

CRUCIBLE OF THE POST-EMPIRE: DECOLONIZATION, RACE, AND COLD WAR
POLITICS IN U.S.-JAPAN-KOREA RELATIONS, 1945-1952

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This dissertation is a synthesis of social, political, and international histories of decolonization in Korea and Japan. My study demonstrates how the liberation of Korea became a foundational historical event not only for the colonized but also for metropolitan society. Despite the recent emphasis on the need to treat the metropole and colony as one analytical field, scholars have yet to approach decolonization as a mutually constitutive process that restructures both the metropole and the colony. The fields of Area Studies and International History often divide their focus on the regional aftermath of the Japanese empire into separate national units of analysis, resulting in histories split between the U.S. and Soviet occupations of Korea (1945-1948) and the U.S. (Allied) occupation of Japan (1945-1952). In a radical departure from the more nation-centered scholarship, my work treats post-empire Japan and Korea, U.S. occupation policy in Japan and Korea, and Japanese and South Korean anti-Communist regimes as one analytical field.

In order to maintain a focused line of inquiry through the complexity of the decolonizing world, I position the Korean postcolonial population in Japan, or the so-called “Korean minority question,” as a primary methodological site in my work. With such an analytical focus, I pose a key set of different questions that turn our attention to the transnational processes of dismantling the Japanese empire. First, how did the problem of repatriating both Korean colonial conscripted workers from Japan and Japanese colonial settlers from Korea molded popular nationalistic sentiments and mutual antagonisms in post-empire Japanese-Korean relations? Second, how did post-1945 everyday encounters between the Japanese and Koreans, the defeated and the liberated, frame the Japanese “embracing” of defeat and colonial independence along with U.S. occupation? And third, how did the politics of Korean diasporic nationalism emerge in Japan from the struggle over self-determination and autonomy from Japanese power and how did it develop into the critical locus of U.S.-Japan-South Korea cold war containment policy? By exploring these issues previously overlooked in the existing historiography, my work offers a new framework that overcomes a dichotomy and separation between histories of post-1945 Japan and Korea.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Deokhyo Choi graduated from Rikkyo University in Japan in March 2000 with a B.A. from the Department of International and Comparative Law at the College of Law and Politics. He received his M.A. in the Department of Area Studies from the University of Tokyo in March 2003. In 2009, he earned his M.A. in history from the Department of History at Cornell University, and received his Ph.D. in History from Cornell in 2013. He will be a postdoctoral research fellow in the Department of East Asian Studies at the University of Cambridge from Fall 2013.

For My Parents

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Introduction

“Overlapping Territories, Intertwined Histories”

Kim Sijong, a well-known contemporary *zainichi* Korean (Koreans-in-Japan) writer, experienced the historical moment of August 15, 1945 on Cheju Island, southern Korea. Japanese Emperor Hirohito’s speech announcing the end of the war was broadcast on the radio at noon, and during that evening, Kim witnessed crowds of Koreans storming the streets and shouting “*manse!*” (hurrahs!) with the Korean national flag in their hands. For Kim, who had grown up “believing innocently” in the imperial slogan of “*naisen ittai*” (“Japan and Korea as one body”) and “striving” to become a genuine “Emperor’s subject,” it was not easy to accept this inverted reality in an instant. Kim even felt like he was suddenly “abandoned” to the Korea that he used to hold in contempt from the vantage point of the colonizer’s gaze. The liberation of Korea started as a bewildering moment for him.

Kim soon began to seek his own “liberation” by learning the language and history of the nation he had once neglected. At the same time, Kim also joined the communist South Korean Worker’s Party in search for his new political subjectivity. In 1948, Kim took part in the so-called “Cheju uprisings” initiated by the Worker’s Party on April 3, where popular protests against rightist and state terror and the establishment of a separate regime in U.S.-occupied south Korea ended with one of the most brutal civilian massacres in post-liberation Korean history. Surviving the counterinsurgent raids, Kim finally fled to Japan in June 1949, taking a small smuggling fishing boat that his father had arranged for his secret escape. After he settled in a small Korean town in Osaka, Kim continued his political activism and became a member of the Japanese Communist Party. When war broke out in the Korean peninsula on June 25, 1950, Kim

devoted himself to radical “anti-war” movements that targeted the U.S. remaking of Japan into a pivotal rear base for military intervention in the Korean War.¹

Kim Sijong’s experience of the liberation of Korea lays out a story that neither Korean nor Japanese mainstream historiographies have told us. While mainstream historical narratives have focused almost exclusively on the political and socio-economic facets of decolonization, Kim’s story presents an unexplored dimension of “liberation” from Japanese colonial rule – how deeply “empire” was embedded even in the interior world of the colonized. Simultaneously, his experience of the Cheju uprisings and the aftermath in Japan provides us with a glimpse of how the history of post-liberation Korea intersected and overlapped with the history of postwar Japan and vice versa. The story of Kim Sijong’s life reveals how experiences and structures on the ground were necessarily already transnational, and the clear national division between Japan and Korea was artificial, especially in the context of the aftermath of the Japanese empire. My study aspires to create a space for decentralizing national historiographies of modern Japan and Korea, to pave a common intellectual ground for understanding what Edward Said once called “overlapping territories and intertwined histories” of the postcolonial world, of post-1945 Japan and Korea.²

Previously, in their focus on the process of dismantling the Japanese empire, historians divided their analysis into separate national units, resulting in histories split between the U.S. and Soviet occupations of Korea (1945-1948) and the U.S./Allied occupation of Japan (1945-1952). Studies of post-liberation Korea have primarily examined the politics of decolonizing Korea within this national framework or the context of U.S.-Soviet cold war international relations. In

¹ On Kim Sijong’s life and experiences of the Cheju Uprisings, see Kim Sōkpōm and Kim Sijong, *Naze kakitsuzukete kita ka naze chinmokushite kita ka* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2001); Kim Sijong, “Zainichi” no hazama de (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2001); Kim Sijong, “Hitobito no naka de,” *Gendai shisō* 35, 17 (December 2007, special issue: “Sengo minshū seishinshi”).

² Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Knopf, 1993).

a similar vein, Japan historians have understood the post-1945 transformation of the imperial power of Japan into a nation-state as simply the product of the U.S.-led occupation and reconstruction of a defeated Japan. Moreover, despite the recent emphasis on the need to treat the metropole and colony as one analytical field in the studies of empire in general, scholars have yet to approach decolonization as a mutually constitutive process that restructures both metropolitan and colonial societies.³ Then, where do empire's metropolitan-colonial relations fit within the history of decolonization and the histories of post-1945 Japan and Korea?

Writing the “Empire” back into the History of Decolonization

The mainstream English and Japanese language historiographies of postwar Japan, particularly the so-called Japanese “narration of the postwar” (*senjo no katari*), have employed a common temporal and relational framework in narrating the formation of post-empire Japan. Their temporal framework is premised on the discontinuity between pre- and post-1945 Japan, and the relational binary framework of U.S.-Japan positions the formation of a post-1945 Japan

³ Recent colonial studies and new imperial history (or the so-called “imperial turn”) have written “empire” back into European history by illuminating the constitutive impact of modern European imperialism on metropolitan politics and society. These new studies present “empire” and “home,” “colony” and “metropole” not as separate but mutually interrelated spheres. For instance, see Bernard S. Cohn, *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge: the British in India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, eds., *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in A Bourgeois World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Antoinette Burton, *At the Heart of the Empire: Indians and the Colonial Encounter in Late-Victorian Britain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); Ania Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* (New York: Routledge, 1998); Ann Laura Stoler, “Tense and Tender Ties: The Politics of Comparison in North American History and (Post) Colonial Studies,” *The Journal of American History* 88, 3 (December 2001); Antoinette Burton, ed., *After the Imperial Turn* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003); Wendy Webster, *Englishness and Empire, 1939-1965* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); Jordanna Bailkin, *The Afterlife of Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012). In a similar vein, historians of modern Korea and Japan have also started to explore connections and interactions between colonizing and colonized societies during Japan's imperialist expansion. For instance, see Andre Schmid, “Colonialism and the ‘Korea Problem’ in the Historiography of Modern Japan: A Review Article,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 59, 4 (November 2000); Todd Henry, “Sanitizing Empire: Japanese Articulations of Korean Otherness and the Construction of Early Colonial Seoul, 1905-1919,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 64, 3 (August 2005); Mark E. Caprio, *Japanese Assimilation Policies in Colonial Korea, 1910-1945* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009); E. Taylor Atkins, *Primitive Selves: Koreana in the Japanese Colonial Gaze, 1910-1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010); Jun Uchida, *Brokers of Empire: Japanese Settler Colonialism in Korea, 1876-1945* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011).

as solely the product of U.S./Allied occupation or U.S.-Japanese postwar encounters. In those narratives, the “postwar” as a new beginning starts with the emperor’s radio broadcast announcing the end of the war, and postwar Japan appears both disconnected and inverted from its wartime and prewar bleak (or “feudal”) past.⁴

Critical challenges to this discontinuity thesis came out during the 1990s, although some historical studies rejecting such temporal framework had already begun to appear during the 1980s.⁵ By refusing a conventional view of pre-1945 Japan as “premodern” society and postwar democracy as modern “enlightenment,” U.S., Japanese and German scholars formulated a new analytical concept of “total war system” that put forth the continuity between the two eras.⁶ In the cutting-edge interdisciplinary study *Total War and “Modernization”* that was published both in Japan and the United States, the contributors presented drastic social transformations during the late 1930s and the early 1940s within a long historical trajectory straddling the wartime and postwar periods. Similarly, historians Andrew Gordon and Nakamura Masanori have presented “trans-war” history as an alternative temporal framework for the history of the 20th century Japan.⁷

New studies on the U.S./Allied occupation of Japan have also questioned the dominant temporal and narrative framework in the history of occupied Japan. Those studies reject a conventional approach that framed the U.S./Allied-led democratic transformation of Japan as

⁴ On the disconnection and inversion in the representation of postwar Japan, see Carol Gluck, “The ‘End’ of Postwar: Japan at the Turn of Millennium,” *Public Culture* 10, 1 (1997).

⁵ See Chalmers Johnson, *MITI and the Japanese Miracle: the Growth of Industrial Policy, 1925-1975* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1982); Andrew Gordon, *The Evolution of Labor Relations in Japan Heavy Industry, 1853-1955* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985); John Dower, *Empire and Aftermath: Yoshida Shigeru and the Japanese Experience, 1878-1954* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988).

⁶ Yasushi Yamanouchi, J. Victor Koschmann, and Ryūichi Narita, eds., *Total War and “Modernization”* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998). The Japanese version is *Sōryokusen to gendaika* (Tokyo: Kashiwa Shobō, 1995).

⁷ Andrew Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan: from Tokugawa Times to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); Nakamura Masanori, *Sengoshi* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2005); Andorū Gōdon, “Shōhi, seikatsu, goraku no ‘kansenshi,’” in Narita Ryūichi, et al., *Iwanami kōza Ajia Taiheiyō Sensō 6: nichijō seikatsu no naka no sōryokusen* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2006); Andrew Gordon, *Fabricating Consumers: The Sewing Machine in Modern Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).

either something “imposed” from the outside or something irrelevant to Japan’s own historical processes. By incorporating the new perspective presented by *Total War and “Modernization,”* Japanese historians started to shift their focus toward the endogenous and wartime origins of democratic reforms accomplished by the U.S./Allied Occupation.⁸ In this new framework, democratization in postwar Japan is understood as the amalgamation of Japanese experiences of wartime social transformations and Occupation’s “democratic revolution from above.” The formation of postwar Japan no longer appears as a completely “reborn” entity but as the product of a long process continuous with past transformations.

While U.S. and Japanese scholars have successfully challenged the existing temporal binary framework in the conventional “narration of the postwar,” the relational binary of U.S.-Japan, another axis of the dominant narrative mode, still remains unquestioned. Previously, U.S. historians, in particular international and diplomatic historians, examined the U.S./Allied occupation of Japan through a U.S.-centered, top-down approach.⁹ Although recent studies have employed new approaches by incorporating “history from below” (John W. Dower), “race” (Yukiko Koshiro) and “gender” (Mire Koikari) into the analysis of occupied Japan, the formation of a postwar Japan is still essentially a story about “U.S.-Japanese” collaboration, collusion, or “embracing.”¹⁰ Despite methodological innovations, their narratives are still corralled within the existing paradigm of the U.S.-Japan relational binary.

⁸ For a recent study, see Amakawa Akira and Masuda Hiroshi, eds., *Chiiki kara minaosu senryō kaikaku: sengo chihō seiji no renzoku to hirenzoku* (Tokyo: Yamakawa Shuppansha, 2001); Amemiya Shōichi, *Senryō to kaikaku* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2008).

⁹ For instance, William Borden, *The Pacific Alliance: United States Foreign Economic Policy and Japanese Trade Recovery, 1947-1955* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984); Michael Schaller, *The American Occupation of Japan: The Origins of the Cold War in Asia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985); Howard Schonberger, *Aftermath of War: Americans and the Remaking of Japan, 1945-1952* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1989).

¹⁰ John W. Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1999); Yukiko Koshiro, *Trans-Pacific Racisms and the U.S. Occupation of Japan* (New York: Columbia University Press,

Historian John W. Dower's Pulitzer Prize-winning work, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II*, is the most significant achievement in the field and the most comprehensive study of U.S./Allied-occupied Japan. In his reevaluation of the U.S. remaking of a defeated Japan, Dower places primacy upon the agency of the occupied population, not only Japanese elites but also ordinary "people." While previous scholarship has primarily analyzed how the American "victors" or "occupiers" crafted, implemented, or imposed "demilitarization" and "democratization" on defeated Japan, Dower examines the social and political developments of the occupation along a critically different line of inquiry: how did the "occupied" react, resist, negotiate or collaborate? With the narrative's emphasis on the active roles that the occupied played in the radical transformation of post-defeat Japan, the birth of a "democratic" and "pacifist" nation is no longer understood as a victor's creation. Rather, it is presented as the product of U.S.-Japanese mutual endeavors and interactions, or the Japanese "embracing" of the occupation.

What remains unexplored in Dower's achievement and, more generally, in the field of postwar Japanese history itself is how "decolonization" mattered to the formation of postwar Japan. The narrative frame of the "postwar" has elided the temporality of the "post-empire," and the aftermath of the dissolving empire and metropolitan-colonial relations is nowhere to be found in the narration of Japan's transformation from imperial power into a nation-state. In other words, the impact of decolonization on metropolitan society is completely missing.¹¹ More importantly, such a narrative framework is partly responsible for reproducing what historian

1999); Mire Koikari, *Pedagogy of Democracy: Feminism and the Cold War in the U.S. Occupation of Japan* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008).

¹¹ Recently, historian Lori Watt has explored the Japanese repatriation from now-liberated colonies and Manchuria and its impact on metropolitan society. See her *When Empire Comes Home: Repatriation and Reintegration in Postwar Japan* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2009).

Carol Gluck has characterized as the “amnesia of empire,” the unfortunate reality that the past of imperial aggression barely enters Japanese collective memory.¹²

Regarding the origins of Japanese “amnesia of empire,” scholars commonly understand that A-bomb catastrophes of Hiroshima and Nagasaki resulted in the “self-victimization” of Japanese people, turning the victimizers into victims and “atomic memory” into “imperial denial.”¹³ At the same time, some scholars also attribute the Japanese collective oblivion of empire to the way through which Japan’s colonies were decolonized. Unlike France who had to give up French Algeria after the long bloody colonial war and international and domestic disputes over the “Algerian question,” Japan lost its colonies all at once as a result of defeat in World War II and thereby experienced no such drawn out traumatized process like French and Algerian decolonization.¹⁴ In this view, the sudden event of Korean independence was not a moment for Japanese collective reflection regarding what they had done to colonial Korea. In short, the imperial past and formerly colonized others simply became forgettable in Japanese imaginary without posing any fundamental questions and challenges to their “self-victimization.”

The problem of these scholarly views and critiques of the Japanese “amnesia of empire” ironically reproduces another “amnesia of empire,” the dismissal of the Japanese empire’s immediate legacies. For instance, Gluck argues that “empire was never brought into the imagination of postwar Japan” because there was “no such a trauma as France had vis-à-vis Algeria, nor such an influx of immigrants from former colonies as Europe faced.”¹⁵ However, as I demonstrate in this study, Japan indeed had traumatized encounters with the “problem” of the

¹² Carol Gluck, “The ‘End’ of the Postwar: Japan at the Turn of the Millennium,” *Public Culture* 10, 1 (1997).

¹³ Gluck, *ibid.* On Japanese “self-victimization” see Lisa Yoneyama, *Hiroshima Traces: Time, Space, and the Dialectics of Memory* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1999); James J. Orr, *The Victim as Hero: Ideologies of Peace and National Identity in Postwar Japan* (Honolulu: The University of Hawaii Press, 2001).

¹⁴ For instance, see Ōnuma Yasuaki, *Tōkyō saiban kara sengo sekinin no shisō e* (Tokyo: Tōshindō, 1993), pp.91-92; Arai Shin’ichi, “Sengo 50-nen to sensō sekinin,” in Rekishigaku Kenkyūkai, ed., *Sengo 50-nen o dō miru ka* (Tokyo: Aoki Shoten, 1995), pp.70-74.

¹⁵ Kyaroru Gurakku [Carol Gluck], “‘Sengo’ o koete,” *Shisō* 980 (December 2005).

over a half million Korean formerly colonized subjects remaining in Japan after the war, who were now performing a new subjectivity as “liberated people” with a posture of defiance. Moreover, postwar Japan soon faced an influx of “illegal” immigrants from Korea, who were mostly former Korean long-term residents in Japan returning to their former country of residence after repatriating to their homeland in the aftermath of Korean liberation. In other words, the legacies of empire did pose challenges and “problems” to the Japanese, who had positioned Hiroshima and Nagasaki prominently in historical memory, which facilitated the forgetting of the imperial past and the making of the new identity as victims. Thus, one has to ask about the question of the contemporary Japanese collective oblivion of the empire differently: How did the “amnesia of empire” and “self-victimization” occur *despite* the specter of the empire, despite Japanese everyday encounters with their formerly colonized subjects after the war?

This study aspires to overcome the “amnesia of empire” both in contemporary Japan and the U.S. and Japanese mainstream scholarship by writing the “empire” back into the history of decolonizing, U.S./Allied-occupied Japan. In a radical departure from the dominant paradigm centered on the U.S.-Japan relational binary, I bring metropolitan-colonial, Japanese-Korean encounters to the fore in analyzing the process of decolonization and the formation of “postcolonial” Japan.

Decolonization is a formative event, not merely a temporal break or an interlude between empire and after. Simultaneously, decolonization is a mutually constitutive process, not simply a process of mutual separation between the metropole and the colony. This analytical focus on the process of decolonization as it impacts both metropole and colony opens up the opportunity to ask a new critical question regarding the history of U.S./Allied-occupied Japan: How did the liberation of Korea mold the template for the Japanese practice of “democracy” and “pacifism,”

the two central principles underlying the early U.S. occupation project of “democratization” and “demilitarization”?

Race, the “Multi-Ethnic” Empire, and “Postwar Democracy”

It is now commonly understood that the Japanese wartime empire in the late 1930s and early 1940s presented itself as a “multi-ethnic” empire. With the aim of reinforcing the integration (“Japanization”) of colonial subjects under the total war regime, the Japanese empire made a drastic shift in its racial ideology and policy, from an “exclusionary” toward “inclusionary” form of racism in the words of Takashi Fujitani’s recent work, *Race for Empire*.¹⁶ After the defeat in World War II, however, the latent “myth of mono-ethnic nation” (*tan’itsu minzoku shinwa*) reemerged into public discourse, and postwar Japan was reimagined as a homogenous, rather than “multi-ethnic,” nation according to Japanese scholar Oguma Eiji.¹⁷ Historian Naoki Sakai characterizes this process as the transformation of Japanese nationalism, from “imperial nationalism” based on a “universal” concept of Japanese national identity and ethnic multiplicity into ethnocentrism, or “ethnic nationalism.”¹⁸

What is important and not yet discussed is how such a transformation, the Japanese reimagining of a “mono-ethnic nation” out of the “multi-ethnic empire,” actually took place *on the ground* and in popular social imaginary, rather than in intellectuals’ discourses on race and

¹⁶ Fujitani argues that the Japanese (and U.S.) total war regime shifted “decisively toward the strategy of disavowing racism and including despised populations” like colonial subjects within its “national” community, if not the elimination of “systemic racialized violence.” Takashi Fujitani, *Race for Empire: Koreans as Japanese and Japanese as Americans during World War II* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), p.7.

¹⁷ Oguma Eiji, *Tan’itsu minzoku shinwa no kigen: “Nihonjin” no jigazō no keisei* (Tokyo: Shin’yōsha, 1995). English translation is *A Genealogy of “Japanese” Self-images* (Melbourne: Trans Pacific Press, 2002).

¹⁸ Naoki Sakai, “Subject and Substratum: On Japanese Imperial Nationalism,” *Cultural Studies* 14, 3-4 (2000); “Imperial Nationalism and the Comparative Perspective,” *Positions* 17, 1 (Spring 2009).

ethnicity.¹⁹ How did national boundaries become (re)racialized within both the political and social realms of the decolonizing “multi-ethnic” empire? If, as the political thinker Seyla Benhabib has formulated, “empires have frontiers; democracies have boundaries,” then the colonized Korean subject was exactly the “frontier” that needed to become a “boundary” as post-defeat Japan moved from being an empire to a nation-state under U.S./Allied occupation.²⁰ My study shows that the postcolonial Korean population in Japan, or the “Korean minority question,” became a central locus for defining the formations of post-empire Japanese citizenship and the national imaginary, where political disenfranchisement, racialized discourse on social problems, and popular everyday violence intersected.

The racialization of national boundaries occurred immediately after the war, especially in the realm of concerning the legal status of imperial subjects of colonial origin. In fear of Korean postcolonial empowerment, the Japanese government suspended political citizenship (male suffrage) of Korean and Taiwanese former imperial subjects in Japan in December 1945. Later in April 1952, when Japan was about to regain its full sovereignty from the U.S./Allied Occupation, the government deprived the entire Korean and Taiwanese minority populations of the Japanese “nationality” (*kokuseki*) that the Japanese empire had once imposed upon every single colonial subject through its imperialist expansion. Since then, Korean and Taiwanese minorities of colonial origin have been the “boundary” of so-called Japan’s “postwar democracy” implemented under U.S./Allied occupation.

Along with the politics of disenfranchisement, the redrawing of national boundaries also developed through the racialization of social problems, or the making of the “Korean problem.”

¹⁹ Recently, Tessa Morris-Suzuki has examined the formation of the postwar immigration system and discussed the transformation of post-empire Japanese national boundaries. Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *Borderline Japan: Foreigners and Frontier Controls in the Postwar Era* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

²⁰ Seyla Benhabib, “Borders, Boundaries, and Citizenship,” *Political Science and Politics* 38, 4 (2005), p.675

During the wartime, the Japanese empire had presented “race” as a unifying ideology for the “multi-ethnic” empire against Western imperial powers and global white supremacy, and the government and media had framed Koreans as “brethren” under the imperial slogan of “*naisen ittai*” (“Japan and Korea as one body”). After the war, the Japanese old guard political forces reformulated the “Korean problem” in public discourse at the moment of the so-called “postwar crisis,” the crisis of the hegemony of the capitalist economy. During the crisis, “race” became the central signifier for the deepening social problems. The presence of Koreans was associated with social disorder, and they now emerged as a “problem” or the “enemy within” in the Japanese social imaginary.

Simultaneously, the racial “othering” of Korean former imperial subjects in Japan also took more violent form on the ground. The defeat in the war made Japanese people extremely uneasy about their future hierarchical racial status vis-à-vis not only their Western “racial enemies” but also those whom the Japanese had treated as an “inferior” race during imperial expansion. Their deeply-entrenched ideas about Japanese superiority over their “Oriental” others drastically transformed into anxiety and even sparked a strong fear of possible racial subordination to the now-liberated Koreans and Chinese. As Albert Memmi emphasizes, “fear” always accompanies the “undertaking of hostility” and is the fundamental driving force of the practice of racism, “aggression.”²¹ Indeed, Japanese everyday encounters with Koreans performing new subjectivity as “liberated people” on Japanese soil became increasingly infused with tensions and hostility, fomenting Japanese violence against Koreans in Japan. This everyday racial violence embodied the popular practice of reclaiming Japanese racial superiority and masculinity as well as defining who would belong to the post-empire Japanese nation.

²¹ Albert Memmi, *Racism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), pp.102-103.

In sum, this study shows that the (re)racialization of the post-empire Japanese nation-state was not a teleological process. It was enacted at the levels of state policy and on-the-ground encounters as a response to a twofold crisis spurred by the event of decolonization: the crisis of imperial capitalism and the shattering of colonial racial hierarchy. Moreover, I argue that the reimagining of a new “democratic,” “pacifist” nation-state out of the “multi-ethnic” empire was not necessarily a democratic or peaceful process of “embracing defeat” on the part of defeated people.

Decolonization, the Cold War, and the “Korean Problem” in Japan

The emergence of North and South Korean regimes in post-liberation Korea is probably one of the most remarkable historical events where decolonization and the cold war converged. Japan’s surrender in the war brought U.S. and Soviet occupation troops into colonized Korea and, as historian Bruce Cumings has discussed, a “quintessential Cold War relationship” immediately took form between U.S. and Soviet military occupations “from day one in Korea.”²² The 38th parallel that the United States and the Soviet Union had initially agreed as temporary demarcation to disarm Japanese imperial soldiers soon turned into the frontline of U.S.-Soviet global cold war confrontation by 1948. Under U.S. and Soviet occupations, Korean political movements also divided into rightists and leftists, the north and the south, the proponents and opponents of the establishment of a separate regime. The indigenous political struggles over the vision of a decolonized nation became a flashpoint of the nascent cold war, developing into the internationalized civil war of 1950, the cold war’s first “hot war” in Korea.

²² Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War: Liberation and the Emergence of Separate Regimes, 1945-1947* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), p.xxvii.

Cold war historian Odd Arne Westad understands the cold war in the “Third World” as the product of U.S. and Soviet “Cold War interventions” in political and social changes in the colonial and postcolonial world. Although Washington’s and Moscow’s objectives were “not exploitation or subjection, but control and improvement,” the cold war appeared as nothing but a “continuation of colonialism” for Third World countries. Washington and Moscow competed each other to impose “their version of modernity” on those countries and thus, Westad argues, it is “easy ... to see the Cold War in the South as a continuation of European colonial interventions and of European attempts at controlling Third World peoples.”²³ He also points out:

Cold War ideologies and superpower interventions therefore helped put a number of Third World countries in a state of semipermanent civil war. In some cases there is likely to have been violent conflict at the end of the colonial period anyhow, but the existence of two ideologically opposed superpowers often perpetuated such clashes and made them much harder to settle.²⁴

What happened to post-liberation Korea would be a typical example of U.S. and Soviet “Cold War interventionisms.” The Korean peninsula in 1945 was, in the words of Cumings, “ripe for revolution,” swept by roaring “demands for thoroughgoing political, economic, and social change.”²⁵ The Soviet Occupation used indigenous revolutionaries and even radicalized and hastened Korean efforts for the revolutionary transformation of their decolonizing society.²⁶ For instance, the radical land reform enforced in the Soviet-occupied north was such a product of Soviet “interventionism” and collaboration with the north Korean leadership. Korean Communists’ land reform plan initially focused on the reduction of rent for tenant farmers, rather

²³ Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp.1-5, 396-397.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.398.

²⁵ Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, pp.xx, xxvii.

²⁶ Korean sociologist Kang Chǒnggu has discussed the consequences of the Soviet occupation of the north in terms of the “radicalization” of a Korean indigenous “historical course.” See Kang Chǒnggu, *Chwajǒl toen sahoe hyǒngmyǒng: Mi chǒmnyǒngha ūi Namhan, P’illip’in kwa Pukhan pigyo yǒn’gu* (Pusan: Yǒrumsa, 1989). For a comprehensive comparative study on Soviet and U.S. occupations, see Pak Myǒngnim, *Han’guk chǒnjaeng ūi palbal kwa kiwon II* (Seoul: Nanam Ch’ulp’an, 1996).

than land distribution. Yet, the actual land reform policy implemented through Soviet-Korean collaboration extended to the confiscation of land from the landlord class without compensation and its distribution to poor and landless peasants.²⁷ Moreover, the Soviet-facilitated radical social revolution in the north created the flood of political refugees to the U.S.-occupied south, turning them into fierce anti-communist, anti-North political forces of the South Korean regime.

On the other hand, U.S. “Cold War interventionism” in the south took a completely different form and brought much more unfavorable, hostile consequences to decolonizing Korea. If Korea was “ripe for revolution,” what the U.S. Occupation had done within several months from occupation, as Cumings has analyzed, was to forge a counter-revolutionary order by reviving Japanese colonial legal-governmental apparatuses and allying itself with Korean colonial collaborators and political elites representing the privileged class. The U.S. Occupation delegitimized spreading Korean demands for a fully liberated nation, both politically and socio-economically, as Soviet-inspired movements. The massive peasant uprisings in southern Korea during late 1946 manifested people’s disillusionment with the promise of liberation under U.S. occupation. For many Koreans, U.S. occupation policy did appear as a “continuation of colonialism,” if not European but Japanese colonialism.

While U.S. occupation in Korea is characterized as quasi-colonial cold war interventionism like in the Third World, the cold war in U.S./Allied-occupied Japan is more complicated and far from one-dimensional. Some scholars approach the U.S. remaking of Japan as “neocolonial revolution from above” (Dower) or as “American imperialistic intervention” comparable to “European colonialism” (Koikari).²⁸ In a similar vein, one could see in the cold

²⁷ English language study on the land reform in Soviet-occupied north, see Charles K. Armstrong, *The North Korean Revolution, 1945-1950* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), pp.74-81.

²⁸ Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, p.561; Mire Koikari, “Rethinking Gender and Power in the U.S. Occupation of Japan, 1945-1952,” *Gender and History*, 11, 2 (July 1999), p.316.

war in occupied Japan the continuation of European colonialism that Westad has understood in the Third World context. In other words, the U.S. cold war politicization of occupied Japan, or the so-called “reverse course” in U.S. occupation policy, could be positioned within the same historical process of the cold war vis-à-vis the Third World. However, the quasi-colonial interventionism practiced by the Japanese government vis-à-vis the “Korean problem” in cold war occupied Japan complicates the more binary framework of the U.S. and Japan relation. The continuation of colonial practices by the Japanese state in regards to its formerly colonized subjects renders the cold war Japan context distinct from Westad’s characterization of Western powers in the colonial and postcolonial South.

My study unravels these multi-layered relationships between the cold war and the continuation of colonialism in U.S./Allied-occupied Japan. I argue that if U.S. and Soviet “Cold War interventionisms” in the Third World emerged as a “continuation of European colonial interventions,” then U.S. cold war interventionism intersected with unending Japanese colonial interventions in the locus of Korean liberation in Japan. In my study, I illuminate the convergence of the two on-going quasi-colonial projects: U.S. global cold war interventions and the Japanese state’s pursuit of lost sovereignty over now-liberated Korean colonial subjects in Japan.

Moreover, in the words of cold war historian Steven Hugh Lee, U.S. cold war interventionism in the Third World looked like the making of “informal empire.”²⁹ As Lee has formulated, the U.S. global cold war strategy of communist containment required establishing anti-communist allies of indigenous “pro-Western governments” and “collaborators.” The United States attempted to “influence” both international and domestic affairs in the Third World

²⁹ Steven Hugh Lee, *Outposts of Empire: Korea, Vietnam and Origins of the Cold War in Asia, 1949-1954* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1995).

through “informal mechanisms” rather than “formal colonial control.” The “relatively independent” and also “interdependent” local actors on the communist perimeter were expected to play significant roles in containing communist expansion “without direct American involvement or expenditure of resources.”³⁰

In this sense, the governments of South Korean and U.S./Allied-occupied Japan were crucial “collaborators” for the cold war U.S. “informal empire” building. Since the end of U.S. military occupation in 1948, the Syngman Rhee administration reinforced the “Koreanization” of the American-made counter-revolutionary political landscape in South Korea by using U.S. military and economic aid. The Japanese newly formed Yoshida administration in early 1949, the first solid single-party administration (the “third Yoshida Cabinet”), capitalized on the cold war turn in Washington’s foreign policy and pushed forward an anti-communist agenda in Japan with the U.S. Occupation’s support. South Korea and Japan had become critical components of U.S. “informal empire” in East Asia.

This study illuminates the overlapping territories of U.S. “informal empire” and the intertwined politics between the two “collaborator” regimes in Japan and South Korea. The territories did not merely overlap at the site of completing sovereignties over the Korean postcolonial population in Japan. The boundaries between Japan and Korea as two separate entities also became blurred in the wake of the Korean War, as the United States transformed occupied Japan into a primary rear base that was directly linked with the UN war effort on the Korean peninsula. Similar to how the territories overlapped and boundaries became blurred, the anti-communist politics of the Japanese and South Korean governments developed simultaneously and became intertwined in the practice of containing Korean leftist activities in Japan. Yet, cold war collaboration between the two “collaborator” regimes never went smoothly

³⁰ Ibid., p.11.

without postcolonial frictions, and U.S. “informal empire” was not necessarily the monolithic transnational regime of communist containment in East Asia. My study unravels this complexity of the overlapping, intertwined and contentious political landscape of Japan-South Korea relations in the mid-twentieth century, where conflicting postcolonial and cold war temporalities coexisted side by side next to each other.

Sources and Organization

For a synthesis of international, political and social histories of the U.S./Allied occupation of Japan, my study draws on wide-ranging and multi-linguistic sources obtained at numerous archives and libraries in the United States, Japan and South Korea. The primary sources upon which I base my multi-layered analysis vary from declassified U.S. military top secret documents and U.S., Japanese and South Korean governments’ records to previously unexamined materials produced by *zainichi* Korean (Koreans-in-Japan) rightist and leftist organizations, such as their internal documents, underground newspapers and political leaflets.

My focus on everyday Japanese and Korean encounters draws upon not only U.S. military and Japanese police intelligence reports but also private memoirs and *zainichi* Korean newspapers included in the Gordon W. Prange Collection, the collections of Japanese and *zainichi* Korean newspapers and magazines censored and held by the Occupation. I use numerous private letters sent to General Douglas MacArthur by ordinary Japanese citizens in order to analyze the complexity of popular sentiments and views on Koreans in Japan. For an examination of occupation policy, I take full advantage of declassified U.S. military and State Department documents available at the National Archives in Maryland, as well as published

microfilm collections of those documents. I also use Japanese and South Korean national assembly records for my analysis of Japanese and South Korean domestic politics.

Chapters 1 and 2 cover the immediate aftermath of Japan's defeat in World War II, the early occupation period of 1945-1947. The first chapter, "Unendurable Subjects: Race and Violence in the Birth of a Pacifist Nation," discusses how Japan's post-empire "peace-loving" nation was borne out of racial hostility and violence toward the now-liberated Korean minority in Japan. This chapter illuminates how Japanese and Korean repatriation and everyday on-the-ground encounters between the Japanese and Koreans in both metropolitan Japan and colonial Korea rekindled long-enduring racial tensions in both societies. Korean conscripted workers brought over their immediate memories of the harsh treatment they had experienced in metropolitan Japan, and they often ended up avenging themselves on the Japanese colonial settlers remaining in now-liberated Korea. Simultaneously, the forcible repatriation of Japanese colonial settlers from Korea and the stories of their doomed fate in the inverted colonial world fomented Japanese hostility and violence toward formerly colonized Koreans in Japan who were now performing "liberation" on Japanese soil.

The second chapter, "Racializing the Postwar Crisis: Democratization and the Remaking of the 'Korean Problem' in Japan," demonstrates how "race" was reformulated in Japanese political discourse and became the central signifier for a postwar social crisis that converged with the crisis of the hegemony of the Japanese old regime. I examine how the Japanese government's making of the "Korean problem" intersected with popular racial anxiety. The initial Occupation's democratization of Japan encouraged the rise and resurgence of Japanese democratic forces and facilitated the crisis of the hegemony of the Japanese "old guard," who had been the guardians of the Emperor-centered imperial "national polity" and the

conglomerate(*zaibatsu*)-dominated capitalist economy. The Japanese old guard government started to racialize the social crisis by associating the presence of the Korean minority in Japan with food scarcity, skyrocketing inflation, and the rampant black-market economy. This racialized view of social problems provided a Japanese individual with the meaning with which to interpret one's own suffering and hardships in the war-torn country.

Chapters 3 to 5 explore a critical moment of the historical conjuncture between decolonization and the Cold War during 1947 and 1952. The third chapter, "Liberation Betrayed: *Zainichi* Korean Search for Self-Determination and the Cold War," shows how the Korean practice of liberation in Japan became a flashpoint of the U.S. cold war confrontation in East Asia. As U.S.-Soviet cold war confrontation developed on the Korean peninsula, U.S. policy-makers both in Washington and Japan began to approach what they called the Korean "minority question" through the lens of cold war politics. In early 1948, the U.S.-Japanese joint crackdown on *zainichi* Korean struggles for their own schooling in Japan epitomized a crucial convergence between the Japanese "postcolonial" problem and U.S. global cold war confrontation.

The fourth chapter, "Containing *Zainichi* Korean Leftists: The 'Reverse Course,' Japanese and South Korean Anti-Communist Regimes, and the 'Korean Problem' in Japan," analyzes the transnational linkages of anti-communist politics in South Korea and Japan. I demonstrate that the "Korean problem" in Japan became a locus of possible mutual collaborations and postcolonial frictions between anti-communist governments in the former metropole and colony. Both the South Korean Syngman Rhee and Japanese Yoshida Shigeru administrations emerged as significant "collaborators" for U.S. cold war strategy of communist containment in Asia. The South Korean and Japanese governments shared the common agenda of diminishing the predominance of the leftist Korean political forces among *zainichi* Korean

communities. However, the two governments approached the mutual concern with conflicting interests. Their relations drifted between postcolonial tensions and “anti-communist cooperation.”

The final chapter, “Fighting the Korean War in Japan: Revolutionary and Counter-Revolutionary Struggles and Blurred National Boundaries,” examines how the Korean War brought the two separate national entities of Japan and South Korea into the same field of vision and practice of revolution and counterrevolution. *Zainichi* Korean Communist leaders mobilized massive “antiwar” campaigns to oppose U.S. military intervention in the Korean affairs and tried to sabotage the U.S. remaking of Japan as a rear base for the Korean War. Working for the cause of national unification under the North Korean regime, the *zainichi* Korean Communist leaders also participated in Japanese Communist revolutionary movements, believing that the Communist seizure of power in the rear base would be the only way to defeat the ongoing U.S. military “invasion” of their nation. I also argue that U.S.-Japan-South Korea’s attempts to contain the Communist solidarity in Japan resulted in undermining the nascent pacifism of postwar Japan.

PART I
The Collapse of the “Multi-Ethnic” Empire and After, 1945-1947

CHAPTER 1

*Unendurable Subjects:
Race and Violence in the Birth of a Pacifist Nation*

Introduction

“Imperial Edict” (August 14, 1945)

We have resolved to pave the way for grand peace for all the generations to come by enduring the unendurable and bearing the unbearable [*tae gataki o tae, shinobi gataki o shinobi*].

—Emperor Hirohito

“The Responsibility of Koreans and Chinese Living in Japan to World Peace”

Remember, if some of those Orientals [*Tōyōjin*] lord a privileged attitude over the Japanese, it will become the cause of another war in the future. Although historically Japan did not enter the civilized world of great powers until the Tokugawa period, it has become a civilized, industrial country thereafter and joined the world of creation. If [those Orientals] hold such feeling [of being privileged] toward this [Japanese] race, an angry eruption from the Japanese is inevitable. ... Those [Orientals] living in Japan have to banish the thoughts that they are victorious: such thinking should not be applied toward a superior and developed nation [*minzoku*], because it will lead to a war.

—A Letter from Sakura Seizō to General Douglas MacArthur¹

“How I Feel as a Korean”

I felt the urge to hate the Japanese so much when I overheard someone saying in a packed train, “Korean bastards [*senkō no yatsu me*] are now swaggering around. We will see. We will bring it back to what it was used to be soon.” ... As long as the Japanese hold such thoughts, amity between Koreans and Japanese will never happen, and Oriental peace [*Tōyō no heiwa*] cannot be secured.

—Chang Tusik, “Chōsenjin wa kō omou”²

At 12:00 p.m. on August 15, 1945, Emperor Hirohito’s recorded speech went on the air across the Japanese empire through a radio broadcast. His short speech conveyed an imperial sovereign’s decision to accept the Potsdam Declaration, the Allied Powers’ demand for Japan’s

¹ A letter to MacArthur, (no date) [stamped on June 4, 1946], Box 231, Assistance Chief of Staff, G-2, SCAP, Record Group 331 (Allied Operational and Occupation Headquarters, World War II), National Archives and Record Administration, College Park, MD. (Henceforth, G-2, RG 331, NARA.)

² *Minshu Chōsen* 3 (June 1946).

“unconditional surrender” and its relinquishment of colonial territories.³ It was the first time that Emperor Hirohito spoke directly to his people, “one hundred million” imperial subjects including Koreans and Taiwanese. In his message of defeat – although Emperor Hirohito never uttered the word “defeat” or “surrender” – the Emperor expressed the deep pain and grief he felt over the suffering that his imperial subjects had gone through and would still have to undergo thereafter. The Emperor also called on his war-exhausted subjects to “endure the unendurable, bear the unbearable” alongside him in order to create a “peaceful” future together. This Emperor’s message of defeat came as a complete surprise to his imperial subjects who had been told to fight the war to the bitter end. In the wake of Japan’s defeat, the words “endure the unendurable” soon became a mantra for the Japanese populace living through the confusion and hardships of a war-torn, foreign-occupied country.

In retrospect, the reconstruction of post-defeat U.S./Allied-occupied Japan as a “democratic” and “peace-loving” nation indeed appears as if the Emperor’s appeal to his people had been realized. According to widely accepted narratives, Japanese people, enduring the anguish of defeat and the disgrace of their direct subordination to the former “racial enemy” on their own soil, soon stood up from ashes to rebuild the country. People responded and participated in the project of “demilitarization” and “democratization,” the radical reforms that

³ On July 26, 1945, the U.S., British and Chinese governments issued together the Potsdam Declaration that defined terms for the Japanese surrender. The declaration addressed the issue of Japanese territories, which was laid out as follows: “The terms of Cairo Declaration shall be carried out and Japanese sovereignty shall be limited to the islands of Honshu, Hokkaido, Kyushu, Shikoku and such minor islands as we determine.” The Cairo Declaration, which was put forth by the U.S., British and Chinese governments on November 27, 1943, more specifically defined Japanese territories and the future treatment of Japan’s colonies as follows: “It is their [the U.S., Britain and China] purpose that Japan shall be stripped of all the islands in the Pacific which she has seized or occupied since the beginning of the first World War in 1914, and that all the territories Japan has stolen from the Chinese, such as Manchuria, Formosa, and the Pescadores, shall be restored to the Republic of China. Japan will also be expelled from all other territories which she has taken by violence and greed. 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.” For the full texts of the Potsdam Declaration and Cairo Declaration, see Division of Special Records, Foreign Office, Japanese Government, ed., *Documents concerning the Allied Occupation and Control of Japan, Volume I: Basic Documents* (January 1949), pp.1, 7-12.

the victors had initially imposed in accordance with the Potsdam Declaration. As historian John W. Dower has vividly narrated in his book *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II*, the Japanese “embraced” defeat and understood the U.S./Allied remaking of Japan, or “revolution from above,” as an opportunity for peace and democracy.⁴ Within a year and half after the beginning of U.S./Allied occupation of Japan, newly elected Japanese lawmakers adopted, after heated debates and multiple modifications, a draft of the new Japanese constitution that General Douglas MacArthur and his staff had originally composed for disarming the militarist authoritarian nation. The Japanese people also participated directly and indirectly in the constitutional process. Some wrote their own drafts of a new constitution, some lobbied Japanese lawmakers and occupation policy-makers for certain rights, and some wrote petition letters to MacArthur in the hope that the victor would listen to the voices of the vanquished. The birth of the new Japanese constitution marked a symbolic collaboration between the victor and vanquished. The postwar constitutional process indeed epitomized the Japanese “embracing” of defeat, and this story has been replicated and often glorified in both academic and public narratives on postwar Japan.

Yet, did the Japanese majority also embrace defeat in relation to now-liberated colonial subjects as they did to their conquerors? Did the Japanese populace also “endure the unendurable” of defeat and sought possible reconciliation and peaceful future with their formerly subjugated Korean minority who were now acting as “liberated people” before their eyes?

In early June 1946, the time when heated debates over the drafting of the new Japanese “democratic,” “pacifist” constitution was about to start in the National Diet, one Japanese man named Sakura Seizō wrote to MacArthur that the attitudes of “Orientals” (Koreans and Chinese) in Japan acting like “victorious” and “privileged” nationals were unacceptable. Sakura warned

⁴ John W. Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1999).

that their attitudes would cause “an angry eruption from the Japanese” and thus “lead to a war.” At a similar time, one Korean intellectual living in Japan was shocked to overhear in a packed train hostile daily conversations targeting Koreans and worried about the possible “amity between Koreans and Japanese” and “Oriental peace.” Indeed, as I examine in this chapter, hatred, fear, and antagonistic attitudes toward the now-liberated Korean minority were surging among the defeated people under foreign occupation, through unexpected day-to-day encounters with the Koreans demonstrating their liberation on Japanese soil.⁵ Those grass-roots sentiments and attitudes fomented pervasive racial violence on the ground, and sometimes exploded into brutal assaults like the military-like execution of two Korean men in mid-1947, an appalling racial murder later called the “Yorii incident.”

In the early morning on August 1, 1947, Korean residents found the corpses of two young Korean men in a village of Saitama Prefecture. Their bodies were covered with numerous deep gashes – one body had its head completely chopped off, while the head on the other corpse had not been completely chopped off. The Korean residents living nearby the village were the ones who had to carry out the investigation as the Japanese police simply ignored the matter. The investigation revealed that late in the night on July 31, a group of some thirty Japanese gangsters armed with cudgels and swords assaulted a group of young Korean men who were watching a play at a local makeshift playhouse. One barely escaped with his life, and two were killed brutally – the Japanese group took turns slashing at those Korean men’s bodies in a frenzy and in the end hacked at their necks in attempt to behead them. A progressive Japanese lawyers

⁵ In fact, the occupation authorities, Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP), initially treated Koreans in Japan as a “liberated people” based on the directive from the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Washington, which stipulated: “You will treat Formosan-Chinese and Koreans as liberated peoples in so far as military security permits. They are not included in the term ‘Japanese’ as used in this directive but they have been Japanese subjects and may be treated by you, in case of necessity, as enemy nationals. See “Basic Initial Post-Surrender Directive to Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers for the Occupation and Control of Japan (Nov 1, 1945),” reproduced in *Documents concerning the Allied Occupation and Control of Japan, Volume I*, pp.129-131.

association called “Jiyū Hōsōdan” and the Saitama branch of the Korean League in Japan (*Zainihon Chōsenjin Renmei*) soon issued a number of joint statements on this harrowing event. In their statements, they characterized the method of the execution as “reminiscent of the ‘beheading’ [*uchikubi*] during feudal times” and condemned the crime as an “atrocious crime comparable to barbaric brutalities that aggressive Japanese imperialist troops had committed as they pleased in the battlefields.”⁶

Japanese lawyer Fuse Tatsuji, the legal counsel for the Korean residents of Saitama Prefecture who were arrested for conducting an unauthorized criminal investigation of the racial murder, recognized that this brutal killing of the two Koreans signaled a much more widespread and broader social phenomenon in post-defeat Japanese society. For Fuse, the killing was indeed an extraordinarily horrific murder committed by a group of gangsters. Yet, he also understood its critical significance within a larger landscape of pervasive racial violence targeting Koreans in Japan. In his view, the spreading violence against Koreans was a product of socially shared sentiments of “sorrow” and “grievances” about defeat, a product of what he called “defeat mentality” (*haisen shisō*) among the Japanese. “Defeat mentality,” he analyzed, would attribute all things miserable to the fact of defeat and necessarily solidify into a “desire for vengeance” (*fukushū kannen*), but under the conditions of defeat, the Japanese felt that they could not vent such desires for vengeance on their “overpowering” conquerors, the U.S./Allied occupiers. The brutality underlying the killing of the two Korean men was, in his words, the “embodiment” (*shisōteki hyōgen*) of the deep-rooted desires for vengeance over defeat among the Japanese, which had exploded into violent assaults against “weaker” Koreans enjoying their new life of

⁶ Japan Lawyers Association for Freedom and the Saitama branch of the Korean League in Japan, “Statement” (August 1947), Folder: Yorii Jiken 3, Reel 5, *Fuse Tatsuji Papers*, Korea University Library, Tokyo, Japan. (Henceforth, *Fuse Papers*, KUL); Investigators of the Japan Lawyers Association for Freedom and the Saitama branch of the Korean League in Japan, “A Report on the Yorii Murder Case” (August 1947), Folder: Chūgoku Chōsen [uncataloged documents], Ohara Institute for Social Research, Hosei University, Tokyo, Japan.

liberation. In a later court hearing, Fuse characterized the background of this harrowing incident as follows:

The feeling of vengeance and sorrow over defeat, which cannot be vented due to the [official] renunciation of war, is erupting in the form of frequent [Japanese] assaults all across Japan targeting Koreans, who are rejoicing at the restoration of their homeland after the war. Thus, I take this incident extremely seriously[.]⁷

What this “Yorii incident” revealed was a reality different from the image of a newly born “peace-loving” nation of Japan. In other words, the Japanese embracing of defeat and the U.S./Allied disarmament of the militarist Japan also heralded the continuation of violent racial assaults from the war period on the ground. If, as recent studies have explored, the relationship between the victor and vanquished under the U.S./Allied occupation was infused with “intimations of white supremacy,”⁸ quasi-“racial segregation,”⁹ “the American masculine gaze,”¹⁰ or images of Japanese men “emasculated” and “feminized” by their conquerors,¹¹ the humiliation of such racialized and gendered forms of subordination (or “emasculatation”) did not simply lie latent and passive in the defeated population as they were “enduring the unendurable.” The humiliation boiled over into vengeance, aggression and even violence toward the formerly subjugated Koreans acting as “liberated people.” Indeed, the beheading of the Korean bodies seemed more revealing of how the group of Japanese men were making desperate efforts to reclaim their disarmed masculinity by enacting a wartime-like execution.

⁷ Trial Records of the Yorii Incident, Folder: Yorii Jiken 1, Reel 4, *Fuse papers*, KUL.

⁸ Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, p.211.

⁹ Yukiko Koshiro, *Trans-Pacific Racisms and the U.S. Occupation of Japan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), chapter 2.

¹⁰ Mire Koikari, *Pedagogy of Democracy: Feminism and the Cold War in the U.S. Occupation of Japan* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008), p.18.

¹¹ Lisa Yoneyama, *Hiroshima Traces: Time, Space, and the Dialectics of Memory* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1999); Yoshikuni Igarashi, *Bodies of Memory: Narratives of War in Postwar Japanese Culture, 1945-1970* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

In this chapter, I discuss how Japan's post-empire "peace-loving" nation was borne out of hostility and racial violence toward the now-liberated Korean minority in Japan. Whereas Japanese lawyer Fuse problematized the "feeling of vengeance and sorrow over defeat" that could not be vented on their conquerors and was instead "erupting in the form of frequent assaults all across Japan targeting Koreans," I illuminate different facets of Japanese sentiments underlying violence against Koreans – the sentiments of fear and racial anxiety. As I argue below, defeat made Japanese people extremely uneasy about their future hierarchical racial status vis-à-vis those whom they had been treating as an "inferior" race under the Japanese empire. The decolonization of Korea sparked a strong fear among the Japanese of reprisals from and possible racial subordination to former Korean colonial subjects. Fear, in the words of Albert Memmi, "always accompanies the undertaking of hostility," and it is the fundamental driving force of the practice of racism, that is, "aggression."¹² This chapter unravels how racial fear rose to the surface in the daily life of Japanese people amidst the fall of the Japanese "multi-ethnic" empire.

Moreover, post-empire new encounters between Japanese and Koreans, between the defeated and liberated, became increasingly infused with racial tensions in both Japan and Korea, the former metropole and colony. The repatriations of Korean conscripted workers from Japan to Korea and also Japanese colonial settlers from Korea to Japan in the wake of the collapse of the Japanese empire added fuel to the mounting mutual antagonism in both societies. The Korean conscripted workers brought over their immediate memories of the miserable conditions and treatment they had experienced in metropolitan Japan, and the Japanese colonial settlers carried with them their resentments over their doomed fate in liberated Korea. If the metropole and colony are not separate entities but mutually constitutive in colonial history as recent

¹² Albert Memmi, *Racism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), pp.102-103.

postcolonial studies have explored, the history of decolonization is also a process of mutual restructuring.¹³ By paying close attention to encounters and interactions between Japan and Korea in the wake of the collapse of the Japanese empire, this chapter brings the former metropole and colony, defeated colonizers and liberated colonized, into one analytical field.

The Moments of Defeat and Liberation

At 9:00 p.m. in the evening of August 14, 1945, the Japanese public radio station broadcasted a brief notification that the government would make an “important announcement” over the radio at 12:00 p.m. the following day. In the morning of the next day, on August 15, Japanese newspapers also printed the notification, and the radio morning news told listeners that something extraordinary would soon take place: the Emperor would for the first time speak directly to his people and issue an imperial edict through the radio broadcast. The radio news stressed that “every single national” must listen. At 12:00 p.m., a radio announcer started with a strained voice and asked listeners to stand up, followed by a government official’s preface and the national anthem. Then, the Emperor’s recorded speech – recorded the previous day at midnight – was aired.

The Emperor’s short announcement of the imperial edict – approximately four and half minutes – was sprinkled with such formal and abstruse languages that it was almost unintelligible for the populace who were trying to catch the Emperor’s words through the noise

¹³ For example, see Bernard S. Cohn, *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge: the British in India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, eds., *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in A Bourgeois World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Antoinette Burton, *At the Heart of the Empire: Indians and the Colonial Encounter in Late-Victorian Britain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); Ania Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* (New York: Routledge, 1998); Ann Laura Stoler, “Tense and Tender Ties: The Politics of Comparison in North American History and (Post) Colonial Studies,” *The Journal of American History* 88, 3 (December 2001); Antoinette Burton, ed., *After the Imperial Turn* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003); Wendy Webster, *Englishness and Empire, 1939-1965* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); Jordanna Bailkin, *The Afterlife of Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).

of radio static. Following the Emperor's enigmatic speech, the radio announcer began to explain – or “translate” – the meaning of the Emperor's message. The announcer also provided listeners with a narration of their supposed sentiments regarding and reactions to the Emperor's message, as if he was speaking on behalf of all in order to instruct what the proper reaction to the Emperor's voiced imperial edict should be. With an emotional appeal, the announcer stated that “the hundred million [of imperial subjects] were all moved to tears” and continued:

We your subjects [*wareware shinmin*] swear to observe the imperial edict without fail and sacrifice oneself for the state [*messhi hōkō*] in order to preserve the national polity [*kokutai*] and national glory [*minzoku no meiyō*].¹⁴

Whereas the announcer demonstrated to listeners how to accept the Emperor's message of defeat by swearing on behalf of all to continue further “self-sacrifice for the state” as a loyal imperial subject, few Japanese, let alone Japan's colonized subjects, could easily embrace such sudden turnabout. In fact, on that day, few people, not only the colonizers but the colonized as well, expected their imperial government to make the decision to surrender. Upon listening to the Emperor's speech at that critical moment – in the aftermath of the U.S. dropping of two atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the Soviet Union's entry into the war as a new foe – most people anticipated a government call for further collective determination to fight to the bitter end. Although more than a few imperial subjects were already predicting Japan's possible defeat in the war, they still believed that the government would not surrender until the “hundred million” (*ichioku*) fought to the bitter end or, as glorified in wartime suicidal slogans, “died like shattered jewels” (*gyokusai*).

