



Aegukka - National Anthem of North Korea

PEOPLES SCHOOL FOR MARXIST-LENINIST STUDIES™



Founding of the DPRK

PSMLS 9/8/26



What we'll be learning today:

- Liberating Korea: Above the 38th Parallel
- Occupying Korea: Below the 38th Parallel
- Rebuilding after the Korean War



Liberating Korea: Above the 38th Parallel



Liberation

When the Japanese capitulated on August 15, 1945, Soviet troops were already on Korean soil. The bright new day for which Korean patriots had worked, organised and fought for 40 years was about to dawn. Overnight the first great symbol of freedom appeared. Throughout Korea in every town and village, Koreans discarded their drab, ungainly Japanese-imposed dress and appeared in their graceful, snow-white summer garments in a spontaneous salute to liberation. The commander of the Soviet forces, Guard Colonel-General Chistiakov, captured the imagination of all when he issued the first proclamation of the Soviet Army in Korea. It read like a poem, an answer to the hopes that beat so strongly in Korean hearts for so long.

TO THE KOREAN PEOPLE!

“The Soviet Army and Allied forces have driven the Japanese plunderers from Korea. Korea has become a country of freedom. However, this is only the first step in a new era of Korean history. An abundant fruitful orchard is the result of man’s effort and foresight. Therefore the happiness of the Korean people will only be achieved by the heroic efforts that you Korean people will exert. Remember those bitter days that you have suffered under Japanese rule. The very stones testify to your sufferings. You are all aware of the fact that the Japanese could afford to live in lofty, spacious pavilions, well-clad, well-fed, despising Koreans and humiliating Korean customs and culture. Such a past of slavery will never be repeated. Like a nightmare, this humiliating past has now disappeared forever.”



TO THE KOREAN PEOPLE! Cont.

“Korean people! Remember you have your future happiness in your own hands. You have attained liberty and independence. Now everything is up to you. The Soviet Army has paved the way and created the conditions for you Korean people, for the free and creative ventures you are bound to embark on. Koreans must make themselves the creators of their own happiness. The owners of mills and factories, the merchants and manufacturers will restore the factories, mills and enterprises which the Japanese have wrecked. They will create new enterprises for production. The headquarters of the Soviet Army is fully prepared to safeguard in every possible way the property of all manufacturing facilities and ensure their normal Functioning.”

“Workers of Korea! Display your heroism and creative effort through your industry which is one of the most splendid characteristics of your race. Those who exert the most appropriate efforts in furthering the economic and cultural development of Korea by means of their own efforts will become the patriots and honoured citizens of Korea. Long live the Korean People!”



Korea celebrates Independence Day on Aug. 15, known as "Gwangbokjeol," which literally translates into "bringing back the light" in Korean



Soviet Forces Reach Korea

Under a war-time agreement between the Great Powers, the Soviet Army was to enter Korea to accept the surrender of the Japanese troops north of the 38th parallel; American forces were to accept the surrender south of the parallel. There was fairly heavy fighting in a few places when Soviet troops broke through into Korea. There was a severe battle at Chongjin, in which Soviet fleet units and planes took part, and there was vigorous resistance at other scattered points along the Soviet and Manchurian borders with Korea. How liberation came can best be described by recounting one of hundreds of eye-witness accounts from Koreans north of the parallel. Some accounts were more dramatic, some more prosaic but what happened in the little village of Tonglim, eight miles north of the city of Sunchon and about 40 miles north of Pyongyang, seems typical of what happened in villages throughout North Korea. The Japanese in Tonglim knew by the early morning of the 15th that Soviet forces were in Korea and that Japan had capitulated, but the villagers first heard of it around 3 p.m. There was a skeleton youth organisation in the village and an underground representative of the Youth Association. As it was the only organisation of any sort, it took the lead in the events which followed.



*Welcome Celebration for the Red
Army in Pyongyang on 14
October 1945*



Symbols of Japanese Oppression are Overtaken

Soviet troops were still fighting along the Yalu and at Chongjin. The Japanese had a full division of troops and air units at Pyongyang. At the meeting's close, however, the entire population of the village marched to the Japanese police station and after a short struggle in which the police chief fired on the crowd the Japanese were disarmed and locked up. The police station was taken over and a Korean guard was placed in charge. From there the crowd went to the village administration headquarters and dealt with the Japanese and puppets whom the Japanese had installed there. Korean flags were hoisted over the police station and other former Japanese offices. The local symbols of Japanese oppression were in the hands of the people by midnight. By next morning, plans had been approved for taking over the administration, registering all Japanese property and preventing sabotage and establishing contact with other villages and the district centre. For the next few days Tonglim was a bustling bee-hive of committees and patriotic young people working almost 24 hours a day.



