and the Preparatory Committee for the Establishment of a Korean State (Chosŏn Kŏn'guk Chunbi Wiwŏnhoe) that he had formed.
[13] "A Last Minute Appeal," *Voice of Korea*, May 31, 1949.
[14] Ibid.

would trump the will of the Korean people. U.S. forces entered Seoul on September 9, 1945 and, from early on, favored Koreans who held conservative (rightist) ideas, while the Soviet administration in the north, in juxtaposition, supported Koreans of leftist suasion from the earliest days of its occupation.

To Koreans throughout this period, decisions made by the United States Army Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK) indicated its interest in extending colonial rule under a different name, rather than make a clear break from previous Japanese rule.[15] This became evident at the very outset of the U.S. occupation, just after the Japanese had surrendered. Richard Robinson recounts that Americans who had arrived in Korea as an advance team to prepare for the occupation threw a big party for Japanese colonial officials. Koreans who tried to meet with them to discuss their country's future, on the other hand, were "summarily shown the door with a minimum of courtesy."[16] The arrival of the U.S. occupying force employed the Japanese soldiers for protection from the Koreans, yet they managed to shoot dead a number of the many Allied flag-waving Koreans who had lined the streets to greet their American liberators. Days earlier the Korean people as a whole had been warned of the general attitude that their liberators would assume. Article III of "Proclamation No. 1" that Commander in Chief, General Douglas MacArthur (1880–1964), delivered from Tokyo in September 1945 echoed the Peace Preservation legislation that Japan imposed on Koreans in 1925, a form of which would later appear in the ROK's National Security Act (*Kukka poan pŏp*) passed by the ROK National Assembly in December 1948. MacArthur's proclamation sternly warned: "All persons will obey promptly all my orders and orders issued under my authority. Acts of

[15] This point is made by Kim Un-t'ae in his *Migunjŏngŭi han'guk t'ongch'i* [The U.S. Military Government's administration of Korea] (Seoul: Pagyŏngsa, 1992).
[16] Robinson, "Betrayal of a Nation," 77. In a previous incident, Americans and Koreans, as part of an OSS operation named the Eagle Project, arrived in Seoul on August 18 to check on Allied POWs, and joined their Japanese "hosts" in a beer and song session that evening. For details on this incident see Mark E. Caprio, "The Eagle Has Landed: Groping for a Korean Role in the Pacific War," *Journal of American–East Asian Relations* 21, no. 1 (March 2014): 5–33.

resistance to the occupying forces or any acts which may disturb public peace and safety will be punished severely."[17]

In essence, this statement gave the United States Military Government the same authority as the Japanese colonial government—the power to determine what would be considered "legal" and "authorized," and what would be considered threatening to the peace and security of southern Korea. As an important example of the exercise of U.S. power, financial and material limitations were imposed on the Koreans and Japanese who were returning to their homeland, which especially affected those who boarded "unauthorized" ships with "illegal" cargo (comprised of personal belongings that exceeded the paltry limits established by the U.S. and/or profits from supplying Japanese and Korean black markets).[18] Both Gayn and Robinson show how the USAMGIK made liberal use of this clause to carry out massive arrests of Koreans who challenged U.S. occupational rule, targeting those deemed to be leftists, in particular.

If Article III of MacArthur's proclamation captured the spirit of the continuity of foreign rule, Article II provided a direct and concrete means to ensure this by authorizing the Japanese and their Korean trainees to retain their positions of power for the foreseeable future. This article directed that, until further notification

> 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

[17] "Proclamation No. 1 by General of the Army Douglas MacArthur" (September 7, 1945), in *FRUS 1945*, 1043. John Barry Kotch notes that the "most egregious error" that the United States made during its tenure in Korea was the attitude that this power was absolute over all indigenous entities. See his "U.S. Occupations of Iraq Recalls Failure in Korea," *Japan Times*, June 18, 2003.

[18] For example, returnees were prohibited from bringing any more than a paltry 1,000 yen into either Korea or Japan. For an extensive report on repatriation in postwar Northeast Asia see "Foreign Affairs Section, Headquarters, United States Army Military Government in Korea, Repatriation from 25 September 1945 to 31 December 1945," prepared by William Gane, (1946), 41, Box 4, Walter E. Monagan Papers, 1945–1948, Hoover Institution Library & Archives. Monagan (1911–2008) served as USAMGIK's legal advisor from 1945–1948.

> duties, and shall preserve and safeguard all records and property.[19]

Within days, Washington ordered that this directive be amended in response to the "unfavorable publicity" it had received through Korean protest: "For political reasons it is advisable that you should remove from office immediately: Governor-General Abe, Chiefs of all bureaus of the Government-General, provisional governors and provincial police chiefs. You should furthermore proceed as rapidly as possible with the removal of other Japanese and collaborationist Korean administrators."[20] USAMGIK found it difficult to carry out this revised directive to replace Japanese officials, thereby maintaining in office Koreans who had been trained by the Japanese.[21] As Yi Yŏn-sik has recently argued, even after the Japanese had been relieved of their duties, rumors spread among Koreans that the Japanese continued to influence the U.S. Military Administration.[22] Some U.S. officials in Seoul foresaw this development. General Hodge's political advisor, H. Merrill Benninghoff (1904–1995), predicted as much in a report he penned in response to his government's order to correct MacArthur's decree. He noted that 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

[19] "Proclamation No. 1," 1043.

[20] "Draft Message to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur" appended to "Memorandum by the Acting Chairman of the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee" (September 10, 1945), in *FRUS 1945*, 1045.

[21] Regarding Korean collaboration, see Mark E. Caprio, "The Politics of Collaboration in Post-liberation Southern Korea," in *In the Ruins of the Japanese Empire: Imperial Violence, State Destruction, and the Reordering of Modern East Asia*, eds. Barak Kushner and Andrew Levidis (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2020), 27–49; and Ahran Bae, "A Comprehensive Assessment of Korean Collaboration under Japanese Colonial Rule (1910–1945)" (PhD diss., Rikkyo University, 2018).

[22] Yi Yŏn-sik reports on rumors circulating among Koreans that the U.S. was allowing Japanese to return to Korea and preparing them to assume their dominant role in the region. Yi Yŏn-sik, "Haebang hu Ilbonin songhwan munjerŭl tullŏssan Namhan sahoewa migunjŏngŭi kaldŭng" [Conflict between southern Koreans and USAMGIK over the repatriation of Japanese nationals after liberation], *Hanil minjok munje yŏn'gu* 15 (2008): 5–47.

> [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 hated almost as much as their masters.[23]

Both Gayn and Robinson document the effect of this directive on Korean society by focusing on the postwar police force. Robinson introduces the cases of two officials, Cho Pyŏng-ok (aka Chough Byung Ok, 1894–1960) and Chang T'aek-sang (1893–1969), who were chosen by USAMGIK to lead southern Korea's post-liberation police force. According to Robinson, both Cho and Chang had prospered under Japanese rule while conducting abusive and corrupt practices, practices that they then refined under the new regime. Robinson argues that by the end of 1946 southern Korea had become a Korean-led "police state."[24] Eradicating leftist influence in southern Korea was a primary task of this police state, a tactic Cho and Chang had honed while working for the Japanese.[25] John R. Hodge supported these efforts. When the commanding officer assumed his duties, he had suspicions that