The U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey that interviewed 3,150 Japanese civilians immediately after the war, during the period from November 10 to December 29 in 1945,

¹⁴ Satō Takumi, *Hachigatsu jūgonichi no shinwa: shūsen kinenbi no mediagaku* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 2005), p.15.

observed that Japanese people were not “mentally prepared for the surrender” and “[e]ven on the last day of surrender, many people were still hoping for some last minute ‘Divine Wind’ to save the day.” The survey explained that “[e]ven though most of the Japanese expected that they could not win, it was very difficult for a Japanese to admit to himself that his nation had definitely lost.”¹⁵ In other words, for the determined (or desperate) Japanese populace, the Emperor’s message of defeat suddenly came as a sheer emotional shock. The survey characterized the Japanese “predominant reactions” to the government decision to accept the Potsdam Declaration as “one of sorrow, misery, surprise, and disillusionment.”¹⁶

Indeed, in a Japanese top secret intelligence report dated August 27, 1945, the secret police, who had been keeping close watch on popular reactions to the Emperor’s radio broadcast, described the state of the Japanese majority as “stupefied and extremely disappointed” with “resentful voices spreading through the city and countryside.”¹⁷ That afternoon, immediately after the Emperor’s radio broadcast, one Japanese elderly man who saw a military officer in uniform sitting in the same bus as him suddenly went up to the officer, grabbed the officer’s cap and flung it down to the floor, hurling insults at the officer, “What were you guys doing all this

¹⁵ The United States Strategic Bombing Survey, *The Effects of Strategic Bombing on Japanese Morale* ([Washington, D.C.]: Morale Division, 1947), pp. 149-150.

¹⁶ The survey summarized Japanese reactions as follows:

Regret, misery, disappointment, 30%

Surprise, shock, bewilderment, 23%

Feeling of relief of happiness that war was over and sufferings at an end, 22%

Anxiety and worry about treatment under occupation, 13%

Disillusionment, bitterness, and sense of futility; had sacrificed to win, all in vain, 13%

Shame followed by relief; acceptance with regret; expected it but felt it a blot on national record, 10%

Expected it, knew it was coming; resignation, 4%

Worry about Emperor; shame for emperor; sorrow for him, 4%

No answer or miscellaneous reactions, 6%

(total 125 percent) The question was: “How did you feel when you heard that Japan had given up the war?” Since some people indicated more than one reaction, the percentages total more than 100 (*Ibid.*, p.149).

¹⁷ Economic Security Section in the Police Bureau of the Home Ministry, “The Recent State of Economic Security” (August 27, 1945), T1490 (Naimshō Keihokyoku, “Kakushu jōhō narabi minshin no dōkō”), Reel 220, *Selected Archives of the Japanese Army, Navy and other Government Agencies, 1868-1945*, National Diet Library, Tokyo, Japan. (Henceforth, *Selected Archives of the Japanese Government*, NDL.)

time? These caps are useless!” The officer simply remained silent.¹⁸ Nare Tokiyoshi, enraged by the Emperor’s radio broadcast, stormed out of the house with a sword in his hand and shouted at strangers on the street: “I heard that Japan gave up the war, but can you agree with that?”¹⁹

On August 23, Sawada Katsumi, an assistant railway worker, was interrogated by the police for suspected lese-majesty, for cursing Emperor Hirohito for accepting the Potsdam Declaration in front of his colleagues and a police officer: “The Emperor is stupid. I don’t need him.”²⁰

Similarly, Hora Toranosuke, the speaker of the municipal council in Yamaguchi City, expressed his anger and frustration with the government’s decision:

Numerous sacrifices were in vain. We also lost all hope and motivation for work. It is unendurably depressing [*mattaku zannen ni taranai*] that foreign bastards [*gaikokujin no yarō*] will rule. I’d rather die by stabbing each other to death.²¹

In contrast to the reactions of the anger and disappointment, other elements of the Japanese populace also became relieved and started to enjoy the liberation of the body from the regimented life of exhausting “self-sacrifice for the state” (*messhi hōkō*) during the war. Some were glad that family members would be able to come back alive from the battlefield, and some were happy that the days of fear over U.S. airstrikes had ended. Police secret intelligence reports recorded popular voices on the ground, and according to the reports, one person said, “I am relieved that at least there will be no more air-raid sirens. I want to go to a spa and relax.”²²

¹⁸ Governor of Yamaguchi Prefecture to the Home Minister, “Concerning the Trend of Public Sentiment in the Aftermath of the Greater East Asia War” (August 19, 1945), MOJ 15 (Folder: Yamaguchiken Keisatsubu, “Keisatsu jōhō”), Reel 1, *Japanese Government Documents and Censored Publications*, National Diet Library, Tokyo, Japan. (Henceforth, *Japanese Government Documents*, NDL.)

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Tottori Prefecture Police Commissioner to the Chief of the Security Section in the Police Bureau of the Home Ministry, “Concerning the Trend of Public Sentiment toward the Abrupt Change in the Situation” (August 30, 1945), T1490, Reel 220, *Selected Archives of the Japanese Government*, NDL.

²¹ Governor of Yamaguchi Prefecture to the Home Minister, “Concerning the Trend of Public Sentiment in the Aftermath of the Greater East Asia War” (August 18, 1945), MOJ 15, Reel 1, *Japanese Government Documents*, NDL.

²² Intelligence Section in the Metropolitan Police Department, “Voices on the Streets (from August 15 to August 31, 1945),” T1490, Reel 220, *Selected Archives of the Japanese Government*, NDL.

Some also showed more opportunistic attitudes. One Japanese soldier returned home and started to learn English, encouraging others to also learn it.²³ Interestingly, on August 29, the military police in the Shikoku region reported on the recent local popular trend and described it as follows: “movie theaters had no vacancy the day after the proclamation of the imperial edict; *Bon* dance [traditional popular dance] started; the purchasing of goods increased; people started to study English hard – a certain vocational school replaced German with English.”²⁴

Some others were poised to observe the sovereign’s words, “endure the unendurable, bear the unbearable,” for various reasons. On August 23, one anonymous letter that appeared in the Letters to the Editor section of a national newspaper, *Asahi Shimbun*, called on people to “endure the unendurable” for the sake of the swift reconstruction of Japan. The letter, titled “Endure Hardship” (*gataki o shinobe*), claimed that although it was understandable to have “disappointment” and “hate for submission” to Allied Powers, everyone should refrain from rashness and make full efforts for “national resurgence” (*kokka saikō*) by enduring the unendurable – that would be the “right way to respond to the Emperor’s will.”²⁵ Similarly, a military police intelligence report dated August 23 recorded a voice of a military official who emphasized “patience” (*jichō*) as a good way to facilitate the early withdrawal of occupation forces from Japan; and similar voice of a rightist figure who insisted that “enduring humiliation” (*kutsujoku o tae shinobu*) would be a good way to “threaten the enemy.” Another anonymous voice said: “It is wise to endure [*gaman suru*] now because it will become possible to have revenge after fifteen years or so.”²⁶

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Headquarters of the Gendarmerie, “The State of Public Security, 27” (August 29, 1945), T1555 (Kenpei Shireibu, “Chian Jōsei”), Reel 229, *Selected Archives of the Japanese Government*, NDL.

²⁵ *Asahi Shimbun* (Osaka Edition), August 23, 1945.

²⁶ Headquarters of the Gendarmerie, “The State of Public Security, 10” (August 23, 1945), T1555, Reel 229, *Selected Archives of the Japanese Government*, NDL.

On the other hand, the Emperor's radio broadcast also stoked unbridled fury among some militant Japanese, particularly extremist military personnel, and drove them to make desperate gestures of defiance against surrender, to undermine the government initiative of demobilization.²⁷ In the immediate aftermath of the Emperor's radio broadcast, the language of open defiance abruptly burst into streets across Japan, as militarist dissidents in the state organs launched guerrilla-like resistance to the government's decision to surrender. Military and police intelligence papers reported multiple incidents of mutiny among imperial soldiers and numerous kinds of anti-surrender leaflets that had been distributed by military aircrafts via air and by military trucks on the ground. For instance, a military aircraft suddenly appeared in the skies of Tokyo in the afternoon of August 15 and scattered leaflets titled "An Appeal to All Nationals," which called for "the uprising of all the hundred million" (*ichioku sō kekki*).²⁸ On August 16, a military aircraft, flying over Shirakawa City in Fukushima Prefecture, scattered leaflets that appealed to people to "encourage the uprising of the Imperial Army."²⁹ On August 18, a military truck appeared around Shinjuku, the center of Tokyo, and distributed anti-surrender leaflets, which stated: "There is no honor to surrendering to the enemy! Atomic bombs, who cares! Soviet Union's entry to the war, who cares! ... We are absolutely determined and poised to push forward the war."³⁰ In the streets of the towns of Iwanuma and Masuda in Miyagi Prefecture, some sixty anti-surrender leaflets were found posted on telephone poles on August 20.³¹

²⁷ For a well-known historical account on failed coup d'état and militarist uprisings during the period of the government's internal decision to surrender and its aftermath, see Ōya Sōichi, ed., *Nihon no ichiban nagai hi: unmei no 8-gatsi 15nichi* (Tokyo: Bungei Shunjū Shinsha, 1965). The English translation is *Japan's Longest Day* (Palo Alto, California: Kodansha International, 1968).

²⁸ Military Manpower Section, "Report on Public Security" (August 18, 1945), T1490, Reel 220, *Selected Archives of the Japanese Government*, NDL.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Headquarters of the Gendarmerie, "The State of Public Security, 7" (August 21, 1945), T1555, Reel 229, *Selected Archives of the Japanese Government*, NDL.

In those anti-surrender leaflets, militarist dissidents questioned the imperial edict of August 15, the Emperor's announcement of the government's decision to accept the Potsdam Declaration, and framed it as something illegitimate, although consciously without denying the Emperor as the imperial sovereign. Their call for defiance contended, "The government's decision to surrender is not the Emperor's true will." One leaflet claimed, "If we accept the Potsdam Declaration, it means to destroy the Emperor. Thus, if we obey the order to carry out the Potsdam Declaration, we commit great treason and disloyalty [*taigyaku mudō no fuchū*]." ³² Another leaflet written by a civilian ultra-rightist called for defiance against the government's decision by questioning more radically the legitimacy of the imperial edict.

[Through this imperial edict] the eternal national polity is now about to be abandoned and the Emperor's sovereignty is now about to be put under the control of the enemy commander. The Emperor's sovereignty has to be supreme, absolute and unique. Once put under the commander of the enemy, the Emperor's sovereignty will be extinguished and the national polity, which is constituted by the unity of the sovereign and people, will collapse. Such an "imperial edict" is not truly an "imperial edict" despite its form, because it is totally against the eternal divine will and inherited divine spirit if the Emperor destroys the national polity by his own will. ³³

In other words, those anti-surrender dissidents tried to undermine the government initiative of demobilization by appropriating the meaning and legitimacy of the "Emperor's will," the imperial edict of August 15. Although the Emperor himself announced the government decision to surrender in the form of an imperial edict by speaking directly to his people, those dissidents framed the decision to surrender as illegitimate and incompatible with the Emperor's sovereignty, that is, the sacred, inviolate foundation of the national polity.

³² Military Manpower Section, "Report on Public Security" (August 18, 1945), T1490, Reel 220, *Selected Archives of the Japanese Government*, NDL.

³³ Mie Prefecture Police Commissioner to the Chief of the Security Section in the Police Bureau of the Home Ministry, "Concerning the Investigation of Seditious Libel" (September 1, 1945), T 1490, Reel 220, *Selected Archives of the Japanese Government*, NDL.

When some Japanese extremists were making desperate efforts in vain to subvert the meaning of the imperial edict and resist the surrender that was fast becoming a *fait accompli* during the days immediately following the Emperor's radio broadcast, a group of Korean political leaders were striving for the exact opposite objective. Seizing the opportunity created by the Emperor's announcement of surrender, the Korean leaders were making determined efforts to expand the meaning of Japan's surrender and establish the widest possible effect of decolonization as possible. Whereas Koreans were promised by the Allied Powers in accordance with the Cairo Declaration that Korea would "in due course ... become free and independent" on the occasion of Japan's surrender,³⁴ the Emperor's announcement did not necessarily mean Japan's immediate disavowal of colonial sovereignty. Amidst the last gasp of the dying Japanese empire, the Korean leaders took the initiative in eviscerating the colonial governmental system and paving the new political landscape of decolonization. Their attempts to establish de facto decolonization coalesced into the declaration of the "Korean People's Republic" (*Chosŏn Inmin Konghwaguk*) on September 6, which they particularly hurried in the face of the arrival of the U.S. occupation forces.³⁵

On August 15, the streets of colonial Korea rather looked calm that afternoon immediately after the Emperor's radio broadcast, especially when compared to the metropole

³⁴ It is important to note that the phrase "in due course Korea shall become free and independent" in the Cairo Declaration, particularly the phrase "in due course," meant the possible future international "trusteeship" of Korea that President Franklin Delano Roosevelt was planning for postwar world order. The basic idea underlying Roosevelt's trusteeship plan was that Korea would need "protection" before becoming independent and trustee powers would "prepare and educate" the "dependent peoples" for self-government. See Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War: Liberation and the Emergence of Separate Regimes, 1945-1947* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), pp.101-109.

³⁵ On the significance of the formation of the Korean People's Republic, see Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, chapter 3; Kim Namsik, *Namnodang yŏn'gu* (Seoul: Tol Pegae, 1984), chapter 2; Rim Ch'ŏl, "Chōsen Jinmin Kyōwakoku ni kansuru jakkan no mondai," *Chōsenshi kenkyūkai ronbunshū* 23 (1986); Ch'oe Sangnyong, *Mi kunjŏng kwa Han'guk minjokchu'i* (Seoul: Nanam Ch'ulp'an, 1988), pp.77-119.

unnerved and unsettled by scattered angry militant voices. The capital of colonial Korea that afternoon was “completely quiet,” in the words of Russian diplomatic official F.I. Shabshina who witnessed the epoch-making moment in colonial Korea. She wrote:

Seoul was completely quiet. Of course, people were aware of Japan’s surrender. But, many did not believe it. They just waited with their cautious joy and hope. On the following day, everything changed – the enormous tide of unbridled jubilation literally swept through the city and across the whole country.³⁶

While the large majority of Koreans was perhaps still in disbelief over Japan’s surrender during that day, the Emperor’s radio broadcast spurred Korean independence fighters into swift action for what they believed was forthcoming decolonization. In the early morning of August 15, hours before the Emperor’s speech was broadcasted, Vice Governor-General Endō Ryūsaku had an urgent meeting with Yō Unyōng, a long-time Korean independence fighter and leftist leader, and asked him for “cooperation” in preventing possible colonial mass retaliation in the wake of Japan’s surrender – the nightmare that the colonizers had feared the most.³⁷ Yō told Endō that he would accept if the colonial authorities agreed to carry out his five demands: “to release all political and economic prisoners in Korea immediately,” “to guarantee food provisions in Seoul for the next three months,” “to make no interference in [Korean] activities for preserving and building law and order,” “to make no interference in the training of students and organizing of the youth in Korea,” and “to let workers all over Korea cooperate with our building efforts.”³⁸ Although Yō’s demands stretched “cooperation” far beyond what the colonial government had originally wanted, Endō had no choice but to accept and rely on Yō’s

³⁶ F. I. Shabshina (Kim Myōngho trans), *1945-nyōn Namhan esō: ōnū Rōsia chisōng i ssūn yōksa hyōnjang kirok* (Seoul: Hanul, 1996), p.70.

³⁷ On the meeting between Vice Governor-General Endō and Yō Unyōng, see Morita Yoshio, *Chōsen shūsen no kiroku: Bei So ryōgun no shinchū to Nihonjin no hikiage* (Tokyo: Gannandō Shoten, 1964), pp.67-71.

³⁸ Yi Mangyu, *Yō Unyōng sōnsaeng t’ujaengsa* (Seoul: Ch’ongmungak, 1946), p.188, cited from Sō Chungsoḳ, *Han’guk hyōndae minjok undong yōngu: haebang hu minjok kukka kōnsōl undong kwa t’ong’il chōnsōn* (Seoul: Yōksa Pip’yōngsa, 1991), p.200.

political leadership for the safety of colonizers amidst the imminent collapse of colonial control. Soon, Yō took the lead in shaping the course of the dying colonial rule and defining a political landscape of “liberation.”

On the following day after the Emperor’s radio broadcast, Yō Unyōng and his comrades started a series of critical efforts to enact an indigenous initiative for establishing de facto decolonization across Korea. They embarked on the new project by announcing Korea’s “liberation” and their establishment of the Committee for the Preparation of Korean Independence (CPKI, *Choson kon’guk chunbi wiwonhoe*); disseminating its name and claim as the new authority in liberated Korea via leaflets, a radio broadcast, and a colonial government newspaper; organizing “peace-preservation corps” (*ch’iandae* or *poandae*) that would maintain peace and order by replacing the colonial police; opening the gates of colonial prisons and releasing imprisoned dissidents and political prisoners. Soon, CPKI organizers and CPKI-led *ch’iandae* members started to challenge and undermine the colonial authorities by taking over local administration offices and police stations.³⁹ *Ch’iandae* youths, wearing armbands as the symbol of new authority, swaggered on the streets and demonstrated to fellow Koreans and Japanese colonizers that the history of subjugation had come to an end in Korea. As an alternative police force, the *ch’iandae* played, as historian Bruce Cumings emphasizes, “an important role in maintaining the peace in the August of 1945.”⁴⁰

The bold and swift initiatives that Yō Unyōng and his comrades performed by appropriating the moment of a nascent colonial political vacuum resulted in more than reassuring those still in disbelief over Japan’s surrender. Their initiatives, particularly the declaration of the

³⁹ On the formation of *ch’iandae* units across Korea and their roles and activities, see Bruce Cumings’s comprehensive work on Korean liberation and the U.S. occupation of southern Korea and Morita Yoshio’s account based on records of Japanese colonial settlers in Korea. Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*; Morita, *Chōsen shūsen no kiroku*.

⁴⁰ Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, p.75.

CPKI as the de facto new postcolonial authority, assured the wary Korean populace of “liberation” from Japan’s colonial rule. As new voices of Korean liberation started to circulate through the radio, newspaper, leaflets and demonstrations, people crowded into the streets en masse and started to take over colonial public spaces that had long been the arenas of surveillance and violence under the colonial police.

On the day following after the Emperor’s radio broadcast, the streets of the colonial capital were swept up in the mood of exaltation, overflowing with the mass of jubilant people enjoying the newly-formed space of freedom. Political prisoners just released from prisons in Seoul poured into the streets in prison garb and started to march through the city along with their supporters in the welcoming crowd, celebrating and demonstrating liberation. Trucks loaded up with people cheering “*manse!*” drove around on the streets, and trains were packed both inside and on the roofs with joyful crowds waving Korean national flags, a flag with the Korean national symbol painted over the symbol of the Rising-Sun of the Japanese national flag.

The emergence of the new political landscape in Korea was also accompanied by some explosions of personal vengeance in the form of sporadic violence. The colonial government recorded that 27 murders and 214 violent assaults against both Japanese and Koreans were reported during the ten days from August 16 to August 25. Among them, 21 murder cases and 185 violent incidents involved Korean victims, particularly Korean police officers and municipal officials, and 6 murder cases and 29 violent incidents involved Japanese victims, particularly Japanese police officers.⁴¹ In other words, the primary target of personal vengeance was not so much Japanese colonial settlers but fellow Korean colonial “collaborators.” Apparently, the

⁴¹ Yamana Mikio, *Chōsen sōtokufu shūsei no kiroku 1: shūsen zengo ni okeru Chōsen jijō gaikyō* (Tokyo: Yūhō Kyōkai, 1956), pp.5-6.

Korean populace held more resentment toward fellow Koreans who had worked for Japanese colonial rule.

In the metropole, similarly, the moment of Japan's defeat evoked unbridled joy and enthusiasm among over two million Koreans living in Japan as well. In his memoir, Pak Hōnhaeng recollected how his Korean neighborhood, the Imakita district of Amagasaki City in Hyōgo Prefecture, was swept up in a mood of sheer exuberance on that day after the Emperor's radio broadcast:

As the evening came, Koreans who came to know Japan's defeat began to crowd into the streets of Imakita. The streets became like a large meeting ground and soon resounded with unceasing cheers of “*manse!*” “*Chōsen banzai!*” and “*dokuritsu* [independence] *banzai!*” People were excited, drunk, and delighted, raising their voices. It was like a festival. People brought *doburoku* [Korean rice wine] from their home and played the Korean drum and small gong. The frenzy of exaltation continued until midnight.⁴²

Some Koreans, particularly those who had had enough of hardships of labor conscription as conscript labors in Japan,⁴³ were too jubilant and could not hold back their simmering grievances against those who had abused them. According to a record of the Hokkaidō Police, some six hundred Korean miners in Utashinai stood up on August 15 immediately after the Emperor's radio broadcast and assaulted the company's office, accusing the company of having exploited and mistreated them as forced labor during the war.⁴⁴ In Akita Prefecture, the local police reported that in the evening of August 15, eleven Korean miners who were intoxicated on

⁴² Pak Hōnhaeng, *Kiseki: aru zainichi issei no hikari to kage* (Tokyo: Hihyōsha, 1990), p.203.

⁴³ See Pak Kyōngsik's classic work that vividly documents the slave-like treatment of Korean conscripted workers at the sites of Japan's wartime industries. Pak Kyōngsik, *Chōsenjin kyōsei renkō no kiroku* (Tokyo: Miraisha, 1965).

⁴⁴ Hokkaidō Keisatsushi Henshū Inkaï, ed., *Hokkaidō keisatsushi 2: Shōwa hen* (Sapporo: Hokkaidō Keisatsu Honbu, 1968), pp.660-661.

celebratory drinks broke some factory equipment and cursed Japanese supervisors, saying, “Japan was defeated. This time around we will exploit you [*omaetachi wo tsukatte yaru*].”⁴⁵

At the same time, however, it is important to note that not all of the Koreans hailed Japan’s defeat and Korea’s liberation with sheer joy, excitement, or desire for revenge. For those who had spent their youth going through the intense colonial educational system aimed at the complete “Japanization” and had accustomed themselves to the colonial demand for the denial of any “Koreaness,” Japan’s defeat/Korea’s liberation triggered rather agonizing confusion and bewilderment. Kim Sijong, who grew up “innocently believing” in the imperial slogan of “*naisen ittai*” (Japan and Korea as one body) through colonial education, heard the Emperor’s message of defeat in Cheju Island in Korea at age seventeen and remembered it as a moment of existential bewilderment:

[A]t the moment of sudden “liberation,” I could not believe Japan’s defeat. I was so shocked that I did not even feel like eating almost for a week. I was telling myself to believe that a divine wind [*kamikaze*] would blow soon and overturn the “defeat.”

It was amid overflowing excitement and the roar of “*manse! manse!*” across Korea. I was sitting alone on the pier of a harbor like a lone dog, unknowingly mumbling Japanese songs.⁴⁶

The songs that came out of his body were all of the Japanese songs he had learned through colonial education – songs to praise the Japanese Emperor. Liberation made Kim feel that he was suddenly “abandoned” to Korea, which he used to hold in contempt from the vantage point of the colonizer’s gaze. For Kim, August 15 was a schizophrenic moment – the beginning of his

⁴⁵ Security Section in the Police Bureau of the Home Ministry, “(Top Secret) The State of Public Security before and after the Imperial Decision to End the War” (September 1, 1945), T1496 (“*Sensō shūketsu ni kansuru chōgi kettei zengo ni okeru chian jōkyō*”), Reel 221, *Selected Archives of the Japanese Government*, NDL.

⁴⁶ Kim Sijong, “*Zainichi no hazama de* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2001), pp.33-34.

agonizing struggle to reconcile his past as an “Emperor’s subject” and the immediate present reality of a liberated Korea.⁴⁷

On the other hand, for those who had devoted themselves to Japanese colonial rule in Korea or who had obtained a certain niche in metropole society, the day heralded by many as “liberation” and “independence” came as rather a grim and uneasy moment. Faced with the sudden collapse of the colonial governmental system in Korea, colonial collaborators instantly disappeared, hiding themselves in fear of retaliation.⁴⁸ Some even decided to remain literally in the same boat with Japanese colonizers ready to flee Korea, hoping to get on the same repatriation boat to metropolitan Japan.⁴⁹ Similarly, on the shop floor in the metropole, those who had obtained a certain niche in Japanese industries – supervisors, assistants and translators who had often played an important role in the Japanese exploitation of Korean conscripted unskilled labor in Japan – also had to embrace Korean “liberation” with a lurking fear of reprisal from fellow Korean workers.⁵⁰ Moreover, for some propertied Koreans in Japan, the fall of the Japanese empire created anxiety that they would have to give up what they had attained through rising up from the very bottom of metropole society due to possible mandatory repatriation. For instance, the local police in Niigata Prefecture reported that Koreans who had been living in Japan for many years and owned “a considerable amount of wealth” were worrying that the Japanese government would send them back to Korea by force.⁵¹

⁴⁷ On Kim’s existential struggle, see also Kim Sōkpōm and Kim Sijong, *Naze kakitsuzukete kita ka naze chīnmokushite kita ka: Saishūtō 4.3 Jiken no kioku to bungaku* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2001).

⁴⁸ According to Cumings, for instance, about 80 percent of Korean police officers “stopped working, were ousted, or simply fled” from August 15 to September 8 (Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, p.75).

⁴⁹ Headquarters of the Gendarmerie, “The State of Public Security, 13” (August 24, 1945), T1555, Reel 229, *Selected Archives of the Japanese Government*, NDL.

⁵⁰ Indeed, during Korean coalmine workers’ uprisings and labor disputes after the war, those Korean “collaborators” became the target of reprisal in some cases. I will discuss more details in the following chapter.

⁵¹ Chief of the Takada Police Station to the Governor of Niigata Prefecture, “Concerning the Attitudes of Koreans in This Region” (August 29, 1945), Special Higher Police Department of Niigata Prefecture, *Shōwa 20-nen Naisen*

While Japan's defeat and Korea's liberation evoked deep pain and apprehension in not a few Koreans, such ambivalent emotions of anxiety and anguish, however, barely registered in the mind of the Japanese imagining of Koreans' experience of August 15. In the eyes of most Japanese, Koreans simply appeared like a jubilant mass crowd noisily celebrating, intoxicated with Japanese defeat and Korean liberation. In their eyes, the jubilation of Koreans even appeared as an insult, betrayal, or challenge to themselves and what they had believed was the glorious cause of Japanese empire, such as the "harmony" (*yūwa*) and "unity" (*ittai*) of Japanese and Koreans. Soon, their direct encounters with the celebrating masses of Koreans on the streets and in public spaces began to provoke bitter sentiments and even fear in the defeated populace.

Race and Racial Anxiety among the Defeated

What followed the emotional shock of the Emperor's announcement of surrender was the looming shadow of the troops of the "racial enemy" on Japanese soil. U.S. military troops had been occupying Okinawa and the Amami Islands since April 1945, holding civilian residents in makeshift internment camps. The U.S. troops in Okinawa and the Allied Powers were ready to place the entire metropolitan society under their control via military occupation as stipulated in the Potsdam Declaration. In Japan, the arrival of their new conquerors whom they had previously depicted as dehumanized "*kichiku Bei-Ei*" (devil- and beast-like Americans and Britons) during the war dominated the imaginations of the vanquished, fomenting rumors of possible future atrocities that the enemy soldiers would commit upon arrival.

During the days immediately after the Emperor's announcement of surrender, the Japanese police reported numerous circulating rumors and daily conversations among people

kankei shorui tsuzuri 2, reprinted in Pak Kyōngsik, *Chōsen mondai shiryō sōsho vol. 13: Nihon haisen zengo no zainichi Chōsenjin no jōkyō* (Tokyo: Ajia Mondai Kenkyūjo, 1990), p.417. (Henceforth, CMSS 13.)

which manifested the popular fear and anxiety over what “defeat” and “occupation” by the enemy would mean to them.⁵² Some were anxious that their conquerors would expropriate their scarce food and throw the hungry war-torn nation into utter starvation. Others were fearful of violent reprisals from enemy soldiers. In their conversations, a group of Japanese women lamented Japan’s defeat in fear of what they assumed would come next: “When the Yankee bastards come, they will put us together and kill us.”⁵³ Groundless rumors about the arrival of enemy troops and the accompanying atrocities also spread immediately, causing further terror and confusion among the people.⁵⁴ Even before the U.S. troops actually arrived in late August, it was rumored that “sixty thousand U.S. soldiers landed [at the port of] Yokohama and [were] now carrying out looting and assaults.”⁵⁵ On August 19, *Asahi Shimbun* printed an article titled “Looting and Violence Will Be Improbable” and denied those rumored possible atrocities of U.S. occupation troops in attempt to calm down the frenzied populace.⁵⁶ It was ironic that *Asahi Shimbun*, which had actively disseminated the dehumanized image of the enemy during the war, was now trying to reassure those panicked by enemy’s looming specter.

Besides the dehumanized, terror-inspiring image of their enemy, the Japanese had good reason to fear and believe in possible violent reprisals from their conquerors, given what Japanese troops had done in their occupied foreign territories during the war, like the “Rape of Nanking” of 1937. One even considered “looting and raping” as something “natural” for victors

⁵² For instance, see the following Japanese police secret intelligence report. Intelligence Section in the Metropolitan Police Department, “Voices on the Streets (from August 15 to August 31, 1945),” T1490, Reel 220, *Selected Archives of the Japanese Government*, NDL.

⁵³ Governor of Yamaguchi Prefecture to the Home Minister, “Concerning the Trend of Public Sentiment in the Aftermath of the Greater East Asia War” (August 18, 1945), MOJ 15, Reel 1, *Japanese Government Documents*, NDL.

⁵⁴ For instance, see *Asahi Shimbun*, August 19, 1945; *Yomiuri Hōchi*, August 20, 1945.

⁵⁵ *Asahi Shimbun*, August 19, 1945.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

according to past experiences of victorious Japanese troops in China.⁵⁷ Likewise, even the Japanese government appeared to be projecting such past experiences in China upon their conquerors. In fear of their conquerors' possible random "mass rape" of Japanese women, the Japanese government hurried to set up "comfort facilities" and institutionalize state-run prostitution for U.S./Allied soldiers.⁵⁸ At the same time, the Japanese local authorities, particularly those in the cities where U.S. troops were expected to land soon, advised and encouraged each household to "evacuate" women and young girls to the countryside. People scared by the local authorities' "advice" rushed to evacuate in droves and in a panic.⁵⁹

Importantly, what made Japanese people extremely anxious about defeat and occupation by the enemy was not simply the specter of violent reprisals from their new conquerors. It was also "race" per se that had become an unsettling matter in defeated Japan. In other words, defeat also marked a disquieting moment for the Japanese still holding imperialist racial ideology, the ideology of the purity and supremacy of the "Yamato Race" (*Yamato minzoku*), which the government had pushed forward during wartime until the late 1930s.⁶⁰ On the ground, one could hear people talking anxiously about the fate of their race. In the face of occupation by U.S./Allied troops, one worried that "negro" (*kuronbo*) Indian soldiers would also come to Japan and "breed" on Japanese soil,⁶¹ and another was concerned that the U.S. might adopt

⁵⁷ Intelligence Section in the Metropolitan Police Department, "Voices on the Streets (from August 15 to August 31, 1945)," T1490, Reel 220, *Selected Archives of the Japanese Government*, NDL.

⁵⁸ For an English-language work on this issue, see Yuki Tanaka, *Japan's Comfort Women: Sexual Slavery and Prostitution during World War II and the US Occupation* (New York: Routledge, 2002), chapter 6.

⁵⁹ *Asahi Shimbun*, August 19, 1945.

⁶⁰ On Japanese racial ideology and propaganda during the war, see John W. Dower, *War without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986); Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *Re-inventing Japan: Time, Space, Nation* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1998), chapter 5; Takashi Fujitani, *Race for Empire: Koreans as Japanese and Japanese as Americans during World War II* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).

⁶¹ Intelligence Section in the Metropolitan Police Department, "Voices on the Streets (from August 15 to August 31, 1945)," T1490, Reel 220, *Selected Archives of the Japanese Government*, NDL.

“miscegenation policy” (*konketsu seisaku*) in the occupation of Japan.⁶² One Japanese man believed that the U.S. would “colonize” a defeated Japan, lamenting this lot to be worse than “becoming the third-rate nation [*sanryūkoku*]”⁶³ – indeed, MacArthur called Japan “fourth-rate nation” later at the very beginning of the occupation, on September 11.⁶⁴

Such racial anxiety was not simply taking shape among the populace. Rather, it manifested more socially shared sentiment. In public space, chauvinistic leaflets written in the name of the “National Salvation Party” (*Kyūkokutō*) told Japanese women to “preserve the pure blood of the Yamato Race,” warning that those who had “intercourse with foreign race” (*ijunshu to majiwaru*) would be “punished by death.”⁶⁵ A Japanese government official also revealed similar concern. Upon setting up “comfort facilities” for U.S./Allied soldiers, one of the founding members of the Recreation and Amusement Association (so-called “RAA”) met the chief of the Tax Bureau of the Finance Ministry, Ikeda Hayato (later Prime Minister), and asked for financial support for the project. He remembered that Ikeda told him: “I will offer as much as one hundred million yen. One hundred million yen is cheap for protecting the pure blood of the Yamato Race.”⁶⁶ In its charter, the RAA declared its intention to “protect the pure blood of the one hundred million” and thereby contribute to the “preservation of the national polity.”⁶⁷ Moreover, one national newspaper, *Asahi Shimbun*, called on people not to lose “love for our brethren” (*dōhō ai*) and a sense of “pride as Yamato Race” in going through hardships of the

⁶² Governor of Saga Prefecture to the Home Minister, “Concerning Words and Actions of Residents after the War” (September 11, 1945), T1490, Reel 220, *Selected Archives of the Japanese Government*, NDL.

⁶³ Headquarters of the Gendarmerie, “The State of Public Security, 22” (August 27, 1945), T1555, Reel 229, *Selected Archives of the Japanese Government*, NDL.

⁶⁴ On September 11, 1945, MacArthur said to the U.S. press, “Japan has been reduced to a fourth-rate nation” and will not be able to wage another war within in the “predictable future.” See *Chicago Daily Tribune*, September 12, 1945; *New York Times*, September 12, 1945.

⁶⁵ Headquarters of the Gendarmerie, “The State of Public Security, 29” (August 30, 1945), T1555, Reel 229, *Selected Archives of the Japanese Government*, NDL.

⁶⁶ Dousu [Duus] Masayo, *Haisha no okurimono: kokusaku ianfu o meguru senryōka hishi* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1979), p.41.

⁶⁷ Kobayashi Daijirō and Murase Akira, (*Shinpan*) *Minna wa shiranai kokka baishun meirei* (Tokyo: Yūzankaku, 2008), pp.22-23.

aftermath of defeat.⁶⁸ After the beginning of U.S./Allied occupation, the Japanese government started to seek for “racial equality” in the future diplomatic relations with its former racial enemies – the diplomatic cause that leaders of modern Japan had been obsessed with in relation to Western powers.⁶⁹

One Japanese intellectual tried to reassure the populace that defeat could never crush Japanese racial superiority. In his essay printed in *Asahi Shimbun* on August 24, Takata Yasuma, one of the prominent Japanese intellectuals who had pushed forward the imperialist project of the “Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere” by forging the new racial ideology of “multi-ethnic empire,” targeted and warned against a growing pessimistic view on the Japanese nation (*Nihon minzoku*).⁷⁰ His short essay, titled “The Purity of Blood and the Resurgence of the Nation” (*chi no junketsu to minzoku no hukkō*), was replete with reassurance regarding the Japanese racial superiority. Refuting a “racist” theory that assumed only “a group of the white” as the “creator of world culture” and thereby justified their “domination of other nations [*minzoku*] as the destiny of humankind,” Takata praised the strength of the contemporary Japanese nation, the strength that derived from the purity of the nation’s long-historical bloodline, if not literally blood per se, under one sovereign. For him, even though Japan was defeated in the war, “national vitality” was still “vigorous” given its “superiority” in terms of the strength of “national unity” and “national spirit.” Takata emphasized that it was the “purity of blood” (*chi no*

⁶⁸ *Asahi Shimbun*, August 20, 1945.

⁶⁹ Japanese politicians and diplomats initially attempted to include the “principle of racial equality” in Japan’s peace treaty agenda. See, Yukiko Koshiro, *Trans-Pacific Racisms and the U.S. Occupation of Japan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), chapter 1.

⁷⁰ Takata Yasuma was a sociologist and served as the director of the government-sponsored Ethnic Research Institute (*Minzoku Kenkyūjo*) during the last years of World War II. On Takata’s role in forging the new racial ideology during the war, see Kevin M. Doak, “Building National Identity through Ethnicity: Ethnology in Wartime Japan and After,” *Journal of Japanese Studies* 27, 1 (Winter 2001). It is important to note that according to Naoki Sakai, Takata’s usage of the term “minzoku” was not simply equivalent to “ethnicity” but it was an “equivocal term encompassing race, ethnos, nation, and citizenry” (Naoki Sakai, “Imperial Nationalism and the Comparative Perspective,” *Positions* 17, 1 [Spring 2009], p.185).

junketsu), underlying the strong unity and sprit of the Japanese nation, which had determined Japan's historical development in the past and would determine its future resurgence from the ashes, from the "bare" state like Meiji Japan. Accordingly, Takata vehemently called upon the Japanese to unite altogether based on the nation's "pure blood" (*junketsu naru ketsueki*).⁷¹

It is important to note that the popular sense that the Japanese nation was racially superior, which Takata attempted to revitalize by focusing on the purity of the historical bloodline, was not simply stemming from the fact of defeat or ensuing occupation by their "racial enemy." Popular racial ideology was also at stake in the face of the liberation of their subjugated "Oriental" others. One worried that under "MacArthur's sovereignty" the Japanese would become "like slave," being "relegated" to a position "lower than Chinese and Korean nationals" (*shina minzoku hantō minzoku*).⁷² Some considered such possible "relegation" as something extremely unendurable about defeat. In their daily conversations, people could hear the grumblings on the streets – "Although we can't do anything about the United States, it will be disgusting [*shakuni sawaru*] if we become lower than the Koreans"⁷³; "Although we can't do anything about Americans and Britons, it is disgusting to bow my head before the Chinese."⁷⁴ One person even went so far as to say: "Since it is disgusting to be lorded over by the Chinese and Koreans, I'd rather die together with my children."⁷⁵

In short, defeat also made Japanese people extremely uneasy about their future hierarchical racial status vis-à-vis those whom they had treated as an "inferior" race during Japan's imperial expansion. In this post-empire new historical conjuncture, their deeply-

⁷¹ *Asahi Shimbun* (Osaka Edition), August 24, 1945.

⁷² Governor of Saga Prefecture to the Home Minister, "Concerning Words and Actions of Residents after the War" (September 11, 1945), T1490, Reel 220, *Selected Archives of the Japanese Government*, NDL.

⁷³ Andō Hiroshi, "Chōsen no tomo e," *Minshu Chōsen* 2 (May 1946), p.26.

⁷⁴ Intelligence Section in the Metropolitan Police Department, "Voices on the Streets (from August 15 to August 31, 1945)," T1490, Reel 220, *Selected Archives of the Japanese Government*, NDL.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

entrenched ideas about Japanese superiority over their “Oriental” others – Japanese as the “leading race” – dramatically transformed into anxiety, which sparked a strong fear of possible racial subordination to Koreans and Chinese. Importantly, this racial anxiety over their subjugated others was often sharper than the fear of subordination to their racial enemy on their soil.

Moreover, the anxiety over the Japanese “relegation” or possible subordination to their despised and subjugated racial others was deeply interwoven with the fear of reprisals from those they had subjugated. For instance, the following remarks that the chief of Kamisakai Village in Chiba Prefecture, Watanabe Yoshikazu, addressed to the local police manifested such fear underlying the Japanese racial anxiety over now-liberated Koreans. Concerning Koreans living in Japan, Watanabe told the local police as follows:

I guess that it was since the Great Tokyo [*Kantō*] Earthquake that Koreans had started movements aimed at independence. During the Great East Asia War [Pacific War], Koreans were the biggest troublemakers to the economy and made quite a lot of money for that. Judging from Japan’s current situation, we will plummet to the bottom of the economic recession. On that occasion, if Koreans come to buy and own our tenancy and lands, it is likely we will be exploited [*tsukawareru*] as tenant farmers by Koreans.⁷⁶

His anxiety, “We will be exploited as tenant farmers by Koreans,” reflected a mixed fear of both Korean reprisal and racial subordination, a fear that Japanese and his own dominant positionality might be soon overturned and they might become subordinate to now-liberated colonial subjects.

Japanese racial anxiety and fear of reprisals particularly rose to the surface through their everyday, unexpected encounters with Koreans who were now performing a new subjectivity

⁷⁶ Chief of the Narutō Police Station to the Governor of Chiba Prefecture, “Concerning the Investigation of Words and Actions toward Koreans” (September 13, 1945), Special Higher Police Department of Chiba Prefecture, *Shōwa 20-nen naisen hōkokushorui hensatsu*, CMSS 13, p.56. It is important to note that Watanabe remembered the rise of Korean independence movements and associated it with the Great Kantō Earthquake of 1923, rather than the March 1st Independence Movement of 1919 in Korea.

with a posture of defiance. Fear and anxiety among the Japanese over Koreans living right next to them fomented rumors about vengeful Koreans plotting against defeated Japan. The Japanese police reported numerous groundless rumors about Korean atrocities that had emerged across Japan in the aftermath of the Emperor's announcement of surrender. On August 28, the Governor of Toyama Prefecture informed the Home Minister of seditious groundless rumors (*ryūgen higo*) spreading among residents, such as "Koreans are starting to riot all over Japan," "Koreans are assaulting and raping Japanese women all over Japan."⁷⁷ A military intelligence report sent from Hokkaidō on August 28 referred to the same kinds of rumors circulating in that area, rumors of Korean riots and assaults on Japanese female factory workers.⁷⁸ Such rumors were also mentioned in the Tottori local police intelligence report of September 12.⁷⁹ In Niigata Prefecture, moreover, the police reported a malicious rumor that said: "Lots of *ayu* fish died in Miomote River. People are saying that it was because two twenty-something-year-old Koreans poisoned the river."⁸⁰

This phenomenon was precisely reminiscent of what had arisen in the post-quake social panic of September 1923, or what Japanese writer Takami Jun characterized as the manifestation of the Japanese people's "sense of guilt" underlying their fear that "Koreans would take revenge" upon them.⁸¹ In 1923, simmering racial fear and hostility among the Japanese over the growing population of Koreans in Japan exploded into entirely fabricated rumors of Korean riots and

⁷⁷ Governor of Toyama Prefecture to the Home Minister, "Concerning the State of Emerging Groundless Rumors" (August 28, 1945), T1490, Reel 220, *Selected Archives of the Japanese Government*, NDL.

⁷⁸ Headquarters of the Gendarmerie, "Report on Military Order and Public Security, 37" (September 5, 1945), T1556 (Kenpei Shireibu, "Chian Jōhō), Reel 229, *Selected Archives of the Japanese Government*, NDL.

⁷⁹ Tottori Prefecture Police Commissioner to the Chief of the Security Section in the Police Bureau of the Home Ministry, "Concerning Groundless Rumors" (September 12, 1945), T1490, Reel 220, *Selected Archives of the Japanese Government*, NDL.

⁸⁰ Chief of Murakami Police Station to the Governor of Niigata Prefecture, "Concerning the Attitudes of Koreans in the Aftermath of the Cease-fire" (September 5, 1945), *Shōwa 20-nen Naisen kankei shorui tsuzuri 2*, CMSS 13, p.441.

⁸¹ Takami Jun, "Waga mune no soko no kokoniwa," *Ningen* (September 1950), reproduced in Kūm Pyōngdong, ed., *Chōsenjin gyakusatsu ni kansuru chishikijin no hannō 2* (Tokyo: Ryokuin Shobō, 1996), pp.427-429.

organized crimes in the chaotic aftermath of the Great Kantō Earthquake. Those rumors of Korean atrocities – rumors of assaults, looting, rape, arson, bombing and the poisoning of the well – immediately spread out all over Japan with the endorsement of the police authorities and resulted in the frenzied brutal killing of over 6000 Koreans by armed mobs and vigilante groups alongside the police and military. Two decades later, the fear that “Koreans would take revenge” reemerged amidst the postwar panic surrounding the defeat in 1945. Japanese encounters with Koreans performing a new subjectivity as the liberated in this post-empire historical conjuncture rekindled their “sense of guilt” over what they had done to Koreans during past decades, fomenting rumors about vengeful Koreans plotting against the Japanese.

Furthermore, day-to-day encounters between Japanese and Koreans after the August 15 of 1945 were also becoming increasingly infused with racial tensions and antagonisms. For the Japanese, direct encounters with those Koreans expressing their unbridled joy on the streets and in public spaces often triggered a bitter sentiment. One Japanese journalist who witnessed the days of exaltation in Korea after August 15 wrote that when he saw the mass of Koreans cheering “*manse!*” with the Korean national flag in their hands, their cheering “evoked something intense” in him. With a sarcastic, condescending attitude toward the Koreans, he described the excitement of Koreans as follows:

In some villages, people were just drunk with festival fever, merrily playing flutes and drums, without worrying about independence and reflecting on Japan sincerely. ... Once they wake up from the festival frenzy, gratitude toward Japan will well up within them.⁸²

Similarly, Miyazawa Nobuko, a Japanese woman who wrote about her days of “stupefaction” immediately after the Emperor’s announcement of defeat, remembered her encounter with now-liberated Koreans in Japan as a bitter experience. In Nagoya City the day

⁸² *Asahi Shimbun*, September 4, 1945.

after the Emperor's radio broadcast, Miyazawa happened to encounter a group of Koreans waving to her from the trolley and shouting in Japanese, "*dokuritsu* [independence], *dokuritu, banzai!*" To hear the word "*dokuritsu*," she felt that her face "tightened with an instinctive feeling."⁸³ Miyata Setsuko also remembered her and her family's encounter with Koreans demonstrating liberation in Japan as a loathsome experience – more disgusting than the fact of the U.S. defeat of Japan:

It was one lazy summer afternoon shortly after August 15th. ... A group of Koreans passed in front of my house, shouting something in the high-pitched tone of a foreign tongue. [At the forefront, they raised a flag with the Korean national symbol painted over the symbol of the Rising-Sun of the Japanese national flag.] "Damn it! Korean bastards will try to occupy half of the Japanese territory. That's why they painted half of the Rising-Sun black on flag," said my neighbor as stood beside me and ground his teeth. My mother, putting her hand on my shoulder, said with tears in her eyes, "Oh my! The Rising-Sun has become half black...." I took it as a symbol of the invasion of Japan. I was too ignorant to understand the feeling of Koreans rejoicing in liberation. ... My father bitterly spat out, "we lost the war, so now we are treated with contempt even by Koreans." This was also my real feeling. *It remained in my mind as a far more loathsome thing [iyana koto] than our defeat by the U.S [my emphasis].*⁸⁴

In fact, such embittered emotion and hostile reaction toward Koreans performing a new subjectivity was not unique to Miyazawa's and Miyata's experiences, and it was a more socially shared sentiment. In daily life, Japanese attitudes toward Koreans were, in the words of police intelligence reports, "becoming mean and cold"⁸⁵ or "growing distrustful and hostile"⁸⁶ after August 15. Korean residents were very upset to find Japanese neighbors, sometimes even

⁸³ Miyazawa Nobuko, "Chika kōjō no watashi tachi," *Sekai* 116 (August 1955), pp.78-79. Also, see Yamada Shōji, "8.15 o meguru Nihonjin to Chōsenjin no dansō," *Chōsen kenkyū* 69 (January 1968).

⁸⁴ Miyata Setsuko, "8.15 to Chōsen to watashi," *Chōsen kenkyū* 32 (August 1964), p.4.

⁸⁵ Chief of the Niigata Prefecture Police Department to the Chief of the Security Section in the Police Bureau of the Home Ministry, "Concerning the Attitude of Koreans (Including the Taiwanese) thereafter" (September 4, 1945), *Shōwa 20-nen Naisen kankei shorui tsuzuri 1*, CMSS 13, p.218

⁸⁶ Governor of Yamaguchi Prefecture to the Home Minister, "Concerning the Trend of Public Sentiment in the Aftermath of the Greater East Asia War" (August 18, 1945), MOJ 15, Reel 1, *Japanese Government Documents*, NDL.

neighbors they were getting along well with, no longer friendly and sometimes becoming more discriminatory.⁸⁷ Some Japanese began to fling sarcastic remarks at Koreans, like, “You feel happy since Japan was defeated, don’t you?”⁸⁸ One blamed Koreans for Japan’s defeat, hurling an invective at Koreans: “Because of you Koreans here, Japan was defeated. Go back to Korea now!”⁸⁹ Even a schoolchild spat out at a Korean classmate: “Since Koreans are given independence from the U.S. and Britain, you are our enemy. Go back to Korea now!”⁹⁰ Furthermore, Koreans were becoming increasingly the target of slanders and the object of the frustration of defeat in everyday conversations among the Japanese populace, conversations in a movie theater, public bathhouse, and other public spaces.⁹¹ The police reported various malicious and seditious remarks on Koreans, such as, “Japan was defeated because of Korean spy activities,”⁹² “Koreans are counterfeiting 10 yen notes for their use, whose total amount is worth 2,000 million yen,”⁹³ “We have to kill Koreans altogether.”⁹⁴

⁸⁷ Marshal of the Tōkamachi Police Station to the Chief of the Niigata Prefecture Police Department, “Concerning the Attitude of Koreans living in This Region in the Aftermath of the Abrupt Change of the Situation” (August 31, 1945); Marshal of the Naoetsu Police Station to the Chief of the Niigata Prefecture Police Department, “Concerning the Attitude of Koreans after the Cease-fire” (August 25, 1945), *Shōwa 20-nen Naisen kankei shorui tsuzuri 2*, CMSS 13, pp.348, 374.

⁸⁸ Marshal of the Murakami Police Station to the Governor of Niigata Prefecture, “Concerning the Attitudes of Koreans in the Aftermath of the Cease-fire” (September 5, 1945), *Shōwa 20-nen Naisen kankei shorui tsuzuri 2*, CMSS 13, pp.440-441.

⁸⁹ Governor of Yamaguchi Prefecture to the Home Minister, “Concerning the Trend of Public Sentiment in the Aftermath of the Greater East Asia War” (August 18, 1945), MOJ 15, Reel 1, *Japanese Government Documents*, NDL.

⁹⁰ Chief of the Niigata Prefecture Police Department to the Chief of the Security Section in the Police Bureau of the Home Ministry, “Concerning the Attitude of Koreans (Including the Taiwanese) thereafter” (September 4, 1945), *Shōwa 20-nen Naisen kankei shorui tsuzuri 1*, CMSS 13, p.219.

⁹¹ Marshal of the Tōkamachi Police Station to the Chief of the Niigata Prefecture Police Department, “Concerning the Attitude of the Japanese and Koreans after the Cease-fire” (August 29, 1945), *Shōwa 20-nen Naisen kankei shorui tsuzuri 2*, CMSS 13, pp.389-390.

⁹² Governor of Yamaguchi Prefecture to the Home Minister, “Concerning the Trend of Public Sentiment in the Aftermath of the Greater East Asia War” (August 18, 1945), MOJ 15, Reel 1, *Japanese Government Documents*, NDL.

⁹³ Metropolitan Police Department, “A List concerning the State of the Policing of Groundless Rumors during September” (October 3, 1945), T1490, Reel 220, *Selected Archives of the Japanese Government*, NDL.

⁹⁴ Governor of Yamaguchi Prefecture to the Home Minister, “Concerning the Trend of Public Sentiment in the Aftermath of the Greater East Asia War” (August 18, 1945), MOJ 15, Reel 1, *Japanese Government Documents*, NDL.

In September, the Japanese government composed an internally circulated document assessing the current state of post-defeat society. In the document, the government characterized the relationship between Japanese and Koreans in Japan as follows:

News on the worsening of the security situation in Korea, particularly the news of Koreans' unjust persecution of the Japanese, is being spread by Japanese returnees. Also, all kinds of incendiary words and behaviors [*furyō gendō*] that Koreans [in Japan] express regarding Korean independence are provoking the Japanese. *A strict watch for possible confrontations and fighting between Japanese and Koreans is required* [my emphasis].⁹⁵

In the above characterization, the Japanese government codified Korean efforts to shape liberation in Korea as “unjust persecution of the Japanese” and portrayed exaltations of “independence” among Koreans in Japan as “all kinds of wicked words and behaviors.” However, the government clearly acknowledged what was “provoking” Japanese sentiments – the unendurable reality that the established power relations were falling apart and their colonized subjects were now speaking back to them. The government was now anxious that day-to-day encounters between Japanese and Koreans in Japan were becoming infused with the racial tension that could escalate into direct “confrontations and fighting” between the two peoples, the former colonizers and colonized. Moreover, as the government document indicated, the racial tension was also fed by what was going on in now-liberated colony, through the news that Japanese returnees from Korea disseminated in Japan. In the next section, I illuminate repercussion of racial tensions between Japanese and Koreans, between the former metropole and colony.

⁹⁵ Japanese Government, “The State of the Aftermath of the War: Reference Materials” (September 1945), T1554, Reel 229, *Selected Archives of the Japanese Government*, NDL.

Repatriation and Hostile Repercussions between the Decolonizing Metropole and Colony

Since the post-quake mayhem of 1923, Koreans living in Japan had been harboring the fear that another social panic might drive the Japanese populace into a frenzy of racial victimization and a “Korean hunt” again.⁹⁶ Japan’s defeat and the ensuing confusion among the Japanese populace rekindled their smoldering fear. In their eyes, what came to the surface in post-defeat Japanese society, such as the increasing racial hostility toward Koreans and circulating malicious rumors of Korean atrocities, appeared as something that spelled another pandemonium like before. Their traumatic memory of the post-quake mayhem of 1923 became, as *zainichi* Korean historian Cho Kyōngdal points out, an urgent motivation that spurred many to rush back to Korea in the immediate aftermath of Japan’s defeat, joining with their joy over return to their family and their enthusiasm for participating in new nation-state building in Korea.⁹⁷

Kim Kyusu, whose family had been ostracized as an “enemy to the country” (*kokusoku*)” in their village during the war, remembered that upon learning about Japan’s defeat, he and his family were so afraid of the possibility of mass violence, “the Japanese might do something to us if we remained here,” that they decided to escape from the village immediately and to leave Japan as soon as possible.⁹⁸ Kim Chongjae (Kin Shōzai) also remembered that there was

⁹⁶ For instance, in June 1945, one Korean factory worker in Niigata Prefecture gathered seventy to eighty fellow Korean workers in a hall of their labor camp and told them, “Don’t forget the past [incident] of the Great Kantō Earthquake. If the war keeps going like this, it is possible that the massacre of Koreans will happen again just like the time of the Great Kantō Earthquake” (Marshal of the Naoetsu Police Station to the Chief of the Niigata Police Department” [August 15, 1945], *Shōwa 20-nen Naisen kankei shorui tsuzuri* 2, CMSS 13, pp.306-308). Moreover, during the war, the secret police reported numerous rumors and daily conversations that revealed the mounting fear among Koreans in Japan of Japanese retaliation, such as: “We might be killed by the Japanese if [U.S.] air strikes become intensified”; “Since riots are likely to happen in Korea, we should go back now. Otherwise, we will be killed by the Japanese” (*Tokkō geppō* [draft, 1945], reproduced in Pak Kyōngsik, ed., *Zainichi Chōsenjin kankei shiryō shūsei* vol.5 [Tokyo: San’ichi Shobō, 1976], pp.500-513).