American Soldiers Lowering the Japanese Flag at the Former Japanese General Government Building, Seoul



The Self-Administration Committee



Seoul, Korea: October 1945 - Streetcars were running crowded as almost no Koreans were driving private cars. Some of the streets were quite rough

Within three days the following tasks had been carried out. The village school was open again with lessons conducted in Korean, from Korean text-books. This was of course not organised from Tonglim alone, but by working with other village committees. There were no Korean text-books as they had been banned and destroyed by the Japanese, but teachers, writers, historians and workers got together to produce within three days mimeographed sheets which could serve as text-books until policies and publishing houses could be organised. A village Self-Administration Committee had been set up as the local administrative organ. The rural bank was open for business again. The post office was also functioning and a bus service was organised between Tonglim and the nearest town; the train service between Tonglim and Sunchon was also restored. The Tonglim Self-Administration Committee had established contact with other villages in the district and elected a district Self-Administration Committee. Every scrap of Japanese property in the district from factories down to pencils and note-paper and stocks of seed, were carefully registered in the Committee's register. Guards were posted in factories and buildings as a precaution against sabotage.



A Smooth Take-Over of Power

When the committee members of Tonglim had time to draw breath at the end of the first three days, they and their fellow citizens could survey with pride what had been done. Their faith in themselves was justified. There were those amongst them who doubted whether Koreans were capable of organising and administering. For 40 years they had been educated to believe that Koreans were an inferior people who had to be ruled by a “superior” race. The general population within those first few days of liberation could now see that Koreans could organise and run their lives without outside interference. The encouraging words of General Chistiakov, which had reached them by this time, took on added meaning. This revived faith in their future was enormously strengthened too, by the knowledge that they would have powerful support from the Soviet Union, that such support was already on the horizon and would soon be felt throughout the land. The fact that such a smooth take-over of power could be accomplished within a few days and that the day-to-day administration of the country was running smoothly in Korean hands, was a heavy blow for the national traitors and top collaborators whose excuse for treachery had always been that Koreans were an inferior, ignorant people incapable of running their own affairs. Village and district committees were quickly set up by mutual agreement between the various political and social organisations which quickly sprang into being, the Peasants’ Associations, the Youth, and Women’s Leagues, the Communist Party and others. The Self-Administration Committees had the complete support of the people – or they were quickly changed until they did. The only people banned from taking part in the Committees or in taking over responsible administrative tasks under the Committees’ control were the out-and-out collaborationists. In general it was the young people that played the leading role, but their selfless energy inspired the whole population.



The Soviet Soldiers and the Korean People

The majority of the population knew very little about Communism. In the first days after liberation, the pro-Japanese collaborators spread slanderous stories about what would happen when the Communists – in the shape of the Soviet Army – spread over the country. But doubts and fears dissolved like snow on a hot stove when Soviet troops actually appeared. The only type of army the people knew was the Japanese Army – an inhuman, cold and brutal machine that ground Korean dignity and individuality into the ground. Officers were aloof and unapproachable; the troops were themselves treated like animals and passed on the inhuman treatment they received to the Korean people. When Japanese troops entered a town or village, the people withdrew behind closed doors. *“When the huge columns of Soviet troops moved through Tonglim,” one old white-bearded resident stated, “we thought, ‘this is not an army. These are real people.’ Well, it’s true, at first we were a little afraid. They looked so different to any people we had seen....But those soldiers from the first moment talked and laughed with the people. Within an hour or two, they were playing with the children and were using some Korean words they had learned on their way down from the north. And the children were trying to stumble over Russian words. When we saw them, we remembered the Soviet general’s speech. We knew it was right what he said about a rich new life ahead of us. We knew Communism must be all right and that we had powerful new friends.”*



A Young Kim Il Sung (Front Right) was a Major in the Soviet Red Army, serving in the far eastern brigade where he would be part of the local Korean Anti-Imperial resistance movements, launching daring attacks and movements against colonial forces



The Advent of Korean Politics



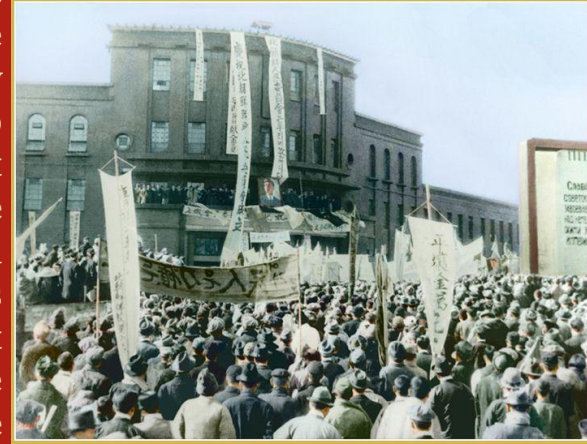
*Founding Joint Plenum of the New
People's Party and the North Korea
Bureau of the Communist Party of Korea
on 28 August 1946*

Within a few days of liberation, two main political groupings clearly emerged. The first was centred around the Communist Party, the second around the nationalist conservative groups under the leadership of the Christian Nationalist, Cho Man-sik. (Later these groups fused into the Democratic Party of North Korea with Cho Man-sik as leader.) The workers, the peasants, the entire youth and most of the intellectuals rallied around the Communist Party; the landlords, manufacturers, merchants and a small part of the intellectuals supported the national conservative groups at this stage. The Communist Party, organisationally, was at a great disadvantage as most of its leaders had been killed and those who had survived had not yet returned from exile or had just been released from long-years in jail. Kim Il-sung had not yet returned to Korea in those early days after liberation. Within ten days of the arrival of the first Soviet troops, leaders of the various political groups in South Pyongyang province met together in Pyongyang and by consultation among themselves set up a coalition, Temporary People's Political Committee of 30 members, 16 of whom were from groups supporting the Communists and 14 from those supporting the Nationalists.