[23] "The Political Adviser in Korea (Benninghoff) to the Secretary of State" (September 15, 1945), in *FRUS 1945*, 1049.
[24] Robinson, "Betrayal of a Nation," 185 and 194. In one memoir, a Japanese official remembers how USAMGIK solicited his advice on Korean matters. See Tsuboi Sachio, with Araki Nobuko, *Aru Chōsen Sōtokufu keisatsu kanryō no kaisō* [Memoirs of a Chōsen Government-General police bureaucrat] (Tokyo: Sōshisha, 2004), 149.
[25] In his interview (see p. 444, footnote 3), Donald S. Macdonald explained one way that USAMGIK used to "reorganize" southern Korea's post-liberation police force: "The first step was to interview the Japanese. Following that, the Americans took over what the Japanese had been doing [...]. The next step was to dismiss all the Japanese and to install Korean personnel who had worked in the Japanese-led Korean government. [...] Then we, at least in name, turned the authority over to the Koreans. The Governor of South Cholla province, who was initially named, was a moderate physician who had been associated with the People's Committee. He was soon displaced by a Korean landowner who was famous for his conservative anti-Communist views and who spoke English very well and who was therefore attractive to the anti-Communist Americans. Under him, and a few other people brought in from outside, continued all these ex-Japanese Government General Korean employees. What was done in effect was to continue the Japanese structure."

communists harbored a "diabolical plot to seize power," according to James Matray.[26]

The U.S. position on pro-Japanese Koreans was manifested in a number of ways over the course of the occupation. At the local level, we see this in its reaction to an early warning that Yun Il (aka Yun T'aek-kŭn, 1893–?) of the South Kyŏngsang Province Branch of the People's Republic of Korea sent to the U.S. forces Military Administration, cautioning that USAMGIK was supporting "shameless and sly" traitors to the Korean people. An anonymous memo penned in at the bottom of his appeal read:

> Attempt to eliminate the bourgeois from all positions of responsibility. Even though no proof of being pro-Jap... The Communists wanted all educated men removed from competition with their "peasants and laborers" even though the leaders of the latter turned out to be more pro-Russian than pro-Korean. Our first contact with communist "double talk"![27]

A more direct display occurred in June 1947 when USAMGIK, responding in part to police pressure, squelched legislation passed by the Southern Korea Interim Government (Namjosŏn Kwado Chŏngbu) to bring colonial-era collaborators to trial. At the time the police threatened to seek retribution against any assembly member who supported the Law of Pro-Japanese, National Traitor and Profiteers that was then being debated in the Assembly. Robinson reports that the police even informed Hodge of the action that they would take should he fail to veto this legislation.[28] In the end, USAMGIK exercised its veto power over this legislation after it passed. Deputy Military Governor, Brigadier General Charles G. Helmick (1892–1991) gave four reasons for the veto: 1) the difficulty of determining guilt by law; 2) the probability that the law would be used for vengeance; 3) the fact that the assembly did not fully represent the "entire Korean

[26] James I. Matray, "Hodge Podge: American Occupation Policy in Korea, 1945–1948," *Korean Studies* 19 (1995): 27.
[27] A letter by Yun Il of the *Inmin haebangbo*, addressed to Brigadier General Harris (October 25, 1945), was found in Box 1, Folder 3, Francis E. Gillette Papers, Harvard-Yenching Library Special Collections.
[28] Robinson, "Betrayal of a Nation," 254.

nation;" and 4) the attempt to do too much with the law by lumping together colonial and post-colonial crimes.[29] Gayn and Robinson's writing suggests a potential fifth reason: the damage that such legislation might have caused to the population of Koreans on whom the Military Government most depended, to say nothing of the adverse effect it would have had on southern Korean conservative politics. Anti-traitor legislation was finally passed after the ROK National Assembly was formed in 1948; but even then, the legislation failed to eradicate this colonial-era legacy from ROK society.[30]

USAMGIK also preserved elements of the Japanese colonial legal code. One example was the USAMGIK administration's April 1946 ruling on the legality of simultaneously holding a government position while being in the National Bar Association and practicing law. In handing down its decision, USAMGIK courts, rather than interpret the law in postwar terms, cited a 1936 colonial-era law that made it illegal for practicing lawyers to hold office. The explanation for this ruling was that it is "not believed that an Order of the [Japanese] Governor can be repealed by an order of this Department."[31] The occupation's judicial branch made a similar judgement against "a certain newspaper," based on a "violation" of both the Ordinance of Military Government and the Japanese Criminal Code of "Crimes

[29] "Helmick to South Korean Interim Government" (November 20, 1947), in *Mi Kungmusŏng han'guk kwan'gye munsŏ / Internal Affairs of Korea, 1940–1949*, vol. 11, comp. Han'guk Charyo Kaebarwŏn (Seoul: Arŭm Ch'ulp'ansa, 1995), 193–94.

[30] The collaborator issue has continued to remain a problem even after the efforts of the No Mu-hyŏn (aka Roh Moo-hyun) administration (in office, 2003–2008) that organized to identify collaborators and punish the families of those who had wrongfully acquired property. The committee that was established for this purpose produced a multi-volume series regarding the history of collaboration and the Koreans who were deemed guilty of having collaborated with their country's colonial subjugators: Ch'inil P'anminjok Haengwi Chinsang Kyumyŏng Wiwŏnhoe, ed., *Ch'inil panminjok haengwi kwan'gye saryojip* [Collection of documentary materials related to pro-Japanese collaboration activities], 16 vols. (Seoul: Ch'inil P'anminjok Haengwi Chinsang Kyumyŏng Wiwŏnhoe, 2007–2009). For a review of these efforts see Jeong-Chul Kim, "On Forgiveness and Reconciliation: Korean 'Collaborators' of Japanese Colonialism," in *Routledge Handbook of Memory and Reconciliation in East Asia*, ed. Mikyoung Kim (London: Routledge: 2016), 159–72.

[31] Department of Justice, *Selected Legal Opinions of the Department of Justice, United States Army Military Government in Korea,* Opinion #198, Box 3, Walter E. Monagan Papers, 1945–1948, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

concerning peace and good order," which were yet to be repealed. Specifically, it found the newspaper guilty of "publishing false and defamatory statements regarding Military Government" for the "purpose of disturbing public peace."[32]

USAMGIK's reliance on Japanese and International law to justify censorship of the Korean press contradicted the position held by the American Delegation at the Joint Commission meetings that it convened with its Soviet counterparts. Here the two sides were to lay the groundwork for forming a unified Korean provisional government. The Soviet Delegation demanded that Korean democratic parties and social organizations that wished to participate in the Joint Commission process provide undivided support for the Moscow Decision. It targeted the anti-trusteeship groups in the American zone whose protests often turned violent.[33] Members of the American Delegation, ignoring the fact that they practiced censorship within their own zone of occupation, argued that it was within the Korean people's right of freedom of speech to voice opposition without forfeiting their eligibility to participate in the Joint Commission process. Perhaps a more accurate reason for the U.S. refusal to accept the Soviet's demands was that doing so would have decimated the Korean extreme right wing that formed the core of the anti-trusteeship movement.

USAMGIK also obstructed the press's right to free speech. As a reporter for the *Chicago Sun*, Mark Gayn felt direct pressure during his three-week stay in southern Korea, when the U.S. administration attempted to limit his ability to report on the more controversial elements of the occupation. Even before Gayn's arrival, Hodge had voiced his disapproval of press activities in the general's report on the "Conditions in Korea." Just days after the USAMGIK's arrival in Seoul, the commanding officer criticized the press for what he believed was irresponsible behavior:

[32] Department of Justice, *Selected Legal Opinions of the Department of Justice, United States Army Military Government in Korea*, Opinion #239, Box 3, Walter E. Monagan Papers, 1945–1948, Hoover Institution Library & Archives. The article in question had reported that "People came to the City Hall to ask for rice, but got guns and beating instead."

[33] For Robinson's description of right-wing anti-trusteeship plans and activities, see 216–17 and 269–70.