⁹⁷ Cho Kyōngdal, *Shokuminchiki Chōsen no chishikijin to minshū: shokuminchi kindaiseiron hihan* (Tokyo: Yūshisha, 2008), pp.268-270.

⁹⁸ Kim Kyusu, “Tennō no sekishi taru o shinjite,” Maeda Kenji, et al., *Hyakumannin no shinse taryon: Chōsenjin kyōsei renkō, kyōsei rōdō no “han”* (Osaka: Tōhō Shuppan, 1999), p.155.

growing fear among the Koreans living in Japan that “Koreans would be massacred by the Japanese.”⁹⁹ In November 1945, after U.S./Allied occupation forces landed Japan, one young Korean man sent a letter to Douglas MacArthur of the Supreme Commander for Allied Powers (SCAP) and asked him to protect Koreans from possible Japanese mass assaults. He wrote:

I would like to ask you to prevent the Japanese from committing such a barbarous behavior [*yaban kōi*] like the massacre of Koreans in the aftermath of the Great Kantō Earthquake. *The current massive exodus of Korean nationals is actually happening out of fear of it* [my emphasis].¹⁰⁰

Holding concerns similar to the young Korean man who wrote to MacArthur, the majority of Koreans in Japan was in a rush to leave and run away from the metropole of the dying empire, if not always necessarily out of fear, to return to their families, home, and now-liberated homeland during the days immediately after August 15. Some prepared a ship using whatever money they could pool together and sailed back to Korea at their own risk, while many simply rushed to the ports in hopes of catching a repatriation ship which the Japanese government had arranged to take them to Korea. When the Japanese government started the repatriation program in September, initially there were only two ships going back and forth between northwestern Japan and southern Korea (Pusan), moving in turn the Japanese settlers and military personnel from Korea to Japan, and the Koreans desiring repatriation from Japan to Korea.¹⁰¹ The cities of Shimonoseki and Hakata in northwestern Japan, the location of the major ports to Korea, were soon flooded by the large crowds of Koreans waiting for their ships for days on end, often without shelter and in abject conditions. The *Yomiuri Hōchi* newspaper reported on September 14 that Koreans from all over Japan were pouring into Shimonoseki City and that

⁹⁹ Kin Shōzai, *Tonichi Kankokujin ichidai* (Tokyo: Tosho Shuppansha, 1978), p.125.

¹⁰⁰ A letter from a Korean to MacArthur, November 15, 1945, Box 231, G-2, RG 331, NARA.

¹⁰¹ On the process of the Korean repatriation from Japan, see Ch’oe Yōnggho, *Chaeil Han’gugin kwa choguk kwangbok: haebang chikhu ūi ponguk kwihwan kwa minjok tanch’e hwaltong* (Seoul: Kūlmoin, 1995), chapter 2; Kim T’aegi, *Sengo Nihon seiji to zainichi Chōsenjin mondai: SCAP no tai zainichi Chōsenjin seisaku 1945--1952-nen* (Tokyo: Keisō Shobō, 1997), chapter 2.

currently almost thirty thousand Koreans were waiting for repatriation. Some four thousand Koreans were staying in a makeshift shelter in front of the Shimonoseki train station, and ten thousand and several hundreds were simply living at the train station, inside and outside – many were getting sick, and some had died.¹⁰²

Those who were fortunate enough to return earlier to Korea, particularly those conscripted workers who repatriated first, spread stories in Korea about the miserable state of conditions in which Koreans had to wait for repatriation in Shimonoseki and Hakata. Soon, multiple voluntary relief associations in Korea started relief efforts, like sending a rescue ship to Shimonoseki and bring back those suffering from illness to Korea.¹⁰³ A newspaper in Korea also reported on their plight and called for popular support and sympathy for fellow Korean “brethren” (*tongp’o*) in Japan, while accusing the Japanese government of being irresponsible.¹⁰⁴ One voluntary relief association leader in South Kyōngsang Province even sent a telegram to the mayor of Fukuoka City in mid-December and condemned the mayor for not showing “any kindness with respect to food and lodging” to the mass of Koreans waiting for the repatriation ships:

They are miserable beyond description. Here, we are taking all possible measures to help Japanese being evacuated from Korea with regard to their lodging and food. Comparing our efforts with yours, we greatly regret that your situation is so bad. If such conditions continue there, it will be a matter of grave influence on the Japanese being evacuated from this province. Therefore, we request you to correct this situation.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² *Yomiuri Hōchi*, September 14, 1945.

¹⁰³ For example, see news articles on voluntary relief activities reported in *Mail Sinbo*, September 12, September 21, September 27, October 2, and October 3, 1945.

¹⁰⁴ For example, see *Maeil Sinbo*, September 27, 1945; October 1, 1945.

¹⁰⁵ A telegram intercepted and translated by the U.S. military intelligence. “G-2 Periodic Report, from 141800/I Dec 45, to: 151800/I Dec 45,” Folder: Korean Repatriation from Japan, Box 34, United States Army Forces in Korea, XXIV, Corps, G-2, Historical Section, RG 554 (Records of General HQ, Far East Command, Supreme Commander Allied Powers, and United Nations Command), NARA. (Henceforth, USAFIK, RG 554, NARA.)

As the volunteer relief association leader advised with an implicit warning in mid-December, how the Japanese were treating and had previously treated Koreans in Japan indeed had been becoming “a matter of grave influence on the Japanese” in Korea since September, when the repatriation of Korean conscripted workers started. The massive return of Koreans from Japan, which amounted to 788,979 by the end of December,¹⁰⁶ began to inflame further the already-growing racial tension between Koreans and Japanese settlers remaining in Korea.

Initially, like those in metropolitan Japan, over 800,000 Japanese settlers in colonial Korea were taken by surprise at the moment of the Emperor’s announcement.¹⁰⁷ The ensuing upheaval of liberation in Korea plunged many Japanese settlers into a state of great fear and confusion. Faced with an uncertain future in Japan’s now-liberated colony and the looming shadow of Soviet troops advancing from the north border, a number of Japanese settlers simply hurried to prepare an escape from the colony. Some rushed to the bank to take their all savings or dumped all their property for cash, and some, particularly those who had fled from the Soviet troops’ arrival, hastened their way to the ports of Inch’ŏn and Pusan where they could take a ship back to Japan.

Japanese settlers living in the northeast of North Hamgyŏng Province along the border with the Soviet Union had already evacuated the area before August 15, after the Soviet troops launched air strikes and crossed the border on August 9. Simultaneously, the Japanese living in

¹⁰⁶ The Headquarters of the United States Armed Forces in Korea, “G-2 Periodic Report,” no.111 (December 31, 1945), reprinted in *Migunjŏng chŏngbo pogosŏ* (Seoul: Irwŏl Sŏgak, 1986), vol.1, p.495. (Henceforth, MCP.)

¹⁰⁷ According to a census conducted by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Pusan, the number of the Japanese population in colonial Korea amounted to 809,900 by late December, 1944. See Maruyama Heiichi, “Chŏsen ni okeru Nihonjin no hikiage jŏkyō” (June 1, 1949), reprinted in Katō Kiyofumi, ed., *Kaigai hikiage kankei shiryō shūsei (kokugai hen) vol.19: Shūseno Chŏsen ni okeru Nihonjin no jŏkyō oyobi hikiage 2* (Tokyo: Yumani Shobō, 2002), pp.318-319. (Henceforth, KHKSS, 19.) Also, according to colonial government statistics cited in Morita’s *Chŏsen shūsen no kiroku*, the Japanese population in Korea was 712,583 in May 1944, composing approximately 2.8 percent of the entire population in Korea (Morita, *Chŏsen shūsen no kiroku*, p.7).

the Japanese puppet state “Manchukuo,” the northeastern region of China along the border with the Soviet Union and the Korean peninsula, also had already started to evacuate cities such as Xining (Changchun) and Mukden (Shenyang) after the Soviet attack, fleeing into the northwestern provinces of colonial Korea. Those who had escaped from Japan’s Manchuria region amounted to as many as almost 40,000 in South P’yŏng’an Province and 20,000 in North P’yŏng’an Province during that August.¹⁰⁸ Some of those evacuees and colonial settlers in the north were able to escape to the south before the Soviet troops blocked their exit beyond the 38th parallel by late August, the line that had become the dividing line between the U.S. and Soviet military occupations of Korea. Many among those over 60,000 evacuees and some 290,000 colonial settlers in the north side of the 38th parallel were not able to leave the Soviet-occupied north and had to survive there for months or for more than a year under miserable conditions.¹⁰⁹ Their property was confiscated in many cases, and they were kicked out of their homes and had to encamp in makeshift shelters with little food and care. Unlike those in the south, Japanese colonial settlers in the north ended up facing numerous sufferings and tragedies. Many died from hunger, disease outbreaks, and the cold of the freezing winter while waiting for official repatriation or during their secret exodus to the south.¹¹⁰

For Japanese settlers living in the south as well as in the north, Japan’s defeat and the ensuing collapse of the empire spelled out the bleak reality that they would have to lose everything they had obtained in the colonial world, not only material prosperity but also their

¹⁰⁸ Morita, *Chōsen shūsen no kiroku*, pp.60-61.

¹⁰⁹ The number is cited from Maruyama, “Chōsen ni okeru Nihonjin no hikiage jōkyō” (June 1, 1949), KHKSS, 19, p.321.

¹¹⁰ There are a number of historical accounts, memoirs and novels published in Japan about the plight of the Japanese in Soviet-occupied north Korea and their tragic experiences of mass exodus and repatriation from the north. For a comprehensive historical account on this issue, see Morita, *Chōsen shūsen no kiroku*. It is said that among some 300,000 Japanese in Soviet-occupied north Korea, over 35,000 Japanese died during August 1945 to November 1946, including approximately 9,000 military personnel. See Wakatsuki Yasuo, *Sengo hikiage no kiroku* (Tokyo: Jiji Tsūshinsha, 1991), p.219.

superordinate position in their everyday life. As Japanese settlers who had repatriated from Sinūiju in North P’yōng’an Province wrote in early 1947, Japanese defeat “changed all of the Japanese overseas into the mass of totally helpless people” in an instant.¹¹¹ Kotani Masujirō who had repatriated from Inch’ōn in Kyōnggi Province remembered that after August 15, the “inversion of Japanese and Korean positionality [*ichi no tentō*]” started and Japanese residents had to worry about the “safety of their life and property” and possible “assaults and persecution by Koreans.”¹¹² Even Japanese children looked like having lost their superordinate position on the streets of the crumbling colonial world. Yashima Shigeru observed that “Japanese children totally cowered” because “Korean children started to have an attitude and hurled rocks at Japanese children” on the streets.¹¹³

Indeed, defeat shattered what Albert Memmi called “colonial privilege” itself – “Even the poorest colonizer thought himself to be – and actually was – superior to the colonized.”¹¹⁴ Tokō Yoshimasa, a second-generation colonial settler who had repatriated from Kwaksan in North P’yōng’an Province in July 1946, recounted that his experience of the inverted colonial world marked an “opportunity” to reflect on his colonial privilege. In Kwaksan after Japan’s surrender, the new local Korean authorities gathered Japanese settlers and started to use them as manpower. One day, Tokō, who was a student, was ordered to work for street cleaning with other Japanese settlers. The Korean supervisor, sitting on a carriage that carried trash cans, would jut his chin out and simply command, “Hey!” and they would have to pick up trash and horse dung, under the gaze of a crowd of curious Korean children. For Tokō, who had been born in Korea “as a member of the conqueror people” (*seifuku minzokusha*) and had “unconsciously” felt superior to

¹¹¹ Akino Jinpei and Kosako Shintarō, “Shingishū o chūkaku to suru Heian Hokudō Nihonjin hikiage kiroku” (February 1947), KHKSS, 21, p.119.

¹¹² Kotani Masujirō, “Jinsen hikiage no kiroku” (March 20, 1948), KHKSS, 18, p.273.

¹¹³ Yashima Shigeru, “Shūsen to Kōkai zaijū no Nihonjin” [September 1949], KHKSS, 21, p.342.

¹¹⁴ Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1991), p.xii.

Koreans of the “subjugated people,” it was an unendurable humiliation. Yet, he tried to accustom himself to the inverted colonial world by discarding the idea of Japanese superiority and accepting the reality of the “defeated people” (*haisen minzoku*).¹¹⁵

On the other hand, another Japanese settler approached the postcolonial inversion differently, with a strong feeling of hatred toward Koreans. Tōno Tomizō later recounted and described the state of the inverted colonial world with a tone of disgust and condescension as follows:

To put it simply, honorable Japanese [*Nihonjin sama*] became Korean bastards [*Chōsenjin yarō*], and Koreans bastards became honorable Japanese. It looked like Koreans were busy trying to become Japanese. Although it was extremely disgusting to see those whom we had looked down become superior [*ue ni naru*], I had no choice but to contain myself. I had no sympathy with Korean nation-building. I just hated Koreans. I thought that much more outrageous riots would happen. But, there were no such things as riots.¹¹⁶

While the postcolonial inversion was accompanied by some personal vengeance and sporadic harassment against Japanese colonial settlers, it was a less violent transition than expected – as Tōno recalled, there were no such things as “riots.”¹¹⁷ This was for the most part because of Korean leaders’ efforts to contain mass violence and reprisals against Japanese colonizers. From the very beginning of the liberation, Korean political leaders called on the populace for “self-restraint” and warned against any “rash actions,” particularly rashness toward the Japanese.¹¹⁸ On August 16, An Chaehong, one of the core political leaders of the CPKI (Committee for the Preparation of Korean Independence), delivered a historic speech on the

¹¹⁵ Tokō Yoshimasa, “Haizan no tabi: Kakusan ni okeru Nihonjin seikatsu kiroku” [no date], KHKSS, 22.

¹¹⁶ Okamoto Tatsuaki and Matsuzaki Tsugio, *Kikigaki Minamata minshūshi 5: shokuminchi wa tengoku datta* (Tokyo: Sōfukan, 1990), pp.251-252.

¹¹⁷ Cumings also assesses this postcolonial transition as less violent compared to similar situations elsewhere like in France. Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, p.76.

¹¹⁸ For example, see the statement that CPKI leaders issued on the following day after the Emperor’s radio broadcast and the speech that An Chaehong delivered through a radio broadcast on the same day. *Maeil Sinbo*, August 16, August 17, 1945.

declaration of Korean liberation and the establishment of the CPKI through a radio broadcast. In his speech, An referred to the fate of colonizers and stressed the importance of “autonomy and mutual concession” (*chaju hoyang*)¹¹⁹ in the relationship between two nations, Koreans and Japanese, at this “critical crossroads.” At the same time, he made a strong appeal to the Korean populace “not to provoke the sentiment of Japanese residents,” calling their attention to the fate of Korean brethren in Japan. Upon concluding his speech, An requested:

Ladies and gentlemen, I believe that all wise [Korean] nationals will fully understand that when we think about our five million [*sic*] Korean brethren living a hard life in Japan together with Japanese nationals, we need to totally guarantee the property and safety of a million and some hundred thousand [*sic*] Japanese residents living Korea. I sincerely ask for all your great caution.¹²⁰

Japanese settlers in Korea had to be defended from personal reprisals for the sake of Korean brethren in Japan, and the *ch'iandae* (peace-preservation corps), a new alternative police force, played an active role for that. On August 16, a Japanese man named Morishita Keiji encountered growing Korean mass demonstrations on the streets of Sŏnch'ŏn in North P'yŏng'an Province and witnessed *ch'iandae* youths practicing An's words and trying to prevent possible mass violence against the Japanese. Morishita wrote that “there seemed little danger of violent assaults on the Japanese” since *ch'iandae* leaders disseminated warnings on the ground, such as: “Those who commit an assault on the Japanese will be punished severely,” “You should consider

¹¹⁹ His emphasis on “*chaju hoyang*” (autonomy and mutual concession) between Koreans and Japanese reflected the three principles that he had formulated during the last year of the war in preparing for Korea's possible decolonization. These three principles, which he had presented to a colonial government official in December 1944, were “national autonomy” (*minjok chaju*), “mutual concession and cooperation” (*hoyang hyŏmnyŏk*), and “the prevention of frictions” (*mach'al pangji*). See Kim Insik, *An Chaehong ūi sin kukka kŏnsŏl undong, 1944-1948* (Seoul: Sŏnin, 2005), pp.51-52.

¹²⁰ *Maeil Sinbo*, August 17, 1945.

what will happen to the fate of some million Korean brethren in Japan if you commit an assault on the Japanese.”¹²¹

Yet ironically, the return of those “brethren” from Japan per se began to rekindle smoldering resentment among the Korean populace toward the Japanese, and the “self-restraint” that Korean leaders requested of the populace soon boiled over into aggressive antagonism, if not mass violent reprisals. Stories told by the Korean returnees about the plight of their brethren waiting for repatriation ships at the ports of Shimonoseki and Hakata in Japan sometimes exploded into stories about Japanese atrocities against Koreans, like the persecution of Koreans all over Japan.¹²² Those rumors spread immediately to such an extent that they started to stir up the Korean populace while frightening both the Japanese settlers and the moribund colonial government. On September 4, an anxious Japanese colonial government official issued a statement through a radio broadcast and denied the rumors of any sufferings of Koreans in Japan, in the hope of appeasing the enraged now-liberated colonial subjects.¹²³

In mid- to late September, Koreans learned about what would later be called the “*Ukishima-maru* incident” of August 24, where the *Ukishima-maru* vessel carrying some thirty-seven hundred Koreans exploded when it touched a sea mine embedded in the Bay of Maizuru in northern Kyoto Prefecture.¹²⁴ The Japanese government initially covered up the accident, but the accounts told by the survivors of the tragic event soon spread among the Korean populace in Korea, inciting hostility toward the Japanese. According to the recorded accounts of some

¹²¹ Morishita Keiji, “Senkawa ni hinan seru Manshū sokaidan no dasshutsuki” (October 9, 1945), KHKSS, 21, pp.448-449. Amagi Fusō, a Japanese settler who had a harrowing journey of exodus from Sinūiju to the south accompanying her seven family members during the summer in 1946, remembered that *ch'iandae* youths they met in the village of Yulli in the north treated them “very nicely,” and one after another, they all asked her for one favor: “Lots of our brethren are still in Japan, so when you return to Japan, please ask the Japanese government to protect them.” Amagi Fusō, “Shingishū yori hikiagete” (no date), KHKSS, 21, pp.254-255.

¹²² *Keijō Nippō*, September 6, 1945.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ For details about the “*Ukishima-maru* Incident,” see Kim Ch’anjōng, *Ukishimamaru Fuzan-kō e mukawazu* (Tokyo: Kamogawa Shuppan, 1994).

Japanese colonial settlers, in North Kyōngsang Province “public safety” for the Japanese became the “worst ever” when the news of the *Ukishima-maru* incident reached the province, as some Koreans started to cry out, “Avenge the Japanese atrocity!”¹²⁵ In Ch’ōngju City in North Ch’ungch’ōng Province, Saitō Takeo, a member of a local Japanese association, participated in a memorial service that Koreans held for the victims of the *Ukishima-maru* incident when the news reached the city in late September. Rumor had it that after the memorial service, the Koreans would begin killing the Japanese in the area.¹²⁶

Simultaneously, the massive return of Korean workers who had been conscripted to Japan as forced labor during wartime inflamed volatile racial tensions between the defeated colonizers and now-liberated colonized, particularly those in the southern and mid-southern provinces of Korea to where the great majority of Koreans from Japan returned.¹²⁷ As Korean conscripted workers returned back from coalmines and munitions factories in Japan, they started to demand compensation from the local Japanese colonial officials and local municipal offices that had sent them, often by force or by deceit, to the perilous worksites of Japanese wartime industries. In mid-September, for instance, about a thousand Koreans besieged the Kusan municipal office in North Chōlla Province and accused Japanese Mayor Inoue of having deceived them when his municipal office mobilized Korean workers to Japan during the war – they had been promised high income and good treatment. Complaining that they had been paid little, treated cruelly, and provided no travel allowance when they repatriated, those Korean

¹²⁵ Aoyama Shinsuke, Tadokoro Sakae, Hayashi Kenji, Sugihara Chōtarō and Ichihara Kan’ichi, “Shūsen igo no Keishō Hokudō” (January 1946, March and April 1948), KHKSS, 19, p.292.

¹²⁶ *Dōwa* 156 (December 1960), reproduced in Morita Yoshio and Osada Kanako, eds., *Chōsen shūsen no kiroku: shiryō hen dai 2-kan: minami Chōsen chiiki no hikiage to Nihonjin sewakai no katsudō* (Tokyo: Gannandō Shoten, 1980), cited from p.276.

¹²⁷ Among Koreans living in Japan, more than 90 percent were originally from southern and mid-southern provinces in Korea. For example, in 1942, those from southern provinces constituted approximately 83 percent of the entire Korean population in Japan – approximately 58 percent was from North and South Kyōngsang Provinces and 25 percent from North and South Chōlla Provinces. See Higuchi Yūichi, *Nihon no Chōsen-Kankokujin* (Tokyo: Dōseisha, 2002), pp.41-42.

returnees demanded the total of 5,400,000 yen as compensation for the 1,803 workers conscripted in Kunsan, including those who had become disabled and dead in Japan. They insisted that if the municipal office did not have the money, the Japanese residents would have to pay in lieu.¹²⁸

Together with the influx of Korean forcibly conscripted workers returning from Japan, the U.S. takeover of the Japanese colonial government in early to mid-September also ended up feeding the hostile conditions surrounding the Japanese settlers remaining in Korea. The U.S. disarmament of the Japanese military and police, both of which had been the pillar and symbol of coercive colonial rule, excited and encouraged some Koreans into more aggressive actions toward Japanese settlers. In Seoul, some radicals started to take over Japanese-owned companies and factories by kicking out Japanese managers, seized Japanese residences and settle the homeless and overseas returnees there, and distributed leaflets that called for the immediate “expulsion of the Japanese.”¹²⁹ A U.S. State Department official in Seoul reported in mid-September that “the hatred of Koreans for the Japanese” was “unbelievably bitter” although it was unlikely that they would resort to violence in the presence of U.S. occupation troops. In his words, south Korea was becoming like “a powder keg ready to explode at the application of a spark” because Koreans were disappointed that the “sweeping out of the Japanese,” as well as the “immediate independence” they had expected to obtain soon after the arrival of U.S. troops, “did not eventuate.”¹³⁰

¹²⁸ Morita, *Chōsen shūsen no kiroku*, pp.309-311; *Dōwa* 75, 76 (March and April 1954), reproduced in Morita and Osada, *Chōsen shūsen*, 2, cited from pp.271-272. Similar protests also took place in Inchōn (Kyōnggi Province) and Mokp’o (South Chōlla Province).

¹²⁹ Yamana, *Chōsen sōtokufu shūsei no kiroku*, pp.35-36, 43; Tanaka Masashi, *Sōkotsu sensei no nikkichō: senchū sengo*, KHKSS, 18, pp.245, 248-249.

¹³⁰ “The Political Adviser in Korea (Benninghoff) to the Secretary of State” (September 15, 1945), in *Foreign Relations of the United States 1945*, vol. VI (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1969), p.1049. Benninghoff noted: “It was recently discovered that from the beginning the Korean translation of the term ‘in due course’ in the Cairo Declaration has been the equivalent of ‘in a few days’ or ‘very soon,’ and well-educated

This upsurge of racial hostility among the Korean populace in September marked a disillusioning moment for the Japanese settlers who were determined to remain in Korea rather than returning to their war-torn homeland like many others. Initially, the An Chaehong's speech calling for protecting Japanese life and property reassured anxious Japanese settlers,¹³¹ and Korean leaders' efforts to contain mass violence unintentionally resulted in some Japanese settlers' clinging to their colonial privilege. Particularly, for those who had lived and developed their privileged life in the colony through many years, it was not easy to give away their "success" all at once.

In Pusan, for instance, when the Japanese governor of South Kyōngsang Province set a plan for the immediate repatriation of Japanese residents in the region soon after Japan's defeat, some wealthy and successful Japanese settlers denounced the governor as a "coward" (*yowagoshi*). They demanded that the governor instead "take active action to encourage [Japanese settlers] to remain by establishing a consulate, organizing residents and building Japanese schools."¹³² In Seoul, Tanaka Masayoshi, a professor of Keijō Imperial University, wrote in his diary in late August that as public safety came to be stabilized, "the Japanese became reluctant to go back to Japan." He observed:

As the Japanese gradually became calm down, they suddenly started to talk tough. It can be said that since Koreans are maintaining relatively gentle [*otonashii*] attitudes, those Japanese now have a delusion that they can continue their life like before without any concern.¹³³

Koreans expressed surprise when the difference was pointed out to them. Hence the Koreans did not understand why they were not given complete independence soon after the arrival of American troops. There is great disappointment that the immediate independence and sweeping out of the Japanese did not eventuate."

¹³¹ Kotani Masujirō, "Jinsen hikiage no kiroku" (March 20, 1948), KHKSS, 18, p.276.

¹³² Nobuhara Satoru, "Shūsen igo no Keishō Hokudō" (April, July 1948), KHKSS, 19, pp.270-271.

¹³³ Tanaka, *Sōkotsu sensei no nikkichō*, KHKSS, 18, pp.238-239.

In major colonial cities where the Japanese police and army still protected amidst dying colonial rule, many Japanese settlers, particularly those among over 160,000 living in Seoul,¹³⁴ were determined to remain in their now-liberated colony, holding an optimistic view about their future. Shortly after August 15, some Japanese colonial entrepreneurs and intellectuals in Seoul immediately started to organize a Japanese mutual aid association that would work for those who wished to live in Korea as well as those who planned to return to Japan. This Japanese association, named “Keijō Naichijin Sewakai” (later “Keijō Nihonjin Sewakai”), declared in its manifesto that the association would also aim to work for a “new Korea” by cooperating and making “full contributions to its [Korea’s] glorious development.”¹³⁵ Hozumi Shinrokurō, a Japanese former colonial government official and a colonial entrepreneur who took the lead in organizing the Japanese association, remembered that initially many in the association shared an optimistic view on the fate of Japanese settlers, the view in his words, “We will not be kicked out [of Korea] all together if we make great efforts.”¹³⁶

In tandem with the formation of the Japanese association, moreover, Japanese residents in Seoul started to prepare for their new life without colonial privilege by learning the Korean language, the language that they had never had to feel necessary in their colonial life before. When the newly formed Japanese association announced its new Korean language course for charge, the course became oversubscribed even before it started on September 12. At the beginning of the first class, a Japanese association official gave a brief speech to students ranging

¹³⁴ The Japanese population in Seoul accounted for approximately 20 percent of the entire Japanese population in Korea. The number is cited from Maruyama, “Chōsen ni okeru Nihonjin no hikiage jōkyō” (June 1, 1949), KHKSS, 19, p.320.

¹³⁵ Morita, *Chōsen shūsen no kiroku*, pp.132-139.

¹³⁶ Hozumi Shinrokurō’s memoirs, reproduced in *Chōsen shūsen*, 2, cited from p.316.

“from a second-year junior high school student to an old bald man” and encouraged them to “learn Korean and make a new cooperation for a new Korea.”¹³⁷

Yet, their hope for a “new cooperation for a new Korea” soon turned out to be just a fiction amidst the upsurge of the hostility among Koreans toward the Japanese during September. Moreover, the news of a U.S. occupation plan to repatriate all Japanese in Korea, as well as the news of the plight of Japanese brethren in north Korea under Soviet military occupation, also shattered such hope completely.¹³⁸ Having lost their privileged colonial life, property, and their last hope of working for their former colony, those Japanese settlers in the end decided to leave Korea, carrying only sorrow, despair, resentment and nostalgia back to Japan like the other settlers.

Their strong emotions of misery, wretchedness and resentment that Japanese colonial settlers had carried with them from Korea often added fuel to the already-growing hostility among the Japanese populace toward Koreans remaining in Japan. Stories told by the Japanese returnees about the misery of their fate in the now-liberated colony soon spread out through media reports and daily conversations. Moreover, stories of their experiences of Korean liberation were often narrated and represented in ways that would strike terror in the hearts of Japanese people. For instance, a former Japanese navy civilian employee in Korea who had repatriated to Japan in mid-September talked to the local police and described the event of Korean liberation as a “riot” in the following manner:

¹³⁷ *Keijō Naichijin Sewakai Kaihō*, 11 (September 13, 1945), reproduced in *Chōsen shūsen*, 2, cited from pp.63-64.

¹³⁸ U.S. President Harry Truman and the U.S. military government in Korea announced the repatriation plan in mid to late September. For example, see *Mail Sinbo*, September 14, September 17, September 28, 1945. For details about the process of Japanese repatriation from south Korea under U.S. occupation, see Morita, *Chōsen shūsen no kiroku*, chapter 7.

Since August 16, [Korean] armed peace-preserving corps began to spring up in *Keijō* [Seoul]. In September, they escalated street warfare with the Japanese police. Although Japanese soldiers took part in the police and stood guard, the situation was wretched because they had no guns. The *peace-preserving corps also caused riots* and disturbed the peace in southern parts of Korea temporarily. But, after the U.S. troops came and cracked down on them, the situation has become completely calm. The Japanese are relying on U.S. soldiers without any worry [my emphasis].¹³⁹

Indeed, one particular story that spread among the Japanese populace was the rumor of “Korean riots” in Korea, which coalesced with similar circulating rumors of Korean atrocities across Japan, embodying the fear that “Koreans would take revenge” upon the Japanese. In early September, for instance, the Tottori Prefecture police reported a circulating rumor that said, “Riots broke out in Korea and the Japanese are being persecuted.”¹⁴⁰ On November 10, a news article about Korean and Chinese atrocities against the Japanese in former Japan’s Manchuria area and north Korea appeared in major national newspaper *Asahi Shimbun*. The news article, based on a report made by Japanese settlers who had repatriated from collapsed “Manchukuo,” portrayed the current state of Manchuria and north Korea as “the world of the darkness” by detailing stories about the killing, abducting, robbing and raping of the Japanese.¹⁴¹ Kawakami Masayoshi, a colonial settler who had been the dean of a Korean women’s school and had repatriated to Japan in November after his thirty-two year life in colonial Korea, wrote a letter about “Korean violence” and the plight of the Japanese in liberated Korea. His letter appeared both in *Asahi Shimbun* and a National Diet discussion in December.¹⁴²

¹³⁹ Marshal of the Tōkamachi Police Station to the Commissioner of the Niigata Prefecture Police Department, “Concerning the Words and Actions of Returnees from Korea” (September 19, 1945), *Shōwa 20-nen Naisen kankei shorui tsuzuri 2*, CMSS 13, p.504.

¹⁴⁰ Tottori Prefecture Police Commissioner to the Chief of the Police Bureau of the Home Ministry, “Concerning the Attitude of Ordinary People in This Region” (September 5, 1945), T1490, Reel 220, *Selected Archives of the Japanese Government*, NDL.

¹⁴¹ *Asahi Shimbun*, November 10, 1945.

¹⁴² *Asahi Shimbun*, December, 9, 1945; *Japanese Imperial Diet Records*, House of Peers, 89th Assembly, Plenary Session, December 14, 1945 (National Diet Library, Tokyo, Japan).

Sometimes, Koreans in Japan became the direct target of vengeful Japanese returnees giving vent to their misery, wretchedness and resentment they had repressed and carried from Korea. Matsumoto Itsu, a former imperial soldier who had been demobilized in Korea and repatriated to Japan in late October 1945, witnessed such a moment among Japanese returnees during his repatriation from Seoul to the port of Hakata. In Seoul soon after Japan's surrender, when he and other Japanese disarmed soldiers were marching on the streets with armed Koreans surrounding them, they saw a group of Korean female students standing in line on the street who started to throw rocks at them, not strongly, but with mocking smiles. Bearing the humiliation, he and other Japanese soldiers grumbled with one voice, "Just you wait!" "If we have a war next time, I will take one shot at you below the stomach!" Soon, he and other Japanese demobilized soldiers were sent to Pusan for repatriation to Japan, and their repatriation ship disembarked at the port of Hakata in late October. Matsumoto recounted that a group of those demobilized soldiers, as soon as they set foot on the ground, immediately began "smashing" the makeshift shelters of the Koreans waiting for the repatriation ships, and even "kicking" people in the waiting crowd. Matsumoto tried to stop their fury, telling them to think about the Japanese still remaining in Korea: "Look. There are lots of Japanese still in Korea. My wife and children, too. If you rough up these Koreans, they will do the same toward those Japanese once they return to Korea."¹⁴³

One worried Korean college student at the University of Tokyo voiced concern over the growing antagonistic attitude of Japanese returnees toward Koreans in Japan and its consequences for the relationship between the two peoples. In his letter published in *Asahi Shimbun* Osaka Edition on January 15, 1946, the Korean student named Mun Honggap wrote that the Japanese returnees' "antipathy and resentment" toward Koreans in Japan had now

¹⁴³ Okamoto and Matsuzaki, *Kikigaki Minamata minshūshi* 5, pp.225-228.

“become blatant and appeared on the surface.” Some Japanese returnees were even spreading a “distorted view on the reality of Korea” and thus causing “thorough estrangement” between the two peoples. Mun understood that the wrath of the Japanese returnees who had “suffered from persecution” in Korea would “not easily calm down.” However, he called for “calm reflections” on what Japan had done to Korea during the past thirty-six years of colonial oppression. In his view, it was the Korean “nation’s pent-up frustration of humiliation” that had exploded at liberation and become something uncontrollable by individual efforts of self-restraint, which, Mun emphasized, the Japanese had to understand.¹⁴⁴

Most probably, it was not easy at all for many Japanese returnees to make “calm reflections” on what colonialism had meant to the colonized or to “understand” their own doomed colonial life and privilege upon decolonization. Or, perhaps they firmly believed in their own “self-justification” and “self-affirmation” – two elements that Memmi characterized as the way through which colonizers legitimized their domination and freed themselves from the “fear” besetting them as the “controlling minority.”¹⁴⁵ A former local colonial government official, Okanobu Kyōsuke, recounted that he “could not understand at all” why Koreans had been “that much exultant” over Japan’s defeat. Having believed that the Japanese rule of Korea was for the “peace and happiness of thirty million Korean people,” he was shocked to hear Koreans celebrating liberation as “victory in the war” and claiming themselves as “victorious nationals.” He was also enraged to see a leaflet written and scattered by “The Headquarters for Mopping up Japs [*Woenom*]” on the street of Seoul in late October 1945, which demanded in a threatening and insulting tone that Japanese settlers still remaining in Korea must evacuate their houses and workplaces and leave the country immediately. More importantly, what enraged him

¹⁴⁴ *Asahi Shimbun* (Osaka Edition), January 15, 1946.

¹⁴⁵ Memmi, *Racism*, p.31.

far more after his return to Japan in late 1946 was, in his words, the “insolence” (*nosabari kata*) of Koreans in Japan. Okanobu wrote how he felt after he repatriated from Korea as follows:

[Upon returning to Japan,] I was only hoping to indulge myself peacefully with the heartwarming love of my parents in my beloved homeland. I was only looking forward to being relieved from appalling persecution by Koreans. But, once I returned, what the hell? The way your [Korean] fellows are behaving is so outrageous that it looks as if Koreans are the main actors in our homeland Japan. The word disgusted [*shakuni sawaru*] is too light to express how I feel.¹⁴⁶

The significance of this excerpt from Okanobu’s memoir extends beyond simply the way he presented his encounter with Koreans in Japan as something far more than “disgusting” about his experience of defeat and repatriation from Korea. His memoir presents and imagines the presence of the Koreans in Japan as something like the national enemy that the new Japanese nation would have to confront for the sake of its own resurgence. As his concluding remarks, Okanobu wrote:

We do not at all demand the military. As very clearly articulated in the Constitution, we sincerely wish to be a pacifist nation [*heiwa kokka*]. However, if they [Koreans in Japan] are storming in droves, come on over anytime. We will also band together, arm ourselves with fire hoses, spades, hoes and whatever we have if necessary, and beat them off. Unless every single Japanese national gains such backbone, it would be impossible to achieve the reconstruction of homeland Japan [*sokoku Nihon*] even if we overcome inflation and restore production. Nay, I believe that [without such backbone] it would be even impossible to overcome inflation and restore production.¹⁴⁷

Given that his memoir was written in November 1947, a moment when the new Japanese constitution had just been put into effect six months previously and Japanese society was still in the throes of economic malaise, it is of great importance to understand what this passage of his

¹⁴⁶ Okanobu Kyōsuke, “Kōgendō ni okeru shūsen chokugo no gaikyō” [November 1947], KHKSS, 19, p.247. The date given is according to the reproduced text included in Morita Yoshio and Osada Kanako, eds., *Chōsen shūsen no kiroku: shiryō hen dai 1-kan: Nihon tōchi no shūen* (Tokyo: Gannandō Shoten, 1979). Interestingly, the reproduced text does not contain the last part of Okanobu’s original memoir, where he revealed his bitter sentiments toward Koreans in Japan.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p.249.

memoir indicates. Here, one can clearly see the logic and imagination in which violence against the Korean minority in Japan became associated with the birth of the post-empire Japanese nation-state. Okanobu, a former local colonial government official who had repatriated to Japan with his colonial dream betrayed, became extremely disgusted with having to witness not only Koreans “behaving outrageously” even in Japan but also the Japanese “being helpless” in their own homeland. With rather an emotional tone, he emphasized the “backbone” needed by the Japanese to “beat off” Koreans in Japan, the determination that he believed was indispensable for a successful national resurgence. Even though Japan was defeated and disarmed completely, for him the nation still could (and should) “band together” to beat off Koreans “storming in droves” – otherwise, how could “we” even reconstruct “homeland Japan” from the ashes? In other words, the reconstruction of the new “pacifist nation” had to be founded on the nation’s collective determination to subdue Koreans in Japan.

In fact, violence targeting the now-liberated Koreans was a pervasive phenomenon on the ground. On August 27, 1945, for instance, three Koreans who welcomed U.S. troops were killed in Chiba Prefecture by the Japanese police; on November 11, a family of six Koreans in Kyoto was killed by a Japanese discharged soldier back from the Korean peninsula;¹⁴⁸ on November 26, a sixteen-year-old Korean was stabbed by a Japanese youth in Chiba Prefecture;¹⁴⁹ on March 29 in 1946, a Korean man on a train in Toyama Prefecture was stabbed to death by the Japanese police with a sword.¹⁵⁰ In April 1946, one Korean man in Yamaguchi Prefecture was beaten by

¹⁴⁸ *Chōsenjin Seikatsu Yōgo Iinkai Nyūsu*, April 5, 1947.

¹⁴⁹ Headquarters 82nd MG Company 112th RCT, “Daily Activities Report” (November 26, 1945), reprinted in Ōya Kazuto, ed., *Gunsei (nanbā MG) repōto: 1945nen 8gatsu-1946nen 9gatsu* (Tokyo: Gendai Shiryō Shuppan, 2007), vol.4, p.37.

¹⁵⁰ 90th Military Government Headquarters and Headquarters Company, “Unit Occupational History Report” (April 23, 1946, May 23, 1946), Folder: MGCO-90-0.2, Box 17470, WWII Operations Report, 1941-48, RG 407 (Records of the Adjutant General’s Office, 1917-), NARA; *Chōsenjin Seikatsu Yōgo Iinkai Nyūsu*, April 5, 1947.

a Japanese resident for the simple reason that his hometown was in Soviet-occupied north Korea where “Koreans mistreat[ed] the Japanese.”¹⁵¹

Those incidents scratch only the surface of reported violent incidents. According to a news article published in April 1947 by a Korean-run newspaper in Japan, 84 cases of police and popular racial aggression were reported to a Korean human rights association since the date of liberation – August 15, 1945 – the total number of the dead and injured amounted to 1223.¹⁵² In short, everyday violence targeting Koreans in Japan became an integral part of the reimagining and rebuilding of a new Japanese nation out of the ashes of “multi-ethnic” empire.

Conclusion

If the U.S./Allied occupation of Japan resulted in the peaceful embracing of defeat on the part of Japanese people, their peaceful embracing of defeat was only enabled by the reassertion of their racial superiority over Japan’s formerly colonized subjects. Racial superiority was reaffirmed through everyday acts of violence targeting the Korean minority in Japan, which became a pervasive phenomenon after Japan’s defeat. Although the newly established Japanese constitution declared the renouncement of “war” and “the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes,” the practice of racial aggression inscribed within Japanese colonialism never ended on the ground. The disarmed “pacifist” Japan was indeed borne out of the hostility and racial violence that Japanese people enacted against now-liberated Koreans in Japan.

As I examined in this chapter, for the Japanese people faced with defeat in World War II, what was at stake in the immediate postwar years was the continued validity of their imperialist

¹⁵¹ Sensaki Liaison of ICR, United States Army Military Government in Korea, “Weekly Report 23-29, 1946” (April 29, 1946), Folder: Repatriation, Box 33, USAFIK, RG 554, NARA.

¹⁵² *Chōsenjin Seikatsu Yōgo Inkaï Nyūsu*, April 5, 1947.

racial ideology – the ideology of the purity and supremacy of the “Yamato Race.” Experiencing defeat in the “race war” against global white supremacy, as well as defeat by Chinese anti-imperial resistance, made Japanese people extremely anxious about their future racial hierarchical status vis-à-vis others, particularly those whom they had treated as an “inferior” race during imperial expansion. Their deeply-entrenched ideas about Japanese superiority over their “Oriental others” dramatically transformed into anxiety, which sparked a strong fear of possible racial subordination to Koreans and Chinese. Such fear among the Japanese populace was often sharper than the fear of subordination to their racial enemy – the Americans – on their soil.

In the light of their long colonial relations with Koreans – especially their brutal massacres of over 6000 Koreans in 1923 – the Japanese had good reason to be afraid of possible subordination to and reprisals from now-liberated Koreans. As Japanese writer Takami Jun understood, what triggered the frenzied killing of Koreans in the chaotic aftermath of the Great Kantō Earthquake was Japanese people’s “sense of guilt” underlying their fear that “Koreans would take revenge” upon them. Importantly, even under the imperial wartime propaganda of *Naisen-ittai*, “Japan and Korea as One Body,” the fear of reprisals never disappeared from the Japanese popular imaginary of Koreans. Although the Japanese empire and media spread the image of Koreans as Japanese “brethren,” people were apparently still haunted by fear and distrust. For instance, a Japanese secret police report from early to mid-1945 noted the mounting Japanese “paranoia” about the presence of Koreans amidst the devastation of war and described it as follows:

[...] among the Japanese [*naichijin*], some associate [U.S.] air raids with the problem of Koreans at the time of the Great Kantō Earthquake and imagine that Koreans are all working as foreign spies. Their association of the air raids with

the Korean problem at the time of the Great Kantō Earthquake is developing into paranoia, which, in turn, is also stirring up and upsetting Koreans.¹⁵³

This smoldering fear and distrust of Koreans rose to the surface in the wake of Japan's defeat, and coalesced with the anxiety over the possible inversion of the imperial racial hierarchical order. The Japanese began witnessing Koreans performing a new subjectivity with an assertive posture of defiance. Their encounters with Koreans demonstrating liberation on Japanese soil rekindled their long-smoldering fear and also evoked a bitter resentment toward Korean independence. As a result, everyday, on-the-ground encounters between Japanese and Koreans in Japan after Japan's defeat became increasingly infused with racial tension and hostility. Moreover, such tension and hostility between decolonizing metropolitan and colonial societies were fanned by the increasing antagonism resulting from the Japanese and Korean repatriations. Korean colonial conscripted workers in Japan brought over to Korea their immediate memories of the harsh treatment they had experienced in metropolitan society, and they often ended up avenging themselves on the Japanese colonial settlers remaining in now-liberated Korea. On the other hand, the forcible repatriation of Japanese colonial settlers from Korea to Japan fueled the spread of stories about their doomed fate in the inverted colonial world, which in turn fueled Japanese hostility toward Koreans, fomenting the racial violence targeting the Korean minority in Japan.

In this sense, the violence was not simply the act of the Japanese reasserting their racial superiority over liberated Koreans. The violence enacted was also the manifestation of both fear and hatred rekindled by decolonization. As Memmi emphasizes, fear always accompanies hostile action. Those who fear others have to take preemptive aggression in order to flee from

¹⁵³ *Tokkō geppō* [draft, 1945], reproduced in Pak, ed., *Zainichi Chōsenjin kankei shiryō shūsei* vol.5, pp.500-513.

their own fear of others.¹⁵⁴ Or, as Frantz Fanon explains, “hatred is not a given; it is a struggle to acquire hatred.” I argue that violence is an integral part of this “struggle” for “acquiring” and “embodying” hatred, through which one conquers one’s own fear and “acknowledged guilt complexes.”¹⁵⁵ Japanese everyday violence toward Koreans manifested Japanese’s determined struggle to acquire hatred, clashing with their fear and sense of guilt and, perhaps, humiliation of defeat as well.

¹⁵⁴ Memmi, *Racism*, pp.31, 102-103.

¹⁵⁵ Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (New York: Grove Press, 2008), p.35

CHAPTER 2

Racializing the Postwar Crisis: Democratization and the Remaking of the “Korean Problem” in Japan

Introduction

Looking back on the immediate post-war period, we were then faced with what looked very much like revolutionary conditions. [...] my first Cabinet was formed at a moment when our headquarters were literally surrounded by a red-flag-waving mob.

—Yoshida Shigeru, *Kaisō jūnen*¹

Today prejudice is mounting against the more than half-million Koreans remaining in Japan. Fanned by rumors, newspaper attacks, and Diet speeches, long-smouldering hatreds have been inflamed against these former subject-people of the Japanese.

—David Conde, “The Korean Minority in Japan”²

In February 1947, David Conde, a Reuters correspondent in Tokyo and former staff member of the Civil Information and Education Section of SCAP (Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers), reported on the “inflamed” anti-Korean sentiments in U.S./Allied-occupied Japan. His five-page short report, titled “The Korean Minority in Japan,” briefly documented the “widespread and bitter attacks” by the Japanese media and politicians targeting Koreans since mid-1946. In the following passage, Conde succinctly summarized how the Koreans (and Taiwanese) living in Japan had emerged as a target of public blame for social problems:

After the political demonstrations of April and May 1946, in which Koreans participated, and the installation by the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers of the Yoshida Cabinet, newspapers began to refer to black-marketeers as “third-party nationals” or “non-Japanese”; by June this had become “Formosans or Koreans.” Except for the extreme leftist press, there seemed to be an obvious attempt to identify only non-Japanese with “*yami*” as the black market is called. Coincidental with American pressure on all radical elements in southern Korea in

¹ Yoshida Shigeru, *Kaisō jūnen* (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1957), vol.1, p.141, vol.2, p.227. English translation is from *The Yoshida Memoirs: The Story of Japan in Crisis* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1962), pp.78, 211-212.

² David Conde, “The Korean Minority in Japan” *Far Eastern Survey*, 16, 4 (February 1947), p.41.

July, *a nation-wide anti-Korean campaign in Japan emerged into the open.* [my emphasis]³

The time when “a nation-wide anti-Korean campaign in Japan emerged into the open” was also the period during which former Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru remembered as witnessing “revolutionary conditions” in postwar Japanese society. The initial U.S./Allied-led project of democratic revolution spurred a rising tide of revolution from below in the form of radical labor and social movements, a tide triggered by the proclamation of the so-called “Japanese Bill of Rights,” General MacArthur’s directive for the “Removal of Restrictions on Political, Civil and Religious Liberties” issued on October 4, 1945. As Yoshida would later recall in his memoir, in the spring of 1946, the waving “red flags” – a symbol of workers’ solidarity rather than the Communist Party itself – literally began to fill the streets. In mid-May 1946, when appointed as the new prime minister to form a new conservative cabinet, Yoshida had to face some 250,000 hungry, starving demonstrators who had gathered in the symbolic plaza in front of the Imperial Palace and demanded immediate food distribution and a Socialist- and Communist-led “democratic people’s government.” This event would later be called the “Food May Day” demonstration of May 19, and under the pressure of the sea of “a red-flag-waving mob” as he remembered, Yoshida, failing to appoint his new minister, almost gave up forming a new cabinet.

General Douglas MacArthur, who had initiated the “promotion of democratic forces” in post-defeat Japan according to Washington’s directive for the occupation, was no longer tolerant when faced with this sea of “a red-flag-waving mob” filling the streets. On the day following the “Food May Day” demonstration, MacArthur immediately issued a statement condemning the demonstrations as “excesses by disorderly minorities” and silenced continuing protests against

³ *Ibid.*

Yoshida's formation of a new conservative cabinet. MacArthur also encouraged Yoshida and promised him additional U.S. food relief to avert the ongoing food crisis. Yoshida rose again and could finally launch his cabinet on May 22. Soon, Prime Minister Yoshida issued the infamous "Proclamation on the Preservation of Social Order" on June 13 and pushed forward its adversarial posture toward the rising tide of revolution from below, or "revolutionary conditions" in his words. Simultaneously, the Yoshida administration also issued another proclamation on the same day, a proclamation on the current food crisis that appealed to "all Japanese nationals" to share the limited food with each other out of "deep love for our brethren" (*fukai dōhō ai*) in order to overcome "this greatest national crisis in [Japanese] history" (*yūshi irai saidai no kono minzokuteki kiki*). The food crisis proclamation also urged all political parties and people, regardless "whether public or private and urban or rural," to unite together for a "national campaign" (*kokumin undō*) to manage the food crisis.⁴ Those two proclamations manifested Yoshida's determination for crisis management, the management of food scarcity and "revolutionary conditions."

It was in the midst of this crisis management that what Reuters correspondent David Conde called "a nation-wide anti-Korean campaign in Japan" emerged. In this chapter, I examine how the "anti-Korean campaign" took shape and developed in relation to Yoshida administration's crisis management and discuss what this race-baiting campaign meant to the critical moment of the so-called "postwar crisis" in Japan after defeat in World War II. As I argue below, the "Food May Day" demonstration of May 19, 1946, or the "revolutionary conditions" that Yoshida witnessed in the sea of "a red-flag-waving mob," manifested the crisis of the legitimacy of Japanese "old guard" elites like Yoshida, that is, guardians of the Emperor-centered imperial "national polity" (*kokutai*) and the conglomerate(*zaibatsu*)-dominated

⁴ *Asahi Shimbun*, June 14, 1946; *Mainichi Shimbun* (Osaka edition), June 14, 1946.

capitalist economy. Moreover, this political crisis of the old guard was inextricably combined with the crisis of the Japanese capitalist economy at a deeper structural level. Unlike the widely held view, the “postwar crisis” in Japan was a crisis that encompassed more than the sudden collapse of the wartime economy and the downfall of old guard’s political and ideological legitimacy. In short, as I demonstrate below, it was indeed the “crisis of hegemony” in a Gramscian sense, in terms of both the political and structural conditions for the accumulation of capital. Then, what did the emergence of the “nation-wide anti-Korean campaign” mean to this postwar crisis?

During the new National Diet session that started on June 20, 1946 – the session during which heated debates over the drafting of the new Japanese “pacifist,” “democratic” constitution started – lawmakers and bureaucrats of the newly formed Yoshida administration spearheaded race-baiting speeches. In the Diet discussions, the ruling party politicians began to portray the ongoing social crisis as something associated with the presence of over a half million now-liberated colonial subjects in Japanese society.⁵ Those ruling party politicians tried to frame social problems differently from the opposition leaders, who often pointed to the structural problems of Japanese capitalism and its capitalist regime. In other words, “race” emerged in public discourse and became the central signifier of social problems. This chapter unravels how the Yoshida administration orchestrated the racialization of social problems in its crisis management, through its attempt to frame and appropriate the meaning of the ongoing social crisis.

⁵ According to the record of the U.S./Allied occupation authorities, the estimated number of Korean and Taiwanese former colonial subjects living in Japan was respectively 529,907 and 10,994 in October 1947. There were also 18,938 Chinese from mainland China. The total of the Korean, Taiwanese and Chinese population in Japan corresponded to approximately 0.7 percent of the Japanese population in 1947. However, the number of the Korean population is estimated higher than 529,907, given that Korean “illegal” migration to Japan was a pervasive phenomenon at that time. For those statistics, see SCAP, *History of the Nonmilitary Activities of the Occupation of Japan, 1945-1951: Treatment of Foreign Nationals* (microfilm from Scholarly Resources, Inc, Reel 11), appendix 1.

“Racism” as ideology and practice operates in different ways and in different forms within (and for) the capitalist system, and thus, as Stuart Hall has precisely articulated as the “premise of historical specificity,” one must start “from the concrete historical ‘work’ which racism accomplishes under specific historical conditions.”⁶ This chapter discusses how “race-making” operated in the post-empire historical conjuncture in Japan, taking the form of the ideological reformulation of the “Korean problem” at the critical moment of the crisis of hegemony.

On the ground, the ideological reformulation of the “Korean problem” provided a Japanese individual with the meaning with which to interpret one’s own suffering and hardships (or material conditions) in the war-torn country. As molded in official parlance, the racialized view of the ongoing social crisis soon permeated into popular parlance through the media and police and intersected with popular sentiments toward Koreans – sentiments of the mounting racial fear and hostility stirred up through day-to-day encounters with Koreans performing their liberation in Japanese soil.⁷ Through an examination of letters and petitions sent from ordinary Japanese people to MacArthur concerning the “Korean problem,” this chapter also pays close attention to how the state ideological reformulation of the “Korean problem” came to frame everyday consciousness and popular understandings of the postwar social crisis.

The Opening of a Pandora’s Box for the Old Guard

On September 22, 1945, three weeks after the Japanese government signed the official surrender papers, the U.S. government publicized an important blueprint for U.S./Allied control of Japan, titled “United States Initial Post-Surrender Policy for Japan.” Two days later, the

⁶ Stuart Hall, “Race, Articulation and Societies Structured in Dominance,” UNESCO, *Sociological Theories: Race and Colonialism* (Paris: UNESCO, 1980), p.338.

⁷ I have examined this issue in the previous chapter.

translated Japanese full text soon appeared in Japanese newspapers, and it became the first published text that detailed occupation policy principle through which the Japanese populace could understand what U.S./Allied occupation would mean to them.

In the blueprint for the control of Japan, Washington outlined the overall goals of occupation policy, such as “disarmament and demilitarization,” “resumption of peaceful economic activity,” and “promotion of democratic forces.” Washington defined that the “ultimate objectives” of occupation were the establishment of a “peaceful and responsible government” that would not “again become a menace to the United States or to the peace and security of the world.” However, this objective was not meant to “impose upon Japan any form of government not supported by the freely expressed will of the people.” In the blueprint, Washington frequently referred to its “encouragement” of the Japanese people to form “democratic” organizations, although it simultaneously declared to utilize, but not to support, “the existing form of government in Japan,” including “the Emperor,” for the efficient control of Japan. Moreover, in the same text, Washington also indicated that there was the possibility of overturning the existing form of government via “the use of force by the Japanese people”:

Changes in the form of government initiated by the Japanese people or government in the direction of modifying its feudal and authoritarian tendencies are to be permitted and favored. In the event that the effectuation of such changes involves the use of force by the Japanese people or government against persons opposed to thereto, the Supreme Commander should intervene only where necessary to ensure the security of his forces and attainment of all other objectives of the occupation.⁸

⁸ For the full text of “United States Initial Post-Surrender Policy for Japan,” see Division of Special Records, Foreign Office, Japanese Government, ed., *Documents concerning the Allied Occupation and Control of Japan, Volume I: Basic Documents* (January 1949), pp.91-108.

In this passage, Washington clearly deemed permissible what one can call a “revolution from below,” the popular subversion of the existing “feudal and authoritarian” government of Japan, unless the revolution directed its “force” against the occupation.