The People's Committees

At the end of September, 100,000 of Pyongyang's citizens turned out to welcome Kim Il-Sung returning from his 15-year-long heroic struggle as leader of the armed resistance to the Japanese. His name had long since become legendary throughout Korea and all political groups turned out to pay him homage. Cho Man-Sik made a powerful speech in which he hailed Kim Il-Sung as the great national hero of Korean armed resistance. Towards the end of October, the People's Committees from all provinces met together in Pyongyang to establish a central organ to coordinate their activities. They set up a Temporary People's Political Committee of North Korea and elected Kim Il-sung chairman of what was the chief administrative organ of North Korea. Within a few months of the arrival of American troops, MacArthur who was determined not to allow the Koreans any say in their own affairs but to deal with them as an enemy people to be ruled, had reported to his government that the unification of Korea was beyond his powers, and accordingly the problem was handed over in December, 1945, to the Moscow meeting of the foreign ministers of America, Britain and the U.S.S.R. Actually, of course, the problem of unification was one for the Korean people to solve. Had they been left alone by the Americans there was no problem. The Korean people had no desire for their country to be politically divided because of a military arrangement to facilitate the disarming of the Japanese.



Kim Il Sung delivers a speech at the Pyongyang mass rally held to celebrate the establishment of the Provisional People's Committee of North Korea (February 1946)



Discussion & New Members Introductions



New Member Introductions

- What is your name, pronouns and state (or country/territory)?
- Where do you work? Is it unionized?
- How did you find out about the People's School?
- What do you think about tonight's class?

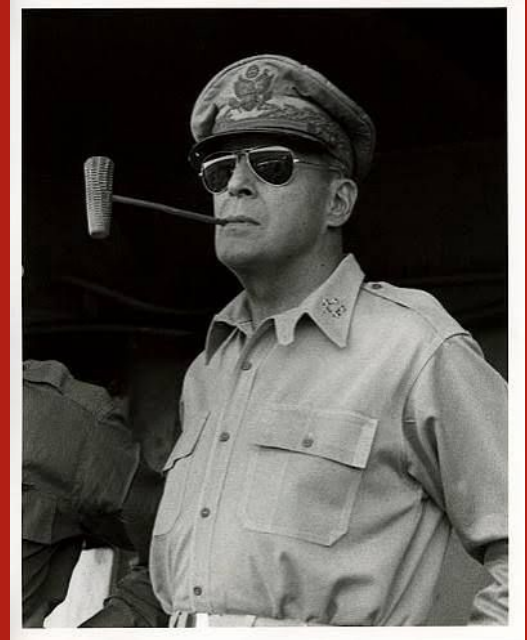


Occupying Korea: Below the 38th Parallel



General Douglas MacArthur's Proclamation No.1

- **Proclamation No. 1 by General of the Army Douglas MacArthur**
- Yokohama, September 7, 1945
- To the People of Korea:
- As Commander-in-chief, United States Army Forces, Pacific, I do hereby proclaim as follows:
- By the terms of the Instrument of Surrender,56 signed by command and in behalf of the Emperor of Japan and the Japanese Government and by command and in behalf of the Japanese Imperial General Headquarters, the victorious military forces of my command will today occupy the territory of Korea south of 38 degrees north latitude.



General Douglas
MacArthur



General Douglas MacArthur's Proclamation No.1 Cont.

- Having in mind the long enslavement of the people of Korea and the determination that in due course Korea shall become free and independent, the Korean people are assured that the purpose of the occupation is to enforce the Instrument of Surrender and to protect them in their personal and religious rights. In giving effect to these purposes, your active aid and compliance are required.
- By virtue of the authority vested in me as Commander-in-Chief, United States Army Forces, Pacific, I hereby establish military control over Korea south of 38 degrees north latitude and the inhabitants thereof, and announce the following conditions of the occupation:
 - Article I
 - All powers of Government over the territory of Korea south of 38 degrees north latitude and the people thereof will be for the present exercised under my authority.
 -



General Douglas MacArthur's Proclamation No.1 Cont.

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

All persons will obey promptly all my orders and orders issued under my authority. Acts of resistance to the occupying forces or any acts which may disturb public peace and safety will be punished severely.



General MacArthur embraces
Syngman Rhee



General Douglas MacArthur's Proclamation No.1 Cont.

- Article IV

Your property rights will be respected. You will pursue your normal occupations, except as I shall otherwise order.