> The newspaper correspondents covering Korea as a group have behaved badly. They arrived by air after landing, most of them from Japan with no knowledge of the local situation and without orientation took advantage of the American uniform to run rampant over the area, committing acts of personal misbehavior that I have forbidden troops to do. There is reason to believe that by open sympathies with Korean radicals some of them have incited Korean group leaders to greater efforts at agitation for overthrow of everything and to have the Koreans take over all functions immediately. Before they got any glimmer of conditions as they existed, they were highly critical of all policies of the nation, of GHQ and of this headquarters relating to the occupation. This latter condition is now rectifying itself slowly as they begin to see the picture. One group arrived by air one afternoon, filed stories that evening and left the next morning, feeling that they knew all about the Korean occupation.[34]

Mark Gayn, who arrived in Korea just a month later, confronted this hostile attitude throughout his three weeks in the country. Officials attempted to keep him from conversing with more controversial Korean personalities and direct him toward more favorable ones. They inhibited his travel throughout the territory and refused to cooperate with his attempts to interview USAMGIK personnel in order to address its shortcomings. Those Americans who agreed to cooperate had to do so clandestinely, and often off the record. However, at the end of his stay in Korea in early November 1946, Gayn makes an upbeat observation: "Among the things I learned in Korea was the fact that censorship—especially when it is aimed at concealing official blunders—will not work well or long with Americans. And I was as happy with this discovery as I was with the fact that I was able to get some of the story of Korea."[35]

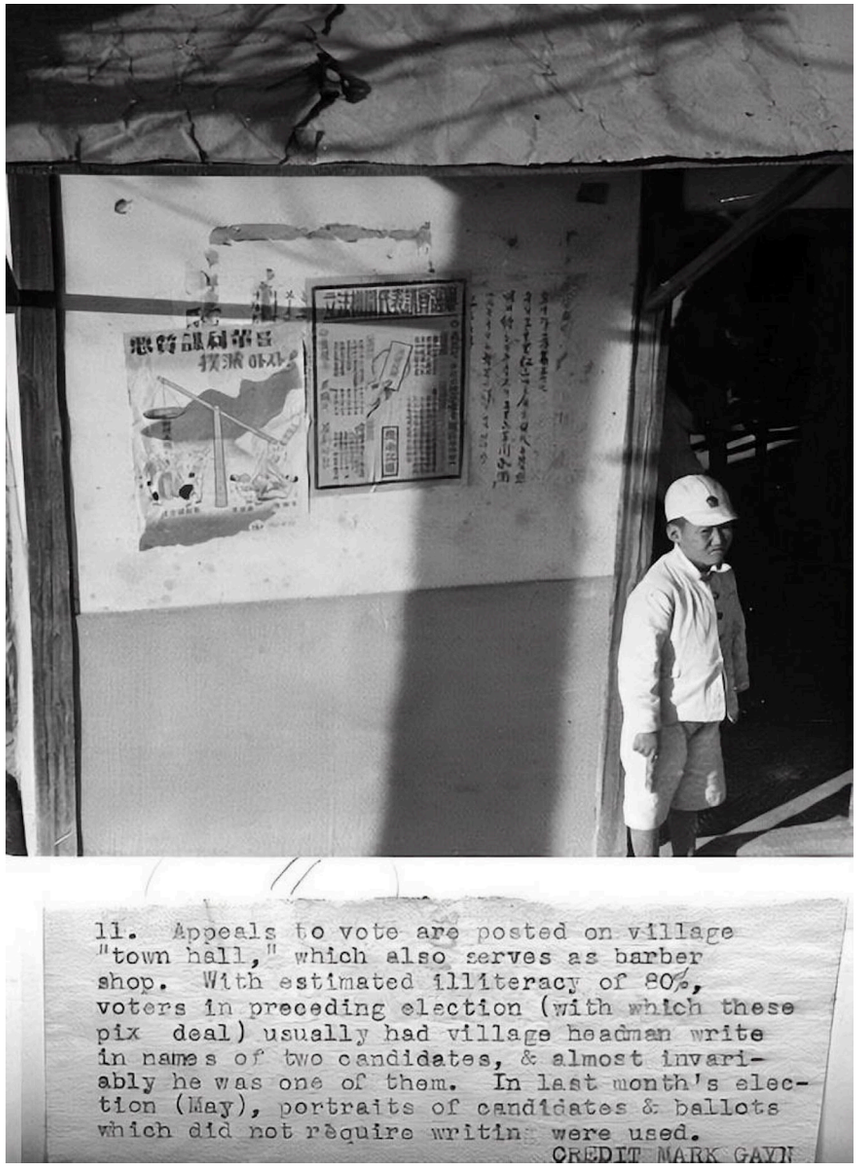
The election procedure USAMGIK introduced to the Korean people in October 1946 to seat Koreans in the Interim Legislative

[34] John R. Hodge, "Conditions in Korea" (September 13, 1945), in *Migunjŏnggi chŏngbo charyojip: Haji (John R. Hodge) munsŏjip: 1945.6–1948.8* [Collection of intelligence materials from the U.S. Military Government period: Hodge (John R. Hodge) Document Collection, June 1945–August 1948], vol. 3, comp. Asia Munhwa Yŏn'guso (Ch'unch'ŏn: Hallim Taehakkyo, Asia Munhwa Yŏn'guso, 1995), 7.
[35] Mark Gayn, "Japan Diary: Korea," in this volume, 439.

Assembly also lacked democratic process. This body was made up of 90 members—half elected by the Korean people and half appointed by U.S. officials who sought balance across the political spectrum in the Assembly. Gayn and Robinson both noted the trouble USAMGIK had in reading southern Korea's political landscape. They criticized its handling of the election process, particularly its treatment of Korea's moderate and extreme left-wing elements. Hŏ Hŏn (1885–1951) explained this to Gayn as a problem of the USAMGIK committing blunders over its "inability to see that most of the Korean leftists are nationalists and not Communists. Yet, all of them are being oppressed alike."[36] We saw an example of this earlier in Yun Il's failed attempt to get U.S. military officials in South Kyŏngsang Province to support patriotic Koreans instead of those who collaborated with the Japanese. Yun opened his statement by acknowledging that Koreans felt "obliged" to the Americans for their values of "liberty and peace" and their faith in "international virtue," before attempting to suggest ways that it might correct some of the administration's problems—advice that a U.S. official dismissed as "communist 'double talk.'"[37] Americans summarily pigeonholed potentially constructive ideas of left-leaning moderate Koreans, such as Yŏ Un-hyŏng, as Soviet influenced and leftist to the extreme.

This attitude was reflected in the results of the October 1946 elections, lauded as the first free elections ever to be held in Korea. The occasion presented a golden opportunity for the USAMGIK to sell democracy to the Korean people. However, once elections were scheduled and held, all of the leftist candidates were either in prison or in hiding, and unable to participate, which skewed the results. Mark Gayn quotes Carl V. Bergstrom (1905–1962), Home Affairs Advisor to the Provincial Government of South Kyŏngsang Province, saying that this made it the "proper time for the rightists to hold the elections."[38] Robinson quotes from a letter that the Chairman of the Southern Korean Interim Legislative Assembly (Namjosŏn Kwado Ippŏbŭiwŏn),

[36] Ibid., 359.
[37] Marginal note in the translation of Yun Il's article of October 25, 1945 (see p. 455, footnote 27).
[38] Carl V. Bergstrom, quoted in Gayn, "Japan Diary: Korea," 391.



(Fig. 29) One of Mark Gayn's heretofore unpublished Korea photos from 1946 with his sharp analytical cutline. (See also Gayn, p. 411.)

Kim Kyu-sik (aka Kimm Kiusic, 1881–1950), sent to Hodge that addressed flaws in the election process. Here Kim advised that due to "police investigations there was no chance for the leftist members in

the elections. As a result, no competent patriot was elected. The results of the elections have produced impressions of an undemocratic nature and have caused disappointment to the people."[39] He appealed for the elections to be invalidated and held anew.