Two weeks after Washington’s announcement of the occupation policy principle encouraging the “promotion of democratic forces,” SCAP issued a civil liberties directive on October 4, a directive for the “Removal of Restrictions on Political, Civil and Religious Liberties” (SCAPIN-93).⁹ The civil liberties directive, heralded by SCAP itself as the “Magna Carta for Japan,”¹⁰ was intended to enforce the legal-governmental disarmament of the repressive Japanese state – the state like, to paraphrase Marx, a “fearsome parietic body” that had been trapping Japanese society like a net and choking it at every pore.¹¹ The directive ordered the Japanese government to abolish “all laws, decrees, orders, ordinances and regulations” restricting “freedom of thought, of religion, of assembly and of speech, including the unrestricted discussion of the Emperor, the Imperial Institution and the Imperial Japanese Government.” Together with legal-governmental devices including the “Peace Preservation Law,” the directive also mandated the abolishment of infamous social regulation apparatuses of the imperial state, such as the Special Higher Police (*Tokkō Keisatsu*, or “thought police”) of the Home Ministry and all other secret police organs. More importantly, the Japanese government was required to immediately release all political prisoners by October 10, including Japanese and Korean Communists and Korean nationalists.

⁹ For the full text of SCAPIN-93, see Division of Special Records, Foreign Office, Japanese Government, ed., *Documents concerning the Allied Occupation and Control of Japan, Volume II: Political, Military and Cultural* (March 1949), pp.82-86.

¹⁰ Takemae Eiji, *The Allied Occupation of Japan* (New York; London: Continuum, 2002), p.238.

¹¹ Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, in Terrell Carver, ed., *Marx Later Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p.115.

Behind SCAP's proclamation of civil liberties directive, there was mounting criticism in the United States of SCAP's reliance on the Japanese old guards and its neglect of Japanese "anti-fascist leaders" who were still in prison. American journalist Andrew Roth, who was an influential figure among SCAP officials,¹² wrote an article, titled "The Prisoners We Forgot," in *The Nation* and called for attention to the "anti-fascist" political prisoners still behind bars – "the thousands of Japanese democrats, liberals, and leftists who had dared to fight the ruling clique and its ruthless police." Roth lamented that "[t]he American program for Japan, as made public by President Truman on September 22, called for the freeing of political prisoners, but as yet nothing [had] been done," and he emphasized the importance of the political prisoners' role in "eliminating the roots of Japanese aggression" by forming "an anti-fascist coalition."¹³ News of the death of well-known Japanese philosopher Miki Kiyoshi in the Tokyo Detention House on September 26 – six weeks after the war ended – also drew attention to the issue of Japanese political prisoners and jolted SCAP into taking investigative action.¹⁴ In the eyes of SCAP officials, the postwar Japanese government appeared both indifferent to and inadequate for the task of legal-governmental disarmament of the Japanese imperial state. The newly formed Higashikuni administration was firmly determined to make any effort needed for "preserving the national polity" (*kokutai goji*) and refused to stop arresting and imprisoning those who advocated the removal of Emperor Hirohito and abolishment of the emperor system.¹⁵ When SCAP issued

¹² Takemae Eiji, *Senryō sengoshi* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2002), p.101.

¹³ Andrew Roth, "The Prisoners We Forgot," *The Nation*, September 29, 1945.

¹⁴ Miki's death in prison was reported by the major U.S. media. For example, "Japanese Liberal Dies in Jail," *New York Times*, October 1, 1945; "Jap Political Prisoners Still Linger in Cells," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 3, 1945. On the issue of the release of political prisoners, see Takemae, *Senryō sengoshi*, chapter 3.

¹⁵ In an interview by Reuter correspondent Robert Reuben on October 3, 1945, Home Minister Yamazaki Iwao revealed that the secret "thought control" police was still in operation and that the government would regard any anti-government (anti-emperor system) subversives as communist elements and arrest them using the Peace Preservation Law. Yamazaki also asserted that the government would not release communist prisoners. *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, October 4, 1945; *Asahi Shimbun*, October 5, 1945.

the civil liberties directive, the Higashikuni administration attempted in vain to resist it and then resigned the next day, on October 5.¹⁶

The release of “anti-fascist” political prisoners in October 1945 marked the dawn of the “promotion of democratic forces” that Washington had made a crucial part of its agenda for the occupation. The release of core Communist leaders such as Tokuda Kyūichi and Shiga Yoshio spurred the resurgence of the Japanese Communist Party. Indeed, the combination of the release of “anti-fascist” prisoners and SCAP’s civil liberties directive triggered the emergence of radical social movements in postwar Japan.

On October 10, 1945, Communist political prisoners, including Korean Communist leader Kim Ch’ōnhae and nationalist leader Yi Kanghun as well as Tokuda and Shiga, were released from Fuchū Prison in Tokyo, and a crowd of some four hundred people, mostly Koreans, welcomed them at the gate waving red flags in the rain.¹⁷ The crowd and the released communist prisoners then moved to an assembly hall in downtown Tokyo, nearby the vicinity of SCAP’s General Headquarters, and held a mass rally that was called the “People’s Welcome Rally for the Release of Freedom Fighters.” Two to three thousand men and women jammed the rally hall that was decorated with both red flags and flags with the Korean national symbol, and over half of the participants were Koreans. People filled the rally hall with banners and leaflets that announced their demands: “We Want Work!” “We Want Food!” “Punish All War

¹⁶ Historian Joe Moore understands the resignation as follows: “What they [the Higashikuni administration] could not tolerate was destruction of the legal foundation stones of elite rule that had been laid down by peacetime governments from 1900 to 1930—that is, the Public Peace Police Law, the Peace Preservation Law, and the regulations and agencies providing for their enforcement. These laws had provided the bedrock of big-business and government control right through the “liberal” era of Taisho democracy, when the political police under Home Ministry guidance began in earnest to fill jail cells with leftist political prisoners.” Joe Moore, *Japanese Workers and the Struggle for Power, 1945-1947* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1983), p.14.

¹⁷ Ever since late September 1945, Koreans leaders had been working for the release of political prisoners. They had formed a committee to negotiate with SCAP and the Japanese government and had initiated a campaign for the release. Takemae Eiji has emphasized that “Koreans played a crucial role in the campaign for the release of political prisoners” (Takemae, *Senryō sengoshi*, p.174). On Korean activities for the release, see Pak Kyōngsik, *Kaihōgo zainichi Chōsenjin undōshi* (Tokyo: San’ichi Shobō, 1989), pp.51-54.

Criminals!” “Establish the People’s Republic Government!” and “Long Live Democracy!”¹⁸ In one of a series of impassioned speeches, a Japanese lawyer declared that one of the rally’s purposes was “to show all Japan that it [was] now possible to have freedom of speech and assembly.” A correspondent for *Pacific Star and Stripes*, who witnessed the excitement generated by the rally, portrayed the rally as epoch-making moment:

The climax, breaking all precedents in recent Japanese political history, was a demand from the platform of the overthrow of Imperial rule on the basis that establishment of a democratic system would otherwise be impossible to achieve.¹⁹

“Democratic forces” were emerging from factories and worksites as well. As wartime police-supervised labor organizations such as *Sanpō* (Patriotic Industrial Association) and *Rōhō* (Patriotic Labor Association) dissolved themselves in the face of U.S./Allied occupation, Japanese workers began to form new labor unions independent of direct state control.²⁰ In some cases, the company itself or the political left initiated unionization by taking over and remobilizing an existing *Sanpō* unit at a workshop. Benefitting from the prior experience of labor mobilization under “total war,” workers’ unionization flourished almost exponentially. According to the statistics of the Japanese Labor Ministry, while there existed only two labor unions in late September 1945, the number of unions soon increased to 509 within three months by December and the number of union members amounted to 380,677. By June 1946, the number of unions and union members rapidly increased to 12,006 and 3,679,971, marking a 31 percent in the unionization rate.²¹ Accordingly, the upsurge of labor disputes followed

¹⁸ *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, October 11, 1945; *Asahi Shimbun*, October 11, 1945.

¹⁹ *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, October 11, 1945.

²⁰ On wartime labor control, see Jerome B. Cohen, *Japan’s Economy in War and Reconstruction* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1949), chapter 5; Moore, *Japanese Workers and the Struggle for Power*, pp.7-12; Andrew Gordon, *The Evolution of Labor Relations in Japan Heavy Industry, 1853-1955* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), chapter 8.

²¹ By December 1946, the number of unions and union members further increased to 17,266 and 4,925,598 respectively, marking a 41.5 percent in the unionization rate. See Rōdōshō, ed., *Shiryō rōdō undōshi: shōwa 20-21nen* (Tokyo: Rōmu Gyōsei Kenkyūjo, 1951), p.989.

widespread unionization. During the first six months in 1946, the number of labor disputes, including strikes, slow-down, lock-outs and “production control,” amounted to 486 cases and a total of 276,242 workers were involved.²²

Together with their previous wartime experience and SCAP’s “democratic revolution from above,” Japanese workers’ unionization also benefitted from Chinese and Korean workers’ initiatives on organizing uprisings in the days immediately after the war. Before SCAP issued the civil liberties directive or directly ordered the Japanese government to encourage labor unionization on October 11,²³ Korean and Chinese coalminers had already stood up for their rights and dignity and had initiated a series of labor disputes. Their uprisings marked the dawn of the postwar labor movement in Japan.²⁴

In the aftermath of Japan’s defeat, Korean and Chinese coalminers, who had been suffering and resisting slave-like treatment,²⁵ soon started to organize themselves and take aggressive action, sometimes using violence, toward their companies. In late September, Chinese miners in Hokkaidō, led by miners who were also Chinese Communist Party members started to become active and demand better treatment. In the Mitsubishi and Mitsui Bibai mines,

²² Statistics Bureau of the Prime Minister’s Office and Executive Office of the Statistics Commission, *Japan Statistical Year-Book, 1949* (Tokyo: Nihon Statistical Association, 1949), pp.730-731.

²³ The new prime minister, Shidehara Kijūrō, met MacArthur soon after forming a new cabinet and received a brief order to work on the liberalization of the constitution and to undertake the five major reforms: extend suffrage to women, promote labor unionization, open schools for more liberal education, abolish secret police systems, and democratize the economy by revising monopolistic industrial control. *Asahi Shimbun*, October 13, 1945; *Mainichi Shimbun* (Osaka edition), October 13, 1945; *Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 13, 1945.

²⁴ On a historical assessment of the significance of the Korean and Chinese miners’ uprising in the historiography of the postwar Japanese labor movement, see Matsunaga Yōichi, “Sengo Nihon rōdō undōshi kijutsu ni okeru zainichi Chōsenjin rōdōsha zō,” *Zainichi Chōsenjin shi kenkyū* 1 (December 1977).

²⁵ According to a government report, the appalling working conditions in coalmines caused deaths for one out of every four Chinese miners (Nihon Tankō Rōdō Kumiai, ed., *Tanrō jūnenshi* [Tokyo: Rōdō Junpōsha, 1964], p.47). Also, Pak Kyōngsik’s classic work vividly documented the slave-like treatment of Korean conscripted workers at the sites of Japan’s wartime industries (Pak Kyōngsik, *Chōsenjin kyōsei renkō no kiroku* [Tokyo: Miraisha, 1965]). The number of Chinese and Korean coalminers totaled to 133,102 (Koreans 124,025, Chinese 9,077), approximately 33 percent of the coalminers in Japan in June 1945. Chinese coalminers were primarily prisoners of war captured in North China, and Korean miners were mostly conscripts sent from Korea through wartime colonial labor conscription during World War II. There were also 9,719 Caucasian prisoners working in the coalmines. On the number of coalminers, see *Tanrō jūnenshi*, p.51.

Chinese miners “liberated” their labor camps with the support of Allied prisoners and demanded that their companies supply more clothes. In the Ōūbari mine, Chinese miners, inspired by organizers from the Mitsui Bibai mine, took action to demand fair wages and started negotiating with their company. There were also some violent “incidents” like the miners’ takeover of the company’s warehouse and bloody clashes between Korean or Chinese miners and the company and the police. The Korean and Chinese miners’ defiance spread immediately, causing similar incidents in 40 to 50 coalmines.²⁶

The major strikes and unionization took place among Korean miners in the Hokutan Yūbari mine in Hokkaidō and Jōban mines in eastern Honshū. After Japan’s surrender, coalmine companies continued to keep Korean miners working, although they stopped using Chinese and Allied POWs according to the Japanese government’s directives.²⁷ In the Hokutan Yūbari mine, most of the some 7000 Koreans miners continued to work and maintained high attendance compared to Korean miners working in other coalmines. On October 5, however, leaflets instigating a general strike and hailing Korean independence started to circulate among Korean miners, and they suddenly launched a general strike on October 8.²⁸ Ironically, a company’s labor management official had to encourage those Korean miners to form a labor union to negotiate with the company, hoping to end the strike and keep them working. Korean miners

²⁶ It is said that the total number of Korean and Chinese miners who were involved in those “incidents” amounted to some ninety thousand until they were replaced by Japanese workers (mostly demobilized soldiers from overseas) by December 1945. See Asahi Shinbunsha, *Asahi keizai nenshi, Shōwa 21-22nen ban: Nihon keizai no minshuka* (Osaka: Asahi Shinbunsha, 1947), p.122; *Tanrō jūnenshi*, p.50.

²⁷ *Tanrō jūnenshi*, p.52. The Japanese government hoped to maintain coal production levels by retaining Korean coalminers for a while after the war. As mentioned above, the number of Korean miners amounted to 124,025 in June 1945, that is, 31.3 percent of the whole coalminers in Japan, and their labor was crucial to Japanese coalmine industries.

²⁸ Nakagawa Shigeichi, “Chōsenjin dōkō nisshi (from October 1945 to January 1946),” Ozawa Yūsaku, ed., *Kindai minshū no kiroku 10: zainichi Chōsenjin* (Tokyo: Shinjinbutsu Ōraisha, 1978). Nakagawa Shigeichi was a labor management official of the Hokutan Yūbari mine and recorded the process of the Korean strike and its aftermath. Also, on Korean strikes at the Hokutan Yūbari mine, see *Tanrō jūnenshi*, pp.56-59; Totsuka Hideo, “Nihon teikokushugi no hōkai to ‘inyū Chōsenjin’ rōdōsha,” Sumiya Mikio, ed., *Nihon rōshi kankei shiron* (Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1977).

held a mass meeting called the “Korean People Rally” (*Chōsen Minshū Taikai*) on the following day, and at the meeting, some 4000 participants decided collectively what their demands were – demands such as the recognition of the Korean labor union, better treatment, more food, eight-hour workday, and repatriation to Korea by December 1945. The company accepted most of their demands. Importantly, the dissolution of the Japanese imperial state apparatuses that SCAP just initiated apparently had an immediate ripple effect on the further emboldening of those Korean colonial labor conscripts. One company’s labor management official understood the Korean strike as inspired by the news on the abolishment of the *Tokkō Keisatsu* (Special Higher Police), as well as by the delay of a repatriation process.²⁹

On the same day of the general strike at the Hokutan Yūbari mine, a group of 821 Korean miners in the Jōban mines also refused to resume working until the company set up a schedule for their repatriation to Korea.³⁰ The strike spread immediately. A few hundred of those Korean miners soon stormed to adjacent coalmine worksites and instigated other Korean miners to refuse to work.³¹ A company’s labor management official tried in vain to convince the Korean miners that the Japanese government would be scheduling Korean repatriation soon. He then decided to take the representatives of Korean miners to the Tokyo headquarters of a newly formed nationwide Korean association, the Korean League in Japan, to come up with a solution. At the office of the Korean League, the company’s labor management official met with *zainichi* Korean leader Kim Tuyong and asked for help with the matter, not realizing that Kim was a prominent leftist leader affiliated with the Japanese Communist Party (JCP) as well. Soon, Kim Tuyong and one

²⁹ Totsuka, “Nihon teikokushugi no hōkai to ‘inyū Chōsenjin’ rōdōsha,” p.229.

³⁰ On Korean strikes at the Jōban mines, see *Tanrō jūnenshi*, pp.59-61; Shōji Kichinosuke, ed., *Fukushimaken rōdō undōshi: sengo hen* vol.1 (Fukushima: Fukushima Prefecture, 1971), pp.29-46; Nagasawa Shigeru, “Jōban tanden ni okeru Chōsenjin rōdōsha no tōsō: October 1945,” *Zainichi Chōsenjin shi kenkyū* 2 (June 1978); Jōban Tankō Kabushiki Kaisha, “Chōsenjin rōdōsha ni kansuru hōkoku (1945),” *Zainichi Chōsenjin shi kenkyū* 2 (June 1978).

³¹ In the Jōban coalmines, approximately 4000 Korean miners were working at the time of Japan’s surrender.

of the JCP leaders Imamura Hideo – who was just released from prison by SCAP’s civil liberties directive – visited the Jōban mines. Much to the company’s dismay, Kim and Imamura started to work on the unionization of the Korean miners and their further collective bargaining for better treatment. Workers’ politicization was also attempted simultaneously. In their speeches and leaflets, Kim and Imamura called for solidarity between Japanese and Korean workers, stating:

*The enemy is the emperor system. Koreans and Japanese are both the same victims. Japanese people, please understand and support Korean struggles. [my emphasis]*³²

Whether or not Japanese workers actually did “understand and support” those Korean workers’ struggles in general is unclear, although some historical accounts written by labor unions themselves praise the workers’ humanity and internationalism.³³ It is true that on the one hand, as some Japanese scholars emphasize, Korean workers’ struggles “inspired” Japanese workers to take action for unionization and strikes later, or inspired them to shake off the so-called post-defeat collective “*kyodatsu*” (exhaustion and despair) condition.³⁴ Yet, on the other

³² *Tanrō jūnenshi*, p.60. The Korean League Fukushima Branch also scattered leaflets on the streets in the downtown area of the coalmine town of Yumoto – leaflets with statements such as “Down the Emperor System!” “Establish Democracy!” and “Establish People’s Republic!” Importantly, U.S. occupation authorities did not tolerate such political agitation against the emperor system. In a mass rally Kim and Imamura organized for Korean and Japanese miners on October 29 in Yumoto, a U.S. military government official interrupted both Kim and Imamura in the middle of their speeches and prevented them from arguing for the abolishment of the emperor system. (See an intelligence record reproduced and included in Shōji, *Fukushimaken rōdō undōshi*, pp.41-42.) In fact, the U.S. official warned Kim and Imamura not to agitate against the emperor system in advance before the rally, despite the fact that it was SCAP that had opened up the Pandora’s box of “unrestricted discussion of the Emperor, the Imperial Institution and the Imperial Japanese government” with its civil liberties directive.

³³ For example, local labor history written by the Ashio Dōzan Labor Union says: “Despite disputes between Koreans and Chinese [*Sen-Kajin*] and mining company, there emerged heartwarming human love between them and [Japanese] workers at Ashio Dōzan regardless of national difference and difference as victorious and defeated nationals” (Ashio Dōzan Rōdō Kumiai, ed., *Ashio Dōzan rōdō undōshi* [Tochigi: Ashio Dōzan Rōdō Kumiai, 1958], p.191). *Tanrō jūnenshi* also refers to such cooperation, providing no details: “Since there were a number of Korean workers in Hokkaidō during the war, it was natural that the [Korean] liberation movement became active in the aftermath of the end of the war. Some sensible Japanese workers also devoted themselves for the Korean liberation movement first” (*Tanrō jūnenshi*, p.43).

³⁴ For example, see Tagawa Kazuo, *Sengo Nihon kakumei undōshi, 1: sengo kakumei no haiboku* (Tokyo: Gendai Shichōsha, 1970), pp.24-28; Satō Kōichi, ed., *Sengo Nihon rōdō undōshi, 1: 1945-1954* (Tokyo: Shakai Hyōronsha, 1976), p.32. *Ashio Dōzan rōdō undōshi* also says: “In any cases, it is true that the tendency of unionization [among Japanese workers] was triggered by Chinese and Korean disputes” (Ashio Dōzan Rōdō Kumiai, *Ashio Dōzan rōdō undōshi*, p.192).

hand, historically the formation of class-based solidarity between Japanese and Korean workers had never been very successful in labor movements in Japan since the 1920s, and Japanese workers had often showed antagonistic or indifferent attitudes toward Korean strikes.³⁵ In other words, popular racism had been hardly overcome previously despite labor activists' strenuous calls for "proletarian internationalism" ("Working Men of All Countries, Unite!"³⁶), nor had it easily evaporated along with the collapse of the Japanese empire. During the Korean strikes at the Hokutan Yūbari mine and Jōban mines, the formation of active solidarity between Japanese and Korean workers appeared unlikely, to say nothing of political solidarity against the emperor system. In the case of the Jōban mines strikes, most of the Japanese workers remained unsympathetic toward Korean struggles, although there were a few who showed their support by offering a place to stay to the Korean workers. Moreover, there was even a growing sentiment among Japanese workers to form a counter-organization with the support of the company against Korean uprisings.³⁷ Racism was still working on the ground at the critical moment of Japan's post-empire conjuncture.

In addition, Korean workers themselves showed little interest in collaborating with Japanese workers or simply could not accept Communist leaders' notion that "Koreans and Japanese [were] both the same victims" of the emperor system. As mentioned above, the Korean miners' primary concern was immediate repatriation to Korea. They stood up and refused to work anymore under abject and perilous conditions, demanding for their safe return to Korea. Some Korean miners stood up and raided the company's warehouse out of hunger; some stood

³⁵ On the issue of solidarity and antagonism between Japanese and Korean workers before 1945, see Iwamura Toshio, *Zainichi Chōsenjin to Nihon rōdōsha kaikyū* (Tokyo: Azekura Shobō, 1972); Pak Kyōngsik, *Zainichi Chōsenjin undōshi: 8.15 kaihōmae* (Tokyo: San'ichi Shobō, 1979); Michael Weiner, *Race and Migration in Imperial Japan* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994); W. Donald Smith, "The 1932 Asō Coal Strike: Korean-Japanese Solidarity and Conflict," *Korean Studies* 20 (1996).

³⁶ From Marx and Engels's *Communist Manifesto*.

³⁷ Shōji, *Fukushimaken rōdō undōshi*, pp.34, 42.

up and assaulted the local police and company's supervisors out of revenge, and their targets included fellow Korean translators and assistants.³⁸ If those Korean strikes and uprisings "inspired" Japanese workers, it was because Korean struggles demonstrated to them that company and police forces were no longer a formidable leviathan like before.

The "Postwar Crisis" and Its Implications

Rapid unionization and the rise of "democratic forces" on the shop floor soon developed into certain radicalized forms of labor movements. Workers devised a radical tactic called "*seisan kanri*" (production control) and seized the operation of mines, factories and offices until the management met their demands. The use of production control as a tactic spread rapidly by mid-1946. In January, 13 out of 74 disputes took the form of production control and 29,029 workers participated; in February, 20 (out of 81) and 15, 806; in March, 39 (out of 103) and 20,651; in April, 53 (out of 109) and 34,815; in May, 56 (out of 132) and 38,847; and in June, 44 (out of 104) and 18,056.³⁹ Once the government condemned production control as unlawful and warned of interfering in the disputes,⁴⁰ workers began to take to the streets and join a swelling mass call against the "reactionary" government, setting the stage for the political crisis in May.

Production control was, from the viewpoint of workers and the public, a rational dispute tactic in the middle of the economic crisis of the war-torn country. Instead of launching a strike and a shutdown that would not help to solve production shortages and skyrocketing inflation – which was partly escalated by big business' sabotage and speculation⁴¹ – workers chose to take

³⁸ Those violent incidents are vividly recorded in the company's report on Korean strikes at the Hokutan Yūbari mine. See Nakagawa Shigeichi, "Chōsenjin dōkō nisshi (from October 1945 to January 1946)."

³⁹ *Japan Statistical Year-Book, 1949*, pp.730-731.

⁴⁰ *Asahi Shimbun*, February 2, 1946.

⁴¹ The Japanese government under the Shidehara administration (October 1945-April 1946) poured a huge amount of cash subsidies into big business with the hope of stimulating production. Yet, in the middle of skyrocketing inflation, big business responded not so much with the expected productive investment but with large-scale

over and maintain the operation of production without the manager's presence.⁴² In many cases, worker's control of operations actually increased production and gained public support, demonstrating that it was the owners and managers, not the workers, who were sabotaging the economic recovery. Moreover, in a few radical cases, workers and unions went as far as to take over management as well, and they also successfully obtained outside cooperation to keep production going despite the company's attempts to sabotage the workers' control.⁴³ These cases demonstrated the loss of immediate capitalist control over the production process. Most importantly, workers' production control contained more radical implications for the labor movement. Labeled the "infringement of ownership" by the hostile Japanese government,⁴⁴ production control indeed was on the verge of making a critical departure from the fundamental principle of the capitalist economy – that is, private property – if workers were determined to question capitalist legality. In other words, production control had the revolutionary potential for the emergence of nascent "soviets" and workers' seizure of the "means of production" from

speculation in raw materials by hoarding and reselling them on black market. Moore, *Japanese Workers and the Struggle for Power*, chapter 3; Gordon, *The Evolution of Labor Relations in Japan*, pp.333-336.

⁴² For an important English-language study of production control, see Moore, *Japanese Workers and the Struggle for Power*.

⁴³ In the production control struggle at the Tōyō Gōsei chemical factory in Niigata, for instance, workers solved the problem of the lack of funds for production by selling their product (methanol) under the union's name to a chemical factory in Tokyo, Edogawa Manufacturing, which was also under production control by workers. The Tōyō Gōsei union paid wages and hired new workers. In order to obtain raw materials, this union also arranged to "barter" the fertilizer ammonium sulphate with a farmer's association in exchange for coal and coke which the association obtained on behalf of the union from coalmine workers in exchange for rice. The Tōyō Gōsei production control struggle can be seen as a seed of radical cooperation among workers of different sectors and between workers and peasants. On the case of the Tōyō Gōsei production control and its radical implications, see Satō, ed., *Sengo Nihon rōdō undōsh*, pp.63-67; Yamamoto Kiyoshi, *Sengo kiki ni okeru rōdō undō: sengo rōdō undō shiron, 1* (Tokyo: Ochanomizu Shobō, 1977), pp.147-150; Moore, *Japanese Workers and the Struggle for Power*, pp.156-160. Moore positions this case as a possible "breakthrough to revolutionary workers' control." On the other hand, Gordon suspects that "the distance yet to be traveled from March 1946 to a revolutionary transfor[ma]tion of the capitalist system in Japan was great" and contends: "Due to SCAP response, in any case, we shall never know how close the Japanese popular movement was in fact to such a breakthrough. It was not close enough to stand up to SCAP" (Gordon, *The Evolution of Labor Relations in Japan*, p.480, footnote 18).

⁴⁴ *Asahi Shimbun*, February 2, 1946.

capitalists, although workers – and JCP leaders – simply regarded it as a temporary “dispute tactic” rather than as a possible path to proletarian socialist revolution.⁴⁵

Workers’ struggles also began to take on a more radical political character in early 1946, converging with urban dwellers’ uprisings for food. Workers took to the streets and formed a rising tide of anti-government forces under the leadership of the left. On April 7, several tens of thousands of workers, including those in the production control struggle, joined a mass rally called the “People’s Rally for the Overthrow of the Shidehara Cabinet” (*Shidehara Naikaku Datō Jinmin Taikai*), which was organized by a newly formed leftist (Communist- and Socialist left-led) popular front, “The Democratic People’s League” (*Minshu Jinmin Renmei*). Some seventy thousand participants in the rally – workers, farmers, intellectuals, teachers, urban dwellers, and twenty thousand Koreans – raised their voices and denounced the government’s suppression of workers’ production control and its incompetence in solving skyrocketing inflation and failing food rationing. One placard stated: “The Ally of the Rich, Enemy of the People. Down with the Shidehara Cabinet!”⁴⁶

On May 1, hundreds of thousands workers took to the streets and celebrated the first postwar May Day. Rallies were organized all over the country and had more than 1.25 million participants.⁴⁷ In Tokyo, despite the falling rain, some half a million men, women, and children

⁴⁵ On JCP leaders’ attitude toward production control, see Moore, *Japanese Workers and the Struggle for Power*, pp.116-119, 122-126. Some Japanese scholars attempt to reassess the significance of the revolutionary potential of production control from the viewpoint that the “postwar crisis” in fact constituted the crisis of the capitalist system itself and thus was ripe for a “proletarian socialist revolution” beyond the “bourgeois democratic revolution” that was set as the primary principle by Japanese leftist revolutionaries. See Tagawa, *Sengo Nihon kakumei undōshi 1*; Satō, ed., *Sengo Nihon rōdō undōshi*; Yamamoto, *Sengo kiki ni okeru rōdō undō*.

⁴⁶ *Asahi Shimbun*, April 8, 1946; *Mainichi Shimbun*, April 8, 1946; Yamamoto, *Sengo kiki ni okeru rōdō undō*, pp.177-179. The rally was held at Hibiya Park in downtown Tokyo, and after the rally, some fifty thousand participants marched to the prime minister’s residence to present their demands. The crowd broke through the gate guarded by the police, and skirmishes started between demonstrators and the police. U.S. military police soon intervened with six armored cars and six jeeps armed with machineguns and broke up the demonstration (Mark Gayn, *Japan Diary* [New York: Sloane, 1948], pp.164-169).

⁴⁷ Koreans and Korean League leaders also participated in May Day rallies across Japan. For instance, in Kanazawa City of Ishikawa Prefecture, a Korean League Ishikawa branch vice-chairman participated in a rally and called for

crowded into the plaza outside the Imperial Palace, carrying union's red flags and various placards with statement such as "Equal wages for men and women for equal labor!" "DDT for corrupted union leaders [*darakan*]!" and "Let us eat enough to be able to work!"⁴⁸ The participants adopted a resolution that expressed their opposition to the "conservative reactionary government" and the government's suppression of production control. The resolution also called for the "Socialist Party-led democratic people's government" and the popular control of food rationing.⁴⁹ Practically bursting with sheer joy and excitement, one union worker told a news reporter the following:

Fifty thousand workers and peasants demonstrated their great power of solidarity. This power is exactly what is the driving force for the completion of democratic revolution and the restoration of industry. May Day [rallies] before had always accompanied quarrels and scuffles, but today's May Day [rally] was in an open and well-ordered manner [...]. Working people became aware of their own power.⁵⁰

What drove the "working people" to unify with the "great power of solidarity" and participate in the historical tide of "democratic revolution" was their mounting frustration over the government's incompetence in dealing with the ongoing economic crisis.⁵¹ Inflationary government policy and big business' speculative hoarding of essential raw materials and commodities exacerbated the war-torn economy and brought on an unprecedented surge in the

"strong solidarity between Japanese and Korean workers [*nissen rōdōsha*] for freedom and peace in East Asia" in his speech. *Kitaguni Mainichi Shimbun*, May 2, 1946.

⁴⁸ *Asahi Shimbun*, May 2, 1946; *Mainichi Shimbun*, May 2, 1946.

⁴⁹ *Rōdōshō, Shiryō rōdō undōshi*, pp.106-109. The resolution also included a demand for "the freedom of political, social, economic, and cultural activities of Koreans and Taiwanese in Japan." The reason the resolution included such a demand is probably because the Korean League was involved as a member of the executive committee of the May Day rally in Tokyo.

⁵⁰ *Mainichi Shimbun*, May 2, 1946. American journalist Mark Gayn witnessed the rally and wrote: "Despite the gray skies, this was a joyous meeting, filled with enthusiasm and more confidence than I have yet seen in Japan." At the rally, when Gayn asked participants why they were demonstrating, he was told by a transport worker: "Because I believe that in a democracy power should belong to the people." Another worker, a mail carrier, answered: "This is my day, and I consider it an honor to participate" (Gayn, *Japan Diary*, pp.196-198).

⁵¹ In its editorial on December 20, 1945, titled "The Danger of Japan's Economic Collapse," *Asahi Shimbun* alerted the public to the current "catastrophic" state of food, production and currency. *Asahi Shimbun*, December 20, 1945.

prices of daily subsistence goods, which was severely diminishing the workers' real wages.⁵²

Also, the government's new currency and finance controls limited the amount of disposable cash available, and workers could only receive 500 yen in cash at their disposal from their monthly salary, which was barely enough to feed their household.⁵³ But, the most pressing crisis was the scarcity of food and the ineffective government food rationing that was causing literal starvation in urban areas.⁵⁴ The severance of food supplies from former colonies, the disastrous harvest of rice in 1945 – the most disastrous since 1910 – and the massive return of the overseas Japanese settlers and military and civilian personnel exacerbated the food scarcity that had already been a critical issue during the war even before the defeat.⁵⁵ The government collection and rationing of food was far from successful in providing bare subsistence for the whole population. As a result, the vast majority of people, especially city dwellers, routinely scoured the countryside to buy, barter, and steal food from local farmers, or had to heavily rely on the black market to obtain basic foodstuffs even at absurdly inflated prices.⁵⁶ As historian John W. Dower succinctly

⁵² The daily average salary of manufacturing workers in January 1946 was 10.78 yen for men and 4.18 yen for women workers, and it increased by double to 21.12 yen and 9.09 yen by May 1946. In Tokyo, the retail prices of rice for 14 kg and potatoes for one *kan* (3.75 kg) were 8.4 yen and 0.56 yen in January 1946. By May, the prices had increased by three to four times respectively to 27.30 yen and 2.1 yen. The prices of staple foods such as rice and potatoes were tremendously higher at the black market, on which the majority of urban dwellers had to depend for their survival. The average black market prices of staple food in Tokyo were 46 times higher than official prices in January and 22 times higher in May 1946. See *Japan Statistical Year-Book, 1949*, pp.646-647, 660-661, 708-709.

⁵³ The remainder of the monthly salary was frozen and deposited in individual's bank account, and workers were allowed to withdraw only 300 yen per month for a household head and 100 yen for each additional family member. According to research on the livelihood of Tokyo residents in March 1946, the average monthly food expenses in one household (average four members) amounted to over 500 yen (approximately 696 yen), and the average monthly living expenses amounted to 1130 yen (*Asahi Shimbun*, May 25, 1946).

⁵⁴ During the four months since the end of war, reports on starvation in major cities stated that 300 starved to death in Kyoto, 148 in Kobe, 100 in Fukuoka, 72 in Nagoya and 42 in Osaka. In Tokyo, it was reported that an average of six people were dying of starvation everyday and an average of three in Yokohama (The Staff of the Mainichi Daily News, *Fifty Years of Light and Dark: The Hirohito Era* [Tokyo: Mainichi Newspapers, 1975], pp.212-213). *Asahi Shimbun* reported in May 1946 that over the period of the previous month, 204 vagabonds were found dead on the street in Osaka (*Asahi Shimbun* [Osaka edition], May 6, 1946).

⁵⁵ According to the statistics of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 3,197,813 returned back to Japan by June 2, 1946 (*Japan Statistical Year-Book, 1949*, pp.126-127).

⁵⁶ For important English-language studies on Japanese daily life and the black market during the early postwar years, see John W. Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1999)

describes in his *Embracing Defeat*, hunger and scarcity “defined each passing day” and “served as a stimulus to grass-roots political activism.”⁵⁷

On May 12, one thousand and some hundred residents and union members in the Setagaya ward of Tokyo held a “Give Us Rice” demonstration that became the inspiration for the massive “Food May Day” demonstration of May 19. Hunger and scarcity drove people to take desperate and daring action. In the “Give Us Rice” rally of Setagaya, in which Communist leader Nozaka Sanzō unexpectedly appeared and raised his voice for establishing a “people’s government,” participants resolved to present the “voice of people” (*jinmin no koe*) directly to Emperor Hirohito, having being stirred up by the organizer’s call for action: “We are starving this much, but what on the earth is Emperor eating?” “Let the emperor hear our voice. Let’s all go to the Imperial Palace together!”⁵⁸ Soon, a group of 113 participants including men, women, and children moved and crowded into the gate of the Imperial Palace, some carrying red flags. Security guards succumbed to the force of the crowd driven by curiosity and hunger, people who were determined to meet and beg the emperor for mercy, for some food, and the crowd succeeded in entering the palace and inspecting the kitchen of the Imperial Household Ministry. One female participant remembered the demonstration:

Although I did not understand the logic of the demonstration, I [participated] out of single concern that something was not right. I was also curious about what the life in the Imperial Palace was like and wanted to see it if possible. (...) [*sic*] It seemed that many of us followed the demonstration to the Imperial Palace simply with the desperate hope that the Emperor would give us something.⁵⁹

chapters 3 and 4; Owen Griffiths, “Need, Greed, and Protest in Japan’s Black Market, 1938-1949,” *Journal of Social History* 35, 4 (Summer 2002).

⁵⁷ Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, pp.90, 96.

⁵⁸ *Asahi Shimbun*, May 13, 1946; Ōshima Yukio, *Ningen kiroku sengo minshūshi* (Tokyo: Mainichi Shimbunsha, 1976), pp.8-17.

⁵⁹ Ōshima *Ningen kiroku sengo minshūshi*, p.13.

The inspection of the Emperor's kitchen was a small victory for the curious and desperate crowd who took the bold, unprecedented action, believing that "the Emperor would give [them] something." However, the demonstration did not manifest a political or ideological challenge to the established "emperor system" itself, although the entry of the crowd and some red flags into the Imperial Palace perhaps appeared to many as disrespect for the emperor and the profanation of sacred space.⁶⁰ Ironically, Communist organizers of the demonstration framed the protest against government food policy as an appeal to Emperor Hirohito, despite their official (Communist Party) stance against the emperor system.⁶¹ Many of Setagaya residents participated in the demonstration into the Imperial Palace, believing that Emperor Hirohito would show compassion for their hardship and act on their behalf – perhaps for them, Emperor Hirohito was still a "benevolent monarch" even after his renunciation of divinity.⁶² Such a popular direct appeal to the emperor also appeared in the "Food May Day" rally one week later, the largest popular rally since the beginning of the occupation.

On May 19, some 250,000 demonstrators – men, women and school children with teachers, as well as Koreans⁶³ – gathered and raised their voices protesting against the old guard regime and demanded the food rations that had been delayed for days.⁶⁴ In this Food May Day

⁶⁰ According to *Asahi Shimbun*, the editor received 56 letters from readers concerning the issue of the demonstration into the Imperial Palace, and 50 letters expressed the disapproval of it, although they also criticized the current "incompetent" government or "conservative" administration (*Asahi Shimbun*, May 19, 1946).

⁶¹ Interestingly, letters to the editor introduced in *Asahi Shimbun* criticized this Communist action as "contradiction" with one voice, saying: "It is too much of a contradiction [*mujun mo hanahadashii*] that the Communist Party whose stance is against the emperor system clings to the emperor for nothing else but food."; "It is too much of a contradiction that the Communist Party utterly rejects the emperor system but tries to implore it" (*Asahi Shimbun*, May 19, 1946).

⁶² Emperor Hirohito's statement renouncing his divinity was published in newspapers nationwide on New Year's Day of 1946. This announcement, which came to be popularly known as the "declaration of secular being" (*ningen sengen*), was the product of collaboration between SCAP and the Japanese government. See Tsurumi Shunsuke and Nakagawa Roppei, eds., *Tennō Hyakuwa, ge no kan* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1989), pp.199-224.

⁶³ On the participation of Koreans in the Food May Day rally and the following demonstration at the prime minister's residence, see *zainichi* Korean newspaper *Minjung Sinmun*, June 5, 1946.

⁶⁴ In Tokyo, the average length of the delay in food rations (staple foods) was eight days during May 3 to 14 (*Asahi Shimbun*, May 17, 1946).

rally, participants and leftist leaders including Socialists and Communists made resolutions and sent them to the emperor as a formal “memorial to the throne” (*jōsōbun*), which began with the traditional language of address, “Dear Your Imperial Majesty, Japanese Highest Authority and Holder of Sovereign Power.”⁶⁵ In the middle of the radical upsurge of democratic revolution from below, even the revolutionary forces held the Emperor as the “Japanese highest authority and holder of sovereign power” to solve the current food crisis.

However, despite the ambiguity over the emperor system manifested in the act of appealing to the emperor, the Food May Day rally also revealed that emperor worship had been teetering precariously at the same time. In the rally, a handmade placard one Communist employee of a precision tool company was carrying for the demonstration was a sensational overt mockery of the emperor in public space – an incident which would later be called the “placard incident.” The placard showed a message written in colloquial language in the form of a formal address by the emperor:

Imperial Edict (Hirohito says)
The national polity has been preserved.
I am eating my fill.
You people, starve and die.
Imperial Sign and Seal.⁶⁶

Although the other side of the placard manifested an ambiguity with an appeal addressed to the emperor similarly as the leftist leaders had done,⁶⁷ the mock imperial edict was, as Dower

⁶⁵ Rōdōshō, *Shiryō rōdō undōshi*, pp.117-118.

⁶⁶ Rōdōshō, *Shiryō rōdō undōshi*, p.120. The picture of the Communist worker carrying the placard was reprinted in Makino Kikuo, ed., *Ketteiban Shōwa shi 13: haikyo to ketsubō, Shōwa 21-25nen* (Tokyo: Mainichi Shinbunsha, 1983), p.32.

⁶⁷ The other side of the placard contained an appeal to the emperor, stating: “Why are we starving no matter how much we work? Answer, Emperor Hirohito! [tennō Hirohito, kotaeyo]” (Ōshima, *Ningen kiroku sengo minshūshi*, p.27; Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, p.266).

precisely acknowledges, “an indication, presumably, of healthy iconoclasm after decades of emperor-centered thought control.”⁶⁸

In addition to the shocking public iconoclasm, the Food May Day rally also marked the most important political crisis facing conservative elites ever since they had regained power from militarist factions after the surrender. When Prime Minister Shidehara resigned on April 22 in the face of an unexpected attack from an anti-Shidehara political and popular front (“Joint Committee for Toppling the Shidehara Cabinet”), the Liberal Party sought to lead a new cabinet based on a grand coalition of conservatives (the Liberal Party and Progressive Party) and Socialists, excluding the Communist Party. Yet, the Socialist Party decided, after heated disputes between the left and right factions,⁶⁹ not to join the conservative-led coalition government, being pressured and encouraged by rising popular voices to establish a Socialist Party-led democratic people’s government in coalition with the Communist Party. As a result, as the formation of another conservative government appeared to take place, more people took to the streets. On May 19, when Yoshida Shigeru – selected the new prime minister three days previously – was making a desperate effort to form a new cabinet, some 250,000 demonstrators gathered in front of the Imperial Palace for the Food May Day rally. Soon, over 70,000 of these participants, including Communist and labor union leaders, also staged a mass demonstration before the prime minister’s residence and continued a “sit-down strike,” calling for Yoshida’s resignation from the position of new prime minister.⁷⁰ Yoshida on that day, failing to appoint his new minister over the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, a position he considered to be the

⁶⁸ Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, pp.266-267.

⁶⁹ The Socialist right was willing to work with the Liberal Party, and the left opposed it and insisted on a coalition with the Communist Party. Japanese historian Nakakita Kōji sees that the priority in Socialist Party’s policy at that moment was on class struggle and class politics, unlike its shift in priorities toward production recovery and economic policy in late 1946, and thus it was not acceptable to choose the Liberal Party over the Communist Party as a political partner. On internal political dynamics in the Socialist Party during this period, see Nakakita Kōji, *Keizai fukkō to sengo seiji: Nihon Shakaitō 1945-1951* (Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1998), chapter 1.

⁷⁰ Gayn, *Japan Diary*, pp.226-231.

most important one given the ongoing food crisis, almost gave up on making a new cabinet and nearly surrendered to oppositional pressure from below.⁷¹

This political crisis, linked with and facilitated by the deepening crisis of the war-torn economy, in fact reflected the crisis of the legitimacy of the old guard – or, it was the “crisis of hegemony” in the Gramscian sense. The “hegemony” of the old guard – understood here as the ideological domination of the “ruling bloc” (dominant social groups) based on popular “consent” – was in the throes of a serious challenge presented by a growing “revolution from below” since early 1946. The ideological leverage of the old guard and even of the existing emperor system, which the old guard made determined efforts to preserve along with Emperor Hirohito, was apparently starting to fall apart in the midst of the imperial collapse and subsequent foreign occupation and its democratic reforms. Surveys of public opinion often showed that a large proportion of the populace was not eager to keep the existing emperor system, although these surveys also indicated that Emperor Hirohito was still securing broad popular consent, whether active or passive.⁷² More importantly, the sacred mantle that the old guard had woven for the emperor system over the past decades started to unravel drastically after the surrender, and the fading ideological aura prepared the conditions for the overt iconoclastic demonstration in the Food May Day rally.

⁷¹ On this process of a political crisis in early 1946, see Shinobu Seizaburō, *Sengo Nihon seijishi I: senryō to minshushugi* (Tokyo: Keisō Shobō, 1965), pp.300-330; Masumi Junnosuke, *Sengo seiji 1945-1955nen, jō* (Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1983), pp.177-196.

⁷² For instance, according to a survey of public opinion conducted by a polling institute in December 1945, only 8.5 percent of respondents (205 out of 2400) opposed the emperor system and 91 percent (2184) supported it. However, those who expressed their unconditional support (“support for the existing state of the emperor”) amounted only to 16 percent of the total, and others expressed their conditional support for the emperor as, for instance, a nonpolitical, moral center (45 percent) or a monarch who would share power with the assembly (28 percent) (*Mainichi Shimbun* [Osaka edition], February 4, 1946). Moreover, a survey conducted by the University of Tokyo showed that among 1131 students surveyed (approximately 40 percent of the students of the University of Tokyo), 6 percent (71) answered that the emperor system should be abolished, 35 percent (400) answered that it should be maintained based on fundamental reform, and 40 percent (452) answered that it should be maintained based on partial reform (*Asahi Shimbun*, December 9, 1945).

Indeed, it is important to note that a tendency toward iconoclasm among the populace, which had partly already appeared during the war in the form of what anthropologist James Scott has termed the “hidden transcript,”⁷³ or in the form of rumors and graffiti, was coming out more into the open since the surrender.⁷⁴ Acts of insolent mocking and gossiping about Emperor Hirohito were becoming a wide-spread phenomena on the ground, and people sometimes went so far as to make disparaging critical remarks about the Emperor and emperor system in their daily conversations.⁷⁵ For instance, a shoemaker, Ogawa Fujii, was reported to the thought police (*Tokkō Keisatsu*) in September 1945 for suspected lese-majesty. According to the intelligence report, while Ogawa was chatting with a Korean barber who was cutting his hair, he started to blame bitterly the Emperor and emperor system for Japan’s defeat in front of several other customers. The intelligence report vividly documented their conversation that became the cause for his arrest on charges of lese-majesty:

Pak Hagi [Korean barber]: “I was called to a Nagano conscript office for labor conscription in September last year [1944]. There, I saw twenty to thirty other people, but only I was conscripted there in Nagano.”

Suspect [Ogawa Fujii]: “It’s ridiculous they called as many as twenty to thirty people but conscripted only one.”

Pak Hagi: “Those who secretly negotiated [with the chief of the conscript office] by bringing stuff like rice and money all succeeded in escaping [labor conscript]. The chief of the conscript office milked the labor conscript for all it was worth. I was conscripted to work at a coalmine and had to suffer hardship.”

Suspect: “How could they do that!”

⁷³ James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990). Scott conceptualizes “hidden transcripts” of the subordinate as “offstage” speeches and practices that represent a critique of power spoken and enacted behind the back of the dominant.

⁷⁴ In his essay, “Sensational Rumors, Seditious Graffiti and the Nightmares of the Thought Police,” Dower delves into Japanese police intelligence reports and vividly documents the emergence of gossip, rumors and graffiti that mocked and slandered the emperor during the war, as well as the spread of popular anti-war and anti-regime sentiments. See John W. Dower, *Japan in War and Peace: Selected Essays* (New York: New Press, 1993), pp.101-154.

⁷⁵ See my previous chapter. Also, see Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, pp.302-308.

Pak Hagi: “It was common in Furuichi [in Osaka], too, and there was only one guy [conscripted]. This guy was [working] at the same place as me and always complained about this. But, I endured it believing it was for the sake of winning [the war].”

Suspect: “Because they did such unfair things, that’s why [Japan] lost the war. People [*kokumin*] will have to suffer from reparations for some twenty years as a result of the defeat, and this is such a ridiculous thing for the people.”

[...]

“In the first place, the Japanese system is bad. Because there is such a thing like the Emperor [*tennō heika*], this [defeat] happened. *Instead, it would be better just to shoot him to death with a gun.* [my emphasis]⁷⁶

Mocking, disparaging, and criticizing the emperor in daily conversations and in public – all these sporadic iconoclastic behaviors reflected (and also facilitated) the dwindling of the ideological leverage of the old, existing emperor system. Coalescing with the rising revolution from below, each of these actions contributed to the overall crisis of hegemony. Furthermore, hegemony itself was also falling apart at the deeper structural level of capitalist society in Japan – at a level different from the normative legitimization of the existing ruling bloc’s domination.⁷⁷ In other words, the foundation of the capitalist economy itself, that is, the production of commodities on the basis of wage labor in the Marxist sense, was facing serious dysfunction after the defeat. This was not only manifested in the fact that big business had retreated from

⁷⁶ Interestingly, Korean barber Pak, apparently shocked and frightened at hearing such blasphemous talk in the presence of others in his shop, immediately expressed his disapproval and tried to defend the Emperor, contending: “The Emperor is the living divine and does not know anything. It [defeat] was because of the government’s wrong doing. The Emperor simply believed the irresponsible things that the government told the people with the aim to deceive them.” Osaka Governor to the Home Minister, “Concerning the Incident of Lese-Majesty and the Arrest of the Suspect” (September 29, 1945), T1490 (Naimshō Keihokyoku, “Kakushu jōhō narabi minshin no dōkō”), Reel 220, *Selected Archives of the Japanese Army, Navy and other Government Agencies, 1868-1945*, National Diet Library, Tokyo, Japan.

⁷⁷ Here, I use the term “hegemony” in both senses of the word, in terms of both the political and structural conditions for the accumulation of capital. According to James Martin, Gramsci’s concept of hegemony is often understood simply as a political account of legitimization, in terms of extra-economic modes of domination and the legitimization of established political institutes. Yet, Gramsci’s concept of hegemony is also concerned with a structural account of legitimization, that is, the separation of the “economic” and the “political” in capitalism and self-reproducing capitalist social relations. See James Martin, “Hegemony and the Crisis of Legitimacy in Gramsci,” *History of the Human Sciences* 10, 1 (1997); *Gramsci’s Political Analysis: A Critical Introduction* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998).

production and instead had sought speculation by hoarding raw materials and commodities in the middle of skyrocketing inflation, but it was also reflected in the state of labor. What would happen if a large proportion of the population suddenly refused a disciplined, productive subjectivity in a capitalist society? What would happen if the large “unemployed” population (or “a surplus population of workers,” in the words of Marx) refused to go back to work – a population that had to be “ready for exploitation by capital” in the circuit of capitalist accumulation?⁷⁸

That was what took place in the wake of defeat in the “total war,” amidst the exhaustion of wartime total mobilization. Together with the post-defeat popular psychological conditions often characterized as “*kyodatsu*” (exhaustion and despair) and “*taihai*” (decadence),⁷⁹ or joy over the “liberation of the body” from wartime regulation,⁸⁰ the collapse of the work ethic became a prevailing social phenomenon in popular life. Indeed, a large proportion of the jobless population apparently did not feel compelled to sell one’s labor power as a commodity out of urgent necessity. One newspaper article, titled “Having Fun in the Black-Market Business, Not Rushing for Employment,” reported that according to statistics of October 1945, the number of people seeking a job (25,913, male 21,218 and female 4,695) only amounted to 70 percent of recruits being sought (37,000, male 27,092 and female 9908), and only 6,240 (male 4,988 and female 1,252) actually attained a job. The newspaper also reported that the majority of the approximately 600,000 (temporarily) “unemployed” population were “drawn in by the lure of

⁷⁸ Marx conceptualizes the surplus population of workers both as “a necessary product of accumulation or of the development of wealth on a capitalist basis” and as “a condition for the existence of the capitalist mode of production.” He writes, “It [a surplus population of workers] creates a mass of human material always ready for exploitation by capital in the interests of capital’s own changing valorization requirements” (Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume One* [New York: Penguin Books, 1990], p.784).

⁷⁹ See Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, chapters 3 and 4.

⁸⁰ See Yoshikuni Igarashi, *Bodies of Memory: Narratives of War in Postwar Japanese Culture, 1945-1970* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), chapter 2.

yami [black-market and underworld business]” and “working in the *yami* world as a street vendor and a broker.”⁸¹

Similarly, according to a government survey of unemployment encompassing a 12-month period starting from May 1946, the number of people seeking a job always fell short of the number of recruits being sought – job seekers only filled 68 percent of the available job vacancies. The survey conducted in the fall of 1946 also showed that among 400,000 jobless people surveyed, only some 230,000 expressed the desire to obtain a job.⁸² A government economic paper published by the Economic Stabilization Board in 1947 described this phenomenon as an “unhealthy state,” because it was a “state in which being jobless [was] not perceived as jobless” since “with insufficient economic regulation under inflation, it [was] possible to make a living without a steady job and even often possible to have more advantageous conditions in making a living than those with a steady job.”⁸³ This was because of the growing underground *yami* economy – the black market. The black market was becoming the actual economy in the everyday life of the war-torn country.

One Japanese leading social policy analyst, Ōkōuchi Kazuo, described this phenomenon of popular life as “becoming lumpen” (*furōka*).⁸⁴ In his essay published in February 1946, Ōkōuchi called attention to “the decadence of the economic ethic” (*keizai dōgi no taihai*) and “the complete lack of a sense of stability in life” that he saw characterizing the current “national

⁸¹ *Yomiuri Hōchi*, November 17, 1945. A similar report also explained: “Given the [current] food situation, it is impossible to make a living with the income from a regular job” (*Yomiuri Hōchi*, December 15, 1945).

⁸² Keizai Antei Honbu, *Keizai jissō hōkokusho* (July 4, 1947), p.44.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, pp.44-45. Such an “unhealthy state” remained the same in 1947, too. According to a government economic paper published in May 1948, the number of the unemployed amounted to 670,000, which was “extremely less than what was generally expected.” The paper explained the main reason for this situation as follows: “First, there is a great number of the population who do not want to have a steady job [which are thus not counted as the “unemployed”] since under current inflation, it is easier to make a living by becoming a black-market broker in the distribution sector than making a living by obtaining a job.” The population of Japan was approximately 78.6 million and the total number of labor force was approximately 33.98 to 34.55 million (Keizai Antei Honbu, *Keizai jōsei hōkokusho: kaiko to tenbō* [May 23, 1948], p.28; *Japan Statistical Year-Book, 1949*, pp.38, 692).

⁸⁴ Ōkōuchi Kazuo, “Kokumin seikatsu no furōka ni tsuite,” *Sekai* (February 1946).

way of living” (*kokumin seikatsu*). According to Ōkōuchi, the lack of discipline and the demoralization of labor were spreading throughout working life. In particular, the majority of the estimated 4.77 million jobless people, composed mostly of demobilized military and labor conscripts, were not feeling compelled to work, and were depending on their temporary retirement allowance or black-market transactions.⁸⁵ Those who were jobless had not only lost jobs and their “material base” (*buttekina ashiba*) suddenly as a result of the collapse of the wartime economy, but had also lost “the base of morale” (*seishintekina ashiba*) as a result of the collapse of the wartime collective objective. Ōkōuchi observed that they were not an “unemployed” population in an ordinary sense because of their lack of will to work – they were not taking joblessness as a serious and urgent issue and had become “lumpen-like beings” (*furōteki sonzai*).⁸⁶

The so-called “postwar crisis” took form within multiple dimensions in Japan during the first nine months after the defeat and subsequent U.S./Allied occupation of Japan. What Yoshida Shigeru termed as “revolutionary conditions” in his memoir emerged as a political crisis in early 1946, and this political crisis, which crystallized in the “Food May Day” demonstration in May, embodied the crisis of the old guard’s legitimacy. The political crisis manifested the disjuncture between state and society, the reality that the balance of political forces in the Diet in which two

⁸⁵ According to a government estimate, the number of these demobilized military and labor conscripts (men) amounted to approximately 13.24 million by December 1945 (Ōkōuchi Kazuo, ed., *Shiryō sengo 20nenshi, 4: rōdō, I* [Tokyo: Nihon Hyōronsha, 1966], p.1).