- Article V

For all purposes during the military control, English will be the official language. In event of any ambiguity or diversity of interpretation or definition between any English and Korean or Japanese text, the English text shall prevail.

- Article VI

- Further proclamations, ordinances, regulations, notices, directives and enactments will be issued by me or under my authority, and will specify what is required of you. Given under my hand at Yokohama this seventh day of September 1945

Douglas MacArthur
Commander-in-Chief, United States
Army Forces, Pacific



US Army Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK) takes power away from Peoples Committees forcibly

- Chief of the Public Opinion Section of the Department of Information of the USAMGIK and Historian Richard D. Robinson admits:
- “It was safe to say that for the most part the local People's Committees in these early days were of the genuine grassroots democratic variety and represented a spontaneous urge of the people to govern themselves. [...] They resented orders from the Military Government to turn the administration of local government over to American Army officers and their appointed Korean counterparts, many of whom were considered to be Japanese collaborators. It seemed like a reversion to what had gone before. Bloodshed ensued in many communities as local People's Committees defied the Military Government and refused to abandon government offices. Koreans and Americans met in pitched battles, and not a few Koreans met violent death in the struggle.”



Emblem of the
USAMGK



Short Biography of a fascist dictator

- Born into the privileged landowning yangban class (aristocracy)
- Primary education in American Methodist missionary school
- Lived in the US for nearly 20 years earning his PhD at Princeton
- Ruled until 1960 until US saw him as too unpopular and deposed him
- Brutally suppressed and massacred hundreds of thousands of Koreans in his reign



Syngman Rhee



Ilminism in Brief

- “I advocate Ilminism. Through this, I aim to clarify the national principle of a newly emerging nation. We are originally a single ethnic group with a long history, always one and never two. This single ethnic group of ours must be one and must remain one. However, the poison of class distinctions tore the nation apart, and the harm of wealth disparities divided it. As regional notions emerged, the nation lost its unity, and due to gender distinctions, it strayed from that unity.” - Syngman Rhee on Ilminism
- “If unity is not yet achieved, it must be created; if obstacles hinder unity, they [Communists] must be removed” - Syngman Rhee
- Ilminism is a fascist ideology of class collaboration that is forced onto the working class.



Flag of the Ilminist Liberal Party



Rhee's Role in the South - Excerpts from *This Monstrous War*

parties and social organisations. Syngman Rhee, who had arrived in the meantime from the United States where he had spent the previous 40 years; was invited to become the president of a provisional government which would arrange with the Committees in the North to hold nation-wide elections. Rhee, who one week after his arrival back in Korea, had organised a "Rapid Realisation of Korean Independence" party, declined to take part in such concrete steps towards real independence. He gave as his reason that it was "impractical" to have two sovereign powers. The U.S. Military governor, General Arnold, promptly disbanded the Korean People's Republic on the grounds that it was "detrimental" to USAMGIK (U.S. Military Government in Korea). Arnold then launched an all-out assault against the People's Committees. These latter, as in the North, were the concrete expression of democracy in Korea. They worked for the people and were accepted by the people. They were careful to act in a constitutional way. The leadership of the Committees leaned over backwards to avoid offending the stern edicts of USAMGIK. This did not save them.

The Americans and Rhee from the first days based their strength on the pro-Japanese elements in the population – elements which owed in some cases their lives and in almost all cases their positions to protection by the Americans.

A typical incident occurred in Namwon in September 1945 within two weeks of the American landing. Koreans gathered together to demonstrate against the policy of maintaining Japanese police. When the demonstrators began to shout: "Down With the Japanese Police. We Don't Want Japanese Police Again!" American Military police from the U.S. 6th division opened fire, killing three and wounding many more Koreans. A protest was lodged, but produced not even an enquiry.

The developments in South Korea from "liberation" to civil war will provide historians with several volumes and can only be briefly sketched here as a necessary background to the armistice talks which followed the civil war and American intervention. Documentation is available in the form of official reports from the Americans themselves, from United Nations Commissions and from even that portion of the press which Syngman Rhee permitted to survive in South Korea, to reveal the American policy of suppressing all democratic movements in South Korea, to make the division at the 38th parallel a permanent one; to install a regime hated by the Korean people but subservient to the aims of American imperialism. And the documentation is supported by masses of evidence from responsible witnesses, many of whom held high posts under the Americans and the Rhee government.



found that funds and paper come from USAMGIK. Of all the political parties operating in South Korea at that time, the only ones opposing unification were Syngman Rhee's "Rapid Realisation of Korean Independence" party and the numerically and influentially unimportant "South Korean Democratic" party of the landlords and capitalists. Both these parties lacked mass support and were subsidised by the U.S. State Department.

Rhee's status at this time needs some explanation. He had been given considerable publicity prior to his arrival in Korea, as a great patriot who – although he had spent several decades in the safety and comfort of the U.S.A. – had nevertheless always had the interests of his native land at heart. Throughout the war years the U.S. Office of War Information broadcasts to Korea kept Rhee's name to the fore as Korea's outstanding patriot. It was because of this prestige – albeit artificially created – that Rhee was offered the presidency of the short-lived first Korean People's Republic. But Rhee declined this honour and for several months remained comparatively in the background of Korean politics.