Mark Gayn, who had more intimate contacts among local Koreans, was able to report on the electoral process at a more personal level to uncover fundamental problems in it. He found, for example, that many people did not even know that the elections were being held. And many of those who cast ballots, Gayn discovered, were under the influence of conservative village headmen, as revealed in a discussion he had with illiterate farmers.

> Gayn: "How then did you write in the names of your candidates in the election?"
> Farmers: "Others wrote the names in for us."
> Gayn: "Was the headman one of the men who helped you?"
> Farmers: "Yes, he helped everyone."
> Gayn: "Was he himself elected?"
> They all caught on. They laughed and said, "Yes."[40]

Police law enforcement practices also relied on undemocratic measures, mostly to elicit confessions. Due to the record of police collaboration with the Japanese authorities, often at the people's expense, policemen who were largely trained under Japanese colonial rule, faced considerable difficulty gaining the respect and acceptance of the Korean people even if they acted ethically. Their actions under USAMGIK, as both Gayn and Robinson attest, were often even more brutal. Their treatment of fellow Koreans frequently involved torture to elicit confessions, even false confessions. Gayn gives us this example:

> In a village not far from [Seoul], sixty-two men were arrested on the charge of plotting to attack a police station. Among them was a doctor. The other day, the doctor's relatives finally got to an influential American officer and persuaded him to drive out to the jail and check the reports of brutal treatment. He did. He found the doctor dead of torture.

[39] Robinson, "Betrayal of a Nation," 211.
[40] Gayn, "Japan Diary: Korea," 411.

> Another man died later, with his face smashed to a pulp. The third had his back broken.[41]

Hodge brushed off this incident when it was reported to him, saying simply that it was the way "police have traditionally operated in the Orient. What can we do?"[42] Gayn took a particular interest in following the actions of Korean thugs that had formed into paramilitary police teams to "assist" the regular police force. He devoted considerable attention to the actions of a right-wing youth organization, which he identifies as the "Great Korea Young Men's Association."[43]

The idea of trusteeship emerged out of a concern that national peoples just released from foreign occupation, like the Koreans, were incapable of forming a democratic government without the guidance of developed nations, and that, without this assistance they would simply repeat incompetent practices that had led to their colonization. This process assumed, however, that the Allied occupiers would be capable of guiding the newly liberated people to sovereignty. Both accounts included here strongly suggest that USAMGIK was not up to this task, pointing to its lack of knowledge of Korea, its failure to practice democratic principles in its governance of southern Korea, as well as its mounting differences with the Soviet occupiers to the north. Richard Robinson warned of this as early as March 1946. In a report he authored in response to a public opinion survey that USAMGIK had recently completed, he noted the survey's results showing that the majority of Koreans favored an increase in government control over their economy in regard to land ownership and large industry. His suggestions for reform required a clear understanding of democracy, which he believed to be

> predicated on four concepts; (1) the obedience of the State to the will of the majority, (2) adequate political machinery to make that will effective, (3) the restraint of any force or violence or threat of such which would make that will ineffective, and (4) the consideration and safeguard of the rights and freedoms of individuals and minority groups; *and further, that democracy prescribes no particular political structure or economic system*.[44]

[41] Unidentified member of an American–Korean commission on police brutality, ibid., 419.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Gayn refers to the Great Korea Democratic Young Men's Association (Taehan Minju Ch'ŏngnyŏn Ch'ong Tongmaeng). See his October 20, 1946 diary entry, 362–68, and Robinson's observations in his "Betrayal," 186–87, 193–94.

Among his suggestions were the idea that the United States must refrain from prescribing a particular economic system on the Korean people, but rather to assure them that a system will be established "to the will of the people." This requires USAMGIK striving to "prevent *any* group from exercising control by force and violence, now, or ... in the foreseeable future." He further advised that USAMGIK "stop using such words as 'communism,' 'socialism' and 'democracy' without making certain that those to whom we speak know about *what* we speak; and that we stop using them in a manner which leads people to believe that we consider democracy to be necessarily incompatible with, and comparable to, socialism and communism."[45] He made these suggestions based on the assumption that "Military Government is interested in creating good will for itself so as to make more possible and probable the advancement of democratic ideals in the Korean mind."[46] As time progressed Robinson's understanding that USAMGIK's policy was advancing in a very undemocratic way, so much so as to encourage his drafting of his rather critical manuscript, "Betrayal of a Nation."

A Question of Culpability

As a warning of the potential consequences of a U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq, almost two decades ago President George W. Bush's (in office 2001–2009) Secretary of State Colin Powell (1937–2021) invoked the Pottery Barn rule—you break it, you own it. "You will own all [the people's] hopes, aspirations and problems. You'll own

[44] Richard D. Robinson, "Suggested MG Public Relations Policy" (March 18, 1946), reprinted in *Haebang chŏnhusa charyojip*, 1: *Migunjŏng chunbi charyo* [Collection of historical materials from before and after the liberation, 1: Preparatory materials by the U.S. Military Government], comp. Yi Kil-sang (Seoul: Wŏnju Munhwasa, 1992), 381.
[45] Ibid., 382.
[46] Ibid., 381.

it all."[47] The U.S. lacked this sense of ownership during its occupation of Korea and it has been broken ever since. The texts published herein indicate that the Truman administration, which embarked on a mission that divided the Korean Peninsula and administered the southern half, lacked a sense of responsibility for its actions in Korea at that time.

Although Mark Gayn and Richard Robinson may not have employed Powell's stark rhetoric in their criticisms of the USAMGIK administration of southern Korea, the broken pot metaphor does ring true throughout their accounts. U.S. fingerprints can be found on the earliest events of this history, even before the arrival of occupation forces. In addition to being unprepared for the operation, the U.S. staffed the operation with incompetent people, who in turn employed incompetent people to perform their mission. After having taken the lead in insisting that Korea required a post-liberation occupation from as early as March 1943,[48] the U.S. found itself in a position of being unprepared to assume this responsibility in August 1945. Thus, the arrival of U.S. occupation forces on the peninsula was delayed for weeks, allowing the Japanese to continue the administration of Korea even after their defeat.[49] The continuation of Japanese rule during the first few weeks of the postwar period established the tone of U.S. rule, as seen in its favoritism toward conservative elements in Korean politics.

[47] Colin Powell, quoted in Bob Woodward, *Plan of Attack* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004), 150.

[48] The earliest mention I could find of President Roosevelt advocating trusteeship for Korea was during Roosevelt's discussion with Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden (1897–1977) during the British official's March 1943 visit to Washington. Herbert Feis, *Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin: The War They Waged and the Peace They Sought*, 2nd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), 124.

[49] Soon after the Japanese Emperor announced Japan's surrender in August 1945, Japanese officials in Korea established connections with the U.S. 24th Corps then preparing to depart Okinawa for the occupation of southern Korea. Between September 1 and 3, this U.S. Army Corps and the Japanese communicated seventeen and eighteen messages respectively. See Folder "Repatriation and Transfer of Control to US," RG 554, Box 33, National Archives and Records Administration. See also Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War: Liberation and the Emergence of Separate Regimes, 1945–1947* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 127–28.

The Soviet Union, as well, found itself ill-prepared for its duties in the north. Robinson is quick to assure his readers that his emphasis on the mistakes that the U.S. made in southern Korea does not excuse the failures of Soviet rule in northern Korea. Both superpower occupiers share responsibility for the predicaments that the Korean people came to face. As he explains:

> There is no doubt that the Soviet administration was harsh and unjust in much that it did. Being no apologist for the Soviet Union, I make that charge at the outset. With the same breath, however, I would hasten to condemn the American administration in South Korea on the same basis and almost as vigorously. Both regimes offended a democrat's sense of justice and humanity, not to mention intelligence.[50]

The USAMGIK rivaled its Soviet counterpart in its unwillingness to take responsibility for its shortcomings. Gayn would no doubt have agreed with Robinson's conclusion that "[m]istakes were rarely admitted to anyone."[51] This is particularly distressing, given that, across the sea in Japan, U.S. efforts are remembered for their contributions to the postwar success of Korea's erstwhile enemy.