⁸⁶ Ōkōuchi viewed this phenomenon not so much as the temporary consequence of post-defeat shock but as the structural consequence of the collapse of the Japanese “feudalistic” and “militaristic” capitalist economy. He understood that because of its “primitive” (*shokiteki*) nature, Japanese capitalism had failed to produce fully “modern,” “rational” labor and preserved irrationality in the national way of living (*kokumin seikatsu*). Thus, a solution and social policy for the current employment issue that Ōkōuchi earnestly suggested was the disciplining of the “lumpen-like” population, that is, the re-education and making of productive “modern” workers. He emphasized the disciplining as the “primary requirement” for the reconstruction of the Japanese economy as a “normal” capitalist economy (Ōkōuchi Kazuo, “Shitsugyō to binbō,” *Shinsei* [May 1946]). Also see his other early postwar essays, Ōkōuchi Kazuo, *Nihon shihonshugi to rōdō mondai* (Tokyo: Hakujuitsu Shoin, 1947).

conservative parties predominated did not represent the rising “revolution from below” on the ground.⁸⁷ At the same time, the “postwar crisis” was also deepening at the structural level of the capitalist economy. The legitimization of capitalist social relations was teetering on a precipitous brink as workers’ seizure of the capital’s means of production (“production control”) spread throughout shop floors. Outside of these production sites, the majority of “a surplus population of workers” refused to return to the production process, and chose a living based on the growing black-market economy, turning into non-productive “lumpen-like beings.”

The Yoshida administration emerged in the middle of this multi-dimensional crisis (or “organic crisis” in the Gramscian sense). Soon, the Yoshida administration began to develop its strategy for crisis management by framing the presence of Koreans as the “problem” in Japanese society.

The Old Guard Strikes Back

General Douglas MacArthur was the figure who staved off the crisis facing the conservative political forces who had been caught in the grip of the rising popular protests. On the following day after the “Food May Day” rally, when some demonstrators were still continuing their “sit-down strike” in front of the prime minister’s residence, MacArthur suddenly issued a statement condemning the demonstrations as “excesses by disorderly minorities.” This statement, warning the Japanese people that occupation forces would “take the necessary steps to control and remedy such a deplorable situation,” had an enormous impact and immediately

⁸⁷ Two conservative parties, the Liberal Party and Progressive Party, held respectively 140 and 94 seats and occupied the majority of the 466 total seats in the House of the Representatives after the first postwar “democratic” election in April 1946. The Socialist Party and Communist Party respectively held 92 and 5 – (it was the first time in Japan that the Communist Party held seats in the National Diet). The overall balance between conservative and democratic (or progressive [*kakushin*]) forces was seen as seven to three. See Shinobu, *Sengo Nihon seijishi I*, p.297.

silenced ongoing demonstrations.⁸⁸ The “sit-down strikers” in front of the prime minister’s residence began to scatter as soon as words of the statement reached the prime minister’s residence. All other demonstrations scheduled for that day and the rest of the week were cancelled.⁸⁹ After the statement, on the following day, MacArthur summoned Yoshida, who had almost given up on forming a new cabinet, and promised Yoshida additional U.S. food relief to avert increasing starvation throughout the population.⁹⁰ The next day, on May 22, Yoshida successfully formed a new cabinet.

Newly appointed Prime Minister Yoshida was strongly encouraged by MacArthur’s warning against “demonstrations and disorders by mass mobs,” which betrayed the initial Washington directive (“United States Initial Post-Surrender Policy for Japan”) that stipulated “[c]hanges in the form of government initiated by the Japanese people” as permissible and favorable. For Yoshida, who believed that a “pro-communist” group within SCAP had been fostering Communist “radical activities,” MacArthur’s post-“Food May Day” warning shot –

⁸⁸ MacArthur issued the following statement: “I find it necessary to caution the Japanese people that the growing tendency towards mass violence and physical process of intimidation, under organized leadership, present a grave menace to the future development of Japan. While every possible rational freedom of democratic method has been permitted and will be permitted in the evolution now proceeding in the transformation from a feudalistic and military state to one of democratic process, the physical violence which undisciplined elements are now beginning to practice will not be permitted to continue. They constitute a menace not only to orderly government but to the basic purposes and security of the occupation itself. If minor elements of Japanese society are unable to exercise such self-restraint and self-respect as the situation and conditions require, I shall be forced to take the necessary steps to control and remedy such a deplorable situation. I am sure the great mass of the people condemn such excesses by disorderly minorities, and it is my sincere hope that the sane views of this predominate public opinion will exert sufficient influence to make it unnecessary to intervene” (Cited from *New York Times* May 20, 1946; Division of Special Records, Foreign Office, Japanese Government, ed., *Documents concerning the Allied Occupation and Control of Japan, Volume II*, p.239).

⁸⁹ Gayn, *Japan Diary*, p.231. Gayn noted the impact of the statement as follows: “The statement had a startling effect. I could actually recall no American move that matched this pronouncement in its repercussions. There was consternation in union headquarters and in the offices of the left-wing parties. In conservative quarters, there was undisguised jubilation.”

⁹⁰ According to a SCAP monthly report, SCAP released “a total of 157,435 metric tons of cereals and 17,273 tons of canned foods” in July, and this was “equivalent to approximately 25 percent of the total monthly ration requirements of staple foods for Japan.” The report also said, “During July food supply reached its most critical stage since the beginning of the Occupation” and “SCAP, following its policy of supplementing domestic food supplies to prevent starvation and civil unrest, found it necessary to release imported foods in 20 prefectures.” The report of the following month stated that “[b]ecause of the release of imported foods there was still no general starvation” (SCAP, *Summation of Non-Military Activities in Japan* no.10, p.183, no.11, p.181).

along with U.S. State Department Official George Atcheson's anti-communist speech in the Allied Council⁹¹ – appeared perhaps to open an opportunity to “rectify the excess” that had been made by so-called the “New Dealers” in SCAP, or, as Yoshida called them, “idealists” (*kannenha* or *rinenha*).⁹²

At the first press conference held two days after his formation of a new cabinet, Yoshida made clear his disapproval of radicalized labor movements, specifically workers' seizure of control over enterprises called “production control,” which had been supported by SCAP, particularly by the Labor Division in the Economic and Scientific Section (ESS).⁹³ In the press conference, Yoshida stated, “Production control is the most unfavorable thing. [...] The

⁹¹ At the fourth meeting of the Allied Council for Japan held on May 15, 1946, Chairman George Atcheson (U.S. State Department Political Adviser to SCAP) claimed in front of Soviet and other representatives: “I do not need to tell you that the United States does not favor Communism either in the United States or in Japan [...]” These anti-communist remarks were made during his speech concerning a Japanese petition presented to SCAP after the May Day rally, which he asserted “was not written in idiomatic Japanese, but gave the [SCAP] translators a rather clear impression that originally it had been drawn up in a foreign language and then translated into Japanese for presentation.” Gayn noted in his diary that “[i]t was the first official charge that the Russians were behind the unrest in Japan, and that the protests supposedly emanating from the Japanese people were actually drafted by Russian agents, and then translated into Japanese” (Gayn, *Japan Diary*, p.218; Atcheson's speech was cited from Division of Special Records, Foreign Office, Japanese Government, ed., *Documents concerning the Allied Occupation and Control of Japan, Volume II*, pp.2-3). Yoshida also understood Atcheson's speech as “the first anti-communist declaration SCAP officially made” (Yoshida, *Kaisō jūnen*, vol.2, p.264).

⁹² In his memoir, Yoshida insists that there was a “pro-communist” faction among SCAP officials, especially in Government Section (GS), who seized influence over occupation policy and caused “excess” (*yukisugi*) in reforms. Yoshida admits that he did not have a good relationship with GS officials such as Brigadier General Courtney Whitney and Colonel Charles Kades. Instead, Yoshida found his counterparts in the anti-Soviet ideologues within SCAP's military bureaucracy, such as Lieutenant General Robert L. Eichelberger, commander of the Eight Army, and Major General Charles A. Willoughby, chief of the Intelligence Section, General Military Staff (G-2), whom MacArthur dubbed “my lovable fascist.” As Dower argues in his in-depth study of Yoshida Shigeru, Yoshida (and his colleagues) “recognized the potency of the ‘Soviet menace’ and ‘Red subversives’ arguments from the outset, and enlisted the support of SCAP's fanatic anti-communists against its ‘New Dealers,’” which ended with “greater eventual success” (Yoshida, *Kaisō jūnen*, vol.1, chapter 4, vol.2, p.260; John W. Dower, *Empire and Aftermath: Yoshida Shigeru and the Japanese Experience, 1878-1954* [Cambridge, Massachusetts: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1979], p.295).

⁹³ When the Shidehara administration issued a statement on February 1 warning that the government would police workers' production control, the ESS Labor Division immediately showed its support for workers on the following day and opposed Japanese government's interference in labor disputes. See *Asahi Shimbun*, February 3, 1946. On SCAP's stance on workers' production control, see Takemae Eiji, *Sengo rōdō kaikaku: GHQ rōdō seisakushi* (Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1982), pp.87-91; Theodore Cohen, *Remaking Japan: The American Occupation as New Deal* (New York: Free Press, 1987), pp.218-228; Takemae, *The Allied Occupation of Japan*, p.313.

government has to take appropriate measures concerning this.”⁹⁴ On June 13, the Yoshida administration released an official statement, titled “Proclamation on the Preservation of Social Order,” that condemned the “recent mass movements” and “production control” as threats to the “construction of a democratic Japan,” which required more than anything else “the preservation of social order” and “the increase of production.” On the same day, the Home Ministry issued a directive permitting the “policing of mass movements” to local governors.⁹⁵

On the ground, the Japanese government was determined to crack down on the rising “democratic forces” that Washington had initially encouraged, and embarked on its own offensive immediately after Yoshida’s pre-emptive statement. On June 14, the Japanese police arrested the suspect of the so-called “placard incident,” Communist worker Matsushima Matsutarō who had carried a handmade placard mocking Emperor Hirohito at the “Food May Day” demonstration. The Japanese government decided to prosecute Matsushima for the crime of “lese-majesty,” the crime of desecrating the Emperor, in attempt to curb further challenge to the dignity of the imperial sovereign.⁹⁶

On June 21, the Japanese police conducted a raid on a labor protest at the *Yomiuri* newspaper company and arrested fifty-six *Yomiuri* workers and union leaders, who were protecting six editorial staff from “unlawful firing.”⁹⁷ This incident marked the first

⁹⁴ *Asahi Shimbun*, May 25, 1946.

⁹⁵ *Asahi Shimbun*, June 14, 1946.

⁹⁶ *Asahi Shimbun*, June 23, 1946.

⁹⁷ The impetus for the (second) *Yomiuri* dispute stemmed from the *Yomiuri* management’s firing of six allegedly Communist editorial staff. The police raid was ordered by the Prime Minister. Moreover, the purge of the alleged Communist employees was also initiated by the Yoshida administration with support from MacArthur and the Civil Information and Education Section (CIE) in SCAP. Theodore Cohen, the former chief of the Labor Division in the ESS, SCAP, recalls that “he [Donald R. Nugent, the chief of the CIE] divulged that MacArthur himself had personally told him ‘to clean up’ the *Yomiuri*” (Cohen, *Remaking Japan*, p.252). On SCAP and Japanese government’s involvement in *Yomiuri*’s “red purge” and labor dispute, see also Masuyama Tasuke, *Yomiuri sōgi 1945/1946* (Tokyo: Aki Shobō, 1976); Takemae, *Sengo rōdō kaikaku*, pp.131-155; Takemae, *The Allied Occupation of Japan*, pp.317, 397.

government's use of the police to crush a labor dispute during the Occupation.⁹⁸ More importantly, the police raid was in fact condoned by anti-communist U.S. military officials in SCAP – if not the Labor Division of the ESS – such as Major General Charles A. Willoughby and Lieutenant General Robert L. Eichelberger, with whom Yoshida had forged a close relationship in opposition to the “idealist” reformers in SCAP.⁹⁹ In other words, Yoshida's offensive and “rectification of the excess” was taking shape through two key elements: first, the increased involvement of the U.S. hawkish warriors who were advancing the quintessential “cold war” binary politics already in early 1946; second, the utilization of the discordance and escalating tensions within SCAP over the limits of democratization and “revolution from below” in Japan.¹⁰⁰

Along with its “preservation of social order” through the use of force, the Yoshida administration also embarked on the ideological reconstruction of social order and national integration, following Emperor Hirohito's initiative in late May. On May 24, in the wake of the “Food May Day” demonstration, Emperor Hirohito, for the second time, spoke to his people

⁹⁸ Also, according to Cohen, “the number of arrests was the largest ever at one time in a labor dispute in Japan's history, including even the bad old militarist days.” Cohen, *Remaking Japan*, p.249.

⁹⁹ Cohen, opposing police interference in labor affairs, bitterly criticized the police raid and rebuked the responsible Japanese police chiefs directly. He remembered, “I had nothing against them personally, but I was determined to show by my line of questioning that GHQ as a whole did not condone their action. They, for their part, seethed with resentment at being called on the carpet for doing their duty, especially when they were sure that it was what SCAP wanted.” Because of his “questioning,” Cohen soon came under fire by Eichelberger who heard complaints of the Japanese police against Cohen. Moreover, because of Cohen's criticism of the Japanese police interference in the *Yomiuri* labor dispute, Cohen came to be labeled as a “Communist” by Willoughby. Similarly, according to Cohen, Yoshida “alleged to MacArthur, on the basis of the *Yomiuri* case, that I [Cohen] was a Communist” on two occasions. See Cohen, *Remaking Japan*, chapter 13.

¹⁰⁰ The discordance and tensions within SCAP already came to the surface during the early stage of democratic reforms. Gayn noted in his diary on December 20, 1945 as follows: “[T]he critics said, a dramatic cleavage has developed within Headquarters, driving all policy planners into two warring camps. One of these believes that Japan should be reshaped drastically. The other opposes fundamental changes, on the ground that a conservative Japan is our best ally in the coming struggle with Russia, and that all that is needed in Japan is a slight face-lifting.” Gayn also noted that “the conflict between the two camps broke into the open” over the purge of war criminals, a conflict between Military Intelligence officials like Willoughby and Government Section officials like Whitney (Gayn, *Japan Diary*, 40-45). American journalist John Gunther who worked in U.S./Allied-occupied Japan also wrote that such “exacerbated disputes” appeared particularly over the issue of the purge and the decentralization of the police (John Gunther, *The Riddle of MacArthur: Japan, Korea and the Far East* [New York: Harper & Brothers, 1950], p.122).

directly through a radio broadcast and expressed his deep pain and concern over the current food scarcity. Emperor Hirohito sprinkled his paternalistic speech with phrases inspiring both moral and national sentiment, appealing to his people to “live in the beautiful [*uruwashii*] tradition of the family state,” that is, “to share whatever little food they have with each other, strengthen themselves in order to bear the pain together, and help each other as brethren.”¹⁰¹ The Yoshida administration echoed the same appeal to Japanese national sentiment and morality. On the same day as the “Proclamation on the Preservation of Social Order,” the Yoshida administration also issued a statement asking people to act out of “deep love for our brethren” to manage the deepening food crisis – a statement that framed national cohesion as the solution for the “greatest national crisis in [Japanese] history” (*yūshi irai saidai no kono minzokuteki kiki*).¹⁰²

Similarly, in the National Diet, Yoshida was poised to articulate his moralistic view of the current “social disorder” and to defend his statement on the “preservation of social order” against his critics. On June 21, Yoshida delivered his first speech as Prime Minister in the House of the Representatives session held in the wake of the formation of the new Cabinet. In his speech, Yoshida again targeted the recent popular movements and reiterated his condemnation of them. He asserted that the “symptom of social disorder” was coming to the surface, stemming from the destructive behavior of those who were “conflating freedom with self-indulgence and regarding self-indulgence as ‘democracy.’” Yoshida framed social disorder as a moral issue. He maintained, “The symptom of social disorder that is appearing now is, in short, the product of decadence in national morality [*kokumin dōgi no taihai*].”¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ *Asahi Shimbun*, May 25, 1946.

¹⁰² *Asahi Shimbun*, June 14, 1946.

¹⁰³ *Japanese Imperial Diet Records*, House of the Representatives, 90th Assembly, Plenary Session, June 21, 1946 (National Diet Library, Tokyo, Japan).

Yoshida's critics in the House immediately challenged his moralistic view and framed the "symptom of social disorder" differently, pointing instead to the structural problem of Japanese capitalism and capitalist regime. Opposition lawmaker Kita Katsutarō of the Cooperative Democratic Party, for instance, stressed that the current chaotic state of Japan was nothing but the product of the "impasse of capitalism" – "people are not working hard, thoughts [*shisō*] are in disorder, and superfluous capital is not being utilized." Socialist Party lawmaker Katō Kanjū opposed Yoshida's preservation of "capitalist" social order and contended that it was the "capitalist social order" that had given rise to "imperialism" and the "tyranny of financial capital," which resulted in the current circumstances of Japan.¹⁰⁴ Socialist Party leader Katayama Tetsu argued for a full-scale transition toward "socialist democracy" in order to get through the crisis and social disorder.¹⁰⁵ Also, Communist leader Tokuda Kyūichi harshly criticized Yoshida for attributing social disorder to "decadence in national morality." Tokuda pointed to the extreme hardship in popular life under the current chaotic economy and asserted that the reason people were generally engaging in black-market transactions was not because of their decadence but because of the deepening food crisis caused by the corrupt "bureaucratic apparatus of the emperor system."¹⁰⁶

What was at stake in this early discussion during the new House session was indeed the definition of the current social crisis. Opposition party leaders – not only Socialists and Communists but also Cooperative Democrats – argued that the major social problems were inevitable products of capitalist development and thus they problematized capitalism itself. On the other hand, Yoshida and his old liberal colleagues, who were determined to take the task of economic reconstruction along capitalist lines – the lines modeled on the *zaibatsu*-dominated

¹⁰⁴ *Japanese Imperial Diet Records*, House of the Representatives, 90th Assembly, Plenary Session, June 22, 1946.

¹⁰⁵ *Japanese Imperial Diet Records*, House of the Representatives, 90th Assembly, Plenary Session, June 21, 1946.

¹⁰⁶ *Japanese Imperial Diet Records*, House of the Representatives, 90th Assembly, Plenary Session, June 23, 1946.

capitalist economy of 1920s¹⁰⁷ – consistently refused to associate the current social crisis with capitalism. Instead, Yoshida and his colleagues simply framed social disorder and problems as a temporary phenomenon caused by the shock of defeat, which included “decadence in national morality.”¹⁰⁸ Interestingly, when Yoshida’s critics presented the current social disorder as the product of the “impasse of capitalism,” it apparently touched a nerve in Yoshida. In his response, Yoshida bluntly retorted that the government was making all possible efforts to get through the current crisis realistically without dwelling on “isms” – “I consider it extremely annoying to discuss an issue on isms like the impasse of capitalism.”¹⁰⁹

What this retort revealed was actually Yoshida’s ideological offensive. It was an attempt to frame and appropriate the meaning of the current social crisis in a depoliticized way – depoliticized in the sense that social disorder was a moral issue, an issue of “decadence in national morality” rather than that of political economy. Soon, another ideological offensive emerged in the Diet in the following months – this time, in the form of a racialization of social problems.

Making the “Korean Problem”

The first three months during the new Diet session that started on June 20 – the session during which heated debates over the drafting of the new Japanese “democratic” constitution

¹⁰⁷ Kojima Seiko and Takeuchi Takeshi, *Yoshida naikaku* (Tokyo: Yoshida Naikaku Kankōkai, 1954), p.7; Dower, *Empire and Aftermath*, p.277. Moore explains Yoshida administration’s project of economic reconstruction as follows: “By the time Yoshida formed his cabinet the conservative approach had been tempered slightly by a grudging recognition of the inevitability of certain of the basic measures of political and economic democratization that SCAP was carrying out, but the old insistence upon big-business leadership of the economy, heavy industry, textile exports, cheap labor, and a minimally interventionist state remained.” Moore calls this conservative project of Yoshida a “laissez-faire capitalist reconstruction” (Moore, *Japanese Workers and the Struggle for Power*, pp.197-202).

¹⁰⁸ For instance, the Minister of Health and Welfare refused to see the current massive unemployment as attributable to the “nature of the social system or economic system” and instead emphasized that it was an “accidental” phenomena caused by the repatriation of the overseas Japanese and the collapse of the munitions industry (*Japanese Imperial Diet Records*, House of the Representatives, 90th Assembly, Plenary Session, June 22, 1946).

¹⁰⁹ *Japanese Imperial Diet Records*, House of the Representatives, 90th Assembly, Plenary Session, June 22, 1946.

started – marked a sudden influx of racial bashing by conservative ruling party lawmakers and government ministers. Their speeches and discussions soon came to frame the Koreans and the Taiwanese as the cause of the current social crisis in Japan. Lawmakers emphasized over and over how Koreans and Taiwanese were spreading economic and social malaise in Japanese society, and thereby framed social problems as a racial issue.

Racial bashing by lawmakers first emerged in a discussion over the policing of underground “concealed and hoarded goods” (*intoku busshi*) and their diversion to the black market, which had been a sensitive issue since men of position and privilege (such as military officials, bureaucrats, politicians and big business capitalists) were involved and making profits through the black-market business.¹¹⁰ In the House on July 2, one Socialist Party lawmaker, Taman Hirofumi, questioned the insufficient government policing of hoarded-goods, indicating that “officials in the judiciary and bureaucrats” were doing something “wrong.” The floor went into an uproar all at once. Some lawmakers shouted, “Don’t say unnecessary things!” “Take it back!” Taman could barely continue his speech until the Speaker quieted them down. Taman continued: “As you all know well about the state of the policing of those concealed and hoarded goods, it is the reality that the policing has not been thorough due to the collusion between

¹¹⁰ For instance, when a large amount of military stocks such as construction materials and machinery that had been taken over and preserved by occupation forces was returned to the Japanese government, the government entrusted the disposal of these vast materials to a committee consisting of five representatives from big business (*zaibatsu*) enterprises. The returned materials soon disappeared and the government could not trace them. These materials, estimated to amount to 100 billion yen, were largely diverted to the black-market business. Moreover, the profits from the black-market business were also used to finance political campaigns. See Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, pp.112-120; Cohen, *Remaking Japan*, chapter 18. In his chapter “The Normality of Scandal: The Japanese Army’s Missing Supplies,” Cohen argues that “the distribution of the Army stocks served to reinforce the old regime” – “In general, industry got windfalls across the board” and “large segments of the propertied classes, on the verge of being suffocated economically by the military defeat, were resuscitated by the distribution of the military stores” (346). Also, on the involvement of the Japanese police, see Christopher Aldous, *The Police in Occupation Japan: Control, Corruption and Resistance to Reform* (New York: Routledge, 1997), chapter 5.

bureaucrats and the rural wealthy and others.”¹¹¹ The Justice Minister of the Yoshida administration who was present in the House denied any wrongdoings conducted by bureaucrats.

On the following day, twenty-seven lawmakers (fifteen from the conservative ruling parties) formed a subcommittee to discuss a law against the improper gaining and hoarding of goods. At the initial meeting of the subcommittee, chairman Nakano Torakichi of the ruling Liberal Party called members’ attention to the significance of this issue, and made certain striking implications: “For the sake of those concealed and hoarded goods, a considerable number of *fellows of certain nationals* [*bōkoku to bōkoku no mono*] are still in Japan. They are living a more affluent life than us Japanese brethren by collecting those goods cunningly and then diverting them [to the black market]” (my emphasis).¹¹²

No more references to those “fellows of certain nationals” were made until the Home Minister attended the subcommittee meeting on July 5. During the discussion with the Home Minister, lawmaker Hara Susumu of the Liberal Party suddenly started to talk about “Koreans,” about whom, in his own words, “we have been most deeply concerned” since the end of the war. With a knowing, assured attitude, Hara made the following blunt statement: “I am sure that Koreans are engaging in the concealing of goods and other *yami* [underworld and black-market] activities in the largest scale.” He complained that Koreans were acting as if they had a certain privilege after Korean independence and their behavior was touching a nerve in Japanese society.¹¹³

The Home Minister simply agreed with Hara’s statements. Echoing lawmaker Hara’s accusation of Koreans for *yami* activities, Home Minister Ōmura Seiichi made a further assertion

¹¹¹ *Japanese Imperial Diet Records*, House of the Representatives, 90th Assembly, Plenary Session, July 2, 1946.

¹¹² *Japanese Imperial Diet Records*, House of the Representatives, 90th Assembly, Subcommittee (“*Intoku busshi tō kinkyū sochirei iinkai*”), July 3, 1946.

¹¹³ *Japanese Imperial Diet Records*, House of the Representatives, 90th Assembly, Subcommittee (“*Intoku busshi tō kinkyū sochirei iinkai*”), July 5, 1946.

that Koreans' "outrageous" behaviors drove Japanese nationals into a state of desperation and he recommended the following action: "I believe that it is absolutely necessary to police and stamp out such lawlessness of Koreans in reinvigorating the spirit of Japanese nationals [*kokumin no eiki*]." ¹¹⁴ Another lawmaker also referred to the lawlessness of the Chinese and Taiwanese. At the end of the discussion, subcommittee chairman Nakano also targeted Koreans and Taiwanese, claiming, "It is troublesome if Koreans and Taiwanese do not leave [Japan] soon. Otherwise, *yami* will become rampant, and it very much matters to the concealing and hoarding of goods"; "We must expel Koreans and Taiwanese as soon as possible. They are the root of *yami*." ¹¹⁵ There was no contest against his statement or others' attribution of social problems to Koreans and Taiwanese in the subcommittee. When chairman Nakano reported the summary of the subcommittee's discussion briefly in the House general assembly on July 9, he emphasized the significance of "enhancing national morality," highlighting it as the conclusion made by all the subcommittee members. Nakano also directed the floor's attention to an issue concerning Koreans specifically, "the policing of Koreans' and others' hoarded-goods." ¹¹⁶ In those

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ *Japanese Imperial Diet Records*, House of the Representatives, 90th Assembly, Subcommittee ("Intoku busshi tō kinkyū sochirei iinkai"), July 6, 1946.

¹¹⁶ *Japanese Imperial Diet Records*, House of the Representatives, 90th Assembly, Plenary Session, July 9, 1946. It is important to note that neither Koreans nor "the policing of Korean hoarded-goods" became an issue at all later in a special investigation report on "concealed and hoarded goods" that was released by a new Socialist-led (Katayama) administration in December 1947. The Katayama administration formed the "Special Committee for the Investigation of Concealed and Hoarded Goods" in the House of the Representatives in July 1947. The committee, led by Socialist Party lawmaker Katō Kanjū, carried out the difficult task of investigation – investigations in which, in the words of the report, "[l]ocal government and police officials [had] both actively and passively interfered." The investigation report stated: "During the course of the investigation this Committee has been convinced beyond any doubt that [...] [f]irst, vast quantities of goods formerly owned by the Japanese Army and Navy were disposed of to local authorities, businessmen and brokers and that the black markets have been flooded with these goods to the detriment of honest industrialists." The report also mentioned that "[e]ven the so-called 'special goods' returned to the Japanese Government by Allied authorities [had] been improperly distributed and no accounting [had] ever been rendered." Most importantly, the report included no reference to Koreans or Taiwanese on this matter, unlike the accusations against them initially made by Liberal Party lawmakers and the Home Minister of the Yoshida administration. Instead, the report clarified lawmakers' and government officials' involvement in the seizing and selling of those military stockpiles, stating: "In some cases these nouveaux riches have run for seats in the Diet or have financed the election of their personal spokesmen, thus gaining power in political field. [...] There are other officials in the central and local governments who have been corrupted by the illegal possessors of war goods and

discussions, Koreans became the target of political blame for social disorder and social problems, and this was just the beginning.

Moreover, it was not only Japanese lawmakers and government officials who started to cast blame openly on Koreans for the ongoing social crisis. The Japanese major national media also contributed. In mid-1946, the media was no longer hesitant about openly criticizing and expressing negative views about Koreans, which was very unlike the pre-defeat, “total war” period. During wartime, when Japanese imperialism started to make a political and ideological shift in its racial policy toward the further “Japanization” of Korean colonial subjects – or an “inclusionary form of racism”¹¹⁷ – the media and government avoided using terms and expressions that would indicate “racial” distinction or discrimination between Japanese and Koreans. Under the wartime imperial regime of total mobilization, the media and metropole and colonial governments pushed ideological propaganda, “Japan and Korea as One Body” (*naisen ittai*), and refrained, if not completely, from portraying and calling Koreans in a negative and contemptuous way like “*senjin*.” Instead, the media began to frame Koreans as “brethren” (*dōhō*) by calling them “*hantō dōhō*” (peninsular brethren) and “*hantōjin*” (Peninsulars) and publicized episodes that highlighted and exaggerated the patriotism of Koreans during the last years of the war.¹¹⁸

who fear to collaborate in exposing these frauds lest they themselves be implicated.” The investigation report was translated and printed in SCAP’s monthly summation. See SCAP, *Summation of Non-Military Activities in Japan 27* (December 1947), pp.23-32. Moreover, during 1947 to 1948, a series of scandals broke out concerning lawmakers and government officials’ involvement in the diversion of military stockpiles into private hands. In February 1948, Liberal Party lawmaker Hara, who had pointed an accusing finger at Koreans during the subcommittee discussion I mentioned above, was in fact revealed his involvement in the scandal and was arrested for accepting a bribe to favor a particular agency to benefit from the sale of government goods during 1947.

¹¹⁷ Fujitani, *Race for Empire*.

¹¹⁸ See, Shinbun Yōgo Kenkyūkai, *Chōsen dōhō koshō narabi shinbun zasshi kiji toriatsukai zadankai* (Osaka: Shinbun Yōgo Kenkyūkai, 1939, National Diet Library); Higuchi Yūichi, *Kyōwakai: senjika Chōsenjin tōsei soshiki no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Shakai Hyōronsha, 1986), pp.231-239; Fujitani, *Race for Empire*, chapter 7.

One major national newspaper, *Asahi Shimbun*, once had played a leading role in disseminating racial propaganda for “Japan and Korea as One Body” during wartime. Immediately after the war, it had still portrayed Koreans in Japan as “brethren” in its article of August 26, which praised a voluntary (allegedly) “donation” from some five hundred Korean coal miners in Hokkaidō to the families of Japanese military members killed in the war.¹¹⁹ Yet, within a year after the war, *Asahi* suddenly published a sensational, race-baiting editorial concerning Koreans remaining in Japan on July 13, 1946 – almost at the same time as some Japanese lawmakers were presenting the presence of Koreans as a problem at the site of political discussion. The editorial was titled “Regarding the Dealing with Koreans.” Sprinkled with very blunt and rather patronizing phrases, the editorial bitterly criticized Koreans for undermining government efforts to ease the current chaotic state of the Japanese economy. It said:

We appreciate the fact that Korea under Japanese rule made numerous of sacrifices for our military augmentation and Koreans living in *naichi* [Japan] provided enormous manpower for munitions production. However, frankly speaking, Korean living habits [*seikatsu buri*] after the war have often stirred Japanese sentiment unnecessarily. For example, some Koreans are deeply engaging in the black market and disturbing the flow of goods and prices. It is undeniable that Koreans, standing outside government regulation and rushing simply into the protection of their livelihood, are having a bad influence on government food policy and price control. Even if the number of Koreans living in Japan might decrease, it is hard to deny that their life will still have the same influence on the employment of government policy.¹²⁰

The editorial presented “Korean living habits” as a problem for the whole of Japanese society and an obstacle to government efforts to stabilize popular everyday life. This logic underlying the attribution of “Korean living habits” to social dysfunction, that is, the racialized view of social problems, was indeed reminiscent of the way in which the prewar Japanese

¹¹⁹ *Asahi Shimbun*, August 26, 1945.

¹²⁰ *Asahi Shimbun*, July 13, 1946.

government framed the pauperization of Korean urban day workers during the 1920s and 1930s as the “Korean problem,” a problem supposedly derived from the inferior nature of the Korean “race.”¹²¹ As Japan historian Ken C. Kawashima has demonstrated, in their official surveys and intelligence reports, the Japanese police and bureaucrats often reduced the social problems experienced by Korean workers to “a problem of being Korean itself, to problems of Koreans” and “racialized or ethnicized” social problems like the pauperization of Korean workers.¹²² In short, what the *Asahi* editorial of July 13 and its representation of “Korean living habits” signified was the ideological reformulation of the “Korean problem” in a new historical conjuncture. In this time, in the middle of the “postwar crisis,” the Japanese government and major media began to racialize pervasive general social problems themselves as the “Korean problem,” framing social problems experienced by the entire population in general as something related to the presence of the Korean minority in Japan. The July of 1946 marked a harbinger of the making of the “Korean problem” in the public sphere, through the media and lawmakers.

Korean leaders sensed from the *Asahi*’s editorial something more than a bluntly worded criticism – they did not take it at face value. It seemed to them that the worded attack from one of major Japanese national newspapers was a portent of organized race-baiting, and leaders immediately reacted to the editorial. In *Asahi Shimbun* the next day, a letter sent from a rightist *zainichi* Korean association, The Youth League for the Promotion of Korean Nation Building or *Kensei*, appeared in the section of *Koe*, the Letters to the Editor section. In a letter titled “The Stance of Koreans,” *Kensei* not only lashed back at the editorial’s misrepresentation of Koreans but also questioned the following condescending phrase in the editorial: “We appreciate the fact

¹²¹ On the logic of the “Korean problem” during the 1920s and 1930s, see Sugihara Tōru, *Ekkyō suru tami: kindai Ōsaka no Chōsenjinshi kenkyū* (Tokyo: Shinkansha, 1998) and Ken C. Kawashima, *The Proletarian Gamble: Korean Workers in Interwar Japan* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009).

¹²² Kawashima, *The Proletarian Gamble*, p.20.

that Korea under Japanese rule made numerous of sacrifices for our military augmentation and Koreans living in *naichi* [Japan] provided enormous manpower for munitions production.” *Kensei* countered, “[Are you saying] we voluntarily cooperated with Japan for its war of aggression by sacrificing ourselves and providing manpower for you? [...] It’s completely the opposite. We have no reason to be appreciated.” Moreover, *Kensei* also problematized an ulterior motive behind the editorial: “here, we ask you what your real intention in publishing that editorial is. We have deep concern about the effects the editorial will bring about.”¹²³

Similarly, a letter sent from the Korean League Osaka branch also appeared in the *Koe* section of *Asahi Shimbun* Osaka Edition on July 19. The letter expressed a markedly blunter and harsher criticism. The Osaka Korean League bitterly accused the editorial of exaggerating some Koreans’ misbehavior and unfairly attributing current social problems and “social unrest” to “Korean living habits.” The Osaka Korean League also condemned the hypocritical attitude of *Asahi* – the press that had used to “speak for friendship between China, Japan and Korea” during the war for the so-called “Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere” was now attempting to incite antagonism between Japanese and Koreans. It seemed obvious to Korean League leaders that the editorial contained an ulterior political motive, and thus they made the following assertion in the letter: “Behind this editorial, we can see both an ongoing nefarious plot to prepare another oppression of Koreans and a ploy by the rump of militarists [*gunbatsu no zantō*] who dream of the restoration of Japanese militarism.”¹²⁴ *Asahi Shimbun* never responded to this sharp criticism. Next day, it simply printed a news article on an incident, titled “Two Groups of Japanese-Korean [*nissenjin*] Muggers,” as if justifying the editorial’s depiction of Koreans as troublemakers.¹²⁵

¹²³ *Asahi Shimbun*, July 14, 1946.

¹²⁴ *Asahi Shimbun* (Osaka Edition), July 19, 1946.

¹²⁵ *Asahi Shimbun* (Osaka Edition), July 20, 1946

Korean leaders' concern over a portent of more adverse things to come turned out to be valid soon enough. Inside the National Diet, lawmakers and government officials were also no longer hesitant about voicing their revulsion against former colonial subjects remaining in Japan, and some began to hurl racial invectives in their political speeches. Like those lawmakers who had earlier put the blame of hoarded-goods on Koreans, one lawmaker of the House of Lords raised his voice and claimed, "Who is seizing Japanese commerce? Frankly speaking, Chinese and Koreans are running rampant and have seized the most of Japanese commerce."¹²⁶ One ruling party (Liberal Party) lawmaker also made a similar assertion: "According to a rumor, in July an enormous amount of Japanese new currency, ten-something billion of fifty billion new yen, is being hoarded by the non-Japanese, that is, *yami* merchants."¹²⁷ Moreover, one opposition party (Cooperative Democratic Party) lawmaker complained that the government was not policing Koreans and Chinese closely enough and thus the Japanese people were suffering. He lamented, "The overseas Chinese once took over regions in Southeast Asia. *I am concerned about the danger of the economic colonization of Japan*" (my emphasis).¹²⁸

One sensational race-baiting speech came from one of the Liberal Party leaders, Ōno Banboku, in the wake of a shocking incident of a gunfight between the Japanese police and a group of Taiwanese on July 19 (the so-called "Shibuya incident"). In the House general assembly on July 23, Ōno posed an "urgent question on the preservation of domestic security." He delivered a fear-mongering speech on the current social disorder and pointed an accusing

¹²⁶ Remarks made by Itaya Junsuke. *Japanese Imperial Diet Records*, House of Peers, 89th Assembly, Subcommittee ("Kaikeihō senji tokurei haishi tō ni kansuru hōritsuan tokubetsu iinkai"), July 26, 1946.

¹²⁷ Remarks made by Satō Torajirō. *Japanese Imperial Diet Records*, House of the Representatives, 90th Assembly, Subcommittee ("Yosan iinkai"), August 6, 1946.

¹²⁸ Remarks made by Kōno Kinshō. *Japanese Imperial Diet Records*, House of the Representatives, 90th Assembly, Subcommittee ("Shōkō keizaikaihō o haishisuru hōritsuan hoka ikken iinkai"), August, 10, 1946.

finger at “non-Japanese” Koreans and Taiwanese, which was accompanied by applause from other lawmakers:

[...] An evil trend, such as the emergence of a black market harmful to the public interest, violence on the train, fare evasion, tax-unpaid business that disturbs the tax system, the opening of a store without permission, the violation of the regulations in the financial world, violent threatening and so on, has already flowed from large cities to small cities and has gradually begun to appear in villages. Such a trend has infiltrated into the minds of good people, and those who do evil have been gradually and constantly increasing in number. What we find extremely regrettable is that *it is mainly the non-Japanese who are involved in such tragic destruction of the social order* (applause). [...] I cannot help but have the impression that such acts of the destruction of the social order by the non-Japanese look *as if tigers and wolves intruded into the peaceful pasture* (applause). [my emphasis]¹²⁹

“Peaceful” Japanese society was said to be the victim of social malaise brought by the predatory “non-Japanese” within. Ōno’s speech portrayed the Japanese people in terms of “victimhood” – they were the victims of “non-Japanese” Koreans and Taiwanese who were doing “evil” and making the “destruction of the social order.” In other words, what Ōno’s speech demonstrated was another mode of self-victimization that was simultaneously taking shape through the post-defeat making of the collective memory of the popular tragic wartime experience – the Japanese people as the victim of the “militarist” government’s perpetration of the war.¹³⁰ On the one hand, self-victimization was taking place, in the words of Japan scholar Lisa Yoneyama, in “the transformation of the official characterization of nationhood from a militant empire to a peace-loving democratic nation,” which was often represented as “a change

¹²⁹ *Japanese Imperial Diet Records*, House of the Representatives, 90th Assembly, Plenary Session, July 23, 1946.

¹³⁰ For a good English-language study on post-defeat Japanese self-victimization concerning wartime aggression, see James J. Orr, *The Victim as Hero: Ideologies of Peace and National Identity in Postwar Japan* (Honolulu: The University of Hawaii Press, 2001). Orr writes about how the “ideology of Japanese war victimhood” took form and played a core role in Japanese “pacifism.” It is important to note that Orr also refers to U.S. and SCAP’s role in the early formation of the ideology of Japanese war victimhood (chapter 2).

from a country of masculine prowess to feminized innocence.”¹³¹ At the same time, as Ōno’s speech epitomized, self-victimization was also operating in the changing relationship with former colonial subjects, a relationship that reflected the collapse of the Japanese dominant position over them. Importantly, these processes of self-victimization were inextricably intertwined with the amnesia of the Japanese empire, which entailed both the silencing of Japanese past imperial and colonial perpetration and the dehistoricizing of the origins and presence of Koreans and Taiwanese in Japan. Both processes were the two sides of the same coin of self-victimization.

Furthermore, in the National Diet, “peaceful” Japanese society was said to be not only the victim of social malaise brought on by the Koreans and Taiwanese within Japan, but also the victim of Korean intrusion from without. In the very same breath, Japanese politicians, while charging what they called the “non-Japanese” for fomenting a hotbed of social diseases, attributed in the very same breath the spread of literal diseases of cholera and typhus to the Koreans who sailed over from the Korean peninsula to sneak into the Japanese border. In the House general assembly on August 17, ruling party (Progressive Party) lawmaker Shiikuma Saburō presented a terror-inspiring image of Koreans along with the racialized view of the spread of disease throughout Japan:

[R]ecently, the number of those people, especially Koreans, who had previously returned to their home countries and now try to smuggle themselves back into Japan in a sort of organized group is increasing day by day. It is said that the number has indeed reached some tens of thousands in the *Kyūshū* and *San’in* areas. Moreover, it is said that they carry lethal weapons, form gangs, and demonstrate astonishing viciousness by taking advantage of the disempowerment of the [Japanese] police, and are posing an indescribable threat to residential life

¹³¹ Lisa Yoneyama, *Hiroshima Traces: Time, Space, and the Dialectics of Memory* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1999), p.38. Similarly, Japan scholar Yoshikuni Igarashi argues that the Japanese official narrative framed the image of postwar U.S.-Japan alliance as a sexualized relationship and represented Japan as a feminized subordinate by disavowing its “colonialist legacy” (Igarashi, *Bodies of Memory*, chapter 1).

there (applause). This is not all yet. Another frightening fact is that many of them are carrying diseases such as cholera, typhus, and dysentery, such diseases have been spread in *naichi* [Japan], causing a large number of sufferers all over *naichi*.¹³²

Shiikuma's speech was indeed a racial incendiary. Following the above account intended to instill fear in the audience, his speech took on a shrill emotional tone as Shiikuma expressed his frustration with now-liberated colonial subjects in Japan:

Unfortunately, we are defeated nationals [*haisen kokumin*], but it is extremely shocking for us that those Koreans who had been living as our brethren, under our law and order until the last moment of the end of war suddenly changed their attitude and are *acting as if they were victorious nationals* [*atakamo senshō kokumin no gotoku*], pasting on railway coaches "Reserved" without any authorization, insulting and oppressing Japanese passengers, and otherwise committing every kind of viciousness with unspeakable violent behavior (applause). Ladies and gentlemen, for us who are completely exhausted from the pains of defeat, such unspeakable actions of these Koreans and Taiwanese just make the blood boil in our entire body (applause). [my emphasis]¹³³

Shiikuma also echoed every kind of accusation other lawmakers had previously made, making assertions such as: "it is said that one third of the Japanese new currency of over fifty billion yen is likely in their hands"; "these impudent, recalcitrant Koreans [*futei naru Chōsenjin*] are actually the main source of black-market transactions in Japan, and their influence on current Japanese commerce, life and society is staggering."¹³⁴ The phrase "*futei naru Chōsenjin*" was indeed reminiscent of "*futei senjin*" (impudent, recalcitrant Koreans) in prewar imperial official parlance.

Together with Japanese lawmakers and government officials, SCAP also took an active role in reinforcing such terror-inspiring images of Koreans. The day after Shiikuma's speech, SCAP issued a press release that referred to the Korean "menace" as if it endorsed Shiikuma's racial bashing. The press release said:

¹³² *Japanese Imperial Diet Records*, House of the Representatives, 90th Assembly, Plenary Session, August 17, 1946.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

It is estimated that some five thousand Koreans, landed at night, have been rounded up and returned (to their homeland). *The influx of Koreans is a menace to the health of the Occupation and the Japanese nation as a whole.* It is feared that some of those coming will spread cholera and typhus [...] Some Koreans came to Japan to operate in the black market. Others, who recently were repatriated from Japan, collect household goods and valuables which they had to leave behind them when they were sent back to Korea. [my emphasis]¹³⁵

These sudden public outpourings of racial bashing took place during the first three months after the new conservative administration emerged in late May 1946 – during which the Yoshida administration embarked on the “rectification of the excess” and launched its physical and ideological offensive against the rising “democratic forces.” What this phenomenon reflected was partly the released pressures of mounting frustration among the Japanese politicians – the frustration of being powerless as “defeated nationals” under foreign occupation. One Liberal Party lawmaker, for instance, lamented the state of the Japanese mind and attitude of the so-called “fourth-rate nation” (*yontōkoku*) – as Japan was initially called by MacArthur¹³⁶:

Recently, as Japan allegedly descended to a fourth-rate nation, the mind of Japanese people has become pretty timid. Somehow, the police [...] have also become timid. On the other hand, it looks as if people like Koreans and Taiwanese suddenly became first-rate nationals. I feel it is very regrettable that the police take it [alleged fourth-rate nation status of Japan] too seriously and

¹³⁵ Conde, “The Korean Minority in Japan,” p.43. The Japanese media immediately reported this statement next day. See, for example, *Asahi Shimbun*, August 19, 1946; *Yomiuri Shimbun*, August 19, 1946. However, according to Conde, SCAP later stated on October 11: “Not a single additional case developed from the first case of cholera that appeared in Japan, that of a laboratory technician who contracted the disease when he boarded a quarantined ship at Kagoshima early in April” (p.43). In fact, the Japanese government and SCAP severely exaggerated (or fabricated) the image of Koreans as carriers of cholera and typhus. In his empirical analysis of typhus in U.S./Allied-occupied Japan, historian Christopher Aldous examines the historical background and conditions of the spread of typhus in post-defeat Japan and refutes the racially charged existing narrative of its spread during 1945-1946. See Christopher Aldous, “Typhus in Occupied Japan (1945-1946): An Epidemiological Study,” *Japanese Studies* 26, 3 (December 2006).

¹³⁶ On September 11, 1945, at the very beginning of the occupation, MacArthur said to the U.S. press that “Japan has been reduced to a fourth-rate nation” and would not be able to wage another war within in the “predictable future” (*Chicago Daily Tribune*, September 12, 1945; *New York Times*, September 12, 1945). This MacArthur’s phrase “fourth-rate nation,” translated into Japanese as *yontōkoku* or *yonryūkoku*, immediately spread through popular parlance and became a catchphrase. See *Asahi Shimbun*, September 14, 1945; *Mainichi Shimbun*, September 14, 1945; Takahashi Nobuo, *Shōwa sesō ryūkōgo jiten: kotoba Shōwa shi word & words* (Tokyo: Ōbunsha, 1986), 88-89.

sometimes even cannot police closely the serious lawbreaking actions those Koreans and Taiwanese make.¹³⁷

Indeed, the public outpourings of racial bashing stemmed from Japanese politicians' frustration of not fully being able to exercise sovereignty and control over former colonial subjects who were acting, in the words of Shiikuma, "as if they were victorious nationals." In their speeches, lawmakers usually associated Korean and Taiwanese "problems" with the new "democratic police" that was born out of SCAP's dissolution of the imperial police system. The Japanese conservative elites viewed the new Japanese police force as severely weakened and thus an example of the "excess" of democratic reform pushed forward by SCAP. With one voice, lawmakers repeatedly grumbled that the police was not strong and capable enough to subdue the "unruliness" of Koreans and Taiwanese. One lawmaker complained, "there is actually no control over third-country nationals, that is, Koreans and Taiwanese, or, to put it differently, because the police have no control over them, those guys are inclined to bully the Japanese all the more."¹³⁸ Ruling parties' lawmakers Ōno and Shiikuma both expressed their frustration more articulately by making exactly the same statements, "the democratization of the police is not the same as the disempowerment of the police [*keisatsu no muryokuka*]."¹³⁹ Apparently, implied in Ōno and Shiikuma's voicing of their frustration was their criticism of radical police

¹³⁷ Remarks made by Isozaki Teijo. *Japanese Imperial Diet Records*, House of the Representatives, 90th Assembly, Subcommittee ("Shōwa 20nen hōritsu dai 34gō chū mada shikō shiteinai bubun no haishi ni kansuru hōritsuan iinkai"), July 3, 1946.

¹³⁸ Remarks made by Kōno Kinshō. *Japanese Imperial Diet Records*, House of the Representatives, 90th Assembly, Subcommittee ("Shōkō keizaikaihō o haishi suru hōritsuan hoka ikken iinkai"), August 10, 1946.

¹³⁹ Ōno claimed: "It is good to democratize the police [system] and wipe out every feudalistic dark element of the police by disbanding of the Special Higher Police [*Tokkō keisatsu*] and abolishing the authoritarian policing of political thought and media. But, I believe that the democratization of the police is never the same as the disempowerment of the police (applause)" (*Japanese Imperial Diet Records*, House of the Representatives, 90th Assembly, Plenary Session, July 23, 1946). Similarly, Shiikuma made an assertion: "When we think of the Japanese police system and policing before, I believe everyone will admit that except for the Special Higher Police, ordinary police officers were generally well disciplined and achieved remarkable success especially in preserving public order, although there was some criticism. On the contrary, what about the state of the Japanese police after the end of war? [...] The current police force is too powerless. What on the earth is this powerless state? The democratization of the police is not the same as the disempowerment of the police (applause)" (*Japanese Imperial Diet Records*, House of the Representatives, 90th Assembly, Plenary Session, August 17, 1946).

reform, the reform that “New Dealers” within SCAP were pushing forward. Given the escalating internal conflict within SCAP over the radical police reform and Yoshida administration’s close tie with critics of the “New Dealers,”¹⁴⁰ Ōno and Shiikuma appeared as if they were appealing to increasingly critical voices within SCAP against its radical reforms.

It is important to note that these public practices of racial bashing did not simply developed out of lawmakers’ own frustration and racial prejudice against the now-liberated colonial subjects. The racial bashing also took shape within the frames of certain political intention on the part of the newly formed Yoshida administration. Reuters correspondent David Conde and one major *zainichi* Korean newspaper reported that it was Home Ministry bureaucrats who had prepared and written Shiikuma’s incendiary speech and that the representatives of both ruling and opposition parties (not including the Communist Party) had taken a look at the draft of the speech in advance and expressed their approval.¹⁴¹ Also, government ministers often endorsed and reinforced lawmakers’ racialized view of social problems in responding to questions in the House.¹⁴² These indicated that the upsurge of racial bashing in the National Diet was initiated, to a large degree, as an orchestrated campaign by the Yoshida administration in the throes of crisis management.

¹⁴⁰ For an in-depth analysis of the internal conflict between GS and G-2 Military Intelligence officials over police reform, particularly over the issue of the decentralization of the Japanese police system during 1947, see Aldous, *The Police in Occupation Japan*, chapter 7. According to Aldous, the Japanese government’s plan for police reform announced in July 1946, “Tentative Reform Measures for the Police System” (which in fact underestimated the need for reform), took shape under the direction or guidance of the Public Safety Division (PSD) in the Civil Intelligence Section of G-2. He argues that “[t]he close resemblance that government’s plan for police reorganization bore to the various complementary reports written or guided by PSD during 1946 certainly suggests a cosy working relationship between the two parties” (155).

¹⁴¹ Conde, “The Korean Minority in Japan,” p.43; *Haebang Sinmun*, November 20, 1946.

¹⁴² For instance, in his response to Ōno’s speech of “urgent question on the preservation of domestic security.” Home Minister Ōmura said as follows: “As all you know, among the so-called liberated people remaining in Japan, those who are delinquent have dismissed our laws as the law of the defeated country out of resentment over [Japan’s] past treatment, and also have held a sense of superiority as if they were victorious nationals. They have committed lawless actions in groups, such as by making unreasonable requests, organizing mob violence, perpetrating various crimes, disturbing economic regulation, and committing fare evasion, and thus have frightened society and people” (*Japanese Imperial Diet Records*, House of the Representatives, 90th Assembly, Plenary Session, July 23, 1946).

In other words, what the public outpourings of racial bashing signified was another ideological offensive launched by the Yoshida administration in its attempt to frame and appropriate the meaning of the current social crisis. In official parlance, Koreans and Taiwanese became a hotbed of social and physical “diseases” and the root of the “*yami*” (black-market and underworld) economy that was causing all agony to Japanese society and constituting a “menace” to the Japanese nation. In short, the common grammar underlying those public condemnations of Koreans and Taiwanese was the racialization of social problems. “Race” – along with “national morality” – emerged and was framed as an ideological solution for the crisis of the Japanese capitalist economy, or the “organic crisis” of capitalist regime in Japan. Here, racism as ideology and practice was reformulated and articulated with capitalism at this critical historical conjuncture.¹⁴³

Korean Struggles over the Meaning of the Social Crisis

The upsurge of racial bashing in the Diet stoked up great anger and anxiety among Koreans and sparked off vehement protests. On September 1, 1946, an event held in Tokyo by Korean residents for the commemoration of the Great Kanto Earthquake and the post-quake massacre of Koreans transformed to become an occasion for expressing a collective protest to Shiikuma’s speech. During the event, participants decided to issue a protest and send their delegates to the Speaker of the House to demand an official apology in the name of the House.¹⁴⁴ Similarly, the Korean League publicly problematized Shiikuma’s “insulting remarks” as well as

¹⁴³ For theoretical and empirical attempts to address how racism operates (and historically operated) in a capitalist society at certain critical moments of crisis, see Stuart Hall, et al, *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State, and Law and Order* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1978); Hall, “Race, Articulation and Societies Structured in Dominance”; Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, *The Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racism in 70s Britain* (London: Hutchinson, 1982).

¹⁴⁴ *Chōsenjin Seikatsu Yōgo Inikai Nyūsu*, December 2, 1946.

similar remarks made by other Japanese politicians. One *zainichi* Korean newspaper reported that both the Korean League headquarters and local branches respectively issued strong protests not only to Shiikuma but also to “reactionary government” ministers who also delivered “demagogic” speeches in the Diet.¹⁴⁵ In its protest against Shiikuma’s speech, the Korean League accused Shiikuma for attempting to incite antagonism between Korean and Japanese peoples – an attempt that was reminiscent of “post-quake [Great Kanto Earthquake] demagogic rumors.”¹⁴⁶

At the same time, the Korean League also emphasized friendship and cooperation between Japanese “people” (*minshū*) and Koreans. In its following statement, the Korean League made an earnest appeal to Japanese people:

We do not consider this [Shiikuma’s speech] as the true voice of Japanese people. We are sure that it is no doubt the sign of a malicious plot by remnants of reactionary militarists [*handō gunbatsu*] who have deceived and oppressed Japanese people [*minshū*] and have also exploited and massacred Chinese and Koreans.

We sincerely trust the Japanese people. We would like to relieve the national [*minzokuteki*] antagonism between China, Japan, and Korea, which is already growing into a crisis, by exposing totally the specious plot and destroying the estrangement policy that remnants of militarists are even now continuing.¹⁴⁷

Moreover, the Korean League also launched a protest campaign on the ground. On October 7, the Korean League organized a massive protest rally in front of the Imperial Palace, a rally named “People’s Rally for the Protection of the Rights for Korean Livelihood,” where, it was reported 5600 Koreans gathered and demonstrated against Shiikuma’s speech and Yoshida

¹⁴⁵ *Haebang Sinmun*, September 30, 1946.

¹⁴⁶ In the chaotic aftermath of the Great Kantō Earthquake on September 1, 1923, groundless rumors of riots and organized crimes by Koreans spread all over Japan with the endorsement of the police authorities and triggered the “mass killing” of over 6000 Koreans around the Tokyo metropolitan area, all committed by the mob and (self-organized) vigilante groups as well as the police.