The big issue, when he arrived in the country, was the patriotic movement against the Japanese and their collaborators in the administration. The universal slogan throughout the South at this time was "Oppose Pro-Japanese Collaborators and National Traitors." But Rhee was in a position to know that it was on just those elements that the Americans were going to rely. Rhee had lived long enough in the U.S.A. to know that politics there were based on the coalition between strong-arm thugs and those who could give them protection. It needed no Kefauver Report² to teach Rhee that in America the capitalist system operated on a tight coalition between gangsters and congressmen, between crime and politics. The gangsters produced votes, the political bosses produced concessions and protection for crime.

Rhee found he had a ready-made team of strong-arm toughs at hand who badly needed protection. They were Japanese collaborators who occupied just those positions in the police and administra-

tion where they could be of most use to Rhee. Let the fools go after mass support; Rhee would mobilise armed support. Rhee knew that USAMGIK aimed at putting all the pro-Japanese back into power and he knew that with his American backing, if he led a political party pledged to protect the collaborators they would be his slaves. He developed the slogan "Unity of All Koreans" which promised protection and salvation for the collaborationists. Let bygones be bygones, he said, let's forgive and forget – which was sweet music in the ears of the traitors but not in the ears of the masses. Rhee captured intact however, a machine which was strong enough to challenge even the Americans on specific issues, particularly as the police knew that American protection might be withdrawn one day and they must rely exclusively on a local political power for their support. And so matters developed.

With Rhee as their chief political satrap the Americans developed a campaign against unification and Rhee had the police and gangs of thugs to support the campaign.

The Moscow decisions called for all democratic parties and organisations to be consulted on unification. A U.S. State Department brochure reported that "thirty-eight organisations in the North and 422 in South Korea submitted applications for consultation with the Joint Commission." The report omits to mention that 95% of the organisations of the South were manufactured by the Americans or Rhee specifically to oppose unification and consisted often of only one or two members. Indeed one protest made by the Soviet delegate on the Commission was against the inclusion of the "Old Men's Association Worrying About the Fate of Our Country" which had about six members.



Syngman Rhee's First Year in Office

- Rhee was handpicked by the US Army Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK) to become first president of South Korea
- In November 1948, the Rhee government declared Martial Law against protesters in Jeju Island
- The government led by Rhee brutally suppressed the uprising leading to tens of thousands of protesters being murdered by the government forces and far right paramilitaries
- The government further killed thousands more in Yeosu-Suncheon after rebellions against the government's repressions in Jeju



Jeju residents awaiting execution



Discussion



Rebuilding after the Korean War



“Back to the Stone Age”

MacArthur argued that the US should threaten the use of nuclear weapons and bomb China itself unless the Communist forces in Korea laid down their arms.

This insistence of the viability of using atomic weapons deeply alarmed other UN countries caught up in the Korean conflict, including the UK Prime Minister, Clement Attlee, who flew to Washington, DC to object to the idea.

But MacArthur was adamant that his plan would work, believing the Russians would be intimidated and not do anything about the US striking China.





“Back to the Stone Age” (cont.)

On 9 December 1950, MacArthur formally requested the authority to have the discretion to use atomic weapons. Truman refused.

MacArthur was joined by General Curtis LeMay, head of the US Strategic Air Command during the Korean War, was also in favor of using nuclear weapons pre-emptively.

LeMay, who believed that a nuclear war was inevitable, would later try to persuade President John F Kennedy that he should be allowed to bomb nuclear missile sites during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Two weeks later, MacArthur submitted a list of targets for strikes, including ones within China, and listed the number of atomic bombs he would require. He continued to push for the Pentagon to grant him a field commander's discretion to employ nuclear weapons as necessary.



Gen. Curtis LeMay. (Photo courtesy/Real Clear Defense)

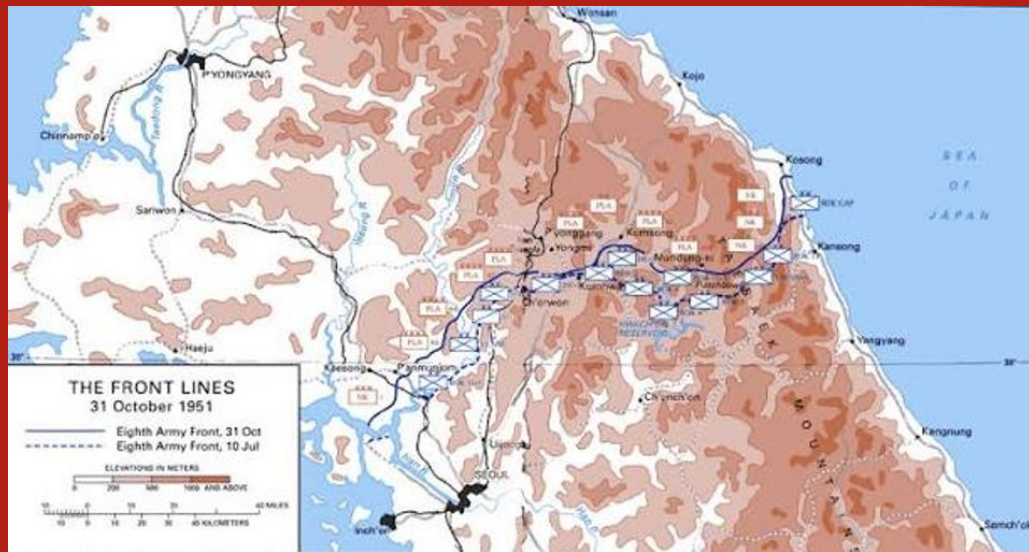
"We're going to bomb them back into the Stone Age." -Gen. Curtis E. LeMay, Air Force Chief of Staff in 1965