Soviet–U.S. relations had deteriorated well before the two states took on the responsibilities of occupying a divided peninsula, and there was little to suggest that relations would improve once each settled into its administration. The 38th parallel, which the U.S. designated as the line of division, soon came to resemble a border where "unauthorized" crossings from either side, even by accident, came to be viewed as infiltrations. A May 1946 United States report criticized Soviet activities at the 38th parallel that included patrolling and establishing roadblocks south of 38°N, and inventorying and coercing civilian contributions of rice. This even extended to an incident involving the Soviets "hauling down a U.S. and Korean flag and tearing them up."[52]

[50] Robinson, "Betrayal of a Nation," 279.

[51] Ibid., 67.

[52] United States Army Forces in Korea, *Intelligence Summary Northern Korea (May 6, 1946), in HQ, USAFIK Intelligence Summary Northern Korea (1945.12.1–1947.3.31)*, vol. 1 (Ch'unch'ŏn: Hallim Taehakkyo, Asia Munhwa Yŏn'guso, 1989), 144.

People on the move:

(Fig. 30) Pusan Harbor, October 1945. Before boarding a ship, a Japanese soldier is searched in order to be repatriated to Japan. (Photo: Buker)

(Fig. 31) Kaesŏng refugee camp, May 1947, Koreans from northern Korea migrate southwards. (Photo: Warren T. Warnecke)

USAMGIK also pressured the Soviets on numerous occasions to assume more responsibility in Japanese repatriation efforts. Yet, Japanese trying to repatriate to their homeland from Manchuria and northern Korea were forced to cross the Korean peninsula to find passage back to Japan from the peninsula's southern-most ports.[53]

The two sides negotiated to allow for the exchange of goods, specifically chemical fertilizer from the North and rice from the South;

[53] Mizuno Naoki estimates that the remains of as many as 33,500 Japanese are scattered throughout North Korea. Mizuno Naoki and Mark E. Caprio, "Stories from Beyond the Grave: Investigating Japanese Burial Grounds in North Korea," *Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* 12, no. 9 (March 2, 2014): 6. Online: https://apjjf.org/2014/12/9/Mizuno-Naoki/4085/article.html.

but to no avail. Robinson casts blame on the U.S. for these failures. Having to import grain to feed starving Koreans south of the 38th parallel due to USAMGIK's inability to come to terms with the Soviets, he calculates, came at a much greater cost than having to pay northern Korea to obtain the fertilizer the South needed to grow rice locally.[54] The formation of the Joint Commission initially brought hope that the U.S. and Soviet Union together could work to resolve the Korean problem and put the North and the South on the road to reunification. This, of course, was not to be. Their failure to reach an agreement, instead, led to the formation of separate Korean governments and, within a few years, brutal confrontation between the two on the battlefield.

Gayn and Robinson also blame the Korean people, as well. They are particularly critical of the extremist elements in southern Korea's political landscape that were obsessed with impeding moderate forces, which offered better possibilities for reconciliation with the North, so they would remain weak and insignificant. While both the extreme left and right share blame, it was the latter that succeeded in grasping the reins of power in the South, largely through the support of the police, the emerging military elements, and eventually USAMGIK. As Robinson explains, the emergence of right-wing power was the product of unwise USAMGIK decisions, which limited its choices.

> [S]o many Korean politicos had been alienated in the early days of the occupation by roughshod American action in support of Kim Ku and [Syngman] Rhee that change was difficult. The extreme right wing was the only political faction friendly to the Americans. All other factions had been snubbed by General Hodge on one occasion or another. The sincerity of the Americans was openly doubted by the middle-of-the-roaders and moderate left-wingers due to the forced breakup of Yŏ Un-hyŏng's Korean People's Republic, the apparent sanction of the many excesses committed by the Korean police, and the appointment of many questionable characters to Military Government administrative posts. The Korean communists, of course, maintained a hostile attitude

[54] For U.S. negotiations with the Soviets to trade rice for fertilizer see Robinson's "Betrayal of a Nation," 128–33 and 153–54.

toward the Americans from start to finish as matter of principle.[55]

Attempts by moderate groups to the left and right of center, and particularly by Kim Kyu-sik and Yŏ Un-hyŏng, to unite in cooperation never received the support they needed to make significant gains in the post-liberation politics of southern Korea. Extremist politics define much of the three-year occupations of both halves of the peninsula, politics supported by U.S. and Soviet administrations, but also pushed through manipulative efforts of certain Koreans, as well.

Finally, the defeated Japanese colonial occupiers also share responsibility for Korea's failure to successfully emerge as a unified state after its liberation from colonial rule. Many of the divisions that plagued wartime Koreans in exile carried over from the differences in their approaches to combating harsh Japanese rule. These differences prevented post-liberated Korea's smooth development as a state. In addition, Japan's economic policies in the last days of the war laid the foundation for rampant inflation. In a September 1945 report on "Conditions in Korea," Hodge criticized the colonial Bank of Chōsen (Chōsen Ginkō) for printing and distributing several billion yen following Japan's surrender for Japanese preparing to repatriate.[56] This contributed to surging inflation that gripped southern Korea in the immediate aftermath of the war.

A Third Perspective: George M. McCune on the United States Occupation

Mark Gayn and Richard Robinson both offer firsthand observations that are critical of the U.S. administration of southern Korea. As Richard Robinson notes, his work "is a reconstruction of the more complete version" that he felt compelled to destroy prior to his departure from Korea in 1947 "to avoid personal incarceration."[57] Fortunately for us, he was able to redraft it on the freighter that carried him to Turkey. For decades it remained an unpublished manuscript—except

[55] Ibid., 173.
[56] Hodge, "Conditions in Korea" (September 13, 1945), 3.
[57] Robinson, "Betrayal of a Nation," 68.

in Korean translation[58]—with very limited readership. Gayn, who retreated back to Japan after his stay, incorporated his Korea report in his book *Japan Diary*, which he published in 1948.

Another critical observer, the Korean historian, George M. McCune (1908–1948), assessed post-liberation Korean developments under U.S. administration, as well, but from his distant office at UC Berkeley. Today, McCune is best known for creating a useful Romanization system for the Korean language in collaboration with Harvard University Professor of Japanese Studies, Edwin O. Reischauer (1910–1990). The son of Presbyterian missionaries, McCune was born and raised in the city of P'yŏngyang. He remained in Korea until it was time to attend university, when he traveled to the United States. He completed his doctorate—writing his dissertation on "Korean Relations with China and Japan, 1800–1864"—and then joined the history department at Occidental College. After the United States entered the Pacific War, he left academia to serve in government as a Korean affairs expert, first with the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), then with the Board of Economic Warfare, and finally with the State Department. After Japan's defeat, he returned to academia but soon succumbed to ill health at the tender age of forty. His knowledge of Korean language, society, and history placed McCune in an ideal position to observe and comment on the peninsula both during and after the war.