¹⁴⁷ Korean League in Japan, “Statement: Comments on the Speech Made by Shiikuma Saburō” (September 27, 1946), Folder: Chōsenjin kankei [uncataloged documents], Ohara Institute for Social Research, Hosei University, Tokyo, Japan.

administration's racial oppression that had been escalating because of aggressive police activities on the ground.¹⁴⁸ The Korean League soon established the "Committee of the Protection of the Rights for Korean Livelihood" and the committee's local branches all over Japan in order to embark on all-out "struggles" on the ground. On December 20, the Committee and the Korean League organized another much larger protest rally in front of the Imperial Palace, in which thirty to forty thousand Koreans participated and raised their voices against the government's racial oppression.

Korean League activists were determined to take more aggressive action against what they called "reactionary" political forces and organized counter-demonstrations at the sites of the political rallies of Shiikuma's Progressive Party and Ōno's Liberal Party. On November 1, the SCAP intelligence corps briefly reported that "meetings of the Progressive Party in Tokyo, Osaka, Nagoya, and Mito [had] been disrupted by Koreans in the audience who obstruct[ed] the delivery of speeches and create[d] disturbances among the spectators." In Mito City, a rally of the Progressive Party where Party President Shidehara Kijūrō appeared was, according to the intelligence report, "thrown into confusion by the Koreans to the extent that it became necessary to call out both the Japanese police and the American Military Police to restore order."¹⁴⁹

A Korean newspaper published by Korean League activists reported on those on-the-spot Korean struggles more vividly. In Shizuoka City, a group of some forty Korean League activists crowded into a public hall where a Progressive Party's local rally was held, and sat in the audience to be watchdog to the party's address. The group was poised to jump in and intervene in a rally speech. Hearing a speaker say, "Japan was deprived of its colonies such as Korea,

¹⁴⁸ *Haebang Sinmun*, October 10, 1946. On the issue of racial violence in the policing of Koreans, see Chapter 1.

¹⁴⁹ Headquarters, Counter Intelligence Corps, "Korean Activities" (November 1, 1946), Folder: 080: Societies and Associations, 1945, 1946 and 1947, Box 268, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, SCAP, Record Group 331 (Allied Operational and Occupation Headquarters, World War II), National Archives and Record Administration, College Park, MD (microfiche, G-2 00301, GHQ/SCAP Records, National Diet Library, Tokyo, Japan).

Manchuria, and Taiwan,” they immediately raised their voice, “Deprived?”¹⁵⁰ In Miyagi Prefecture, participants in a Korean League local branch’s gathering – reportedly two thousand member participants – decided to form a negotiation committee to make a direct protest against the Progressive Party. The committee delegates were immediately sent to the local political rally of the Progressive Party in Sendai City, and demanded a meeting with the party president. Their request refused, the committee delegates tenaciously demanded to present their protest in the rally in front of all participants, and made certain implications in order to put pressure on the Progressive Party officials: “The mass of two thousand is watching behind us, and if you don’t accept even this kind of request, we don’t know what will happen.” The Progressive Party succumbed. The committee delegates took the stage and successfully presented the “will of two thousand people” against Shiikuma’s speech at the rally of his Progressive Party, where not a single participant was expecting Koreans to take the stage.¹⁵¹

Korean activism was vigorous and successful enough to go toe-to-toe with both of the ruling conservative parties and obtain their official apology for Ōno’s and Shiikuma’s race-baiting speeches. In Gifu Prefecture, local Korean League leaders and the Korean youth crowded into the local rally of the Liberal Party where the lawmaker Ōno appeared. They demanded to meet with Ōno and two other party representatives. The two party representatives soon disappeared, and Ōno also tried in vain to run away. Besieged by a group of determined Koreans, Ōno succumbed and promised to issue an official apology in a local newspaper.¹⁵² Similarly, the headquarters of the Korean League also pushed hard. Korean League representatives visited the headquarters of the Progressive Party and persuaded the party leaders

¹⁵⁰ *Haebang Sinmun*, November 20, 1946.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² *Haebang Sinmun*, November 15, 1946. Later, a representative of the Liberal Party, Kita Reikichi, visited the Korean League headquarters on December 2 and gave an official apology. See *Asahi Shimbun*, December 3, 1946.

to issue a public apology to Koreans – the apology was soon aired nationwide through a radio broadcast.¹⁵³

All of these small victories had deep political significance. For Koreans living in Japan who were deprived of rights to have either representation or their voices in the political arena, these everyday protests constituted an important ideological struggle in the sphere of civil society – demonstrations in front of a symbolical site (the Imperial Palace), protests at the sites of ideological propagandizing (political rallies) by oppositional conservative forces, and demands for an official apology and correction of the misrepresentation of Koreans via media (newspaper and radio broadcast). Moreover, Koreans’ ideological struggle against racial bashing was not only centered on protest against and the correction of Japanese politicians’ misrepresentation of Koreans. It was also a struggle over the meaning and definition of the current social crisis. In other words, it was also a struggle against the racialized view of the nature of social problems.

For instance, in its critique of the *Asahi* editorial titled “Regarding the Dealing with Koreans,” *zainichi* Korean rightist newspaper *Shin Chōsen Shimbun* presented a historicized counter-view against *Asahi*’s attempt to associate the growing black-market economy with “Korean living habits.” While stressing the fact that the majority of black-marketeers were the Japanese “proletariat” (*musan kaikyū*), the newspaper critique also contended as follows:

While it [the *Asahi* editorial] asserts that Korean black-marketeers are disturbing the flow of goods and prices and having a bad influence on government policy, the black market, born as a deformed child out of the capitalist economic system, is in the first place the product of the wartime Japanese economy at a dead end.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵³ *Haebang Sinmun*, November 15, 1946.

¹⁵⁴ *Shin Chōsen Shimbun*, August 30, 1946.

The critique framed the social malaise of the growing black market as the result of “the discordance of the current Japanese economic system or the [food] distribution system” and argued that the black market was not a matter to be solved by strict policing. Thus, in its view, the *Asahi* editorial “ignored the fundamental problem,” and *Asahi* was simply incorrect and guilty of “rather arousing mutual antagonism” between Koreans and Japanese. The critique concluded: “It is no less imprudent to accuse petty Korean problems without paying attention to the *unsolvable fundamental problem*” (my emphasis).¹⁵⁵

The “unsolvable fundamental problem” the *zainichi* Korean rightist newspaper criticized *Asahi* for ignoring did not appear to be “unsolvable” in the eye of *zainichi* Korean Communist and Korean League leader Kim Tuyong. In a *Haebang Sinmun*’s editorial titled “Expose a Plot by the Reactionary Japanese Government,” Kim articulated a “class”-based counter-view against *Asahi*’s and Japanese politicians’ racialization of social problems. Kim accused the surge in race-baiting as a “vicious plot” by the Japanese government who was the guardian of “capitalists and landlords.” In his view, the Japanese government that had previously “only thought about exploiting people [*jinmin*] and puny nationals like us [Koreans]” was now scheming to “split up and cause friction between the peoples of Korea, China and Japan” by distracting Japanese attention from the nature of social problems associated with the “exploitation” of people. Kim did not simply end his critique with the exposure of “a plot by reactionary forces.” He called for a struggle to “establish the people’s republic government” by “smashing those [reactionary] forces.” For Kim, to establish the people’s republic government – the government capable of “restoring production, solving unemployment, and bringing freedom and peace as well as a stable life” – was “the only way to eradicate social crimes.”¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ *Haebang Sinmun*, September 10, 1946.

Kim's call for establishing the "people's republic government" was resonant with voices of radicalized labor and popular movements on the ground. Similarly, voices of Korean protests against the "reactionary Yoshida administration" were also more resonant with increasingly discontented, politicized voices against government social policies among Japanese workers and peasants.¹⁵⁷ However, it did not necessarily mean that the counter-racialized view of social problems that Koreans repeatedly articulated was widely shared among the Japanese populace. Rather, despite Korean struggles against the Yoshida administration's race-baiting offensive, the image of Koreans as a corrosive force within Japanese society spread through popular everyday life via the state ideological apparatus and the police, ultimately framing popular parlance about what the underlying problem was in postwar society.

The "Korean Problem" as Common Sense

There were certain material conditions for the dissemination and reproduction of racial bashing that politicians initially instigated in the Diet, and the radio was the most crucial material tool through which ordinary people could be exposed to Diet discussions at that time. According to a radio yearbook published in 1948, 38.6 percent of Japanese households owned a radio in 1946.¹⁵⁸ The national broadcasting station (*Nippon Hōsō Kyōkai*, or NHK) broadcasted every Diet discussion live on radio, whether in the general assembly or major and minor standing

¹⁵⁷ For instance, on August 24, approximately forty thousand labor and farmer union members in the Kantō area gathered in front of the Imperial Palace and raised their voices against the Yoshida administration. Two newly formed major labor union federations (Socialist-led *Sōdōmei* or Japan General Federation of Labor, and Communist-led *Sanbetsu Kaigi* or Japan Congress of Industrial Unions) and other associations co-organized this rally. The rally issued a protest against government policies such as the increase of income and consumption taxes and the enactment of the Labor Relations Adjustment Law that would impose certain restrictions on labor's rights. The number of participants in the rally amounted to more than one hundred thousand. The rally marked another momentous popular protest after the Food May Day rally of May 19. See *Asahi Shimbun*, August 25, 1946; Rōdōshō, *Shiryō rōdō undōshi*, p.185.

¹⁵⁸ Nihon Hōsō kyōkai, *Rajio nenkan: Shōwa 23nenban* (from April 1946 to March 1948), reprinted in *NHK nenkan 1* (Tokyo: Yumani Shobō, 1999).

committees, during July 1 to August 31 in 1946. This was the period during which the debate on the new Japanese constitution started and also lawmakers' racial bashing took place.

Simultaneously, NHK also ran a political talk show called "From the National Diet Last Week" (*senshū no Kokkai kara*) and broadcasted live debates among political party leaders concerning the latest Diet discussions.¹⁵⁹ Clearly, the radio became the central site of political ideological struggle and played the most significant role in disseminating the words of politicians.¹⁶⁰

The major national presses such as *Asahi*, *Yomiuri*, and *Mainichi*¹⁶¹ also published excerpts of race-baiting speeches made by lawmakers such as Ōno and Shiikuma.¹⁶² Moreover, these national newspapers started to print more news articles on violent and shocking incidents involving Koreans and Taiwanese perpetrators, such as "Two Groups of Japanese-Korean [*nissenjin*] Muggers" (*Asahi Shimbun*, Osaka edition, July 20, 1946), "Counterfeit New Yan-Notes, Smuggled from Korea, Three Million Yan Scattered" (*Mainichi Shimbun*, July 18, 1946), and "Members of the Korean League in Japan Rampaged into a Branch Office" (*Yomiuri Shimbun*, July 21, 1946).¹⁶³ Together with politicians' racial bashing, major national

¹⁵⁹ Since there is no record or transcript of this political talk show, it is hard to know what was discussed on the show and whether or not this live radio talk show also became another site of political racial bashing.

¹⁶⁰ According to the radio year book, one listener living in a small island wrote to NHK regarding the political talk show as follows: "For us who do not have any newspapers and cannot have any opportunities to hear good speeches during the election period, [the political talk show] is the best time to learn about national politics" (*ibid.*, p.37).

¹⁶¹ The morning and evening edition of these three major newspapers were distributed in every prefecture in Japan. According to a SCAP record, by May 1950 these three major newspapers had a combined morning and evening circulation of 12,902,087, nearly half of all daily papers published throughout Japan. SCAP estimated that in the case of four to five readers for each copy, "about 70 percent of Japan's literate population during the Occupation read one or more of the big Three daily" (SCAP, *History of the Nonmilitary Activities of the Occupation of Japan, 1945-1951: Freedom of the Press* [microfilm from Scholarly Resources, Inc, Reel 3] p.123).

¹⁶² For instance, *Asahi* and *Yomiuri* reported a discussion between Ōno and the Home Minister over the lawlessness of "the non-Japanese" (*Asahi Shimbun*, July 25, 1946; *Yomiuri Shimbun*, July 26, 1946). An excerpt of Shiikuma's speech was also introduced in *Asahi* and *Yomiuri* (*Asahi Shimbun*, August 18, 1946; *Yomiuri Shimbun*, August 18, 1946). Amid the upsurge of racial bashing in the National Diet, similar negative reference to Koreans and Taiwanese by other politicians also appeared frequently in newspapers. For example, see *Asahi Shimbun* (Osaka edition), July 20, 1946; *Mainichi Shimbun*, July 20, 1946; *Asahi Shimbun*, August 7, 1946; *Yomiuri Shimbun*, September 3, 1946; *Mainichi Shimbun* (Osaka edition), September 3, 1946; *Mainichi Shimbun* (Osaka edition), September 6, 1946; *Yomiuri Shimbun*, September 6, 1946.

¹⁶³ Other news articles are, for example, in *Asahi Shimbun*, "Shooting between the Police and Taiwanese" (July 21, 1946), "Arrest of a Group of Murder and Robbery Suspects" (August 3, 1946), "Minami Police Station Arrested a

newspapers' inflammatory news articles on Koreans wreaking havoc on Japanese society played a crucial role in inflaming anti-Korean sentiments among the populace.

On the ground, the police often acted as the main official transmitter of the image of Koreans as potential criminals. For instance, in October 1946, the Ueno police station distributed and displayed 720 anti-crime posters on the street walls all over the downtown Ueno area of Tokyo. The poster was illustrated with the symbol of the Korean national flag as its central motif and with the figure of a robber with a knife pointing a Japanese woman.¹⁶⁴ Similarly, in November, the Meguro police station in Tokyo sent round a circular notice in a neighborhood in search of an unidentified mugger, which alerted:

The suspect *seems* to be a Korean. Each household should watch out and make sure to lock up. [my emphasis]¹⁶⁵

In Hokkaidō, the Kushiro City Police suddenly summoned all thirty-six Koreans living in Kushiro City to the police station on November 10 for the “prevention and policing of Korean crimes.” The police put these thirty-six Koreans all together in one room and told them that the police would take a photo and fingerprint of every one of them. After a verbal fight and resistance from the Koreans, the police gave up on taking a photo in the end, but still insisted on taking a fingerprint. A *zainichi* Korean newspaper reported that some “sensible” (*kokoroaru*)

Group of Muggers” (Osaka edition, August 9, 1946), “Prison Escapee Snatched a Gun from a Police Officer” (Osaka edition, August 10, 1946), “Room for Confinement and Torture: The ‘Private Police’ at the Chūkyō Branch of Korean League in Japan” (Osaka edition, August 19, 1946), “Leaders of Muggers and Others Escaped from the Higashi Police Station” (Osaka edition, August 30, 1946), and in *Mainichi Shimbun*, “Group of Fourteen Gangsters Who Threatened the Areas around Imperial Metropolis Was Arrested” (July 26, 1946), “Chinese Beat a Diet Member” (Osaka edition, September 2, 1946).

¹⁶⁴ *Haebang Sinmun*, November 20, 1946; *Chōsenjin Seikatsu Yōgo Inikai Nyūsu*, December 2, 1946. Also, see Changsoo Lee and George De Vos, *Koreans in Japan: Ethnic Conflict and Accommodation* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1981), p.76. According to *Chōsenjin Seikatsu Yōgo Inikai Nyūsu*, when Korean League leaders had a meeting with the chief of Ueno police for protest, the chief explained that the poster was designed by an “elementary school student.” Although the News derided it as an absurd excuse, if the poster had been indeed designed by an “elementary school student,” it would illustrate that how deeply the distorted image of Koreans had filtered into Japanese everyday life.

¹⁶⁵ *Chōsenjin Seikatsu Yōgo Inikai Nyūsu*, December 2, 1946. The Korean League Meguro branch immediately protested that such action was no doubt “the manifestation of oppressive policy to instill ill-feeling toward Koreans” and obtained an apology from the chief of the Meguro police and the leader of the neighborhood association.

Japanese residents were condemning such “discriminatory” police action for stirring up “bad feeling” among the Japanese against Koreans.¹⁶⁶

Although there might have been some “sensible” Japanese regarding official racial discrimination, the majority probably did not fall under this category. In fact, the government and media’s racial bashing was sensational enough to incite Japanese people to make an appeal to MacArthur for the aggressive solution of the “Korean problem,” for a final resort to compulsory repatriation. In letters and petitions sent from ordinary Japanese people to MacArthur concerning the “Korean problem,” many appealed to MacArthur to deport all Koreans immediately, and portrayed Koreans as “criminals,” “vicious people,” “black-marketeers,” “the source of food shortage,” “troublemakers for the Japanese economy and public order,” “the obstacle to the construction of Japan” and so on.¹⁶⁷

More importantly, the image of Koreans as a corrosive force within Japanese society, an image that the lawmakers, government officials, media and police forged and disseminated during mid- and late 1946, immediately appeared in popular parlance as well. For instance, in their daily private conversations, some Japanese echoed and reproduced the exact same rhetoric of racial bashing that politicians made in the National Diet, saying:

Japan’s new yen economy is being thrown into disorder by Koreans. They hold most of the cash in Japan and interfere with the Japanese Government’s attempt to check inflation.

Another said:

¹⁶⁶ *Chōsenjin Seikatsu Yōgo Inkai Nyūsu*, December 16, 1946.

¹⁶⁷ Those letters are in Box no. 231-236, G-2, RG 331, National Archives and Record Administration, College Park, MD. (Henceforth, RG 331, NARA.)

They [Koreans] hold one-third of the new currency and control the majority of middle-class people in large cities in Japan... If left alone, they will seize the entire Japanese economy.¹⁶⁸

Some even echoed the exact same phrase lawmaker Shiikuma uttered in expressing his frustration with Koreans acting, in his words, “as if they were victorious nationals” (*atakamo senshō kokumin no gotoki*). One anonymous letter to MacArthur claimed, “It is really outrageous that those Koreans [*senjin*] challenge us *as if they were victorious nationals* disregarding their previous history.”¹⁶⁹ Another anonymous letter complained, “[...] the fact that Koreans are swaggering around *as if they were victorious nationals* makes me feel that Japan is in an anarchic and lawless state” (my emphasis).¹⁷⁰ Clearly, these letters manifested that the official racial bashing molded the grammar of popular parlance for narrating one’s view of Koreans, coalescing with mounting racial fear and hostility among the Japanese populace, which had been stirred up through their post-defeat everyday encounters with Koreans on the ground.¹⁷¹

Similarly, the Japanese petitions to MacArthur concerning the “Korean problem” also indicated how strongly the media focus on violent incidents involving Koreans perpetrators fueled popular frustration and hostility toward Koreans in Japan. One letter titled “Petition for the Policing of Koreans” stressed that “good Japanese people [were] severely suffering from recent Korean lawlessness,” pointing out that almost every robbery incident that appeared in newspapers was related to Koreans.¹⁷² In another letter, a man in Kyoto City named Yamashita Yoshio, who wrote to MacArthur in the name of “concerned Kyoto residents” (*Kyōto yūshi*

¹⁶⁸ Cited from Japanese private correspondence intercepted by the U.S. military intelligence in Japan. United States Army Forces Pacific, Military Intelligence Section, General Staff, Civil Intelligence Section, *Periodical Summary* 4 (October 15, 1946), p.32, reprinted in Kawashima Takane, ed., *Senryōgun chian chōhō geppō* (Tokyo: Gendaishiryō Shuppan, 2006), vol.1, p.339.

¹⁶⁹ A letter to MacArthur, August 8, 1947, Box 236, G-2, RG 331, NARA.

¹⁷⁰ A letter to MacArthur, (no date) [received by SCAP on August 22, 1947], *ibid.*

¹⁷¹ See my previous chapter.

¹⁷² A letter to MacArthur, (no date) [received by SCAP on July 8, 1947], Box 236, G-2, RG 331, NARA.

ichidō), made an earnest request for the deportation of “every single Korean.” Yamashita, who had lived in Korea for years and had become homeless after repatriating to Japan, emphasized that he knew Koreans “very well” and claimed that Koreans were “traditionally the people [*kokumin*] of theft and falsehood.” He pointed out, “In newspapers, countless criminals and perpetrators of heinous crimes such as violence, robbery and rape and those criminals have always been identified as ‘born-in-Korea’ [*Chōsen umare*].” Yamashita was also determined to alert MacArthur to the “obstacle” to U.S./Allied occupation and went so far as to insist, “[Koreans] are destroying piece by piece all your kindness in your efforts to reconstruct Japan and save Japanese people”; “Otherwise [if Koreans are not deported], the ordinary Japanese will not be able engage in work without worry and will continue to suffer.”¹⁷³

Like Yamashita, those who made petitions to MacArthur asking for the policing and deportation of Koreans usually presented both themselves and the Japanese people in general as helpless victims of the Koreans, in the same manner that some lawmakers presented the issue in the Diet – the Japanese were victims who were suffering from a “non-Japanese” corrosive force within. In almost every petition letter, Koreans became associated with the black-market economy, which had been the center of popular resentment and life-and-death concerns about survival and daily subsistence. Thereby, Koreans appeared as a target of emotionally worded attacks and blame for current Japanese hardships. Those who stigmatized Koreans as black-marketeers simply believed that Koreans were “eating well” and making a quick and fat profit in the mushrooming black-market business by taking advantage of Japanese misery and the chaos of a war-torn country. One anonymous letter to MacArthur complained that Koreans whose life before had been mostly “no better than tramps” (*kojiki dōzen*) were now enjoying “the lifestyle

¹⁷³ A letter to MacArthur, October 12, 1947, *ibid*.

of dressing well and eating well” (*bii bishoku no seikatsu*) through “big black-market business” (*ōyami*).¹⁷⁴

For instance, Maeda Zenjirō, a man living in Toyama Prefecture who had repatriated after Japan’s defeat from China with nothing, sent a letter to MacArthur and asked for measures to be taken against the “Korean problem” (*Chōsenjin mondai*). In his letter, Maeda first revealed that he had been barely able to make a living since his return to Japan. He described his current life as “wretched” (*hisan na mono*) like other returnees, and started to blame Koreans for “throwing the Japanese economy into disorder,” “disturbing law and order,” “committing robbery and pickpocketing in groups,” and “buying up food and other essential goods.” Maeda claimed that amidst the current severe food shortage and mass starvation across the country, “hundreds of thousands of Koreans” were “eating their fill” (*bishoku hōshoku shite*) even though they had “no stable job.” Maeda also did not hesitate to present his racist view more directly, insisting, “Indeed, the Korean race consists mostly of degenerates [*akka shita mono*].” In addition, he even went so far as to warn MacArthur, using menacing rhetoric: “Our seventy million brethren will not just stand by and watch” you do nothing about the “vice of Koreans.”¹⁷⁵

As seen in Maeda’s and others’ letters, the publicly-forged representation of Koreans – the representation strongly associated with social malaise and social disorder – not only intersected with one’s hardship and desperate circumstances in day-to-day living, but also framed one’s misery and hunger as something related to the presence of Korean “racial others.” Given that food was always a major topic in daily popular parlance and, as Dower succinctly describes, “[f]ood-fixed activities and stories mesmerized the public,”¹⁷⁶ the image of Koreans “eating their fill” and “buying up food” no doubt outraged the hungry and starving Japanese

¹⁷⁴ A letter to MacArthur, (no date) [received by SCAP on August 22, 1947], *ibid*.

¹⁷⁵ A letter to MacArthur, August 7, 1947, *ibid*.

¹⁷⁶ Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, p.96.

populace more than anything else. In this sense, what MacArthur articulated in his speech at the U.S. Congress concerning U.S. food aid for occupied Japan turned out to be correct: “Starvation [...] renders a people an easy prey to any ideology, however evil, which bears with it life-sustaining food.”¹⁷⁷ Although MacArthur was probably never concerned about Japanese starvation in relation to racial hostility toward Koreans, starvation apparently rendered Japanese people an easy prey to the ideology of racism.

The ideology and practice of racism, specifically the official racialization of social problems and social disorder at this historical moment, indeed provided an individual with a powerful meaning with which to interpret one’s hardship. One letter sent to MacArthur from a Japanese woman living in Beppu City, Ōita Prefecture demonstrated how the official parlance and racial bashing framed the individual’s understanding of her own “experience.”¹⁷⁸

In her letter, Iwasaki Tsuyako first expressed her gratitude to MacArthur for the new Japanese constitution that had granted women equal rights the same as men.¹⁷⁹ She also appreciated the democratic reform of the police, but at the same time showed her deep concern about the reality that the new democratized police were not being capable of handling rampant petty crimes and growing social disorder. Iwasaki wrote that her house had been burglarized and her sewing machine had been stolen – the sewing machine that had been the indispensable, sole means of livelihood for her family for twenty years. The burglar was not yet identified, and the ineffectual police were only able to show their sympathy for her plight but could not help her more materially and immediately regarding her stolen sewing machine, the one item she needed the most for survival. In the depths of despair, Iwasaki confessed that she was even “feeling the

¹⁷⁷ *New York Times*, February 24, 1947.

¹⁷⁸ On the view of experience as ideological construction, see Joan W. Scott, “The Evidence of Experience,” *Critical Inquiry* 17 (Summer 1991).

¹⁷⁹ A letter to MacArthur, June 19, 1947, Box 236, G-2, RG 331, NARA.

strong temptation of vice” at the mere thought of her family’s subsistence. But, rather than allowing herself to totally succumb to despair, she took her misfortune as something to learn from for the future prevention of similar crimes in society, and made a request and suggestion to MacArthur. Iwasaki suggested that SCAP implement an ordinance that would require owners to report the serial number of their sewing machines to the local police, in the hope that people could recognize stolen property.

Her letter did not end with this offered suggestion. In the next page immediately after she wrote about her idea of a preventive measure against sewing machine theft, she continued:

I cannot afford to buy a ten thousand yen sewing machine. At the thought of livelihood ahead, I am even struck with a sense of resentment [*urameshii*] at the new constitution.

In particular, criminals are Koreans [*hantōjin*]. Koreans in Beppu City are mostly involved in black-marketing [*yami no shōbai*], stealing and mugging, and doing whatever they want. They are living in a boarding house and *spreading vicious thoughts and false rumors* [*aku shisō ya dema o tobashiteiru*].

The Japanese were defeated in the war. We cannot blame anyone even if we face all kinds of wretchedness. Thinking about your numerous acts of kindness with all our heart, we are making determined efforts by encouraging and telling ourselves that Japan has only just begun [*Nihon wa korekara da*], in the hope that we can show you our appreciation as much as possible. [my emphasis]

Iwasaki concluded her six page long letter with her appeal for the “policing of Koreans” along with for the measures to find stolen property.

In her letter, one can see the abrupt shift in the mode of her narration and a leap in her logic. Her telling of her desperate circumstances and her resentment of social disorder suddenly turned into racial accusation. Her tone and language changed. She asserted, “In particular, criminals are Koreans.” Her words, “They are [...] spreading vicious thoughts and false rumors” – especially the phrase “vicious thoughts” (*aku shisō*) – sounded like the official parlance, the words the police often used. She interpreted her hardship via the meaning and representation

politically attached to the social phenomenon of crimes (“criminals are Koreans”) and understood her agonizing “experience” as something associated with the presence of Koreans. In short, one can see in her letter how the discursive power (as the product of power struggles) of racism was operating to frame her “experience.” Her letter demonstrated how the ideological racialization of social problems from the state and “ruling bloc” (dominant social groups) had converged with the everyday “common sense” framework with which she understood her own individual circumstances. The racial specter of the Koreans in Japan had now become a “lived experience” for her.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed how “race” was reformulated in postwar Japanese political discourse and became the central signifier for the so-called “postwar crisis” in U.S./Allied-occupied Japan. As I demonstrated above, what the “postwar crisis” essentially manifested was the “crisis of hegemony” in a Gramscian sense, in terms of both the political and structural conditions. The Japanese old guard, the guardians of the Emperor-centered imperial “national polity” and the conglomerate(*zaitatsu*)-dominated capitalist economy, faced serious challenges from the rising democratic forces spurred by the radical democratization project that SCAP had initiated. Radicalized workers not only took to the streets to challenge the legitimacy of the old guard government but also launched movements for “production control” on the shop floors. Although workers and the Japanese Communist Party used the seizure of control over the production process as a temporary labor dispute tactic, I argue that the workers’ takeover of the “means of production” from capitalists had the revolutionary potential for a possible path to nascent “soviets.” Simultaneously, the ideological leverage wielded by the old guard and

existing emperor system was increasingly weakening on the ground, as people started to practice iconoclasm by mocking, disparaging and criticizing the emperor in public. The event of the so-called “Food May Day” demonstration in May 1946 became a showcase of spreading popular iconoclasm. The event also marked a critical moment of the rise in popular challenges against the legitimacy of the old guard.

This political crisis was closely linked with and facilitated by the deepening crisis of the war-torn economy. Capitalist hegemony was also falling apart at a deeper structural level, a level different from the normative, ideological legitimization of the existing old guard’s domination. On the one hand, the legitimization of capitalist social relations was teetering on a precipitous brink as the workers’ seizure of the capital’s means of production (“production control”) spread throughout shop floors. Outside of these production sites, the majority of “a surplus population of workers” refused to return to the production process, and chose a living based on the growing black-market economy, essentially turning into non-productive “lumpen-like beings.” In other words, the population that had to be ready for exploitation by capital in the circuit of capitalist accumulation was not functioning in that way.

It was in the middle of this “organic crisis” that the racialization of social disorder and fragmentation took shape in the form of the ideological reformulation of the “Korean problem.” The Japanese government and media started to racialize the ongoing social crisis by associating the presence of the Korean minority with food scarcity, skyrocketing inflation and the rampant black-market economy. The government’s and media’s making of the “Korean problem” intersected with the mounting popular fear and hatred of the Korean minority on the ground. The racialized view of social problems provided the Japanese individual with a powerful meaning with which to interpret one’s ongoing hardship and hunger. People started to attribute

their sufferings to the “Korean problem,” and some even believed themselves to be victimized by the liberated Korean minority in Japan. Like the Japanese politicians presenting the Japanese nation victimized by the presence of Koreans (and Taiwanese) swaggering “as if they were victorious nationals,” people also framed their own “self-victimization” vis-à-vis their formerly colonized subjects in Japan.

The first two years of U.S./Allied occupation, which I examined in this chapter, marked a period of the significant political and social transformations in Japan, such as the new constitution, the purge of militarist leaders, the dissolution of *zaibatsu* conglomerates, the establishment of land reform, women’s suffrage and so on. Scholars often hail this early formation of “postwar Japan” as a moment of radical democratization from above, as opposed to the later serious setback in SCAP’s democratic reforms (such as the purge of Communists and the termination of the purge of ultra-rightist), which scholars characterize as the unfortunate product of the beginning of the cold war. Yet, as discussed above, a setback or nascent reactionary turn in SCAP occupation policy (such as MacArthur’s attack on rising grassroots movements and his involvement in the *Yomiuri*’s “red purge”) was already taking shape during the early period of the occupation at the same time with the ongoing democratic reforms of Japanese society. More importantly, the nascent reactionary turn and the ensuing Yoshida administration’s counteroffensive against rising democratic forces developed in tandem with race-baiting, the making of the “Korean problem.” The origins of the setback in democratic revolution in occupied Japan were also deeply intertwined with the reformulation of racism in political discourse.

PART II

The Cold War Comes to U.S./Allied-Occupied Japan, 1948-1950

CHAPTER 3

Liberation Betrayed: Zainichi Korean Search for Self-Determination and the Cold War

Introduction

You will treat Formosan-Chinese and Koreans as liberated peoples in so far as military security permits. They are not included in the term “Japanese” as used in this directive but they have been Japanese subjects and may be treated by you, in case of necessity, as enemy nationals.

—U.S. Army Joint Chiefs of Staff, “Basic Initial Post-Surrender Directive to Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers for the Occupation and Control of Japan” (November 1, 1945)¹

The large Korean group in Japan, which is for the most part unassimilable in Japan and the source of dangerous friction with the Japanese, constitutes a strong element of instability in the Far East and the cause of unfavorable propaganda directed against the United States as the principal occupying power in Japan.

— SCAP Diplomatic Section, “Staff Study concerning Koreans in Japan” (August 16, 1948)²

The solution of the Korean minority problem in Japan does not lie ultimately with the occupation or with the new government in South Korea. It is part of a larger picture, the so-called “cold-war” between the Western democracies and the USSR.

— U.S. Army Forces Pacific, Civil Intelligence Section, “Periodical Summary,” 32 (September 15, 1948)³

On November 3, 1945, Washington sent General Douglas MacArthur the first concrete directive for the U.S. military occupation of Japan, titled “Basic Initial Post-Surrender Directive

¹ “Basic Initial Post-Surrender Directive to Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers for the Occupation and Control of Japan” (November 1, 1945) in Division of Special Records, Foreign Office, Japanese Government, ed., *Documents concerning the Allied Occupation and Control of Japan, Volume I: Basic Documents* (January 1949), pp.129-131. (Henceforth *Documents concerning the Allied Occupation and Control of Japan, Volume I*.)

² “Staff Study concerning Koreans in Japan” (August 16, 1948), Reel 15, *Records of the U.S. Department of State Relating to the Internal Affairs of Japan, 1945-1949* (microfilm from Scholarly Resources Inc).

³ United States Army Forces Pacific, Military Intelligence Section, General Staff, Civil Intelligence Section, “Periodical Summary,” 32 (September 15, 1948), SAP-12, reprinted in Kawashima Takane, *Senryōgun chian chōhō geppō* (Tokyo: Gendaishiryō Shuppan, 2006), vol.9, p.449. (Henceforth, Civil Intelligence Section, “Periodical Summary,” SCCG.)

to Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers for the Occupation and Control of Japan.” In the directive, Washington clarified the basic policies which Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP) would follow, and the policies ranged from political, economic and financial reforms to the treatment of prisoners of war and displaced persons. Among these very concrete directives was specific instructions regarding the treatment of Korean and Taiwanese subjects in Japan. For their treatment, Washington commanded SCAP to “treat Formosan-Chinese and Koreans as *liberated peoples* in so far as military security [would] permit” (my emphasis). At the same time, Washington continued:

[Formosan-Chinese and Koreans] are not included in the term “Japanese” as used in this directive *but they have been Japanese subjects and may be treated by you, in case of necessity, as enemy nationals.* [my emphasis]⁴

This ambiguity in Washington’s definition of formerly colonized subjects in Japan – “liberated people” and “enemy nationals” – came from the split between legal and political concerns that U.S. policy-planners had while drafting occupation policy toward Koreans in Japan. As Japanese and Korean historians have discussed, policy-planners in Washington regarded Koreans in Japan as “Japanese nationals” in a legal sense.⁵ Washington had no intention to challenge or nullify their legal status of Japanese nationality that the Japanese empire had implemented through the “annexation” of Korea. However, U.S. policy-makers also considered that Koreans in Japan should not be treated the same as Japanese “enemy nationals” for political

⁴ “Basic Initial Post-Surrender Directive to Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers for the Occupation and Control of Japan” (November 1, 1945), in *Documents concerning the Allied Occupation and Control of Japan, Volume I*, pp.129-131. The directive also stated: “They may be repatriated, if they so desire, under such regulations as you may establish. However, priority will be given to the repatriation of nationals of the United Nations.”

⁵ Miyazaki Akira, “Senryō shoki ni okeru Beikoku no zainichi Chōsenjin seisaku,” *Shisō* 734 (August 1985); Ōnuma Yasuaki, *Tan’itsu minzoku shakai no shinwa o koete* (Tokyo: Tōshindō, 1986), pp.15-114; Kim T’aegi, *Sengo Nihon Seiji to zainichi Chōsenjin mondai* (Tokyo: Keisō Shobō), pp.23-73.

reasons, given that the Cairo Declaration of 1943 had condemned Japan's "enslavement of the people of Korea" and promised Korean independence in the future.⁶

In fact, Washington's other directive prepared for the occupation of Korea presented Korea as a "liberated country." It stipulated that "[i]n conformity with the provisions of the Cairo Declaration your administration of civil affairs [would] be based upon the treatment of Korea as a *liberated country* to the maximum extent consistent with the security of your forces" (my emphasis).⁷ Washington extended this political concern for the treatment of Korea also to the status of Koreans living in Japan and created a new category of "liberated peoples" in its Basic Initial Post-Surrender Directive to SCAP. As a result, the Korean colonial population in Japan was defined in the same breath as both "liberated people" and "enemy nationals" as the Japanese.

This chapter demonstrates how the ambiguity in Washington's definition of the status of Koreans in Japan developed into the primary locus of political struggles between Koreans, Japanese, and Occupation policy-makers over the meaning and scope of Korean liberation. Koreans in Japan understood liberation as autonomy from Japanese sovereignty and framed the status of "liberated people" as a space for self-determination on Japanese soil. On the other hand, SCAP limited the scope of liberation to the "privilege of repatriation" with the objective of reducing the Korean colonial population in Japan as much as possible. Americans in Korea tried to convince SCAP of the possible significant consequences of treating Koreans in Japan as "liberated people" for their own occupation policy there, as they found that the SCAP's

⁶ "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." For the full text of the Cairo Declaration, see *Documents concerning the Allied Occupation and Control of Japan, Volume I*, p.1.

⁷ "Basic Initial Directive to the Commander in Chief, U.S. Army Forces, Pacific, for the Administration of Civil Affairs in Those Areas of Korea Occupied by U.S. Forces" (SWNCC 176/8), *Foreign Relations of the United States 1945*, vol. VI (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1969), p.1074. (Henceforth, *FRUS*.)

“unsympathetic handling” of Koreans in Japan was feeding “anti-American propaganda” in Korea. Moreover, the Japanese government and police denied the Koreans’ “liberated people” status and strived to retain control over the formerly colonized Korean subjects. Everyday encounters between the Japanese police and Koreans demonstrating their liberation in Japan often ended in violent clashes over the practice of sovereignty on both parts, the claim of authority over Korean bodies.

Through an examination of those tensions, conflicts and discrepancies between the victors, vanquished and liberated over the status of Koreans in Japan, this chapter also demonstrates how *zainichi* Korean struggles for a space of self-determination became a flashpoint for the anxieties and ambitions of the early U.S. cold war project in East Asia. By September 1948, U.S. Occupation policy-makers began not only to understand the presence of Koreans in Japan as “a strong element of instability in the Far East,” but also to associate the “solution of the Korean minority problem in Japan” with the cold war rivalry between “the Western democracies” and “the USSR.” Indeed, the Korean school disputes in April 1948, where SCAP suppressed *zainichi* Korean protests for their rights to Korean education by painting the protests as “red riots,” marked a critical event that spelled out the process of the U.S. cold war politicization of the Korean minority problem in Japan. This chapter analyzes the Korean school disputes of April 1948 as a critical convergence between U.S. global cold war and Japanese “postcolonial” politics in the locus of Korean liberation in Japan. If, as cold war historian Odd Arne Westad has argued, U.S. and Soviet “Cold War interventionisms” in the Third World emerged as a “continuation of European colonial interventions,” I argue that U.S.

quasi-colonial cold war interventionism intersected with unending Japanese colonial interventions in the locus of Korean struggles for a space of self-determination in Japan.⁸

Liberation as Repatriation

Washington's directive did not provide any clarification on what the status of "liberated peoples" would mean to occupation policy, and SCAP quickly defined the meaning of "liberated peoples" on its own terms as the officials faced the immediate challenge of reducing the large Korean population in Japan. In order to give incentives to Koreans to return to their homeland as early as possible, SCAP immediately set up the time-limited "privilege of repatriation" that allowed Koreans to travel and transport a certain amount of their property to Korea at the Japanese government's expense.⁹ The "privilege of repatriation" was also incorporated into the criminal justice system. On February 19, 1946, SCAP announced that "[s]entences imposed by Japanese Criminal Courts on Koreans and other nationals of countries formerly under the domination of Japan" would be subject to "review and further action" by SCAP if the person could "furnish adequate proof of their intention to *return to their homelands*" (my emphasis).¹⁰

Importantly, the liberation of Korea became synonymous with the repatriation of Koreans in the context of the Occupation in Japan. On the ground, the local Occupation authorities started opening the gates of Japanese prisons to release Korean petty criminals who had agreed to return to Korea in exchange for their release. A U.S. military unit in Chiba Prefecture reported that unit officials visited "all prisons in Chiba Prefecture where Koreans were held" and interviewed 46 Korean petty criminals to determine "whether or not they desired to be

⁸ Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp.1-5.

⁹ SCAPIN 746, "Registration of Koreans, Chinese, Ryukyuan and Formosans" (February 17, 1946).

¹⁰ SCAPIN 757, "Review of Sentences Imposed upon Koreans and Certain Other Nationals" (February 19, 1946).

repatriated to Korea.” All of them desired to return and were released for repatriation.¹¹ Other local Occupation authorities released some 85 Koreans being held in prisons for minor offenses during February.¹² A U.S. military unit in the Kyūshū area also reported on similar action and described it as the “practice of indiscriminately repatriating.”¹³ Later, SCAP diplomatic official William J. Sebald wrote to Washington in mid-1948 and admitted that “[t]he status of Koreans as ‘liberated people’ ha[d] in practice of this Headquarter been virtually limited to encouraging and giving every opportunity to Koreans to return to Korea.”¹⁴

Such opportunity of repatriation was also virtually limited to those who accepted returning to Korea with almost no means to survive once they arrived in Korea. SCAP initially allowed each Korean repatriate only to carry no more than 1,000 Yen in currency as well as “clothing and personal possessions” that one could “carry at one time.”¹⁵ While those financial restrictions were supposedly aimed for anti-inflation and economic stability in Korea according to the Economic and Scientific Section of SCAP,¹⁶ the amount of 1,000 Yen could barely sustain

¹¹ 82nd Military Government Company, “Unit Occupational History Report” (March 10, 1946), Folder: MGCO-82-0.2, Box 17469, WWII Operations Report, 1941-48, Record Group 407 (Records of the Adjutant General’s Office, 1917-), National Archives and Record Administration, College Park, MD. (Henceforth, WWII Operations Report, RG 407, NARA.)

¹² “Historical Events; Military Government Section for the Month of February 1946,” reprinted in Ōya Kazuto, ed., *Gunsei (nanbā MG) repōto: 1945nen 8gatsu-1946nen 9gatsu* (Tokyo: Gendai Shiryō Shuppan, 2007), vol.3, p.8. (Henceforth, *MG Reports*.)

¹³ 92nd Military Government Headquarters and Headquarters Company, “Unit Occupational Historical Report” (March 1946), *MG Reports*, vol.9, p.137.

¹⁴ Sebald to the Secretary of State, “Status of Koreans in Japan” (May 6, 1948), 895.012/5-648, Reel 5, *Records of the U.S. Department of State Relating to the Internal Affairs of Korea, 1945-1949* (microfilm from Scholarly Resources Inc).

¹⁵ SCAPIN 142, “Reception Centers in Japan for Processing Repatriates” (October 15, 1945); SCAPIN 822, “Repatriation” (March 16, 1946); SCAP, *History of the Nonmilitary Activities of the Occupation of Japan, 1945-1951: The Treatment of Foreign Nationals* (microfilm from Scholarly Resources Inc, Reel 11); Edward W. Wagner, *The Korean Minority in Japan, 1904-1950* (New York: International Secretariat, Institute of Pacific Relations, 1951), pp.44-46. On March 27, 1946, SCAP modified the limitation and allowed each repatriate to carry no more than 250 pounds of personal possessions. After July 1946, SCAP also decided to allow repatriates to ship an additional 250 pounds of personal possessions and “certain light machinery and handcrafts tools” with SCAP’s approval.

¹⁶ The Economic and Scientific Section (ESS) of SCAP explained that purposes of the financial restrictions were: “a. To limit influx into Korea of large volume of purchasing power in form of paper currency without corresponding flow of goods from Japan into Korea or corrective fiscal and monetary problem in Korea. b. To avoid export from Japan, by Koreans as cloaks, of foreign exchange assets of Japan which otherwise will be available in Japan for

Korean repatriates in starting out their lives in Korea. In February 1946, the U.S. Army XXIV Corps in Korea warned SCAP that due to the financial restrictions, “all persons returning from Japan to their homeland [would] soon become welfare cases” instead of “becoming the hope of Korea.”¹⁷ The financial restrictions also reduced the number of repatriates from Japan and even resulted in adding fuel to growing anti-U.S. sentiments in Korea.¹⁸ The XXIV Corps in Korea told SCAP that the “[e]vidence of unsympathetic handling of Koreans in Japan” had been used as “anti-American propaganda by certain Korean groups” in Korea “with considerable effect.”¹⁹

Apparently, few U.S. officials in Japan understood how their “unsympathetic” attitudes to Koreans in Japan mattered to the U.S. occupation of Korea. In his report on meetings with multiple U.S. officials in Japan, Captain Robert L. Beyer, the Chief of the Displaced Persons Office in United States Army Military Government in Korea, wrote that “[l]ittle or no thought had been given to the relationship between handling Koreans in Japan and public opinion in Korea toward the American occupation.”²⁰ During mid- and late January 1946, Beyer visited the

meeting reparations and restitution claims of Korea and other countries when such claims are established.” ESS to Government Section of SCAP, “Korean Repatriates” (February 28, 1946), Folder: 091.714B Repatriated Koreans, Box 5984, Economic and Scientific Section, SCAP, Record Group 331 (Allied Operational and Occupation Headquarters, World War II), National Archives and Record Administration, College Park, MD (microfiche, ESS(C) 00639, GHQ/SCAP Records, National Diet Library, Tokyo, Japan. Henceforth, *GHQ/SCAP Records*, NDL).

¹⁷ Headquarters of the XXIV Corps to SCAP, “Treatment of Koreans in Japan” (February 10, 1946), Folder: Korean Repatriation from Japan, Box 34, United States Army Forces in Korea, XXIV, Corps, G-2, Historical Section, Record Group 554 (Records of General Headquarters, Far East Command, Supreme Commander Allied Powers, and United Nations Command), National Archives and Record Administration, College Park, MD. (Henceforth, USAFIK, RG 554, NARA.)

¹⁸ The number of Koreans returning to Korea decreased drastically after SCAP started to take the control of repatriation and enforced the financial restrictions. For instance, the number rapidly decreased in 1946, from 214,617 in December 1945 to 66,765 in January 1946, 96,610 in February, 58,903 in March and 32,616 in April. During the time period of what Wagner calls “spontaneous mass exodus,” the three and half a month from August 15 to November 30 in 1945 before SCAP started to take control, almost a half million Koreans returned to Korea. On the number and process of Korean repatriation, see SCAP, *History of the Nonmilitary Activities of the Occupation of Japan, 1945-1951: The Treatment of Foreign Nationals*, Appendix B; Wagner, *The Korean Minority in Japan*, pp.43-50; Kim, *Sengo Nihon seiji to zainichi Chōsenjin mondai*, p.243.

¹⁹ Headquarters of the XXIV Corps to SCAP, “Treatment of Koreans in Japan” (February 10, 1946), Folder: Korean Repatriation from Japan, Box 34, USAFIK, RG 554, NARA.

²⁰ Beyer to the Chief of Foreign Affairs Section, United States Army Military Government in Korea, “Repatriation and Korean Affairs in Japan” (February 5, 1946), *ibid.*

central and local Occupation authorities in Japan and found “[a]lmost everywhere” that U.S. officers in charge of Korean repatriation were “either prejudiced against Koreans” or “indifferent to Korean problems.”²¹ Beyer even had the impression that some officers were treating Koreans as “unnecessary annoyances” who were simply “referred to” local Japanese government agencies. In a critical tone, he continued:

No policy or instructions to lower military echelons was [*sic*] evident suggesting generous treatment to Koreans. The officers and men I talked to in Japan almost without exception overlooked the fact that their policies and actions (or inaction and indifference) on Korean affairs in Japan had a direct influence on the American policies in Korea[.]²²

Beyer added that all U.S. officers in Japan “should be instructed to treat Koreans there as liberated people and in a generous spirit.”²³

Beyer’s report indicated that there was the serious gap between Americans in Korea and Japan in understanding the political significance of the Korean problem in Japan at this early stage of occupations. As the XXIV Corps in Korea told SCAP in February 1946, how Americans were treating Koreans in Japan mattered significantly to the XXIV Corps in “establishing American prestige in Korea.”²⁴ For SCAP, however, the primary concern about Koreans in Japan was, as one SCAP official characterized, to “[g]et them out” of Japan²⁵ – another SCAP official later admitted that Koreans were “not wanted in Japan.”²⁶ SCAP only cared about the status of “liberated people” for the purpose of encouraging Koreans to return to Korea at the earliest possible time through the SCAP-organized mass repatriation program. By

²¹ Beyer to Gordon B. Enders, “Korean Repatriation from Japan” (February 3, 1946), *ibid.*

²² Beyer to the Chief of Foreign Affairs Section, “Repatriation and Korean Affairs in Japan” (February 5, 1946), *ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Headquarters of the XXIV Corps to SCAP, “Treatment of Koreans in Japan” (February 10, 1946), *ibid.*

²⁵ William J. Gane, “Foreign Affairs of South Korea: August 1945 to August 1950” (Ph.D. Thesis, Northwestern University, 1951), p.152. Gane was a former U.S. Army personnel who worked for the Displaced Persons Division of United States Army Military Government in Korea.

²⁶ “Repatriation (Korean)” [August 1947], Folder: Orders and Directives: Japanese Surrender and Status of Non-Japanese, Controlled Korea, Box 45, USAFIK, RG 554, NARA.

late 1946, this gap between the Occupations in Korea and Japan developed into a clear discrepancy over the meaning of the liberation of Korea.

The Nationality of Koreans in Japan and the Meaning of Liberation

In May 1946, SCAP decided to establish a new policy toward Koreans in Japan. When SCAP policy-makers discovered that a large number of Koreans would not choose the “privilege of repatriation” that was to expire in mid-December, the so-called “confusion concerning citizenship status” of Koreans in Japan became a critical issue within SCAP. For the treatment of the Koreans who would remain in Japan, the policy-makers agreed to clarify their status as follows:

Those Koreans who voluntarily continue to reside in Japan and who are not accepting repatriation to Korea under existing procedure for repatriation should presumptively be considered for purposes of treatment, *as retaining their Japanese nationality* pending such time as a duly established Korean Government shall have accorded recognition to the individual concerned as a Korean national. [my emphasis]²⁷

The State Department also approved this new policy on May 31,²⁸ but SCAP did not make it public until the term of “privilege of repatriation” came almost to an end in November. On November 8, a SCAP spokesperson made a public announcement through the press and revealed the new policy as follows:

²⁷ Diplomatic Section, “Treatment of Koreans and Formosans” (May 1, 1946), Folder: South Korea, General, Box 381, G-3, RG 331, NARA (G-3 00044, *GHQ/SCAP Records*, NDL). For details about the background to this new policy, see Kim, *Sengo Nihon to zainichi Chōsenjin mondai*, pp.254-259.

²⁸ Washington to CINCAFPAC, “Incoming Message, W 89799” (May 31, 1946), Box 381, Folder: South Korea, General, Box 381, G-3, RG 331, NARA (G-3 00044, *GHQ/SCAP Records*, NDL).

Korean nationals who refuse to be repatriated when their turn comes will retain their Japanese nationality, pending recognition by a duly established Korean government as Korean nationals.²⁹

The press report came as a complete surprise to U.S. officials in Korea, who had not been notified by SCAP of this new policy in advance. On November 20, Colonel William F. Centner of United States Armed Forces in Korea sent a telegram to SCAP and emphasized that the new status of Koreans in Japan had “not [been] referred to this headquarters for consideration and comment prior to policy announcement.” Centner argued that SCAP should regard Koreans in Japan as “friendly foreign nationals,” as in the case of “Koreans in [the] US,” until they could have a choice between “Korean or Japanese citizenship” at the time of the “establishment of a sovereign Korean State.” In fact, the announcement made by SCAP that Koreans remaining in Japan would retain Japanese nationality stood in a clear contradiction to what Koreans had believed as liberation – Koreans were no longer Japanese imperial subjects. Center stressed that the “[s]uccessful solution to this problem [would be] vital to occupation mission in Korea.” If SCAP were not to revise the announced policy, he warned, “Korean leaders and groups inimical to American authorities in South Korea” would take advantage of the announcement to spread the view among Koreans that “Americans [had] betrayed them.”³⁰

The Occupation in Korea had good reason to worry that Koreans would understand the SCAP’s policy announcement as “American betrayal.” In a sense, Occupation policies in Korea had been nothing but the denial of Korean liberation from the beginning. As historian Bruce Cumings has discussed, during the first three months of occupation Americans in Korea overturned the indigenous “regime of liberation” created by left-leaning political leaders and

²⁹ United States Armed Forces in Korea (USAFIK) to SCAP, “TFYMG 3146” (November 20, 1946), Folder: Korean Repatriation from Japan, Box 34, USAFIK, RG 554, NARA; USAFIK to SCAP, “Incoming Message, TFYMG 3146” (November 23, 1946), *ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

hundreds of self-governing local organizations.³¹ United States Army Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK) denied the legitimacy of the Korean People's Republic and people's committees that had replaced central and local colonial authorities before U.S. troops established full occupation in south Korea. Instead, USAMGIK forged a new order by reviving colonial legal-governmental apparatus. USAMGIK also retained Korean colonial bureaucrats and police officers, despite the Washington's initial directive to purge "[c]riminal and ordinary police agencies" of those who had "collaborated with the Japanese."³² This American-made new order soon proved to be the failure and betrayal of what the majority of Koreans had envisioned for liberation. In the fall of 1946, popular discontent over the first year of the occupation burst into violent uprisings against the remnants of the colonial regime, triggered by an incident in Taegu City where one demonstrator was shot to death by the local Korean police on October 1. During the months from October to December, crowds (mostly peasants) armed with clubs, hoes, rice-cutting hooks and bamboo spears started to assault local police stations and municipal offices across southern provinces and killed more than two hundred police officers, if not Americans.³³

In this tumult of spreading local popular rebellions, the SCAP's new policy announcement of early November brought and added another uproar to the Occupation in Korea. SCAP's new policy was sensational enough to stir up further a sense of betrayal among many Koreans who had already become disillusioned with the promise of liberation under U.S. occupation. On November 15, a Korean leftist newspaper, *Tongnip Sinbo*, published an editorial that launched a blistering criticism on the SCAP's policy. The editorial portrayed the new policy as the "humiliation" of Koreans because it would not only enforce the status of "defeated

³¹ Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War: Liberation and the Emergence of Separate Regimes, 1945-1947* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981).

³² "Basic Initial Directive to the Commander in Chief, U.S. Army Forces, Pacific, for the Administration of Civil Affairs in Those Areas of Korea Occupied by U.S. Forces" (SWNCC 176/8), *FRUS* 1945, vol.VI, p.1076.

³³ On the popular uprisings of 1946 in southern Korea, see Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, pp.351-381.

nationals” on liberated Koreans in Japan but also render them “punishable” by laws of “defeated country Japan.” Such treatment was absolutely “unacceptable,” and *Tongnip Sinbo* also lamented the abject reality of their brethren overseas, those returning from Japan and China to the “liberated” homeland with almost nothing. *Tongnip Sinbo* questioned: “Is the ‘liberation’ that the Allied Powers declared several times and promised the world supposed to be this kind of ‘liberation’ at all?”³⁴

Another newspaper, *Chosŏn Ilbo*, also criticized the SCAP’s new policy as a “contradiction to the initial purpose of liberation.” In its editorial on November 15, *Chosŏn Ilbo* even went so far as to characterize it as “one of the most serious instances” that ignored “pride and national sentiments” of Koreans.³⁵ Similarly, politicians from both leftist and rightist camps raised their voices about the American betrayal of liberation by lashing the SCAP’s policy with one, collective voice. The rightist Headquarters for National Unification condemned it as a “contradiction to the initial purpose of Korean liberation promised by the Allied Powers,”³⁶ and the leftist Democratic National Front accused it as the “virtual denial of [Korean] national independence promised by international society.”³⁷ On November 19, the *zainichi* Korean League in Seoul, the Seoul branch of the Korean League in Japan, invited some forty representatives from both leftist and rightist political camps to one place to coordinate protests. The representatives agreed to organize a national campaign against the SCAP’s new policy, characterizing it as the “extension of Japanese domination of Korea.”³⁸

Faced with fierce opposition emerging from Koreans in both Korea and Japan, SCAP soon tried to appease their exasperated sentiments by denying the policy announcement to the

³⁴ *Tongnip Sinbo*, November 15, 1945.