Stalemate at the 38th Parallel

"One of the great ironies of the war is that, at that point in the spring of 1951, where the front line of the two forces is, is not that far from the partition line, the 38th parallel. All of these great losses on both sides, the absolute civilian devastation that had occurred, but they were more or less back to where they started."

The two countries eventually ended the fighting with an uneasy truce in 1953, but they did not sign a peace treaty – meaning that technically they are still at war. The conflict was ruinous to the peninsula.





Relentless Destruction

The U.S. Military destroyed nearly all substantial buildings in a massive three-year bombing campaign of the Korean Peninsula

The U.S. dropped approximately 635,000 tons of explosives in the Korean conflict, exceeding the total tonnage dropped in the entire Pacific Theater during World War II.

Over 32,000 tons of napalm were deployed, causing widespread destruction to urban centers and rural areas alike.

Major cities, including the capital of Pyongyang, were largely reduced to rubble, forcing schools, factories, and hospitals to move underground.





White Phosphorus

White phosphorus is a highly toxic substance that can ignite on contact with air and is used in battlefield smoke screens and incendiary weapons.

The physical destruction and loss of life on both sides was almost beyond comprehension, but the North suffered the greater damage, due to American saturation bombing and the scorched-earth policy of the retreating UN forces.

White phosphorus munitions are known to produce significant thermal effects, burning bodies and scorching lands in multiple contexts of military violence (e.g., in Gaza, Lebanon, Syria)





White Phosphorus

White phosphorus munitions are known to produce significant thermal effects, burning bodies and scorching lands in multiple contexts of military violence (e.g., in Gaza, Lebanon, Syria).

White phosphorus munitions also drift into urban areas and farmlands; they deplete ecosystems and damage agricultural products, causing long-term toxifying effects for both human and nonhuman life.

Most recently Israel deploys white phosphorus munitions in southern Lebanon, where farmers and residents report enduring effects on health and the environment.

White phosphorus munitions effect enduring and dispersed forms and volumes of military violence by operating to modulate inhabitability





Decimated

The US Air Force estimated that North Korea's destruction was proportionately greater than that of Japan in the Second World War, where the US had turned 64 major cities to rubble and used the atomic bomb to destroy two others.

The number of Korean dead, injured or missing by war's end approached three million, ten percent of the overall population. The majority of those killed were in the North, which had half of the population of the South; although the DPRK does not have official figures, possibly twelve to fifteen percent of the population was killed in the war, a figure close to or surpassing the proportion of Soviet citizens killed in World War II.

The act which inflicted the greatest loss of civilian life in the Korean War by far, one which the North Koreans have claimed ever since was America's greatest war crime, was the aerial bombardment of North Korean population centers.





The U.S. Never Sought Peace

Referring to the American defence pact in South Korea, Mr Malenkov said: “It (The United States) is planned to go on maintaining South Korea in the status of a military springboard of the United States, which obviously runs counter to the exigencies of the final peaceful settlement of the Korean question and the strengthening of security in Asia.”

“For many decades the struggle of imperialist groups for domination in China has created a particular tension of international relations in the East, but there has appeared in the world a new Power which, together with all peace-loving forces, is upholding the interests of the strengthening of peace and international security.

China is now a mighty stabilising factor in the East, and will not be isolated. Peace-loving forces will use the Korean truce for new efforts to ease international tension throughout the world.”

PATH TO GLORY

The Chinese People's Volunteer Army enters Korea in October 1950 at the request of the DPRK to fight in the War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea. A cease-fire is signed in 1953.



The Chinese People's Volunteer Army enters Korea at the request of the DPRK to fight in the War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea.



Fraternal Aid to Restructuring

Soviet Prime Minister, Mr. Malenkov denounced American Far East policy and accused it of failing to move towards “a final peaceful settlement” in Korea after the armistice.

Russia had earlier announced an agreement to help North Korea to rebuild her war-damaged country.

Western observers believe these moves indicate a widespread development of Soviet technical aid to Communist countries as a possible counter to the American mutual assistance program.

Mr Malenkov condemned American opposition to Indian and other Far East countries joining the political conference on Korea.