While working in government services McCune assumed a major role in Korea's postwar planning. His drafts of position papers on Korea's future that he and others authored, transcripts of interview reports conducted with people returning from Korea, along with many other interesting items, are housed in the George M. McCune Collection at the University of Hawai'i, Manoa's Center for Korean Studies. In February 1946, after leaving government service, he published a position paper assessing the accomplishments of the U.S. Military Administration to that date. Written just prior to the start of U.S.–Soviet negotiations in the recently formed Joint Commission, McCune

[58] Rich'adŭ D. Robinsŭn, *Migugŭi paeban: Migunjŏnggwa Namjosŏn* [America's betrayal: The U.S. Military Government and southern Korea], transl. Chŏng Mi-ok (Seoul: Kwahakkwa Sasang, 1988).

conveys his doubts about Korea's left and right politics coming together, unless they are "given genuine freedom to solve their own practical political problems." While he saw a "hopeful sign" in the guarantee of Korean independence by the involved parties, he felt that the Joint Commission would have to "make allowances for minority opinions," rather than seek "complete agreement among the Korean leaders," if a sovereign Korean state were to prove successful. He criticized the United States' administration for its tendency to "drift without definite direction," an unfortunate situation in that he saw USAMGIK as a "testing ground of American postwar policies in the Far East." He believed that Commanding Officer Hodge was first a victim of circumstance who may have been "prepared militarily but not politically or economically,"[59] and second, only minimally equipped with the direction and personnel to carry out his important task. Hodge's entourage lacked personnel with experience and knowledge in Korean affairs. McCune predicted that the failure of U.S.–Soviet meetings would come not from the reluctance of the superpowers to negotiate, but from their inability to understand Koreans. His critique of the U.S. perspective follows:

> Korea is still looked upon as a step child in high government circles in Washington. The lack of preparation in the War Department and State Department for the occupation of Korea reflected this attitude. And now, even after five months of occupation, there is as yet no move toward meeting the Korean problem with the emphasis and care which it deserves. The success of the Joint Soviet–American Commission is imperiled unless the Korean situation is more seriously evaluated in Washington.[60]

McCune's final point proved to be prophetic. In the end, the Soviet and American delegations could not agree on which groups to consult with to plan for Korea's future government. The meetings ended in October 1947 with few positive results. There the process died, and Koreans were denied the chance to contribute their views

[59] George M. McCune, "Occupation Politics in Korea," *Far Eastern Survey* 15, no.3 (February 13, 1946): 34.
[60] Ibid., 37.

directly to the Joint Commission. A later article by McCune in *Pacific Affairs*—itself under attack from the right—pinpoints the fundamental cause of Korea's travesty and argues that the hopeless outcome had been predictable from the start:

> [T]he lack of foresight that brought about the division of Korea (a liberated country) into two zones of occupation is hard to dismiss lightly; and the protracted occupation of a divided Korea by the military forces of two foreign powers, neither of which is governing with the consent of the governed, creates an intolerable situation. During the year and more since the occupation began, military rule has continued and the arbitrary division of the country has not been qualified in the least. Even as a temporary measure, foreign military control coupled with such a division would have been a serious blow to the Korean people; as an indefinite arrangement, it is an indefensible abrogation of justice.[61]

The U.S. and Soviets mostly heeded the voice of extreme right-wing groups that aimed to shut down the entire Moscow Decision process, which, of course, they eventually did. While the failure of the Joint Commission preceded the formal initiation of the Korean War by just under three years, relations between the two Koreas, now formed into formal states, continued to spiral into increased violence before escalating into full-scale war in June 1950.

As part of the legacy of the two occupations on the Korean peninsula, roughly 700,000 Koreans did not return to their ethnic homeland after liberation. Even well into the twenty-first century, the specter of "pro-Japanese" collaboration continues to haunt Korean society.[62] The accounts of Mark Gayn and Richard Robinson provide

[61] George M. McCune, "Korea: The First Year of Liberation," *Pacific Affairs* 20, no. 1 (March 1947): 4.
[62] For discussion on the difficulties that Koreans faced in returning to the peninsula after liberation, see Mark E. Caprio and Yu Jia, "Legislating Diaspora: The Contribution of Occupation-Era Administrations to the Preservation of Japan's Korean Community," in *Diaspora without Homeland: Being Korean in Japan*, eds. Sonia Ryang and John Lie (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 21–38. For the legacy of collaboration, see Caprio, "The Politics of Collaboration" and Kim, "On Forgiveness and Reconciliation," 165–66.

a window into how a mis-administered occupation in southern Korea contributed to this tragic legacy. In this light, U.S. involvement in post-liberation Korea recalls Colin Powell's broken-pottery analolgy,[63] even though he later helped launch the Iraq War—a preemptive war widely regarded as unwarranted. In the Korean case, the U.S. and other associated parties must assume responsibility for the tragic history that Koreans have been made to endure over the decades that followed their "liberation" from Japanese colonial rule. For now, it involves seeing the problems of the Korean Peninsula as having deeper roots than simply brinkmanship by "rogue" states that periodically threaten neighbors and the security of the region. The solution requires that the U.S. join with other associated states to realize their part in this history and take positive steps to lessen regional tensions and resolve longstanding problems.

[63] See Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 150.

Sprechen Sie Deutsch? Fascism in Korea

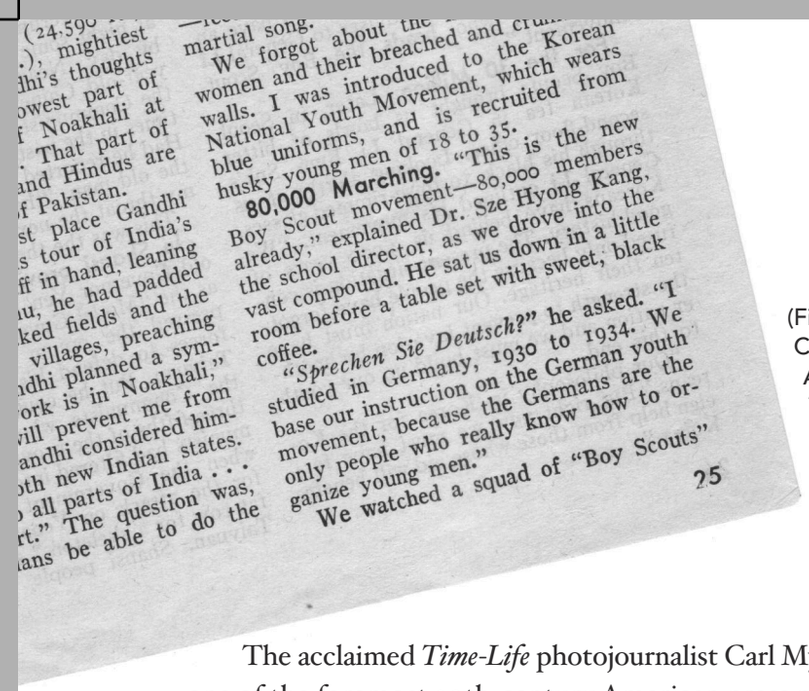
Frank Hoffmann

It is not true
that history
is being falsified
For the most part,
it truly
unfolded
false
I can attest to that:
I was there

— Erich Fried, "Die Engel der Geschichte"

The main discourse on fascism in Korea—kept at the margins of historiographic debate, despite decades of authoritarian rule in South Korea—dates back to a 1947 article. Between then and the publication of Fujii Takeshi's thought-provoking study *P'asijŭmgwa che-3 segyejuŭi saiesŏ* [Between fascism and Third-Worldism][1] in 2012, post-liberation Korean fascism and its youth organizations were typically portrayed as an ephemeral political movement advised and funded by the U.S. Army Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK). Fujii's study shifts the vantage point, explaining Korean fascism as a nativist political movement—a Third-Worldist framing of the extreme right. A kind of decolonized brainchild of pan-Asianism, this reframing seeks to distance itself from the Cold War's East–West divide between capitalism and communism.

[1] Hujii Tak'esi [Fujii Takeshi], *P'asijŭmgwa che-3 segyejuŭi saiesŏ: Chokch'ŏnggyeŭi hyŏngsŏnggwa mollagŭl t'onghae pon haebang 8-nyŏnsa* [Between fascism and Third-Worldism: An eight-year history of liberation viewed through the formation and fall of the Korean National Youth Corps]. Yŏkpi Han'gukhak yŏn'gu ch'ongsŏ, 34. 2nd ed. (Seoul: Yŏksa Pip'yŏngsa, 2016). The first edition appeared in 2012.



martial song.
We forgot about the
women and their breached and cru
walls. I was introduced to the Korean
National Youth Movement, which wears
blue uniforms, and is recruited from
husky young men of 18 to 35.