³⁵ *Chosŏn Ilbo*, November 15, 1945.

³⁶ *Chayu Sinmun*, November 17, 1946; *Chosŏn Ilbo*, November 17, 1945.

³⁷ *Chayu Sinmun*, November 19, 1946.

³⁸ *Chosŏn Ilbo*, November 21, 1946.

public. On November 20, SCAP released a statement and emphasized that SCAP had treated Koreans in Japan as “liberated people” from the beginning of the occupation and would have “no intention of interfering in any way with the fundamental right of any person of any nationality.” Now, SCAP avoided providing any clarification on the legal status of Koreans remaining in Japan, and the statement only specified that Koreans “refusing repatriation and electing to remain” in Japan would be subject to “all appropriate local laws and regulations.”³⁹ However, this announcement did not mean that SCAP had abandoned its previous decision to treat Koreans remaining in Japan as Japanese nationals once the privilege of repatriation would expire on December 15, 1946. SCAP’s internal memorandum dated December 13 reconfirmed the previous policy approved within SCAP in May.⁴⁰ Moreover, when the Occupation in Korea later planned to issue a press release in mid-1947 in order to clarify the legal status of Koreans in Japan as “nationals of Korea,” as nationals of a “liberated country,” the Legal Section of SCAP denied such status. The Legal Section objected that “legally” Korea would still remain “a part of Japan” until a future international settlement and thus that: “Koreans are Japanese nationals until a peace treaty is signed.”⁴¹

In fact, what was at stake in these controversies over the treatment of Koreans in Japan was not simply their nationality status but, more fundamentally, the meaning and scope of the liberation of Korea itself. Their nationality status related directly to how to define Japan’s defeat

³⁹ “Chōsenjin no chii oyobi toriatsukai ni kansuru sōshireibu shōgaikyoku hatsu (Statement Issued by a Spokesman for SCAP concerning Status and Treatment of Koreans in Japan) (November 20, 1946), in Gaimushō Seimukyoku Tokubetsu Shiryōka, *Zainichi Chōsenjin kanri jūyō bunshoshū, 1945-1950* (Tokyo: Kohokusha, 1978), pp.16-17.

⁴⁰ General Headquarters, United States Army Forces, Pacific, “Status of Koreans in Japan” (December 13, 1946), Folder: South Korea, General, Box 381, G-3, RG 331, NARA (G-3 00044, *GHQ/SCAP Records*, NDL).

⁴¹ The Legal Section took such legal stance for pragmatic reasons. According to a legal opinion presented by the Department of Justice I USAMGIK, the Legal Section was apparently concerned that: “From the standpoint of international law, Japan can be required to pay Korean occupation costs only as long as Korea remains, legally, a part of Japan.” United States Army Forces in Korea, *Selected Legal Opinions of the Department of Justice, United States Army Military Government in Korea*, vol.2, pp.376-377, reprinted in Hallim Taehakkyo Asia Munhwa Yōn’guso, *Mi kunjōnggi chōngbo charyojip: Pōmmuguk, Sabōppu ūi pōp haesōk pogosō, 1946.3 – 1948.8* (Seoul: Hallim Taehakkyo Asia Munhwa Yōn’guso, 1997), pp.404-405.

and Korea's liberation, and these controversies revealed conflicting visions of liberation between not only U.S. Occupations in Japan and Korea but also between Americans and Korean political leaders. While the Legal Section of SCAP – and the Japanese government as well – did not admit that Korean liberation was a “legally” settled fact, USAMGIK understood that the Japanese defeat and acceptance of terms of the Potsdam Declaration had “terminated the sovereign rights of Japan over certain parts of her empire, including Korea.” A legal opinion presented by the Department of Justice in USAMGIK refuted the stance of the Legal Section and also claimed that “Koreans [had] ceased to owe allegiance to the Japanese Crown” as a result of the Japanese acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration.⁴² In a similar vein, Korean political leaders had no doubt that Koreans had become “legally” – let alone virtually – free from the Japanese nationality into which Japan had “forcibly incorporated Koreans for the past thirty-six years.”⁴³

For Korean political leaders, moreover, the meaning and scope of liberation extended beyond the legal and actual termination of the Japanese sovereignty or independence from Japan which the Allied Powers had promised in the two declarations of Cairo and Potsdam. In its critique of the SCAP's new policy of treating Koreans in Japan as Japanese nationals, the *Tongnip No-Nong Dang*, the Labor-Farmer Party for Independence, stressed that Korea had “restored its initial independence” as a result of liberation from Japanese “invasion.” Liberation was not simply “separation” from Japan but the “restoration” of sovereignty deprived by the Japanese “annexation” of Korea in the early twentieth century. The *Tongnip No-Nong Dang* understood that the annexation treaty of 1910, the “forced theft agreement” (*kangdo munso*) between Korea and Japan, became “null and void” (*muhyo*) on its own after liberation. Thus,

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ *Chayu Sinmun*, November 17, 1946.

SCAP's recognition of the Japanese nationality of Koreans in Japan meant nothing but the "prolongation of [Japanese] theft."⁴⁴

In other words, the controversies over the legal status of Koreans in Japan also brought to the surface long-enduring historical discrepancies over the legitimacy of the annexation treaty of 1910 endorsed by the United States and the imperialist forces in the early twentieth century. The legal status of Koreans in Japan represented a litmus test for the meaning and scope of the "liberation" that Americans and the Allied Powers had promised colonized Koreans in the Cairo Declaration – did the Allied denouncement of Japan's "enslavement of the people of Korea" also extend to the judgment on and negation of the legitimacy of the annexation treaty, the original sin of Japanese colonial rule itself? The problem of the legal status of Koreans in Japan became a controversial site where fundamental discrepancies over how to approach the original sin of Japanese colonial rule came into view.

Korean Struggles over the Scope of Liberation in Japan

The SCAP's initial policy of treating Koreans in Japan as a "liberated people" buoyed up the Koreans, who were reveling in the joy and excitement of Japan's defeat and Korea's liberation. Although SCAP had no intention to extend the status of "liberated people" beyond the "privilege of repatriation," such treatment prompted open demonstrations of pride by the Koreans who had been treated as "inferior race" during their lifetime by the Japanese majority. On March 23, 1946, a U.S. occupation military unit in Kyoto Prefecture reported that Koreans were "under the impression that they possessed special privileges" and were having "an

⁴⁴ *Tong'a Ilbo*, November 16, 1946; *Sŏul Sinmun*, November 16, 1946.

exaggerated sense of importance.”⁴⁵ Koreans sometimes understood their new status not only as political emancipation but also as the reversal of the hierarchical racial status. When scolded from a Japanese police officer, one Korean man bitterly spoke back to him, saying: “You fourth-rate national! [*yontō kokumin!*] We are first-rate nationals, and we won’t let you domineer us!”⁴⁶ Later, SCAP told Washington in mid-1948 that “the Allied statement that Koreans were to be treated as ‘liberated people’ [had been] interpreted by Koreans in Japan to mean their complete emancipation from Japanese control.”⁴⁷

Indeed, Koreans often demonstrated liberation through their open defiance of the authority of the Japanese police. For them, the police were the most immediately recognizable (and notorious) agents of Japan’s leviathan-like state and state penetration into everyday life. Particularly during the war, the Japanese government established the nation-wide governmental apparatus aimed at the wartime mobilization and surveillance of Koreans in Japan, and put every single of them under the tight control of local police-supervised organs called “*Kyōwakai*” (Association for Harmonization).⁴⁸ After Japan’s surrender, it was natural that many Koreans started to claim and experience their status as liberated people in their relation with the authority of the Japanese police.

For instance, a U.S. military unit stationed in the Hakodate City of Hokkaidō reported on January 24, 1946 that there had been “numerous incidents of refusal of Koreans and Chinese to submit to Japanese police authorities” since Japan’s defeat.⁴⁹ A U.S. military unit in Osaka

⁴⁵ 90th Military Government Headquarters and Headquarters Company, “Unit Occupational History Report” (March 23, 1946), Folder: MGCO-90-0.2, Box 17470, WWII Operations Report, RG 407, NARA.

⁴⁶ Kim Muhui, “Nihon no tomo e,” *Minshu Chōsen* 2 (May 1946), p.24.

⁴⁷ Sebald to the Secretary of State, “Status of Koreans in Japan” (May 6, 1948), 895.012/5-648, Reel 5, *Records of the U.S. Department of State Relating to the Internal Affairs of Korea, 1945-1949*.

⁴⁸ Higuchi Yūichi, *Kyōwakai: senjika Chōsenjin tōsei soshiki no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Shakai Hyōronsha, 1986); Michael Weiner, *Race and Migration in Imperial Japan* (New York: Routledge, 1994).

⁴⁹ 74th Military Government Headquarters, “The Unit History of the 74th Mil Govt Co. for the Month of January” (February 18, 1946), Folder: MGCO-74-0.2, Box 17468, WWII Operations Report, RG 407, NARA.

Prefecture also made a similar report on March 7, stating that the “[c]ontrol of Korean, Formosan and Chinese nationals living in the Osaka area posed a major problem in law enforcement.”⁵⁰ Sometimes, liberation was performed violently against the Japanese police. The U.S. military unit in Hakodate City recorded the incident in which “such a show of defiance [had] culminated in a riot and bloodshed.” On January 24, 1946, according to a unit report, the local Japanese police officers caught three Koreans on suspicion of black-market activities and interrogated them in a police station. Shortly thereafter, some 50 or 60 Koreans stormed into the police station and “destroyed the interior and $\frac{3}{4}$ of the windows,” and also attacked another police station nearby. Soon, Japanese residents organized themselves and started “beating up every Korean in sight.” The report estimated that some four thousand Japanese had “either actively or passively engaged in the mob action.”⁵¹ More minor clashes between Korean and Japanese residents were also becoming a pervasive everyday phenomenon.

Korean leaders demonstrated liberation differently through political empowerment. After Japan’s surrender, local Koreans leaders immediately started to organize mutual assistance groups in order to protect Korean residents from possible Japanese reprisal and help those who wished to return to the liberated homeland. In some cases, Korean leaders took advantage of local Korean residential organs formed through imperial wartime mobilization.⁵² In mid-October 1945, various Korean mutual assistance groups that had mushroomed across Japan united into a single organization named “Korean League in Japan.” The Korean League established its local branches in almost all prefectures and had a total of forty-seven branches across Japan by

⁵⁰ [107th Military Government Headquarters and Headquaters Company], “Unit Occupational History Report” (March 7, 1946), Folder: MGCO-107-0.2, Box 17471, WWII Operations Report, RG 407, NARA.

⁵¹ 74th Military Government Headquarters, “The Unit History of the 74th Mil Govt Co. for the Month of January” (February 18, 1946), Folder: MGCO-74-0.2, Box 17468, WWII Operations Report, RG 407, NARA.

⁵² See Ch’oe Yŏngho, *Chaeil Han ’gugin kwa choguk kwangbok: haebang chikhu ūi ponguk kwihwan kwa minjok tanch’e hwaltong*, (Seoul: Kŭlmoin, 1995).

January 1946.⁵³ Until September 1949, when the Japanese government and SCAP ordered its dissolution, the Korean League was the predominant Korean organization that represented the Korean majority in Japan.

The Korean League launched multiple activities demonstrating what liberation looked like for Koreans in Japan. Shortly after its inauguration, the central leadership of the Korean League called for the investigation of “pro-Japanese national traitors” among Korean leaders in Japan and made public the names of thirty-six individuals, making them the target of accusations and calls for a purge by Koreans.⁵⁴ The Korean League also launched a campaign to demand compensation from Japanese industries for the exploitation of Korean conscripted workers and succeeded in obtaining the total of 340 settlements across Japan.⁵⁵ Moreover, the Korean League dispatched delegates to the first prime national representative meeting in Korea, the General Convention of People’s Committees held in Seoul from November 20 to November 22. The delegates met with national political leaders and made a request for the recognition of the Korean League as the official agency representing the Korean community in Japan, as the overseas agency of the future Korean government.⁵⁶ Indeed, its local branch in Yamagata Prefecture even claimed the Korean League in Japan as the representative of the “Korean Provisional Government” (*Chōsen Rinji Seifu*) in Korea, even before such a recognized government existed.⁵⁷

Among its initial activities, the Korean League exercised its most crucial influence on the task for the repatriation of Koreans. Until SCAP banned its involvement in May 1946, the

⁵³ Pak Kyōngsik, *Kaihō go zainichi Chōsenjin undōshi* (Tokyo: San’ichi Shobō, 1989), p.61.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.60-61.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.66-70.

⁵⁶ The Korean League in Japan, “Report” (November 1945), reprinted in Pak Kyōngsik, *Chōsen mondai shiryō sōsho*, vol.9 (Tokyo: Ajia Mondai Kenkūjo, 1983), pp.7-16.

⁵⁷ *Yamagata Shimbun*, January 28, 1946.

Korean League took the lead in the repatriation program on the ground, working to arrange domestic transportation and provide food and accommodations for those waiting for repatriation ships at local ports. In fact, the Japanese government heavily relied on the Korean League in order to meet the daily quota of Korean repatriates that SCAP had stipulated. The dilemma the Japanese government was facing was that Koreans did “not believe the instructions the Japanese Government [had] issued,” as a Japanese official lamented, but they were “apt to believe rumors issues by the League of Koreans.” The government even “most earnestly asked for the League’s closer collaboration,”⁵⁸ and such reliance on the Korean League further boosted its prestige among Koreans in Japan. SCAP internal memorandum stated on June 14, 1946 that the Korean League had “enjoyed some degree of semi-legal status in the eyes of the Koreans in Japan due to its utilization by the Japanese in meeting repatriation quotas.”⁵⁹

What also made the Korean League appear to be “enjoying some degree of semi-legal status” was its vigilante activities. In the aftermath of Japan’s defeat, local Korean leaders also organized vigilante groups out of fear of the possible Japanese victimization of Korean residents that had once happened during the post-quake mayhem of 1923.⁶⁰ As *zainichi* Korean historian Chōng Yōnghwan has analyzed, self-formed local Korean vigilante groups were united and reorganized as the “Peace-Preservation Corps” of the Korean League under the slogan of “protecting the life and property of brethren in Japan.” The Peace-Preservation Corps also played an active role in helping local Korean residents return to Korea and preventing Korean crimes and “delinquent behaviors” (*furyō kōi*). Interestingly, the tasks of the Peace-Preservation

⁵⁸ General Liaison Office, Imperial Japanese Government to SCAP, “Repatriation of Koreans” (May 30, 1946), Folder: South Korea, General, Box 381, G-3, RG 331, NARA (G-3 00046, *GHQ/SCAP Records*, NDL).

⁵⁹ Eighth Army to SCAP, [no title] (June 14, 1946), *ibid*.

⁶⁰ On the fear of Japanese retaliation and racial hostility, see my chapter 1.

Corps included the training of the Korean youth in Japan to join the future national army in Korea.⁶¹

As the Occupation authorities understood them as the “police squad,” the Korean Peace-Preservation Corps exercised de facto police power in Korean communities.⁶² On June 22, 1946, a U.S. military unit in Kyoto Prefecture reported that a “Korean ‘vigilante’ committee” in the Nishi-Maizuru district was in charge of “maintaining order among Koreans in the district” and its cooperation with the Japanese police had been “satisfactory.”⁶³ In Ibaraki Prefecture, the Peace-Preservation Corps “arrested” the members of an opposition Korean rightist association for receiving illicit rations by fabricating the Korean League’s certification. The members of the Peace-Preservation Corps found that the local branch of the rightist association hoarded a considerable amount of unlawfully obtained food and goods, including Japanese swords, and reported it to the local Occupation authorities.⁶⁴ Similar policing activities were also reported in Hiroshima Prefecture. According to a U.S. military intelligence report dated on September 15, 1946, the Korean League had “succeeded in assuming considerable amount of police power” among Korean residents in the Hiroshima area, and Korean youth groups and “police groups” were “attempting to maintain peace and order” among Koreans. Some offices of the Korean League even “took the responsibility of punishing” Korean residents who were “adjudged by the League to be guilty of crimes or misdemeanors.” Four cases of “imprisonment” in offices of the

⁶¹ Chōng Yōnghwan, “‘Kaihō’ chokugo zainichi Chōsenjin jieiei soshiki ni kansuru ichi kōsatsu: Chōren jichitai o chūshin ni.” *Chōsenshi kenkyūkai ronbunshū* 44 (October 2006).

⁶² [109th Military Government Headquarters and Headquarters Company], “Unit Occupational History Report” (March 27, 1946), Folder: MGCO-109-0.2, Box 17471, WWII Operations Report, RG 407, NARA.

⁶³ 103 Military Government Company, “Military Government Activities Report, 14-21 June 1946” (June 22, 1946), *MG Reports*, vol.7, p.251.

⁶⁴ *Minjung Sinmun*, July 1, 1946. On this incident, see Chōng, “‘Kaihō’ chokugo zainichi Chōsenjin jieiei soshiki ni kansuru ichi kōsatsu.”

Korean League and five cases of “beatings administered by the members of the League” were reported to the local Occupation authorities.⁶⁵

The Peace-Preservation Corps even enforced its power in the policing of Japanese assaults on Koreans and pervasive skirmishes between both peoples. For instance, when two Korean men were assaulted on the streets and injured seriously by a group of seven Japanese men armed with swords and clubs, the Korean Peace-Preservation Corps immediately found and “arrested” the group in cooperation with the Japanese police.⁶⁶ In the case of a violent clash between Korean and Japanese residents in Ueno City of Mie Prefecture, the actions taken by the Peace-Preservation Corps were more aggressive and problematic. According to a Japanese local newspaper, the members of the Peace-Preservation Corps arrested a group of seven Japanese men without the presence of the Japanese police and “interrogated” them in the office of the local Korean League by using “violence.” The Japanese police demanded to handle the case, but the members of the Peace-Preservation Corps refused to release the group of Japanese offenders. The Japanese police took forceful measures and instead arrested the fourteen Koreans in charge of the arrest and confinement of the Japanese offenders.⁶⁷

In fact, the activities of the Peace-Preservation Corps were posing a significant challenge to the weakened Japanese police. The Occupation’s democratic reform and thorough disarmament of the Japanese repressive state dismantled the police regimentation of social life and diminished police power drastically. A number of Japanese police officers left their job in the wake of defeat, and the loss reached 24.8 percent in 1946, which reflected, in the view of SCAP, the “low morale attributed generally to economic difficulties and probable ‘loss of face’

⁶⁵ Civil Intelligence Section, “Periodical Summary” 3 (October 1, 1946), p.67, SCCG, vol.1, p.259.

⁶⁶ *Minjung Sinmun*, July 25, 1946.

⁶⁷ *Ise Shimbun*, January 5, 1946; January 17, 1946.

suffered as a result of the defeat and purges.”⁶⁸ Faced with the bold defiance of now-liberated peoples in Japan, police officers often showed a “reluctance to arrest Koreans and Chinese offenders” because of the “fear of stirring up those minority groups.”⁶⁹ Moreover, the two SCAP directives issued on the same day of February 19, 1946 resulted in confusing the Japanese police about their authority over the Korean population in Japan. The directive of SCAPIN 756 titled “Exercise of Criminal Jurisdiction” declared that the Japanese government would “have no authority to arrest United Nations Nationals” except for special circumstances, and another directive declared the “review of sentences imposed upon Koreans and certain other nationals.”⁷⁰ These directives created discouragement and confusion among Japanese police officers in their dealings with Koreans who had been claiming that they were “liberated people” and even sometimes as “United Nations nationals.”

Amidst the confusion and the disgrace of defeat, the Japanese government was struggling to retain its full jurisdiction and control over the Korean population in Japan. During late January and early February 1946, Japanese policy-makers discussed problems concerning Koreans in Japan and agreed on the need to enforce aggressive actions such as the “deportation of lawless elements” and the “disbandment of lawless organizations.”⁷¹ On February 23, the Central Liaison Office of the Japanese government sent SCAP a memorandum titled “Prevention of Disputes between Koreans and Japanese, and Control of Unlawful Acts by Koreans.” In the memorandum, the Japanese government made a request for the SCAP’s authorization to launch

⁶⁸ SCAP, *History of the Nonmilitary Activities of the Occupation of Japan, 55: Police and Public Safety* (microfilm from Scholarly Resources Inc, Reel 10), p.7.

⁶⁹ 103 Military Government Company, “Military Government Activities Report, 22-29 June, 1946” (June 29, 1946), *MG Reports*, vol.7, p.260.

⁷⁰ SCAPIN756, “Exercise of Criminal Jurisdiction” (February 19, 1946); SCAPIN 757, “Review of Sentences Imposed upon Koreans and Certain Other Nationals” (February 19, 1946).

⁷¹ Kim, *Sengo Nihon seiji to zainichi Chōsenjin mondai*, pp.221-222.

the countermeasures that the Japanese government had planned, to “deport Koreans committing illegal acts.”⁷² On March 13, the Central Liaison Office sent another memorandum emphasizing:

Recently their [Korean] unlawful acts by force in organized groups have occurred successively, causing a great uneasiness among the Japanese people, and the antagonism and frictions between the Koreans and the Japanese may likely to lead to the occurrence of an untoward event.⁷³

The Japanese government “did not stop at reporting in detail upon every misdemeanor actually perpetrated by Koreans,”⁷⁴ and such reports – often made by the local police with exaggeration – were successful enough to convince SCAP of the necessity of the Japanese subjugation of now-liberated Koreans. On March 26, a SCAP spokesperson contended in a press interview that no Korean organizations were authorized to conduct police activities or arrest Japanese citizens. The spokesperson warned that those who committed such activities would be “punished by the Japanese government.”⁷⁵ On April 24, SCAP also ordered the Korean League to disband its Peace-Preservation Corps,⁷⁶ and the Korean League decided to follow the order.⁷⁷ Moreover, SCAP officially endorsed Japanese jurisdiction over Koreans in Japan. On April 30, SCAP announced that the Japanese government would have “full authority to control Koreans [committing] acts of violence.”⁷⁸

The SCAP’s authorization of Japanese jurisdiction over Koreans also spelled out a further setback for the Korean practice of liberation in Japan. Inside SCAP, policy-makers began to blame the Korean League for the decrease in the number of Koreans choosing to return to Korea.

⁷² C.L.O. no.874, “Prevention of Disputes between Koreans and Japanese, and Control of Unlawful Acts by Koreans” (February 23, 1946); C.L.O. no.955, “Request for Authorization to Deport Koreans Illegally Entering Japan” (March 1, 1946), reprinted in Takemae Eiji, ed., *GHQ e no Nihon seifu taiō bunsho sōshūsei* (Tokyo: Emuti Shuppan, 1994), vol.3, p.254, vol.4, p.345. (Henceforth, *CLO Documents*.)

⁷³ C.L.O. no.1186, “Misconducts Committed by Koreans” (March 13, 1946), *CLO Documents*, vol.4, p.605.

⁷⁴ Wagner, *The Korean Minority in Japan*, p.62.

⁷⁵ *Yomiuri Hōchi*, March 27, 1946.

⁷⁶ Tsuboi Toyokichi (Tsuboe Senji), *Zainichi Chōsenjin undō no gaikyō* (Tokyo: Hōmu kenshūjo, 1959), p.169.

⁷⁷ Chōng, “‘Kaihō’ chokugo zainichi Chōsenjin jiei soshiki ni kansuru ichi kōsatsu,” p.173.

⁷⁸ SCAPIN 1111-A, “Misconducts Committed by Koreans” (April 30, 1946).

On May 28, the local Occupation authorities in Osaka reported to the Headquarters of the Eighth Army concerning the Korean League's "interference" in repatriation. The report said that the Korean League "played a decisive role in the bogging down of the repatriation of Koreans from Osaka-fu."⁷⁹ According to the Occupation officials in Osaka, members of the Korean League posted a notice on the wall of a post office in Osaka in order to convey their message to local Korean residents concerning the ongoing repatriation program. The Occupation in Osaka problematized the following message in the notice as "interference," which simply stressed that repatriation was not compulsory:

Fellow Korean Nationals – we are free to return to our homeland at any time....
It appears that Korean residing in Japan tend of late to be compelled in various districts to be repatriated. However, so far as the repatriation problem of the Koreans in concerned, the Allied Headquarters has no right to compel or force us to be repatriated. The above statements mean that Koreans are able to repatriate to Korea at their own accord. [original English from the document] ⁸⁰

The Occupation authorities in Osaka arrested the total of twenty-six Koreans for an act "prejudicial to the interests of the Occupation Forces" and sent them to an Occupation's provost court.⁸¹ The Occupation officials in Osaka even suggested that SCAP authorize the Japanese local governments to "deport to Korea, not repatriate, all persons who [had] been and [were] officers of the Chosen Ren Mei [the Korean League in Japan]."⁸² The Eighth Army took this "interference" seriously and recommended to SCAP that the Japanese government "be directed

⁷⁹ 109 Military Government Headquarter to Eighth Army, "Interference of Korean Repatriation by Chosen Ren Mei" (May 28, 1946), Folder: South Korea, General, Box 381, G-3, RG 331, NARA (G-3 00046, *GHQ/SCAP Records*, NDL).

⁸⁰ Military Intelligence Section, United States Army Forces, Pacific, "Special Reports" (August 27, 1946), *ibid.*

⁸¹ 109th Military Government Company, "Unit Occupational History Report" (June 21, 1946), Folder: MGCO-109-0.2, Box 17471, WWII Operations Report, RG 407, NARA.

⁸² 109 Military Government Headquarter to Eighth Army, "Interference of Korean Repatriation by Chosen Ren Mei" (May 28, 1946), Folder: South Korea, General, Box 381, G-3, RG 331, NARA (G-3 00046, *GHQ/SCAP Records*, NDL).

to cease using the Korean Association in any manner in the repatriation program.”⁸³ On June 14, SCAP instructed the Japanese government to take full responsibility of planning and implementing the repatriation of Koreans and warned that such responsibility would “not be delegated wholly or in part to any of the various Korean associations or societies.”⁸⁴

The series of those actions SCAP had taken in early 1946 – the disbandment of the Korean Peace-Preservation Corps, the authorization of Japanese jurisdiction over the liberated people of Koreans, and the exclusion of the Korean League from the repatriation program – signaled what the Korean legal status as Japanese national would mean in SCAP policy. As I discussed in the previous section, SCAP policy-makers reached an agreement by May 1946 that Koreans remaining in Japan would be considered “for purpose of treatment ... as retaining their Japanese nationality.” This new policy emerged as the crystallization of the series of actions that SCAP had been taking against the Korean population’s claim of autonomy and different treatment as “liberated people.” In other words, the reassertion of Koreans’ “Japanese nationality” was not only the “betrayal” of what Korean leaders in Korea had understood as “liberation” promised by the Allied Powers – the termination of Japanese sovereignty over Koreans and the “restoration” of deprived Korean sovereignty. The reassertion of Japanese nationality also reflected the actual negation of what Koreans in Japan had demonstrated as liberation.

If liberation was supposed to mean the “restoration” of deprived sovereignty in Korea, Koreans leaders in Japan struggled to realize it on Japanese soil on their own terms, through the creation of a space for autonomy and self-determination. Korean vigilante activities represented the claim for sovereignty over Korean bodies. Korean leaders organized the Peace-Preservation

⁸³ Eighth Army to SCAP, [no title] (June 14, 1946), *ibid.*

⁸⁴ SCAPIN 927/1, “Repatriation” (June 14, 1946).

Corps because “the untrustworthy and ineffectual Japanese police would not be able to guarantee the life and property of [Korean] brethren remaining in Japan.”⁸⁵ The Peace-Preservation Corps exercised their power not only to protect Korean residents from racial violence but also to establish Korean self-governance by “arresting” and “punishing” fellow Korean offenders in lieu of the “untrustworthy” Japanese police. Yet, for SCAP and the Japanese government, such practice of liberation among Koreans in Japan appeared simply as “lawlessness” or as “self-granted extra-territoriality.”⁸⁶ Soon, this incompatibility between Koreans and the Japanese and the Occupation authorities further developed and escalated over the schooling of Korean children, becoming a flashpoint of nascent cold war politics in Japan.

Cold War Politicization of the “Korean Problem”

Korean schools initially developed from small Korean language classes that intellectuals and local leaders voluntarily started across the country in the wake of Japan’s defeat. Private residential houses or makeshift shanties were often turned into classrooms for schoolchildren to learn the Korean language, and the Korean League in Japan opened up their local offices for a classroom. Soon, the Korean League started to take the lead in building a Korean educational institution by incorporating and developing individual Korean language classes into small schools. Parents and local Korean League organizers invested everything they could to make their own schools and create opportunities for their children to learn the language and history of their own nation.⁸⁷ The large majority of Korean children only understood Japanese, and even young Koreans who had been born in Korea and then migrated to Japan barely understood their

⁸⁵ *Minjung Sinmun*, April 5, 1946.

⁸⁶ Civil Intelligence Section, “Periodical Summary,” 8 (December 15, 1946), p.87, SCCG, vol.2, p.431.

⁸⁷ On the history of Korean schools in Japan, see Kim Dongryong, *Chōsen gakkō no sengoshi, 1945-1972* (Tokyo: Shakai Hyōronsha, 2004).

own national language due to their experience of colonial “assimilation,” the negation and Japanization of Koreaness. Thus, “liberation” – or “decolonization” to paraphrase Franz Fanon – was the “veritable creation of new men,”⁸⁸ and Korean parents and leaders put extreme enthusiasm into their education for creating a new personhood as the decolonized both politically and culturally.

Koreans had to start literally from nothing for their own schooling, but they were determined to use whatever resources could be found within the community. “With money from those with wealth, with might from those with strength, and with knowledge from those with wisdom,” parents and Korean League organizers devoted themselves to crafting their own education system, from building schools by their own efforts, finding and training teachers, and writing their own Korean school textbooks which had not even existed before. By early 1946, the Korean League completed the first Korean language textbook “Korean Reader” and published and distributed it to Korean schools. One Korean newspaper in Japan reported that the publication of the Korean Reader marked the first significant step for teaching with “true Korean spirit” those Korean children who had “grown up without learning how to speak and read Korean language.”⁸⁹ Korean League primary schools defined their purposes of education as the cultivation of “national pride,” “democratic thoughts,” and skills to become a “true patriot” who would contribute to the “development of a democratic Korean state” and “world peace.” Korean education was also aimed at “cleansing elements of Japanese imperialism and residues of feudalism.”⁹⁰ By October 1946, the Korean League set up a total of 525 primary schools, 4

⁸⁸ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1963), p.36.

⁸⁹ *Minjung Sinmun*, April 15, 1946.

⁹⁰ Pak, *Kaihō go zainichi Chōsenjin undōshi*, p.139.

secondary schools and 12 youth schools across Japan, and schools had more than forty thousand students in total.⁹¹

The rapid expansion of Korean schools across Japan posed to the authorities a question of how to deal with those non-Japanese schools that had been providing their own education outside the standard of Japanese education system. After SCAP issued a warning statement on November 20 in 1946 that Koreans “refusing repatriation and electing to remain” in Japan would be subject to “all appropriate local laws and regulations,”⁹² Japanese authority over Korean schools emerged as an important issue within the Occupation. The local Occupation authorities were particularly anxious about ambiguous Japanese law enforcement against Koreans. The Occupation in Chūgoku district insisted that Korean schools were required to obtain permission from the Japanese government and had to use qualified teachers who had passed tests and screening.⁹³ Moreover, the Occupation and Japanese authorities agreed that Korean school children were subject to Japanese compulsory education the same as Japanese children.⁹⁴ Requested by SCAP to enforce fully Japanese authority over the education of Koreans, the Japanese Ministry of Education drafted a directive clarifying the obligations of Korean schools and schoolchildren and issued it to local governors on January 24 in 1948.⁹⁵ The directive defined:

Koreans currently living in Japan must obey Japanese laws, according to the statement made by SCAP on November 20, 1946.... Therefore, Korean children of school age must attend either public or private primary and secondary schools according to their age as in the case of Japanese children.

⁹¹ Ibid., p.138.

⁹² See the first section of this chapter.

⁹³ Kim, *Sengo Nihon seiji to zainichi Chōsenjin mondai*, pp.392-394.

⁹⁴ “Chōsenjin jidō no shūgaku gimu ni kansuru monbushō gakkō kyōiku kyokuchō kaitō” (April 12, 1947), in *Gaimushō, Zainichi Chōsenjin kanri jūyō bunshoshū*, p.122

⁹⁵ Kim, *Sengo Nihon seiji to zainichi Chōsenjin mondai*, p.398.

Moreover, in accordance with the School Education Act, it is required to obtain permission from the local authorities (governor) in order to establish private primary or secondary schools.⁹⁶

The government announcement immediately evoked angry reactions from Koreans. On February 16, the Korean League sent a protest to the Japanese Minister of Education and criticized the government for distorting the meaning of SCAP's statement of November 20 in 1946. In its protest, the Korean League critiqued the rationale the Japanese government had made for justifying the Japanese compulsory education of Korean children. According to the Korean League, the SCAP's statement only admitted Japanese judicial authority over Koreans remaining in Japan, and the fact that Koreans were subject to Japanese laws would not also mean that Korean children were subject to Japanese compulsory education as well. The Korean League also claimed that Koreans remaining in Japan held "Korean nationality."⁹⁷

On the contrary, the Occupation authorities presented the Japanese education of Korean children as an issue of equal rights. In its statement issued on April 23, a Tokyo Military Government Team Officer emphasized that Koreans in Japan were guaranteed their fundamental rights of enjoying "equal opportunities" and "equal treatment," including "educational privileges in Japanese schools" – thus, the Japanese government had to "respect" their rights.⁹⁸ Needless to say, it was not "equal rights" that the Occupation authorities were concerned about in dealing with Korean schools. What was more important for the Occupation was their principle that Koreans remaining in Japan had to be subject to "all appropriate local laws and regulations." In other words, "equal opportunities" and "equal treatment" simply meant treating Koreans in Japan

⁹⁶ "Chōsenjin setsuritsu gakkō no toriatsukai ni kansuru monbushō gakkōkyōiku kyokuchō tsūchō" (January 24, 1948), in Gaimushō, *Zainichi Chōsenjin kanri jūyō bunshoshū*, pp.123.

⁹⁷ *Haebang Sinmun*, March 1, 1948.

⁹⁸ "Chōsenjin gakkō ni kansuru Tōkyō gunseibu happyō" (Announcement by Tokyo Military Government Team Officer concerning Education Regulations for Koreans Residing in Japan) (April 23, 1948), in Gaimushō, *Zainichi Chōsenjin kanri jūyō bunshoshū*, pp.124-126.

in the same way as the Japanese, as defeated nationals – a situation which Koreans had been rejecting as the betrayal of Korean liberation.

Simultaneously, the local Japanese and Occupation authorities started to take aggressive action against Korean schools not obeying the directive issued by the Japanese Ministry of Education and launched forcible closure on the ground. According to a report sent by a Japanese official to SCAP, the local Occupation in Hyogo Prefecture told the prefectural governor on March 5 to carry out the “evacuation of public school houses now occupied by the Koreans as their school-houses” and to enforce “[the] attendance of Korean children of school age to public elementary schools or secondary schools or approved private schools.” In Okayama Prefecture, when the Governor ordered Korean schools to close in early April, the local Occupation authorities even “came out very strong and went so far as to say that unless they were closed within 48 hours the responsible persons would be referred to the Provost Marshal.”⁹⁹ Similar actions were taken in other prefectures, and Koreans organized mass protests against the forcible closure across Japan during March and April.¹⁰⁰ In Yamaguchi Prefecture, crowds of some 6,000 to 8,000 gathered at the Prefectural Office on the day after the Governor issued an order for the closure on March 29. Carrying out the wishes of the demonstrators, Korean representatives and Japanese supporters negotiated with the Yamaguchi prefectural government and won the suspension of the closure. The victory encouraged Korean struggles in other regions, particularly those in the Kansai region such as Osaka and Kobe, which ended with the

⁹⁹ “Korean School Situation in Japan, March and April” (April 23, 1948), Folder: 000.8: Korean Schools, Box 5698, Civil Information and Education Section, RG 331, NARA (CIE(C) 04144, *GHQ/SCAP Records*, NDL).

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.* Also see Pak, *Kaihōgo zainichi Chōsenjin undōshi*, pp.188-197; Kim, *Chōsen gakkō no sengoshi*, pp.78-91.

Occupation's exercise of anti-communist countermeasures and its first declaration of a "state of limited emergency."¹⁰¹

On April 23, Korean residents in Osaka held protest rallies at eight municipal offices, and later some seven thousand demonstrators gathered together in the park near the Osaka Prefectural Office. Representatives from the Korean League visited the Prefectural Office and requested a meeting with the Governor. While representatives were negotiating for the meeting, a few hundreds demonstrators crowded into the Prefectural Office and staged sit-ins inside the Office building. Soon, some three thousand police officers seized the building and dragged out the demonstrators. The police arrested 179 demonstrators, including 9 Japanese participants.

Next day in Kobe City, Hyogo Prefecture adjacent to Osaka, some five thousand Korean demonstrators gathered at the plaza in front of the Hyogo Prefectural Office, and a crowd of two hundred Koreans stormed into the Office demanding to meet and negotiate with the Governor. According to a report sent to SCAP by the Japanese government, "[a] call was made to the City Police, but within twenty minutes the Koreans had broken through the door and completely demolished all the furniture and cut off all communication with the outside." Soon, three U.S. military police officers came into the Office trying to rescue the Governor besieged by the crowd of Koreans. When one officer pulled his gun, "Koreans defied him to shoot."¹⁰² The three U.S. officers gave up taking the Governor and left the building. The Governor succumbed and accepted Koreans' request that the local government withdraw the order to close Korean schools,

¹⁰¹ On the Korean demonstrations in Osaka and Kobe, see Kim Kyōnghae, *Zainichi Chōsenjin minzoku kyōiku no genten* (Tokyo: Tabata Shoten, 1979); Pak, *Kaihōgo zainichi Chōsenjin undōshi*, pp.188-197; Kim, *Chōsen gakkō no sengoshi*, pp.78-86.

¹⁰² Government Section, SCAP, "Report of Kobe Korean Incident by Prosecutor Matsuoka Saichi, Supreme Prosecutor's Office" (May 4, 1948), Folder: Korea, Box 2241, Government Section, RG 331, NARA (GS(A) 02473, *GHQ/SCAP Records*, NDL).

grant Korean schools the status of a special school, and release those Koreans who had been arrested during previous demonstrations.

The Occupation regarded those Korean demonstrations in Osaka and Kobe as the “activities inimical to the Occupation” and decided to launch direct “police action” by U.S. troops. In the night after Korean demonstrators left the Hyogo Prefectural Office, the U.S. Commander of the Kobe Base declared a “state of limited emergency” in the Kobe area. In lieu of the local Japanese government, U.S. Tactical Troops took the command of the Japanese police,¹⁰³ and U.S. soldiers and Japanese police officers started to search and arrest Koreans indiscriminately – they arrested whoever identified as Koreans.¹⁰⁴ Some Japanese were also arrested, including seven Japanese Communist Party members.¹⁰⁵ According to a report later made by a SCAP official, “[f]rom the night of April 24 to April 27 about 2000 Koreans were taken into custody, the majority of them during the first twenty-four hours.”¹⁰⁶ Moreover, the local Occupation and Japanese police took heavy-handed measures against a Korean mass protest rally held in the park near the Osaka Prefectural Office on April 26. The Japanese police forcibly dispersed the demonstrators with water cannons and even fired on the crowd. A sixteen-year-old Korean young man was shot to death, and some twenty-three demonstrators were also severely injured.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³ On the declaration of a state of limited emergency, see Ara Takashi, *Nihon senryōshi kenkyū josetsu* (Tokyo: Kashiwa Shobō, 1994), pp.67-100.

¹⁰⁴ Kim, *Zainichi Chōsenjin minzoku kyōiku no genten*, pp.73-76.

¹⁰⁵ *New York Times*, April 26, 1948; *Asahi Shimbun*, April 27, 1948.

¹⁰⁶ Douglas Jenkins to William J. Sebald (May 4, 1948), enclosure to United States Political Advisor for Japan, “Korean Demonstrations in Kobe, Japan” (May 11, 1948), 894.4016/5-1148, Reel 15, *Records of the U.S. Department of State Relating to the Internal Affairs of Japan, 1945-1949*. microfilm from Scholarly Resources Inc). The report also stated that “once the immediate purpose [the restoration of order] had been accomplished, it [was] hard to justify the retention in custody for a week of more than half of the persons originally apprehended simply because time had not been found to screen them.”

¹⁰⁷ Kim, *Chōsen gakkō no sengoshi*, pp.83-86.

SCAP diplomatic official William J. Sebald pointed out the “unfortunate timeliness of the recent disturbances.” The development of Korean protests against the closure marked an “unfortunate” event concurrent with spreading anti-U.S. protests in the Korean peninsula.¹⁰⁸ In Korea, a general election plan that USAMGIK had pushed forward for establishing a separate regime in the U.S.-occupied south sparked massive anti-election movements in early 1948. The South Korean Worker’s Party (SKWP) called for “national salvation struggles” (*kuguk t’ujaeng*) protesting against UN preparation for the election in the south and organized a general strike on February 7. In Cheju Island, leftists organized anti-election mass rallies on March 1, and the Occupation’s violent suppression fomented serious tensions between the local state and society, which exploded into the popular uprisings in April. Moreover, rightist and leftist political leaders from the south and north held joint conferences in Pyongyang in Soviet-occupied north Korea during mid- and late April, demonstrating against what USAMGIK was enforcing in the south.¹⁰⁹ Indeed, as Japanese historian Ara Takashi has discussed by examining the Occupation’s internal documents of April 10 1948, Eighth Army officials in Japan worried that mounting anti-Occupation struggles in south Korea might provoke Korean dissidents in Japan into creating similar disturbances against the Occupation in Japan.¹¹⁰

Eighth Army officials in Japan understood and denounced the Korean mass demonstrations in Kobe and Osaka as “riots” linked with the Communist offensive in the Korean peninsula. In the press interview held in Kobe City on April 26, General Robert L. Eichelberger of the Eighth Army described those Korean demonstrations as “uncivilized,” “Communist-

¹⁰⁸ USPOLAD to Secretary of State, “Korean Disturbances in Kobe and Other Cities in Japan” (April 29, 1948), 895.00/4-1948, Reel, 2 *Records of the U.S. Department of State Relating to the Internal Affairs of Korea, 1945-1949*.

¹⁰⁹ On the joint conferences held in Pyongyang, see To Chinsun, *Han ’guk minjokujuūi wa nambuk kwange* (Seoul: Sŏul Taehakkyo C’hulp’anbu, 1997); Sŏ Chungśŏk, *Nambuk hyŏpsang* (Seoul: Hanul, 2000).

¹¹⁰ Ara, *Nihon senryōshi kenkyū josetsu*, p.76.

inspired” riots.¹¹¹ General Charles A. Willoughby of the Intelligence Section repeated the same characterization – “Communists instigated riots” – and even stated that Koreans were “really dangerous.”¹¹² An Eighth Army Intelligence official more explicitly pushed forward the view of international Communist conspiracy, telling the press: “I am convinced that Communists are behind these disorders, just as they are in southern Korea. The school dispute is a pretext.”¹¹³ The Japanese government also spotlighted the same story. The Japanese national police headquarters pointed out that “Communists had been instructed to step up demonstrations in Japan and to reach a climax with a big rally in Tokyo, May 10, simultaneously with the Korean voting.”¹¹⁴

The disputes over Korean education in early 1948 marked a critical watershed in Occupation policy toward Koreans in Japan. Policy-makers both in Washington and Japan began to approach the so-called “Korean problem” in Japan through the lens of cold war politics. Apparently, the “recent riots” in Kobe and Osaka had convinced one State Department official of the view that “a sizable Korean minority in Japan [was] undesirable” since the Korean minority was, “[p]oorly educated, emotionally unstable, and politically immature, they are an easy prey to Communist machinations.”¹¹⁵ A SCAP diplomat in Kobe also wrote in a similar vein about the Korean population in Kobe after the demonstration:

They are of a low type generally, poorly educated and include among their number a high percentage of thugs and roughnecks. Moreover, they harbor a virulent hatred of the Japanese who, while they had the opportunity, treated the Koreans in a most cavalier manner. This large, boisterous and dissatisfied, alien

¹¹¹ *New York Times*, April 26, 1948; *Los Angeles Times*, April 26, 1948; *Asahi Shimbun*, April 27, 1948. For the full text of Eichelberger’s press statement, see Public Information Office, General Headquarters of Far East Command, “General Eichelberger Makes Statement on Kobe Disturbance” (April 26, 1948), Folder: 000.8: Korean Schools, Box 5698, Civil Information and Education Section, RG 331, NARA (CIE(C) 04145, *GHQ/SCAP Records*, NDL).

¹¹² *Chicago Daily Tribune*, April 26, 1948.

¹¹³ *New York Times*, April 26, 1948.

¹¹⁴ *New York Times*, April 27, 1948.

¹¹⁵ W. Walton Butterworth to Sebald (May 10, 1948), 390.00015/5-548, Box 1858, Decimal File, 1945-1949, RG 59 (General Records of the Department of State), NARA.

group in the population of the city is an easy prey to organizers and agitators. They are known to include among their leaders a number of communists and quasi-communists who probably receive instructions from Northern Korea or, if not that closely associated, certainly follow the party line.¹¹⁶

Under such a lens of cold war politics – with the typical attendant racial stigma – the Korean population in Japan simply appeared as either passive or irrationally vengeful people ready to be exploited by Communists. What this sort of characterization left out was a fundamental question of why so many Koreans stood up in Kobe, Osaka, and other regions as well. Korean protests against the forcible closure of Korean schools developed through their continuous struggles to create a space for certain autonomy and self-determination as a liberated people in defeated Japan. Koreans remaining in Japan devoted themselves more than anything to building their own education system, and the spread of Korean schools across Japan symbolized their enthusiasm for political and cultural decolonization. Korean struggles for self-determination, or diasporic nationalism, was now simply understood by Occupation policy-makers as Communist political manipulation through their lens of cold war politics. By the same token, the suppression of Korean minority’s diasporic nationalism now became justified through cold war political rhetoric.

Moreover, the violent crackdowns on Koreans in Osaka and Kobe areas were a critical event that had, in the words of the SCAP diplomat in Kobe, “greatly strengthened the position of Japanese police and enhanced their prestige.”¹¹⁷ Since Japan’s defeat, the government and police had been striving to regain their lost authority and control over the Korean minority population, and the Korean school disputes in April 1948 became a watershed moment for the Japanese

¹¹⁶ Douglas Jenkins to William J. Sebald (May 4, 1948), enclosure to United States Political Advisor for Japan, “Korean Demonstrations in Kobe, Japan” (May 11, 1948), 894.4016/5-1148, Reel 15, *Records of the U.S. Department of State Relating to the Internal Affairs of Japan, 1945-1949*.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

police. Under the “state of limited emergency” declared by the Occupation, the Japanese police were empowered to take heavy-handed measures against Koreans and flexed their muscles while working together with U.S. soldiers under the Occupation’s direct “police action.” Furthermore, the event of April 1948 also became an “opportunity” for the U.S. Occupation troops to “test the efficacy of [their] plans for dealing with public disorders” in the words of the same SCAP diplomat in Kobe. He continued:

This has been accomplished without a major mishap. The only casualty suffered by the Occupation forces was one colored military policeman who was wounded by a second during a midnight chase after a fugitive Korean.¹¹⁸

The U.S. Commander at Kobe Base had mobilized the so-called “Negro troops” for this “state of limited emergency.” African-American soldiers and Japanese police forces worked side by side on the streets to put down Korean dissidents, described by the SCAP diplomat as the “most disturbing and unruly alien element in Kobe.” Indeed, their successful joint operation became a timely showcase for U.S. muscle flexing amidst the emerging global cold war confrontation, and the “Negro troops” appeared in the center of the spotlight. The U.S. major news media and some African-American newspapers published an Associated Press (AP) report on the Kobe incident by highlighting the use of the “American Negro troops” and their success in crushing “red riots” in Japan.¹¹⁹ According to the AP report, General Eichelberger lavished the black unit with high praise – “a darned good outfit – full of good soldiers; I’m proud of them.” Eichelberger also told the press: “[T]he use of Negro troops was not resented, as *no color line exists in Japan*” (my emphasis).¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ *New York Times*, April 26, 1948; *Washington Post*, April 26, 1948; *Los Angeles Times*, April 26, 1948; *Chicago Daily Tribune*, April 26 and April 27, 1948. For African-American newspapers, see *New York Amsterdam News*, May 1, 1948; *Afro American*, May 1, 1948.

¹²⁰ *New York Times*, April 26, 1948. The cited phrase is slightly different in other newspapers. For instance, it appeared in *Washington Post* as follows: “General Eichelberger said that use of the troops was not resented, as no

Against the backdrop of the “Negro problem” fast becoming America’s “Achilles’ heel” in the cold war propaganda battle with the Soviet Union, Eichelberger’s insistence that the Kobe incident evidenced the absence of a “color line” in Japan revealed the real preoccupations of the U.S. occupation forces. The Soviet Union was ready to capitalize on negative images of American racial discrimination for its propaganda battle in the Third World, and “race” emerged as a crucial ideological component in the U.S. pursuit of global hegemony and anti-communist alignment. This drove the Truman administration to determined efforts to present different stories of American race relations and also reshape Asian and African perceptions of the U.S. government’s treatment of racial minorities.¹²¹ In fact, a report sent by SCAP diplomat Sebald to the Secretary of State soon after the Kobe incident showed that U.S. Occupation policy-makers also shared such concern over how the world would perceive the U.S. handling of race relations in Japan. In his long report of May 1948 titled “Status of Koreans in Japan,” Sebald presented the significance of the “Korean problem in Japan” by emphasizing:

Any failure to resolve a minority problem of this sort would undoubtedly have unfortunate effects on United States foreign policy and might readily provide opportunity for subversive forces to exploit the situation to their own ends.”¹²²

color line exists in Japan” (April 26, 1948). In *Chicago Daily Tribune*: “He [Eichelberger] added the use of Negro troops was not resented here by Japanese or Koreans” (April 26, 1948). In *Afro American*: “[T]he use of the colored men was not resented because there is no prejudice in Japan” (May 1, 1948).

¹²¹ For important studies on how American race problems emerged as a critical ideological site of the cold war, see Penny M. Von Eschen, *Race against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937-1957* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997); Mary L. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); Thomas Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line: American Race Relations in the Global Arena* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001).

¹²² Sebald to the Secretary of State, “Status of Koreans in Japan” (May 6, 1948), 895.012/5-648, Reel 5, *Records of the U.S. Department of State Relating to the Internal Affairs of Korea, 1945-1949*. It seemed that many Occupation officials had in their mind the so-called American “Negro question” in dealing with the “Korean problem” in Japan. In a different context, a U.S. military official in Japan compared Japanese racism toward Koreans with U.S. domestic race relations. One U.S. military document shows: “At the outset Major Goff compared the Koreans in Japan to the Negro in the U.S. The average Jap thinks the Korean is inferior. Yet it is hard to tell the two peoples apart, he said, especially the short Koreans.” See “Repatriation (Korean)” [August 1947], Folder: Orders and Directives: Japanese Surrender and Status of Non-Japanese, Controlled Korea, Box 45, United States Army Forces in Korea, XXIV, Corps, G-2, Historical Section, RG 554, NARA.

A radical critique of the Occupation's handling of the minority problem in the event of Kobe did not come from the Soviet Union or "subversive forces" as Sebald worried. It came from one American man living in New York City. Thomas R. Jones, a reader of the African-American newspaper *New York Amsterdam News*, wrote a letter to the editor concerning the Kobe incident and condemned the Occupation's "use of Negro troops to attack the Koreans" as a "deliberate and provocative act."¹²³ His critique attempted to present what the race relations represented by Eichelberger as "no color line" actually manifested in relation to American race problems. Such transpacific critical view of American racism was most probably the one thing that was touching a nerve in U.S. cold war warriors.

In his letter to the editor, Jones argued that what had happened in Kobe, the event hailed by the Occupation as the swift suppression of "red riots," deserved to "be denounced by true democrats everywhere." Although it was "so cavalierly presented to the American people as a just exercise of occupation authority," Jones understood that what the event of Kobe actually manifested was "the denial of elementary democracy to the Korean minority in Japan" who had been "recently enslaved by the Japanese warlords and industrialists." He believed that the use of the black unit was aimed at fueling "antagonisms and hatred" between "the oppressed Koreans" and "the oppressed Negro people." Such attempt of racial estrangement was also equivalent to the "plan of American big business" to prevent those two "oppressed nationalities" from developing solidarity as they would "strive to liberate themselves." In his view, moreover, the suppression of Korean minority's "just demands" for the use of their own national language not only resembled the "fascist tactic" that the "Nazis" had used before. It also constituted an extension of the ongoing racial oppression in the United States. Jones claimed:

¹²³ *New York Amsterdam News*, May 8, 1948. Although the published letter to the editor did not provide any information about him, he was probably the same Thomas R. Jones who was a leading member of the local branch of NAACP in New York City.

We must see the calloused attitude of MacArthur's lieutenants in Japan as a threat to our own liberties as well as an extension of the un-American policy in our own country toward Negroes, Indians, Puerto Ricans, Mexicans and the Chinese people.¹²⁴

What Jones saw in the event of Kobe was the cold war politicization of race that was taking place in U.S. society during 1947 and 1948. As anti-communist zeal surged in Congress and the Truman administration in 1947, American segregationists took advantage of anti-communist rhetoric to suppress black radicals. Radical critiques of American race relations began to be stigmatized and marginalized as “reds” and “un-American,” or “Communist front.” The Civil Rights Congress was one of many examples of an organization labeled as “red” by the House Un-American Activities Committee, the public nerve center of anti-communism within the U.S. government.¹²⁵ Race became closely associated with the discourse of the cold war within the context of U.S. domestic politics, in the same manner as the Korean minority question in Japan did so under U.S./Allied occupation. In other words, the Kobe incident, where U.S. Occupation troops launched a direct crackdown on Korean diasporic nationalism as “red riots,” revealed the coterminous and constitutive process of the cold war politicization of American race relations – or an “extension of the un-American policy” toward occupied-Japan as Jones understood.

Conclusion

This chapter examined how the ambiguity in Washington's definition of the status of Koreans in Japan – “liberated people” and “enemy nationals” – developed into a primary site of

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Gerald Horne, *Communist Front? The Civil Rights Congress, 1946-1956* (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1988); Jeff Woods, *Black Struggle, Red Scare: Segregation and Anti-Communism in the South, 1948-1968* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2004).

tensions and conflicts between the victors, vanquished and liberated. Controversies over whether the liberated Koreans in Japan would still retain Japanese nationality evoked fierce anger and a sense of betrayal among Koreans toward the American victors who had liberated them. The controversies revealed an insurmountable question and inconsistency within U.S. policy-makers, between U.S. Occupations in Korea and Japan, in articulating how to define the liberation of Korea – Does Korea still remain “a part of Japan” in a legal sense until a future peace treaty? Do Koreans thereby retain Japanese nationality until then? Furthermore, the controversies also brought to the surface long-enduring historical discrepancies over the legitimacy of the Japan-Korea “annexation” treaties – the original sin of Japanese colonial rule – which had been endorsed by the United States and other imperialist forces at that time. Korean leaders maintained the firm stance that the annexation treaties were signed by force and thus null and void from the beginning – and thus liberation meant the “restoration” of deprived sovereignty in Korea. Later, the question of whether the annexation treaties signed during 1905 and 1910 had been legitimate or not emerged as an unbridgeable gap between South Korean and Japanese governments working on possible rapprochement.