He said the armistice in Korea had shown that “the peace-loving forces can achieve the due settlement of acute international problems if they display this fortitude and persistence,” but it would be “unforgivable to pay no attention to the new schemes of the reactionary forces in the East. The aim of these schemes is perfectly obvious – to wreck the armistice in Korea and aggravate the situation in Asia and the Pacific.”



Soviet Prime Minister, Mr. Malenkov



Rebuilding

Considering that the Soviet Union was still rebuilding from the devastation of World War II, that China had only recently concluded its civil war, and that East Germany (the third-largest aid source) was rebuilding from war as well, the scale of aid to North Korea is remarkable.

Contemporary Soviet sources give a breakdown in foreign assistance to the DPRK between 1953 and 1960 as dividing roughly into thirds, no doubt a division of labor suggested by Moscow. Exactly (33.3%) of reconstruction aid came from the USSR, 29.4% from China, and 37.3% from other countries.

The monetary figures do not consider aid in the form of labor, which was particularly important on the Chinese side. Source: USSR Academy of Sciences, 1988), p. 256

North Korea was dependent on fraternal assistance for more than 80% of its industrial reconstruction needs between 1954 and 1956, the period of the Three-Year Plan.





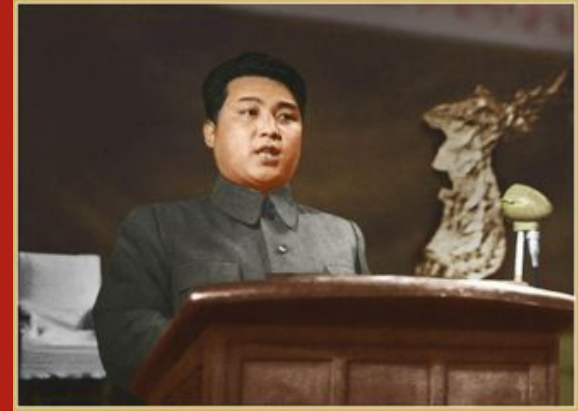
Rebuilding

North Korea could not possibly have rebuilt its economy as quickly as it did without this massive inflow of aid into nearly every sector of production and consumption.

But the DPRK did not remain aid-dependent for long. Partly this was out of necessity, as socialist-bloc aid was intended from the beginning to be phased out as reconstruction was completed.

Yet it is remarkable how quickly North Korea's aid dependency dropped – North Korea's declaration of “self-reliance” by the end of the 1950s was not without substance.

In 1954, 33.4% of North Korea's state revenue came from foreign aid; in 1960, the proportion was down to a paltry 2.6%. By contrast, well over half of South Korea's government revenue came from foreign assistance in 1956. By the early 1960's, well before South Korea's industrial take-off, the North had impressively re-industrialized.





Chinese Volunteers Remain to Rebuild

In labor-short North Korea, the physical assistance of Chinese People's Volunteers was invaluable for the rehabilitation of the war damaged infrastructure.

Chinese technical experts went to North Korea, and Koreans traveled to China for technical training. But perhaps the most important contribution that China made to North Korea's reconstruction, in addition to monetary aid and debt cancellation, was the manpower supplied by Chinese People's Volunteer (CPV) troops who remained in North Korea until 1958.

These troops, who numbered in the thousands, helped repair roads and rail lines damaged by war and rebuild schools, bridges, tunnels and irrigation dams.

The period of post-war reconstruction in North Korea was the first and only time the Soviet Union, China, and the Soviet-aligned countries of Eastern Europe and Mongolia cooperated on a large-scale economic project of this nature. It was the historical high point of "international socialist solidarity," one that would never be repeated after the USSR and China fell out in the early 1960s.



The Memorial Hall of the War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea in Dandong, Northeast China's Liaoning Province Photo: Li Qiao/GT

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The Chollima Movement (cont.)

The slogan of 'Let us dash forward in the spirit of Chollima' was adopted to help motivate workers, with the result that successes were reported in many areas of economic activity. North Korea experienced an annual industrial growth of 36.6 percent during the five-year plan.

In 1959, the Chollima Work Team Movement was started. This was a system of socialist competition waged among teams of workers, upholding the Communist lifestyle and working under the lofty socialist ideal "One for all and all for one."

"A work team would receive the title of Chollima Work Team by setting a production target high enough to stand out among other work teams in the whole nation and actually attaining the target as assessed competitively under a national evaluation system." If the title was awarded the team and its members would receive honorific items such as Chollima embossed banners, flags and notebooks.





The Chollima Movement

At a meeting of the Workers' Party of Korea held in December 1956, Kim Il Sung called on the nation to be more motivated in economic production. He said, "Let us produce more, practice economy, and over fulfill the five-year plan ahead of schedule!" Within four years the aims of the five-year plan were met.

Kim Il Sung first introduced the term Chollima in December 1956, shortly before the start of the 1957-61 five-year plan.