80,000 Marching.

Boy Scout movement—80,000 members
already," explained Dr. Sze Hyong Kang,
the school director, as we drove into the
vast compound. He sat us down in a little
room before a table set with sweet, black
coffee.

"*Sprechen Sie Deutsch?*" he asked. "I
studied in Germany, 1930 to 1934. We
base our instruction on the German youth
movement, because the Germans are the
only people who really know how to or-
ganize young men."

We watched a squad of "Boy Scouts"

25

(Fig. 32)
Carl Mydans, "Korea: A Scout Is Militant," *Time* magazine, June 30, 1947; detail.

The acclaimed *Time-Life* photojournalist Carl Mydans (1907–2004), one of the foremost 20th-century American press photographers who would also cover the Yŏsu–Sunch'ŏn Rebellion for *Life* magazine the following year and later produce the most striking images of the Korean War, published a short article in *Time* magazine. In that article (see fig. 32), just two years after Nazi Germany's defeat, Mydans draws a direct line from the state-run Nazi youth movement and its Hitler Youth (Hitlerjugend) to the USAMGIK-funded Korean National Youth Corps

(Fig. 33)
Carl Mydans' slide, documenting his visit to Suwŏn, May 27, 1947: Mydans (left) with his colleague Joseph Fromm (middle) and Korean fascist Kang Se-hyŏng at Hwasŏng Fortress.

(Chosŏn Minjok Ch'ŏngnyŏndan, aka Chokch'ŏng) under "General" Yi Pŏm-sŏk (1900–1972).[2] Gregory Henderson (1922–1988) and many U.S. Army G-2 reports explicitly rendered *minjok* as "racial" (hence "Korean Racial Youth Corps"), then standard, now politically incorrect—yet all too apt here.[3] The man who guides Mydans and his colleague Joseph

[2] See Carl Mydans "Korea: A Scout Is Militant," *Time* 49, no. 26 (June 30, 1947): 25–26, and his Yŏsu–Sunch'ŏn photo essay "Revolt in Korea: A New Communist Uprising Turns Men into Butchers," *Life* 25, no. 20 (November 15, 1948): 55–58.

[3] Back in 1990, Bruce Cumings, in his own swift overview on the topic, pointed out that the Korean National Youth Corps and other such youth groups were highly powerful *mass organizations* but remained "an unstudied phenomenon" (p. 194). Thirty-five years later, and despite hundreds of pages of USAMGIK G-2 military intelligence reports that document the formative role of right-wing youth groups and their sociopolitical, military, and terrorist activities in southern Korea, this is essentially still the case. Monica Kim's chapter on their crucial importance during the Korean War in her study *The Interrogation Rooms of the Korean War* is a commendable exception. This is complemented by shorter discussions in Sungik Yang's 2023 dissertation on "Korea's Fascist Moment" and Kornel Chang's 2025 study *A Fractured Liberation: Korea under US Occupation*. In Korea itself, Yi Sun-t'aek and Kim Si-hŭng published the first book on the topic in 1989—a very extensive study—which was later, in 2004, supplemented by a similarly extensive overview authored by Kim Haeng-sŏn. Also worth mentioning is Im Chong-myŏng's 1996 article on the relationship between the Korean National Youth Corps and USAMGIK. But apart from Fujii Takeshi's already mentioned book—his revised dissertation—and a few more articles and book chapters by him and others (Yi T'aek-sŏn and Ch'ae O-byŏng deserve mention), there is relatively little genuinely critical scholarship. A 2016 volume of interviews with former Korean National Youth Corps members, published alongside an exhibition catalog on the youth corps' Central Training Center in Suwŏn, leaves a disquieting aftertaste, suggesting that Suwŏn seeks to celebrate nearly anything historical as patriotic and glorious—even fascism.

See Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, vol. II, *The Roaring of the Cataract, 1947–1950* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), especially 193–203, 810–12; Monica Kim, *The Interrogation Rooms of the Korean War: The Untold History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019), 211–58, 391–96; Sungik Yang, "Korea's Fascist Moment: Liberation, War, and the Ideology of South Korean Authoritarianism, 1945–1979" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2023); Kornel Chang, *A Fractured Liberation: Korea under US Occupatio*n (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2025). Yi Sun-t'aek and Kim Si-hŭng, eds., *Taehan Min'guk kŏn'guk ch'ŏngnyŏn undongsa* [History of the youth movement during the founding period of the Republic of Korea] (Seoul: Kŏn'guk Ch'ŏngnyŏn Undong Hyŏbŭihoe, 1989); Kim Haeng-sŏn, *Haebang chŏngguk ch'ŏngnyŏn undongsa* [History of the liberation period youth movement] (Seoul: Sŏnin, 2004); Im Chong-myŏng, "Chosŏn Minjok Ch'ŏngnyŏndan (1946.10–1949.1) kwa Migunjŏngŭi 'changnae Han'gugŭi chido seryŏk' yangsŏng chŏngch'aek" [The Korean National Youth Corps (October 1946–January 1949)

Fromm (1920–2014) through Chokch'ŏng's headquarters, training camp, and historical sites in Suwŏn (see fig. 33) is Kang Se-hyŏng (1899–1960), rendered in his own transcription as Dr. Sze Hyong Kang. Nicknamed "Korea's Hitler" in the early years of the republic, the self-styled Berlin University doctor of philosophy (a degree he never earned), soon to become a parliamentarian holding several ministerial posts, seems at first glance to be the most obvious direct link between the Hitler Youth and the post-liberation fascist youth movement in Korea. But he was not alone. Yi Pŏm-sŏk himself, Chokch'ŏng's founder and the republic's future prime minister, was equally blunt about the main sources of inspiration for his militaristic, racist weltanschauung. "After Auschwitz, to write a poem is barbaric,"[4] Adorno's dictum ran—a watchword across Europe. Yet halfway around the globe, the soon-to-be South Korean prime minister cast his country's youth in Hitler's ethno-fascist mold:

> We will remember that in Germany Hitler was compelled to initiate a movement to promote racial purity. But due to the complex historical circumstances surrounding the formation of the German nation, this goal was essentially unattainable.

Omitting the Holocaust, Yi continues in his essay dated June 1947:

> Despite this, the expulsion of the Jews had, in fact, a profound impact on the nation's solidarity. This single instance alone exemplifies how precious and important the purity of blood is, emphasizing the necessity for us to cherish and fully embrace this advantage ourselves.[5]

and its relationship with USAMGIK's 'Future Leaders of South Korea' training policy], *Han'guksa yŏngu* 95 (December 1996): 179–211; Suwŏn Pangmulgwan, *Haebang konggan Suwŏn, kŭ ttŭgŏun hamsŏng: 2016 Suwŏn pangmulgwan t'ŭkpyŏl kihoekchŏn* [Suwŏn after independence, the passionate shouts: 2016 Suwŏn Museum special exhibition] (Suwŏn: Suwŏn Pangmulgwan, 2016); Yu Sang-hŭi, Yi Sang-nok, Chŏng Tae-hun, et al., *Chosŏn Minjok Ch'ŏngnyŏndan Chungang Hullyŏnso* [Korean National Youth Corps Central Training Center] (Suwŏn: Suwŏn Pangmulgwan, 2016); Hujii Tak'esi [Fujii Takeshi], "Suwŏn Chokch'ŏng Chungang Hullyŏnsowa sae chŏngch'i-juch'eŭi saengsan" [The Korean National Youth Corps Suwŏn Central Training Center and the production of new political subjects], *Suwŏn yŏksa munhwa yŏn'gu* 6 (2016): 119–49.

[4] Theodor W. Adorno, *Prismen: Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft* [Prisms: Cultural criticism and society] (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1955), 31. The quote is from 1949.

[5] Yi Pŏm-sŏk, *Minjokkwa ch'ŏngnyŏn* [A people and its youth], Yi Pŏm-sŏk nonsŏljip, no. 1 (Seoul: Paeksusa, 1948), 30.

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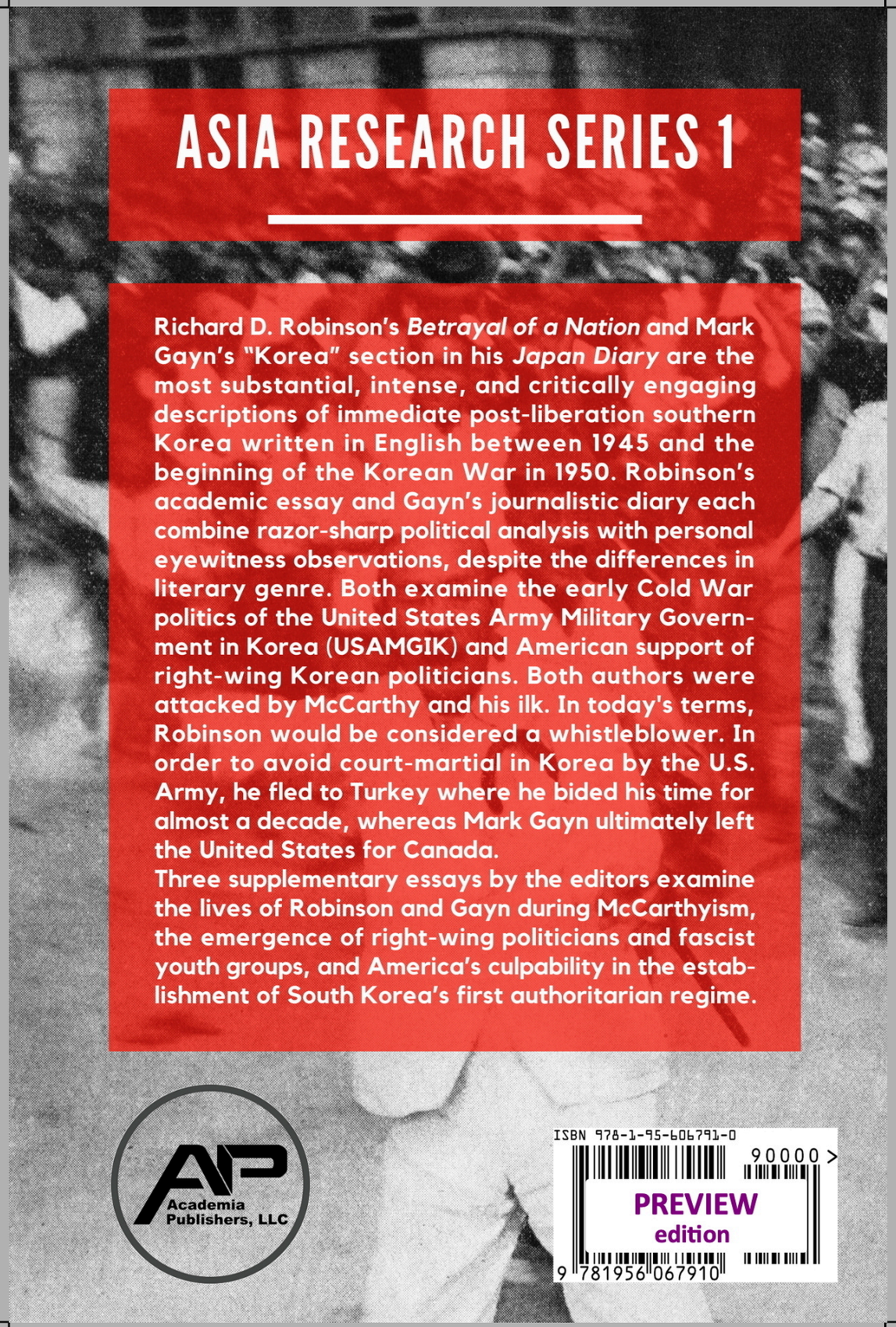
Mark Gayn (1909–1981) was born in Manchuria as the oldest of three sons in a Russian–Jewish family. He grew up in a small settlement at a Manchurian railway station close to the Mongolian border, but then moved with his family to Harbin, and later to Shanghai, witnessing revolutions, hunger, and war. In 1929 he left China to study journalism in the United States. *The Washington Post* then hired him as a special correspondent and he returned to Shanghai. During the war, back in New York, he wrote for several liberal papers, and in 1943 he became a U.S. citizen. In June 1945 Gayn and other journalists were arrested by the FBI for having used classified government documents for their work—the so-called Amerasia case that became the foundation for McCarthyism. In December 1945 Gayn settled in Tokyo as the *Chicago Sun*'s bureau chief for Japan and Korea, and in October and November the following year he visited Korea. His journalistic *Japan Diary* that dealt with postwar U.S. occupation politics, published in 1948, became a bestseller. Because of the continuous hostilities during the McCarthy era, he relocated to Canada in late 1952, where he worked for the *Toronto Daily Star* and other newspapers and magazines.

Frank Hoffmann studied Korean studies and art history at the University of Tübingen. He continued his research on modern Korean art and intellectual history at Harvard University and taught at IIC in

San Francisco and Hamburg University, among other institutions. For several years, he served as a co-owner and moderator of the academic Moderated Korean Studies Internet Discussion List. He is currently a senior IT systems administrator at UC Berkeley and the founder of Academia Publishers, LLC. His articles have appeared in specialized journals such as the *Korea Journal* and *Korean Studies*, as well as acclaimed popular magazines, including *Art in America*. He also compiled *The Harvard Korean Studies Bibliography* (Harvard University Press, 2000) and is the author of *Berlin Koreans and Pictured Koreans* (Praesens, 2015). His latest publication delves into fin-de-siècle Hamburg and the history of Korean art history (forthcoming).

John Merrill is a visiting scholar at the Institute of Korean Studies, George Washington University. He retired from the State Department as chief of INR's Northeast Asia Division. Merrill has taught at Georgetown University, George Washington University, Lafayette College, and the University of Delaware. He is the author of *Korea: The Peninsular Origins of the War* (1989) as well as numerous articles, reviews, and op-eds. His recent pieces include "Inside the White House: The Future of US–DPRK Policy" (*Korea Observer*, Winter 2016), as well as op-eds and articles for *SisaIN*, *Tonga ilbo*, and *Nikkei Asian Review*.

Richard D. Robinson (1921–2009) was trained as an officer for the future administration of the U.S. occupation forces in preparation for Japan's surrender. In November 1945, he was sent to Korea, where he served as the officer-in-charge of the U.S. Army Military Government in Korea's (USAMGIK) Office of Public Opinion. In his second year there, now as a civilian working for USAMGIK, he became one of a handful of historians working on an official history of the U.S. occupation of southern Korea. Witnessing the army's support for ultra right-wing Korean politicians, the suppression of democracy and abuses on all levels of the administration, as well as the censorship of the official history he worked on, he published a critical article in the popular *Nation* magazine and wrote a book-length alternative occupation history, "Betrayal of a Nation." Being investigated by the army for his article and for speaking out in support of Korean democracy, he fled the country in the summer of 1947, then stayed on in Turkey for almost a decade, becoming a Turkish area specialist. After his return to the United States in 1956 Robinson worked as a lecturer at the Harvard Graduate School of Business, and later became Professor of Management at the Alfred P. Sloan School of Management at MIT (1962–86). He authored or edited about twenty books and numerous articles.



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