The successes of the Chollima movement were first seen in 1957 when Kim Il Sung called on workers in a factory near Pyongyang which only had a capacity of 60,000 tons to produce an extra 10,000 tons of steel. The factory, however, was able to produce 120,000 tons, 60,000 tons more than its capacity. This achievement was credited as lighting the torch of the Chollima movement. The term 'Chollima rider' was given to workers who surpassed their targeted goals of production. This title encouraged people to work harder.





Rebuilding towards Self-reliance

This difference cannot be explained by foreign aid alone, which was far greater in absolute terms in South Korea than in the North. The regime's ability to mobilize the North Korean population was also indispensable for the success of this project.

In just over five years, North Koreans with East German assistance rebuilt Hamhung as a modern industrial city, and for decades the city would be the main industrial hub of North Korea outside the capital Pyongyang. In 1960 – long before the term would be applied to South Korea – the East German press called North Korea “an economic miracle in the Far East.”

In June 1956, Kim Il Sung visited the GDR and personally thanked the East Germans for their help. But from the beginning of the reconstruction process, the DPRK leadership had seen foreign assistance as a limited process that would gradually give way to North Korean self-reliance.

In December 1955 Kim made his subsequently famous speech about “Juche” or self-reliance, Originally referring to ideological independence, especially with regard to the Soviet Union, over the course of the next two decades Juche would be extended to all aspects of North Korean behavior, from politics to economics to military defense.





Discussion & Wrap Up



Announcements

- PCUSA Cell Chairs need to call members of their cells to remind them about attendance.
- PCUSA Cell members are reminded attendance at the Continuing Education class of Jones-Foster every first Wednesday of the month is required.
- The next issue of New Masses (2026) has begun production. If you have art you want us to feature, email it to info@partyofcommunistsusa.net.



Volunteers Needed!

We are in need of volunteers for the staff of the People's School! Here's a few roles we need filled:

- People to help manage posting on our social media and podcast platforms
- Video Editors, Audio Editors, Graphic Designers, Artists, Narrators
- Web Controls, Moderators

Email info@peopleschool.us if you're interested and try to attend our next staff meeting if possible.



View From Left Field

<https://viewfromleftfield.libsyn.com>



The Old PSMLS Youtube is now the Youtube of View From Left Field, a podcast of analysis and discussion of current events from a progressive perspective.

Like the Youtube videos and subscribe with 5 star ratings on your podcast platforms.

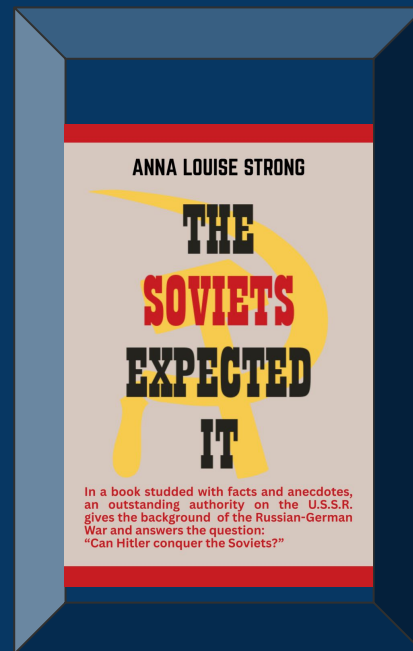
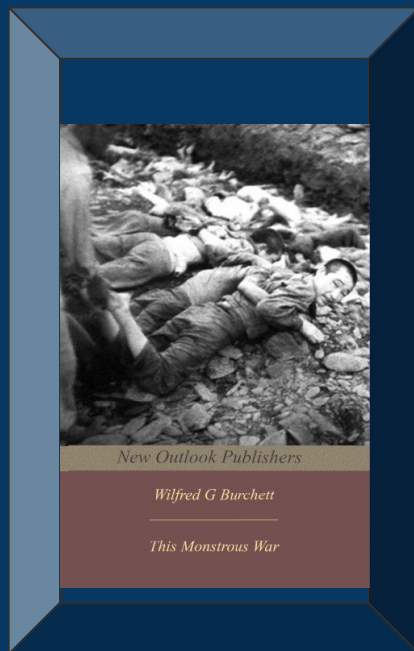
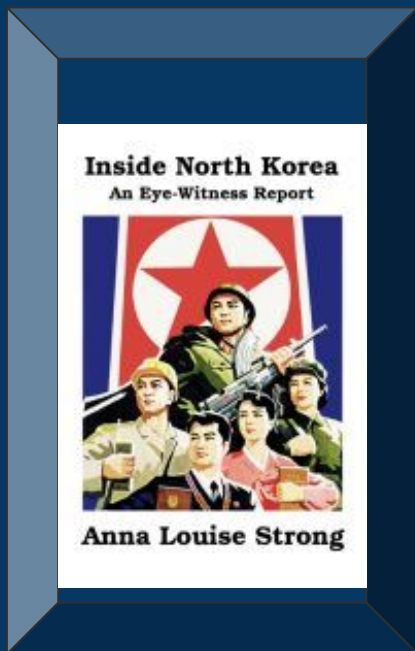




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Chollima On The Wing by Pochonbo Electronic Ensemble