In other words, how to define the legal status of Koreans in Japan represented how to understand the meaning and scope of Korean liberation, and *zainichi* Korean leaders defined and demonstrated it through their practice of self-determination on Japanese soil. *Zainichi* Korean vigilante activities claimed their authorities over Korean affairs – or sovereignty over Korean bodies – and refused Japanese police interference. Local Korean leaders built Korean schools and education system to teach the language and history of their own nation, devoting themselves to the creation of a new decolonized (“de-Japanized”) personhood. The Koreans in Japan

established a certain autonomy and the space of liberation on their own terms, although SCAP and the Japanese government immediately eviscerated their “liberated people” status.

In a sense, the betrayal of liberation took place simultaneously both in U.S./Allied-occupied Japan and U.S.-occupied Korea. SCAP started acting deliberately with the aim of undermining *zainichi* Korean practice of liberation in early 1946, by disbanding the Korean Peace-Preservation Corps, authorizing Japanese jurisdiction over the liberated people of Koreans, and prohibiting the Korean League in Japan from engaging in the Korean repatriation program. In Korea, it was the time period when the U.S. Occupation had almost completely overturned the indigenous “regime of liberation” and forged a new unpopular order. In the fall of 1946, sheer disillusionment with the promise of liberation also came as a surprise to Koreans in Japan when SCAP announced that Koreans remaining in Japan would retain Japanese nationality, while in Korea such disillusionment was already manifesting itself in violent uprisings across southern Korea. In Japan, the climax of this serial betrayal was the Korean education disputes of early 1948, where *zainichi* Korean persistent claims for autonomy and self-determination ended with the violent crushing of demonstrators by SCAP who had understood and framed them as “red riots” linked with the Communist anti-election offensive in south Korea.

The Korean education disputes marked a critical convergence of the U.S. global cold war and Japanese “postcolonial” politics at the site of Korean liberation in Japan. Occupation policy-makers began framing *zainichi* Korean struggles for self-determination as a kind of Communist political manipulation. The Occupation policy-makers also started to use anti-communism as a rationale for suppressing Korean minority’s diasporic nationalism. The Japanese government and police who had been striving to regain their lost control over formerly colonized subjects

took advantage of the “limited state of emergency” during the disputes in strengthening and demonstrating their power and authority over Koreans in Japan.

Moreover, what this cold war politicization of the “Korean problem” – or the Occupation policy-makers’ conflation of Korean minority’s racial politics (diasporic nationalism) with international communism – actually epitomized was the cold war politicization of American race relations. Race became closely associated with the discourse of the cold war in a twofold manner within the context of U.S. domestic politics. On one hand, the Truman administration and segregationists targeted and marginalized radical critiques of American race relations by stigmatizing them as “reds” and “un-American.” At the same time, the Truman administration also took the initiative to reform race problems in U.S. society for the purpose of a cold war ideological battle. Fighting against domestic racial discrimination emerged as integral part of cold war foreign policy to forge a multi-racial global anti-communist alliance against the Soviet Union. The President Truman’s Executive Order 9981 of July 1948, a historic order stipulating desegregation in the U.S. military, was the most significant showcase for Truman’s commitment to racial equality. Placed in this historical context, what happened in occupied-Japan in April 1948 shows a different picture of race and the cold war. The Occupation’s use of the black unit against “red riots” – and the General Eichelberger’s remarks of “no color line” – appears as if it symbolized the shifting political ground of race in the early cold war.

CHAPTER 4

Containing Zainichi Korean Leftists: The “Reverse Course,” Japanese and South Korean Anti-Communist Regimes, and the “Korean Problem” in Japan

Introduction

There is a strange phenomenon of frightening retrogression in the recent social landscape in Japan, which is completely distinct from the progressive mood that has sprung up in the wake of the establishment of the new constitution.

—Editorial, “Reflecting on the ‘Reverse Course,’” *Yomiuri Shimbun*, November 15, 1951.

Interviewer: When we look at our present and our past trajectory after liberation, it appears as if systems and institutions of our country are returning to the Japanese colonial period. What do you think?

Vice President: Of course, it should be. Our nation is a backward country [*hujin kukka*]. How can we model ourselves after advanced nations such as the United States or Great Britain whose lifestyle is different from ours? We have customs we have lived with before, so it is natural that we use things from the Japanese colonial period a lot. What is wrong with Japanese things? Isn't it all right if those are useful for us?

—An Interview with the South Korean Vice President Yi Siyŏng (early 1949)¹

[T]here exists a very strong distrust of the feasibility at this stage of bringing Koreans and Japanese into direct discussion. It has been tried at various times, with unfortunate results.

—SCAP Internal Memorandum, February 17, 1950.²

On November 2, 1951, one of the major Japanese newspapers *Yomiuri Shimbun* published a column series titled “reverse course” (*gyaku kōsu*). The series, which appeared almost every day on a *Yomiuri* page and completed its twenty-fifth episode on December 2, illuminated a growing trend of what *Yomiuri* described as the “revival” of various “things from the wartime era and before” (*senzen mono*) in Japan. *Yomiuri* asserted, “We are living in the

¹ “Yi Siyŏng put’ongnyŏng kwa ponsa sajang Cho Sangwŏn ssi wa ūi siguk taedamgi,” *Kŏn’guk kongnon* (February 1, 1949), p.5, cited from Kwŏn T’aeŏk, “Kundaehwa, tonghwa, singminji yusan,” *Han’guksa yŏn’gu* 108 (March 2000), p.136.

² Huston to Allison, [no title] (February 17, 1950), Folder: 1950-52: 510.1 Korea-Japan, Box 71, Office of the U.S. Political Advisor for Japan, Tokyo, Classified General Correspondence, 1945-1952, Record Group 84 (Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State) National Archives and Record Administration, College Park, MD (microfiche, FSP 429, National Diet Library, Tokyo, Japan. Henceforth, *USPOLAD Classified General Correspondence*, NDL).

middle of the ‘reverse course’ period.”³ In late 1951, when the U.S./Allied occupation of Japan was about to end, many Japanese were witnessing “things” re-entering their everyday life that were reminiscent of the ancien régime during and before World War II, from local customs and popular culture to political and social institutions. On November 15, *Yomiuri* also published an editorial titled “Reflecting on the ‘Reverse Course’” and called attention to the recent “frightening retrogression” in society which differed completely from the previous “progressive mood” (*kakushin teki kibun*) that had sprung up in the wake of the establishment of the new constitution in 1947.⁴

Although the term “reverse course” was initially presented by *Yomiuri* to designate the widespread “revival” of “things” reminiscent of pre-defeat Japan, scholars have been using this concept for the analysis of U.S./Allied occupation policy in Japan.⁵ Historians of postwar Japan and U.S.-Japan relations once engaged in heated debates on how to define the shift of emphasis in occupation policy, the shift of its objectives from the initial “demilitarization” and “democratization” of defeated Japan toward economic recovery and possible rearmament. While the majority of scholars both in the United States and Japan now agree to call this particular shift in U.S. occupation policy “reverse course,” the meaning of “reverse course” is not necessarily the same in Japanese and U.S. academia. In Japanese academic narratives, the “reverse course”

³ *Yomiuri Shimbun*, November 2, 1951.

⁴ *Yomiuri Shimbun*, November 15, 1951.

⁵ On scholarly debates about the “reverse course,” see Pītā Furosuto [Peter K. Frost], “Nihon senryō ni okeru ‘gyaku kōsu,’” in Rei Mūa [Ray A. Moore] ed., *Tennō ga baiburū o yonda hi* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1982); Carol Gluck, “Entangling Illusions: Japanese and American Views of the Occupation,” in Warren I. Cohen, ed., *New Frontiers in American-East Asian Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983); Howard B. Schonberger, “William H. Draper, Jr: The Eightieth Congress and the Origins of Japan’s ‘Reverse Course,’” in *Aftermath of War: Americans and the Remaking of Japan, 1945-1952* (Kent: The Kent State University Press, 1989); John W. Dower, “Occupied Japan and the Cold War in Asia,” in *Japan in War and Peace: Selected Essays* (New York: New Press, 1993); Takano Kazumoto, “Nihon senryō kenkyū ni okeru ‘gyaku kōsu,’” *Chūō Daigaku hōgaku kenkyūka daigakuin kenkyū nenpō* 15, I-1 (1986); Ogura Yūji, “Makkāsā to Nihon Kyōsantō: senryō seisaku no renzokusei no kanten,” in Akazawa Shirō, ed., *Ajia no gekihen to sengo Nihon* (Tokyo: Gendai Shiryō Shuppan, 1998); Myōjin Isao, “Senryōshi kenkyū to ‘gyaku kōsu’ gainen: Furosuto setsu no ronpyō o chūshin ni,” *Kushiro ronshū* 35 (November 2003); Hans Martin Krämer, “Just Who Reversed the Course? The Red Purge in the Higher Education during the Occupation of Japan,” *Social Science Japan Journal* 8, 1 (November 2004).

signifies a series of setbacks in “democratic revolution” initiated by the Occupation authorities (SCAP) in the immediate postwar months. Some Japanese scholars trace the origins of the “reverse course” to MacArthur’s prohibition of the general strike in February 1947 and view its climax in the so-called “red purge” offensives during 1949 and 1950, the Japanese version of “McCarthyism.”⁶ In other words, the “reverse course” is understood as a continuum of turning points and a process of escalating social suppression enforced by SCAP or through collaboration between SCAP and the Japanese government.

On the other hand, U.S. academic narratives mostly concern the shift in Washington’s policy toward occupied Japan during 1947 and 1948. As U.S. scholars have demonstrated, the Washington’s revision of occupation policy was an outcome of the U.S. global policy of communist “containment” represented by the Truman Doctrine of early 1947.⁷ The containment of communist expansion emerged as the primary agenda for the reconstruction of the postwar global political economy, and Washington policy-planners, such as George Kennan and Dean Acheson, envisioned Germany and Japan as regional pivots for the recovery of the world capitalist economy and the balance of power against Soviet expansion. On October 9, 1948, the Truman administration officially adopted the National Security Council’s proposal titled “Recommendations with Respect to U.S. Policy toward Japan” (NSC 13/2), which emphasized

⁶ On the Japanese side of narratives, see Gluck, “Entangling Illusions: Japanese and American Views of the Occupation”; Nakamura Masanori, “Senryō towa nandattanoka,” in Rekishigaku Kenkyūkai, ed., *Nihon dōjidaishi 2: senryō seisaku no tenkan to kōwa* (Tokyo: Aoki Shoten, 1990).

⁷ William Borden, *The Pacific Alliance: United States Foreign Economic Policy and Japanese Trade Recovery, 1947-1955* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984); Michael Schaller, *The American Occupation of Japan: The Origins of the Cold War in Asia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985); Howard Schonberger, *Aftermath of War: Americans and the Remaking of Japan, 1945-1952* (Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1989); Dower, “Occupied Japan and the Cold War in Asia”; Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War Volume II: The Roaring of the Cataract, 1947-1950* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990); “Japan’s Position in the World System,” in Andrew Gordon, ed., *Postwar Japan as History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

“economic recovery” as the “primary objective” of U.S. occupation policy in Japan other than “U.S. security interests.”⁸

For a synthesis of those two separate narratives, Japanese historian Nakamura Masanori proposes formulating the “reverse course” as the convergence between a series of political setbacks in U.S.-occupied Japan and the shift of Washington’s occupation policy toward Japan in late 1948.⁹ Nakamura understands that the Washington’s revision of occupation policy was institutionalized into the “regime of reverse course” (*gyaku kōsu taisei*) once it intersected with the emergence of a strong Japanese conservative regime in early 1949. Nakamura particularly emphasizes the significance of the landslide victory of Yoshida Shigeru’s conservative party in the House of the Representatives election in January 1949, which enabled Yoshida to form the first solid single-party administration (the “third Yoshida Cabinet”) in postwar Japan. In other words, the anti-communist Yoshida administration emerged as a crucial “collaborator” for the Washington’s new policy. Moreover, Nakamura pays attention to the agency of the occupied. He argues that Yoshida took advantage of the shift in occupation policy for his efforts to “rectify the excess” of radical democratic reforms initially pushed forward by SCAP. In short, the Washington’s new policy converged with Japanese conservative “rollback” politics through the Yoshida administration participating as an indigenous “collaborator.”¹⁰

This chapter reconceptualizes Nakamura’s idea of “regime of reverse course” by framing it as a critical constituent of what historian Steven Hugh Lee has characterized as U.S. “informal

⁸ NSC 13/2 reproduced in *Foreign Relations of the United States 1948*, vol. VI (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1974), pp.857-862. (Henceforth, *FRUS*.)

⁹ Nakamura Masanori, “Senryō towa nandattanoka,” pp.232-240.

¹⁰ Takemae Eiji also characterizes Yoshida as “leader of a new conservative hegemony uniting right-of-center political interests, big business and a civil service dominated by conservative bureaucrats – an alliance that Washington would find congenial and support fully.” See Takemae Eiji, *The Allied Occupation of Japan* (New York: Continuum, 2002), p.468.

empire” building in Asia.¹¹ According to Lee, what became an “integral part of America’s global strategy of containment” was the making of “pro-Western governments” and anti-communist allies of indigenous “collaborators.” Through his analysis of U.S. foreign policy toward Korea and Vietnam, Lee argues that the United States attempted to “influence” both international and domestic affairs in the Third World through “informal mechanisms” rather than “formal colonial control.” The “relatively independent” and also “interdependent” local actors on the communist perimeter were expected to play significant roles in containing communist expansion “without direct American involvement or expenditure of resources.”¹² By incorporating both Nakamura’s and Lee’s theorizations, I posit the “regime of reverse course” during 1949 as a transnationally linked political process of communist containment under U.S. informal empire. To put it differently, I reformulate Nakamura’s “regime of reverse course” as the *transnational regime of communist containment* where relatively independent indigenous “collaborators” interacted and negotiated with each other and with the United States against communist expansion in and beyond their own lands.

In order to illuminate the formation of the transnational regime of communist containment, this chapter examines how Japanese Yoshida Shigeru and South Korean Syngman Rhee administrations, the two “collaborators” in the U.S. cold war strategy of containment in Asia, forged anti-communist regimes. At the same time, I analyze how the two administrations addressed the problem of the growing *zainichi* Korean (Koreans-in-Japan) leftist forces linked with the North Korean regime and the Japanese Communist Party (JCP). Although a close political alignment between Japanese and South Korean governments emerged as an urgent task for the U.S. remaking of the regional order in East Asia after the so-called “loss of China,” the

¹¹ Steven Hugh Lee, *Outposts of Empire: Korea, Vietnam and Origins of the Cold War in Asia, 1949-1954* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1995).

¹² *Ibid.*, p.11.

two governments approached this alignment with their respective – and ultimately conflicting – interests. This chapter argues that the “Korean problem” in Japan became a sort of litmus test for the political alignment between anti-communist governments in the former colony and metropole. I explore how their mutual collaboration and friction over communist containment developed in the locus of the “Korean problem” in Japan.

In addition to the transnational relationship of anti-communist regimes in Japan and South Korea, this chapter also pays attention to the temporal continuity between the South Korean anti-communist regime and the previous Japanese colonial regime in Korea. I argue that the political and social trend that *Yomiuri Shimbun* characterized as “frightening retrogression” toward the past was not necessarily a unique phenomenon peculiar to Japan during the early cold war. In South Korea, what *Yomiuri* called “things of the wartime and before” in late 1951 had already reemerged through the postcolonial “mimicry” or the Rhee administration’s reformulation of Japanese colonial system – although some colonial apparatuses like the overdeveloped police system had been preserved and reinforced much earlier by the U.S. Army Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK). In early 1949, when asked about similarities between past (colonial) and present domestic institutions in South Korea, Vice President Yi Siyŏng responded: “What is wrong with Japanese things? Isn’t it all right if those are useful for us?”¹³ I demonstrate in this chapter that the Rhee administration was indeed dusting off colonial legal-governmental devices which were “useful” for the government in order to crack down hard on both leftists and non-leftist dissidents.

¹³ “Yi Siyŏng put’ongnyŏng kwa ponsa sajang Cho Sangwŏn ssi wa ūi siguk taedamgi,” *Kŏn’guk kongnon* (February 1, 1949), p.5, cited from Kwŏn, “Kundaehwa, tonghwa, singminji yusan,” p.136.

The Formation of the Transnational Regime of Communist Containment

If early 1947 marked a decisive turning point in U.S. foreign policy as represented by the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan, 1948 was a year that heralded the U.S. global containment of communist expansion through military or economic commitment. Congress passed the Marshall Plan, or officially the European Recovery Program, in April, and the U.S. government set up the Economic Cooperation Administration to stabilize the global capitalist economy through U.S. economic aid. Simultaneously, the U.S. government started to negotiate with Canada and European countries to form a military alliance against Soviet expansion (and also the revival of German nationalism) and signed the North Atlantic Treaty with twelve nations in April 1949.

In Asia, the escalation of the civil war in China and the subsequent Nationalist defeat during 1948 changed, in the words of historian Bruce Cumings, “the East Asian context of American policy profoundly.”¹⁴ Washington’s foreign policy toward Korea transformed into the “de facto containment” in Korea that USAMGIK had already been enforcing on the ground since the beginning of occupation, and Washington proceeded the making of an anti-communist regime in the south.¹⁵ The 38th parallel on the Korean peninsula, the line that the United States and Soviet Union had initially drawn as a temporary demarcation between U.S. and Soviet military occupation, now turned into the frontline of U.S.-Soviet global cold war confrontation. Simultaneously, Japan emerged as a crucial regional bulwark for U.S. new strategy of global containment against communist expansion in Asia. Washington shifted its occupation policy from initial “democratization” and “demilitarization” toward economic recovery and future

¹⁴ Bruce Cumings, “Introduction: The Course of Korean-American Relations, 1943-1953,” in *Child of Conflict: The Korean-American Relationship, 1943-1953* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1983), p.25.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.16-25.

remilitarization, and SCAP and the Japanese government ratcheted up their heavy-handed polices toward labor and social movements.

The regime of communist containment was soon established in Japan through the SCAP-Yoshida collaboration during 1949. With the support of SCAP, the newly formed Yoshida administration aggressively worked to undermine the Japanese Communist Party. During mid-1949, the Yoshida administration carried out the massive layoff of public employees, specifically targeting Communist and leftist union members. This layoff was also the Yoshida administration's efforts to enforce the austerity plan that SCAP had imposed in accordance with Washington's new occupation policy of economic stabilization. More importantly, the government's anti-communist offensive with this large-scale layoff of public employees spelled out what would later be called "red purge" offensives. During 1949 and 1950, the Japanese government and big business orchestrated, under SCAP's supervision, the extensive elimination of Communists and alleged Communist sympathizers from the media, universities, public schools and the shop floor.¹⁶ The Yoshida administration also issued the Organization Control Ordinance (*Dantai Tō Kiseirei*) in April 1949 with the aim of cracking down and possibly disbanding "anti-democratic organizations."¹⁷ The Korean League in Japan became the first main target of compulsory dissolution in September, as I discuss later in this chapter.

Likewise, the South Korean Syngman Rhee administration reinforced the "Koreanization" of the anti-communist political landscape that Americans had already forged through the three-year occupation. Unlike the Yoshida administration in occupied Japan, the Rhee administration was expected to accomplish regime consolidation by its own efforts,

¹⁶ For a recent comprehensive work on "red purge," see Hirata Tetsuo, *Reddo pāji no shiteki kyūmei* (Tokyo: Shin Nihon Shuppansha, 2002).

¹⁷ On the enactment of the Organization Control Ordinance, see Ogino Fujio, *Sengo chian taisei no kakuritsu* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1999), pp.84-95; Takemae, *The Allied Occupation of Japan*, p.479.

through U.S. military and economic aid after the occupation. In fact, the Rhee administration had to manage different crises that periled its survival during 1948 and 1949, as the government was faced with the leftist guerrilla warfare, border conflicts along the 38th parallel, and the withdrawal of U.S. occupation troops by June 1949.

On August 15, 1948, the Republic of Korea (ROK) was established amidst the political and economic turmoil. The Cheju popular uprisings of April 1948 had escalated into prolonged guerrilla struggles after USAMGIK sent counterinsurgency forces to the island. Most of the villages located on the interior of the island were controlled by leftist guerrilla groups by early June 1948. The guerrillas also had sabotaged the national assembly election of May 10 – among the three electoral districts, the two had not reached effective voting rates and thus representatives had not been elected.¹⁸ In mid-October, another popular uprising started from a rebellion within a unit of the ROK Army in South Chōlla Province. In mid-November, U.S. Ambassador John Muccio described the Syngman Rhee administration as an “incompetent government without strong public support and adequate security forces,” which would not be able to sustain itself without the “continued presence [of] United States occupation troops.”¹⁹ Furthermore, chronic inflation in the economy posed a serious challenge to the political and social stabilization of the nascent anti-communist regime.²⁰ By early 1950, Washington policy-planners were concerned that the inflation might develop into an imminent internal threat to

¹⁸ For English language studies on the Cheju insurgency, see John Merrill, *Korea: The Peninsular Origins of the War* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1989), pp.55-83; Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War Volume II*, pp.250-259. There are numerous Korean language studies on this issue. For instance, see Ko Ch’anghun, “4.3 minjung hangjaeng ūi chōngae wa sōngkyōk,” in *Haebang chōnhusa ūi insik 4* (Seoul: Hangilsa, 1989), pp.245-340; Jemin Ilbo 4.3 Ch’wijaeban, *4.3 ūn marhanda, 1,2,3* (Seoul: Chōnyewōn, 1994-1995).

¹⁹ Muccio to Secretary of State (November 12, 1948,) 740.00119 Control (Korea)/11-1248, *FRUS 1948*, vol. VI, p.1326.

²⁰ Secretary of State to Embassy in Korea (December 30, 1949), 895.50 Recovery/11-1449, *FRUS 1949*, vol.VII (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1976), p.1112-1113. Also see Pak T’aegyūn, “Miguk ūi taehan kyōngje puhūng chōngch’aek ūi sōngkyōk, 1948-1950,” *Yōksa wa hyōnsil 27* (March 1998), pp.76-111.

South Korea, as it did to Nationalist China where the inflation “contributed even more than the military inertia to bringing about the Nationalist downfall.”²¹

As the Cheju guerrilla fighting progressed, another insurgency shook the Rhee administration more profoundly. On October 19, 1948, leftist elements that had infiltrated the Fourteenth regiment of the ROK Army rose up in rebellion, refusing to embark for a counterinsurgency mission against guerrillas in Cheju Island. By the following day, the rebels seized control of the port city Yōsu and the town of Sunch’ōn, and the rebellion spread through other areas in South Chōlla Province. Members of the underground South Korean Worker’s Party (SKWP) and local residents joined the rebellion and restored town people’s committees. Soon, rebels and people’s committees took over local government offices and courts. The people committees held “people’s courts” and put captured policemen, government officials, landlords and members of rightist organizations on trial. In Yōsu City, 72 policemen and 16 others were executed by October 24. There were also a number of popular reprisals against policemen and rightist members, particularly those who had supported the separate regime building in the south. The people’s committee in Yōsu City also declared its revolutionary objectives, and among them was the task of “destroying the Syngman Rhee separate regime preparing to sell our [Korean] homeland to American Imperialism.”²²

This insurgency struck fear into the heart of the Rhee administration, and the government immediately mobilized almost all available troops for a counterinsurgency attack.²³ The ROK military troops, under the direct control of the U.S. military in Korea, subdued rebels and carried

²¹ Muccio to Secretary of State (January 18, 1950), *FRUS 1950*, vol.VII (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1976), p.9.

²² On the Yōsun rebellion, see Merrill, *Korea*, pp.98-129; Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War Volume II*, pp.259-267; Hwang Namjun, “Chōnnam chibang chōngch’i wa Yōsun sakōn,” in *Haebang chōnhusa ūi insik 3* (Seoul: Hangilsa, 1987), pp.413-494; Kim Tūkchung, “*Palgaeingi*” *ŭi t’ansaeng* (Seoul: Sōnin: 2009), pp.69-171. The citation is from Kim, “*Palgaeingi*” *ŭi t’ansaeng*, p.145.

²³ Jim Hausūman [James H. Hausaman] and Chōng Irhwa, *Han’guk Taet’ongryōng ūl umjigin Migun taewi: Hausūman chūngōn* (Seoul: Han’guk Munwōn, 1995), p.174.

out on-the-spot executions, killing a number of local residents as “communist sympathizers.”²⁴ Simultaneously, the Rhee administration launched the intensive social control and containment of dissidents by dusting off colonial legal-governmental devices. On December 1, the government enacted the National Security Act, which was almost identical replication of the notorious colonial legal device of Japanese “Peace Preservation Law” that had criminalized communist movements and colonial independence struggles.²⁵ The National Security Act prohibited any anti-government action, and the government used this new legal weapon for arresting a total of 118,621 suspects during 1949. A Korean scholar estimates that about eighty percent of criminals imprisoned during 1949 were “leftists.”²⁶ In April 1949, the government also implemented the so-called “National Guidance Alliance” (*Kungmin Podo Yŏnmaeng*), a state ideological device that the Rhee administration had adopted from the Japanese colonial practice of “conversion” (*tenkō*) and applied it toward the reeducation of SKWP members and leftist sympathizers.²⁷ The government reported that the number of “surrendered” or “converted” leftist sympathizers amounted to 39,986 by November 27.²⁸

Communist containment also extended into the everyday life of ordinary people. The government’s counterinsurgency action toward the Yŏsu rebellion developed into the state reconfiguration of fragmented society. The Rhee administration embarked on a “national

²⁴ On the Yŏsun civilian massacre, see Kim, “*Palgaeingi*” *ŭi t’ansaeng*, p.295-367.

²⁵ The Peace Preservation Law which was enacted in metropolitan Japan was also enforced in colonies. On the issue of how the Peace Preservation Law was enforced differently in colonial Korea and metropolitan Japan, see Mizuno Naoki, “Shokuminchi dokuritsu undō ni taisuru chian ijihō no tekiyō,” in Asano Toyomi and Matsuda Toshihiko, eds., *Shokuminchi teikoku Nihon no hōteki tenkai* (Tokyo: Shinzansha, 2007), pp.417-459. Also, the National Security Act still exists in South Korea as a crucial legal device against anti-government movements. On the history and cases of the National Security Act, see Pak Wŏnsun, *Kukka poanpŏp yŏn’gu*, vol.1,2,3 (Seoul: Yŏksa Pip’yŏngsa, 1989-1992).

²⁶ Pak, *Kukka poanpŏp yŏn’gu*, vol.2, p.16.

²⁷ For English language studies on the National Guidance Alliance, see Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War Volume II*, p.215; Namhee Lee, *The Making of Minjung: Democracy and the Politics of Representation in South Korea* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007), p.79. For a recent Korean language study on this issue, particularly on the massacre of members of the National Guidance Alliance, see Kim Kijin, *Kkūt naji anŭn chŏngjaeng, Kungmin Podo Yŏnmaeng: Pusan, Kyŏngnam chiyŏk* (Seoul: Yŏksa Pip’yŏngsa, 2002).

²⁸ *Tonga Ilbo*, December 2, 1949.

movement” (*kungmin undong*) through Syngman Rhee’s political campaign organization called “National Society for the Acceleration of Korean Independence” (*Taehan Tongnip Ch’oksōng Kungminhoe*) in order to consolidate the nation under the Rhee regime.²⁹ On October 26, 1948, the National Society announced that the “national movement” would center upon the three primary tasks of “developing anti-communist thought,” “forming the anti-communist nation” and “performing anti-communist society.”³⁰ The government and the National Society began to reconstruct the regimentation of everyday life by restructuring the remains of the colonial residential “patriotic corps” (*aeguk pan*), the units of the wartime neighborhood association that had been created for the colonial “National Spiritual Mobilization Movement.”³¹ The National Society reorganized each ten or twenty household into “national corps” (*kungmin pan*) and controlled them through anti-communist indoctrination and mutual surveillance.³² This reorganization signified that the colonial neighborhood association, which had been forged for the making of colonial “Japanese” subjects, now re-emerged as a daily site of anti-communist subject making.

In addition to the anti-communist regimentation of everyday life, the Rhee administration also sought the militarization of civil society. For instance, schools became the site of military training. The government trained physical-education teachers at the Military Academy and sent them back to schools as commissioned officers who would provide training in military drills – most of them were former colonial conscripts called “student soldiers” (*hakpyōng*).³³ The government also set up a “Student National Defense Corps” (*Hakto Hoguktan*) at each school by

²⁹ The organization changed its name to National Society on December 26, 1948. See *Tonga Ilbo*, December 26, 1948.

³⁰ *Taehan Ilbo*, October 26, 1948.

³¹ On total mobilization in Korea during World War II, see Anzako Yuka, “Chōsen ni okeru sensō dōin seisaku no tenkai: ‘kokumin undō’ no soshikika o chūshin ni,” *Tsudajuku Daigaku kokusai kankeigaku kenkyū* (bessatsu) 21, 1994; Ch’eo Yuri, *Ilche malgi singminji chibae chōngch’aek yōn’gu* (Seoul: Kukhak Charyowōn, 1997).

³² *Chosōn Ilbo*, August 26, 1949; *Kyōnghyang Sinmun*, August 26, 1949.

³³ *Chosōn Ilbo*, January 5, 1949.

late March 1949. An Hosang, the Minister of Education and a leading anti-communist ideologue, called it the “vanguard” of national defense and communist containment.³⁴ Moreover, the Rhee administration incorporated the newly unified youth organization called “*Taehan Youth Corps*” (*Taehan Ch’öngnyöndan*) into the state’s apparatus. The *Taehan Youth* was a conglomeration of youth auxiliaries of different rightist political parties, which had played significant roles in rightist and Occupations’ campaigns of terror against leftist forces.³⁵ Rhee appointed himself its supreme commander, and the *Taehan Youth* declared its “absolute obedience” to President Rhee and devotion to “exterminating every single communist running dog.”³⁶ The *Taehan Youth Corps* took the lead not only in the military training of the youth but also in their anti-communist indoctrination. The Rhee administration used the *Taehan Youth Corps* to spread its official state ideology of “*Ilminjuüi*” (The One-People Principle), the quasi-fascist ideology that pushed forward the elimination of class distinctions and the formation of the anti-communist, anti-capitalist organic unity of the Korean nation.³⁷

Importantly, the South Korean government extended these state structures and tools of communist containment to Korean communities in Japan. The “national movement” spearheaded by the National Society not only targeted every South Korean resident but also aimed to incorporate Koreans in Japan as well. The National Society was planning to expand its organization and campaign to Korean communities in Japan in order to carry out the “ideological guidance [*sasang chido*] of six hundred thousand brethren in Japan” and to protect their “rights

³⁴ *Söul Sinmun*, March 9, 1949.

³⁵ On rightist youth groups, Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War Volume II*, pp.193-203.

³⁶ *P’yöngghwa Ilbo*, December 21, 1948.

³⁷ *Söul Sinmun*, April 12, 1949. For English language studies on the *Ilminjuüi* ideology, see Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War Volume II*, pp.209-212; Gi-Wook Shin, *Ethnic Nationalism in Korea: Genealogy, Politics, and Legacy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), pp.96-109. For an important Korean language study, see Sö Chungsoök, “Yi Süngman chöngkwön ch’ogi ilminjuüi wa p’asijüm,” in Yöksa Munje Yön’guso, ed., *1950-nyöndae nambukhan üi sönt’aek kwa kulchöl* (Seoul: Yöksa Pip’yöngsa, 1998), pp.17-71.

and interests.”³⁸ Indeed, U.S. Ambassador Muccio also recommended establishing a branch of the National Society in Japan if the *zainichi* Korean rightist Residents Union was not capable of overtaking the “rival Communist [Korean] League” in Japan.³⁹ In other words, the Korean Residents Union in Japan was expected to operate as another National Society that would integrate the Korean communities in Japan into the single state society controlled by the Rhee administration.

The Korean Residents Union in Japan was initially formed in October 1946 under the leadership of a famous Korean ex-anarchist, Pak Yöl. Since its inception, the Residents Union had built close ties with Syngman Rhee and voiced its strong support for Rhee’s political campaign to establish a separate regime in the U.S.-occupied south. Once Rhee was elected the first President, the Residents Union claimed itself as the only official *zainichi* Korean association recognized by the only legitimate government in Korea.⁴⁰ The head of the Residents Union Pak Yöl was invited to the government inauguration ceremony in South Korea on August 15, 1948 and met with President Rhee to discuss countermeasures against the leftist Korean League in Japan. Pak revealed that President Rhee had agreed with his policy proposal that Pak viewed as necessary: “All Korean Communists in Japan should be deported to Korea.”⁴¹

The Residents Union leader Pak Yöl also presented himself to Americans as a critical *zainichi* Korean collaborator for U.S. cold war strategy of containment. At a meeting with a U.S. Army official in Korea on August 18, Pak stressed the need to sever “[c]ommunications between

³⁸ *Yön’hap Sinmun*, February 16, 1949; *Söul Sinmun*, February 17, 1949.

³⁹ Muccio to Secretary of State and SCAP, “Status of Koreans in Japan” (April 13, 1949), 894.4016/4-1349, Reel 15, *Records of the U.S. Department of State Relating to the Internal Affairs of Japan, 1945-1949* (microfilm from Scholarly Resources Inc).

⁴⁰ Mindan Samsimnyönsa P’yöñch’an Wiwöñhoe, ed, *Mindan 30-yönsa* (Tokyo: Chae Ilbon Taehanmin’guk Köryumindan, 1977), p.60.

⁴¹ U.S. Political Adviser in Korea to Secretary of State, “Transmitting Report of Conversation with President, Korean Residents Union in Japan, on Koreans in Japan” (August 21, 1948), 895.01/8-2148, Reel 5, *Records of the U.S. Department of State Relating to the Internal Affairs of Korea, 1945-1949* (microfilm from Scholarly Resources Inc).

communists in Japan and communists in Korea.” Pak claimed that he and his “boys” could find out “when a ship carrying communists or carrying goods intended for communist trade [would be] leaving Japan for Korean ports.” He also requested U.S. assistance for “non-communists” and their “counter-propaganda,” insisting that the “non-communists” were “not nearly as effective with their counter-propaganda” as the Communists. Indeed, Pak was the incarnation of a typical cold war warrior. According to the same U.S. official, Pak expressed his idea of communist containment as follows:

[U]nless the US wipes out communism in Japan, Korea will always be threatened. Unless the US wipes out communism in Korea, Korea will have a tremendous effect upon both communists and non-communists in Japan.⁴²

Along with the Korean Residents Union in Japan led by Pak Yöl, the *zainichi* Korean rightist youth group named “Youth Alliance for the Acceleration of Korean Independence” (*Chōsen Kenkoku Sokushin Seinen Dōmei*) also transformed itself into an arm of the South Korean anti-communist regime apparatus. In March 1950, former Chief of Staff of ROK Army Ch’ae Pyōngdök visited Japan and requested *zainichi* Korean youth leaders to reorganize existing rightist youth groups under the name of *Taehan* Youth.⁴³ In mid-June, President Rhee sent An Hosang, an ideologue of the *Ilminjuŭi*, to Japan to unite *zainichi* Korean youth groups.⁴⁴ As An told the press that the purpose of his visit to Japan was, in his words, the “ideological indoctrination” (*sasang kyohwa*) of the *zainichi* Korean youth,⁴⁵ his ideological influence was indeed prominent among certain Koreans in Japan. An Hosang established the Japan Headquarters of the *Taehan* Youth Corps on August 29, and the *Taehan* Youth in Japan called

⁴² Ibid. Pak also told the U.S. official that there were only “200 real Korean communists in Japan” and that if “a particular 20 or 25 of these” were eliminated, the rest would “fade out.”

⁴³ Mindan Samsimnyōnsa P’yōnch’an Wiwōnhoe, *Mindan 30-yōnsa*, p.446.

⁴⁴ An Hosang, *Hana rŭl wihayō hana toegi wihayō: Hanmoe An Hosang 20-segi hoegorok* (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch’ulp’ansa, 1996), p.254.

⁴⁵ *Chosŏn Ilbo*, May 29, 1950.

upon the *zainichi* Korean youth to “unify our thought under the *Ilminjuŭi*.”⁴⁶ When the war broke out in Korea on June 25, An launched a lecture tour across Japan for recruiting *zainichi* Koreans to volunteer and fight against North Korea.⁴⁷ Through the recruiting campaign spearheaded by the rightist Korean Residents Union and the *Taehan* Youth in Japan, 642 *zainichi* Korean youth were sent to Korea as “volunteer soldiers.”⁴⁸

Japanese and Korean Leftist Transnational Solidarity

As the Chinese Nationalist defeat in the civil war during 1948 and 1949 changed U.S. foreign policy toward East Asia profoundly, the progress in China brought critical impacts on the political landscape in Korea and Japan as well. The Communist victory in China no doubt buoyed up North Korean leaders and fueled their preparation for a revolutionary war against South Korea. In the spring of 1949, Chinese and North Korean officials held a series of contacts and discussed possible Chinese support for the Korean revolution and the return of Korean soldiers in the Chinese People’s Liberation Army to North Korea.⁴⁹ Some 30,000 to 40,000 Korean soldiers returned from China during the period from July to October in 1949, and the total number amounted to between 75,000 and 100,000 by the fall of 1950.⁵⁰ In Japan, the downfall of Nationalist China plunged many Japanese into the fear of immediate political reverberations. In mid-February 1949, the Occupation’s survey of intercepted Japanese private correspondence and communication reported that the “sweeping victories of the Chinese

⁴⁶ *Kannichi Shinpō*, September 9, 1950.

⁴⁷ *Kannichi Shinpō*, July 16; *ROK National Assembly Records*, 10th Assembly, March 27, 1951 (National Assembly Library, Seoul, South Korea).

⁴⁸ On the process of recruiting *zainichi* Korean volunteer soldiers, see my “Chōsen Sensō to *zainichi* Chōsenjin: giyūhei haken no mondai o chūshin ni,” in Dōjidaishi Gakkai, ed., *Chōsen Hantō to Nihon no dōjidaishi* (Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Hyōronsha, 2005), pp.3-29.

⁴⁹ Chen Jian, *China’s Road to the Korean War: The Making of the Sino-American Confrontation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), pp.109-110.

⁵⁰ Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War Volume II*, p.363; Bruce Cumings, *Korea’s Place in the Sun: A Modern History* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997), p.238-243.

Communist Armies” in China had “infected” the Japanese public “with fear and anxiety.” The survey also concluded that Japanese people were “hoping for continued US support to prevent a similar situation from arising in Japan.”⁵¹

Japanese Communists were gaining confidence so much so that Japanese police officers sometimes even became uncertain about how to handle Communist activities. In December 1948, the local Occupation authorities in Toyama Prefecture reported on permeating anxiety among Japanese police officers “as to how they would be treated in the event Japanese went Communist.” The report continued:

Many times the Communists have threatened the police and public officials with; “wait until we take over Japan, then we’ll get even with you. You will be taken care of properly.” This fear complex among the police is becoming more pronounced since the Communist gains in China.⁵²

In fact, Japanese Communists were bolstering their confidence and prestige not only through the sweeping Chinese Communist victories since late 1948, but also through their unprecedented leap in voter support in the general election of January 1949. In the general election, the JCP obtained almost three times as many votes as the previous election in mid-1947 and multiplied its seats from four to thirty-five. Although this remarkable gain owed much to the rifts in the Socialist Party and popular disappointment over the former Socialist-moderate rightist coalition government, the JCP rapidly expanded its party members during 1949.⁵³ Japanese

⁵¹ United States Army Forces Pacific, Military Intelligence Section, General Staff, Civil Intelligence Section, “Periodical Summary,” 37 (February 15, 1949), POS 3-4, reprinted in Kawashima Takane, *Senryōgun chian chōhō geppō* (Tokyo: Gendaishiryō Shuppan, 2006), vol.11, pp.383-384. (Henceforth, Civil Intelligence Section, “Periodical Summary,” SCCG.)

⁵² First Lieutenant Frank D. Proctor to Commanding General, 25th Infantry Division, “Summary of Activities” (December 9, 1948), Folder: 091.412 Propaganda, Box 37, Eighth U.S. Army, 1946-1956, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, RG 338 (Records of U.S. Army Operational, Tactical, and Support Organizations [World War II and Thereafter]), NARA.

⁵³ According to JCP top leader Nosaka Sanzō, the number of Party members reached about hundred fifty thousand at the time of the general election in January 1949. It is said that the number of Party members kept increasing and totaled more than two hundred thousand in 1949. See Nikkan Rōdō Tsūshinsha, ed., *Sengo Nihon kyōsan shugi*

Communists even envisioned the possible takeover of power. In a May Day rally, JCP top leader Tokuda Kyūichi declared that the JCP would strengthen mass movements and overturn the Yoshida administration by September – although soon the JCP would experience a complete defeat by Yoshida’s counteroffensive.

The JCP’s strong political ally, the Korean League in Japan, also radicalized its political movements during 1948 and 1949, reinforcing its ties with both the JCP and the North Korean regime. Since its formation as the largest Korean organization in Japan, the Korean League had held strong connections with the JCP. *Zainichi* Korean Communist leaders, such as Kim Ch’ōnhae and Kim Tuyong, actively engaged in the Korean League and linked its activities with JCP’s agenda for “democratic revolution” in Japan. At the same time, the Korean League built the close political relationship with the leftist camp in Korea, initially with the Democratic National Front in the south. When the UN-observed general elections to create a separate regime in the U.S.-occupied south emerged as a critical issue in the international arena in late 1947, the Korean League spearheaded anti-election campaigns across Japan in support of the massive oppositional movements in Korea.⁵⁴ The Korean League also sent representatives to the famous north-south joint conferences held in Pyongyang in April 1948, where north and south Korean political leaders, from both the left and the right, gathered to demonstrate their protest against the UN-observed general elections that would establish a separate regime in the south.⁵⁵

When north Korean leaders established the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) against the Republic of Korea in the south on September 9, 1948, the Korean League

undō (Tokyo: Nikkan Rōdō Tsūshinsha, 1955), p.115; Koyama Hirotake, *Sengo Nihon Kyōsantō shi* (Kyoto: Sangatsu Shobō, 1958), p.48.

⁵⁴ O Kyusang, *Dokumento Zainihon Chōsenjin Renmei, 1945-1949* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2009), pp.166-173.

⁵⁵ A Korean League representative gave a speech at the conference. *Zainichi* Korean historian O Kyusang speculates that the Korean League sent the representatives from its Seoul branch, given that SCAP would not allow *zainichi* Koreans to travel between Japan and North Korea. On Korean League’s participation in the conference in Pyongyang, see O, *Dokumento Zainihon Chōsenjin Renmei*, pp.169-172.

immediately recognized the DPRK as the single legitimate government representing the entire Korean people. On September 17, *Chōren Chūō Jihō*, the bulletin of the Korean League in Japan, published a statement expressing its support for the DPRK as the “people’s government” which was formed through the “truly democratic” general election conducted both in the north and south.⁵⁶ At the Fifth General Convention held from October 14 to 16, the Korean League adopted a new manifesto that called upon *zainichi* Koreans to “defend the DPRK to the death” and “devote themselves with full vigor to the development of the DPRK.” The Korean League also reaffirmed its “resolution to exterminate the south Korean reactionary forces completely,” characterizing the South Korean regime as the “puppet” connected with “anti-popular, anti-pacifist international reactionary forces.”⁵⁷ Moreover, at the Seventeenth Central Committee Meeting held in mid-February 1949, the Korean League leadership adopted new slogans that pushed forward a “direct link” with the DPRK, a new political line that had been proposed by the North Korean leader Kim Il Sung through his radio speech on January 12.⁵⁸

The leaders of the Korean League also attempted to have a direct meeting with Kim Il Sung through their visit to North Korea. On October 8, the Korean League received an official invitation from Prime Minister Kim through a telegram and the Pyongyang radio broadcast.⁵⁹

The Korean League formed a group of some hundred delegates to visit North Korea and

⁵⁶ *Chōren Chūō Jihō*, September 17, 1948.

⁵⁷ Korean League in Japan, “Minutes of the Fifth General Convention, October 14 to 16, 1948,” reprinted in Pak Kyōngsik, *Chōsen mondai shiryō sōsho vol.9: kaihōgo no zainichi Chōsenjin undō, I* (Tokyo: Ajia Mondai Kenkyūjo, 1983), p.252.

⁵⁸ *Haebang Sinmun*, February 15, 1949; *Chōren Chūō Jihō*, February 16, 1949. The significance of this Seventeenth Central Committee Meeting in the history of the Korean League in Japan and *zainichi* Korean movements, see O, *Dokumento Zainihon Chōsenjin Renmei*, pp.59-71.

⁵⁹ The invitation said: “The Government of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea is aware of the fact that our brethren in Japan are making efforts for the revival of our nation on the basis of democratic principles. The Government of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea invites the representatives of your League to come to Pyongyang in North Korea to familiarize themselves with the situation in Korea.” *Haebang Sinmun*, October 12-15, 1948; Military Intelligence Section, SCAP, “Exchange of Messages Between League of Koreans Residing in Japan and North Korean Government” (October 14, 1948), Folder: Spot Intelligence Reports, October-November 1948, Box 260, Assistance Chief of Staff, G-2, SCAP, RG 331, NARA (microfiche, G-2 02659, GHQ/SCAP Records, National Diet Library, Tokyo, Japan. Henceforth, *GHQ/SCAP Records*, NDL).

requested SCAP for permission to travel. Once SCAP refused to give permission, the Korean League decided to send some ten delegates to North Korea secretly, through an unauthorized (illegal) route. According *zainichi* Korean historian O Kyusang, Han Tōksu, the leader of the delegate group, had a meeting with Prime Minister Kim on December 23, and other delegates also met with Kim on January 10, 1949. In these meetings, Kim emphasized the need to unite *zainichi* Koreans as overseas nationals of the DPRK and nurture young *zainichi* Koreans as engineers of the new nation-state in Korea.⁶⁰

During September to November 1948, the Korean League and its local offices embarked upon mass campaigns across Japan to demonstrate Korean and Japanese support for the DPRK.⁶¹ In Ishikawa Prefecture, for instance, the local branch organized a ceremonial rally on November 9, and some five hundred participated in the rally for the celebration of becoming members of the “independent nation.” In the ceremony, according to a police intelligence report, a local Korean League leader spoke to the audience and stressed that Koreans should no longer be afraid of Japanese government’s oppression because the “independent DPRK government” was established.⁶² The ceremony also exhibited some sort of international solidarity. Japanese and Chinese representatives from local labor and farmer unions, Communist Party, and an overseas Chinese association in Japan participated and made congratulatory speeches on the stage on which the portrait of North Korean leader Kim Il Sung was displayed. The Chinese leader called upon “our brothers of Koreans” for solidarity between the same “oppressed” peoples. Araki Tsugio, a local union leader from the National Railway Workers’ Union, congratulated Koreans for establishing a “government of working people,” which had “not come into in Japan” yet.

⁶⁰ O, *Dokumento Zainihon Chōsenjin Renmei*, pp.189-194.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp.173-180.

⁶² “Police (NRP) Record of the Proce[e]dings of the Koreans’ Meeting Held on 9 Nov at the Oyama Club” (November 11, 1948), Folder: Koreans, Box 2326, Civil Affairs Section, RG 331, NARA (CAS(C) 00262, *GHQ/SCAP Records*, NDL).

Conveying his congratulations, Communist representative Nakata Kikuo expressed his concern over government's suppression of Koreans and Japanese workers and made an earnest appeal to Koreans for "enormous support" for building a "democratic state" in Japan.

Indeed, many Koreans did support the JCP by becoming Party members. During early and mid-1949, the Korean League launched a political campaign across Japan to encourage local Korean residents to join the JCP and fight together against the Yoshida administration. In Kobe, the ceremony that the Korean League held to remember the victims of the Korean education disputes in April 1948 turned into a dramatic event where 358 Korean men and women among some forty-five thousand participants declared to join the JCP.⁶³ In Kyoto Prefecture, a local office of the JCP held a welcome ceremony for new 300 Korean members on June 2. At the ceremony, another 200 Koreans also volunteered to join the Party.⁶⁴ During the months from April to July, more than thirteen hundred Koreans became JCP members.⁶⁵ A Korean League spokesperson stated in a press interview that the mass participation in the JCP meant "our League's response to the oppression" by the Japanese government. The spokesperson also emphasized that the JCP was the only political forces who had "always fought for Korean rights to subsistence and Korean education."⁶⁶

The Korean League expected that the Korean mass entry into the JCP would build the solid foundation for grassroots inter-racial struggles between Koreans and Japanese. The leadership of the Korean League understood that the lack of support from Japanese people had been one of the most urgent problems facing Korean struggles for political and social rights in Japan. In the aftermath of the Korean education disputes of April 1948, some Korean League

⁶³ *Haebang Sinmun*, April 30, 1949; May 9, 1949.

⁶⁴ *Chōren Chūō Jihō*, June 10, 1949; *Haebang Sinmun*, June 13, 1949.

⁶⁵ Kim T'aegi, *Sengo Nihon seiji to zainichi Chōsenjin mondai: SCAP no tai zainichi Chōsenjin seisaku 1945-1952-nen* (Tokyo: Keisō Shobō, 1997), p.543.

⁶⁶ *Haebang Sinmun*, May 9, 1949.

leaders attributed the failure of Korean struggles to their “parochial national sentiments” (*p’yŏnhyŏphan minjok jok kamjŏng*) and “isolation” from Japanese people. The leaders pointed out the need to link Korean movements with “Japanese revolutionary forces” fighting for democratic reforms in Japan.⁶⁷ Thus, Korean mass participation in the JCP was, in the words of the Korean League spokesperson, “the most concrete way to develop joint struggles with Japanese people.”⁶⁸ Moreover, Korean leaders had learned lessons from the racial bashings against Koreans in Japan spearheaded by the former Yoshida administration during mid- and late 1946. In a press interview held by *Haebang Sinmun* in July 1949, the chief secretary of the Korean League pointed out Japanese government’s continuous efforts to increase the racial estrangement between the Koreans and Japanese.⁶⁹

The leadership of the Korean League believed that the establishment of the “democratic people’s government” in Japan – the objective of the JCP’s ongoing fight – would be the only solution to the problem of institutionalized racial discrimination against Koreans. More importantly, the leadership viewed that the time was ripe for JCP-led democratic revolution at that moment in early and mid-1949, as JCP leader Tokuda claimed that they would overturn the Yoshida administration by September. At the Korean League’s Central Committee Convention in late May, leaders argued that “Japanese revolutionary movements” were growing “through popular struggles” like everywhere in the world. The leadership understood that Japanese popular struggles over livelihood were “extending beyond economic struggles and becoming political struggles for power.” In its slogan adopted in the Convention, the Central Committee

⁶⁷ *Haebang Sinmun*, May 25, 1948.

⁶⁸ *Haebang Sinmun*, May 9, 1949.

⁶⁹ *Haebang Sinmun*, July 11, 1949.

declared that the Korean League would fight with Japanese people against the Yoshida administration in order to establish the “democratic people’s government” in Japan.⁷⁰

As Communist-led labor unions radicalized their struggles against government’s and big business’s massive layoffs and labor restructuring in mid-1949, the Korean League approached the shop floor as a critical site for demonstrating Korean direct participation in the “democratic people’s government” building in Japan. In Chiba Prefecture, the members of the Korean League and its affiliated Korean associations took part in a National Railways’ labor dispute at Chiba Station on June 10. The Koreans and Japanese workers clashed with some three hundred Japanese police, and 21 Korean Youth group members and 117 women from the Korean Democratic Women League in Japan were arrested with 4 JCP members – most of them were soon released.⁷¹ In Hiroshima Prefecture in mid-June, local branches of the Korean League supported worker’s sit-down strikes at the Japan Steel Works factory by mobilizing food, relief money and Korean youth corps who would fight with the Japanese workers. The sit-down strikes ended up with a violent crackdown by the police, and some three hundred Koreans and Japanese workers were injured.⁷² The Japanese intelligence reported that the total of some sixteen hundred Koreans participated during the five days of the sit-down strikes and demonstrations at the Japan Steel Works factory in Hiroshima.⁷³

Such joint struggles were also taking shape behind the scenes between Korean League leaders, the JCP, and the North Korean regime. According to a U.S. intelligence report, Communists in Korea and Japan were constantly contacting each other and building secret collaborations. The report dated on March 30, 1950 described:

⁷⁰ *Chōren Chūō Jihō*, May 31, 1949; *Haebang Sinmun*, June 3, 1949.

⁷¹ *Asahi Shimbun*, June 11, 1949; *Haebang Sinmun*, June 21, 1949.

⁷² *Chōren Chūō Jihō*, June 21, 1949.

⁷³ Special Investigation Bureau, Attorney-General Office, “On the Trend of Korean Organizations, June 1949 – September 1950” (August 1951), *Special Investigation Records* (August 21, 1951), pp.22-25.

J.C.P. members regularly [*sic*] or temporarily conducted secret passages to attend the North Korean Conference, while considerable number of Koreans secretly entered Japan to give directives to the JCP. Among them there were various elements connected with Communist activities such as the self-styled North Korean Organization Unit Members, influential leaders of the South Korean Labor Party, Japanese and Korean Communists who carried santolin from Vladivostok to Japan, leaders of the former CHOREN [Korean League in Japan], who secretly started from the Japanese San [*San'in*] coast to attend the rally for celebrating the independence of North Korean government (held in August 1949), etc.⁷⁴

It was true that North Korean agents secretly entered Japan and contacted Communist leaders of the Korean League in Japan. For instance, the so-called “North Korean spy net in Japan” that was exposed in May 1951 revealed such linkages and interactions behind the scenes. According to Japanese police interrogation reports on “spy” suspects, Hō Kilsong (alias Iwamura Yoshimatsu) and Ko Ch’angman made a secret entry into Japan in late August 1949 with the mission of gathering information on Japan’s remilitarization and sending the *zainichi* Korean youth to North Korea.⁷⁵ Hō and Ko were told by the DPRK’s Political Security Department to visit the headquarters of the Korean League in Japan, who were supposed to prepare a group of the *zainichi* Korean youth to send. According to Hō’s testimony, he understood that the group would be used for fields of political affairs, education, intelligence and engineering. With the collaboration of Korean League leaders, Hō sent some thirty *zainichi* Koreans to North Korea in early October.

Ko Ch’angman, another North Korean “spy” who was sent to Japan with Hō, had a political background as a former member of the South Korean Worker’s Party in Cheju Island.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ “Illegal Immigrants” (March 30, 1950), 658298, Box 4237, Army-Intelligence Document File, RG 319 (Records of the Army Staff), NARA.

⁷⁵ I found those Japanese police interrogation reports in the following records. Folder: Iwamura Yoshimatsu ni kansuru gunji saiban 1-4, Reel 8-10, *Fuse Tatsuji Papers*, Korea University Library, Tokyo, Japan. (Henceforth, *Fuse Papers*, KUL.)

⁷⁶ Folder: Iwamura Yoshimatsu ni kansuru gunji saiban 1, Reel 8, *Fuse Papers*, KUL.

According to his testimony, Ko joined the Party in March 1948 and soon participated in the Cheju uprisings of April 3, which escalated into prolonged guerrilla warfare and ended up with the Rhee regime's brutal civilian massacre. In early May, Ko fled from the police counterinsurgency attack and hid in Pusan. In late May, he decided to attempt an escape to Japan and took a smuggling ship to Osaka, where his uncle was running a small shoemaking factory. In Osaka, he then became acquainted with a Korean man from the same village in Cheju Island, who had been engaged in political activities in the Osaka area. A year later, in mid-June 1949, the man arranged a trip to North Korea for him, and Ko made a visit to the Political Security Department in Pyongyang. After receiving education and training at a youth training camp in the northern city of Chongjin, Ko was told by the Political Security Department to go to Japan with Hō Kilsong on an intelligence mission. The trajectory of Ko's life – his participation in the Cheju uprisings, escape to Japan, return to Korea and secret reentry into Japan on the mission of the North Korean regime – shows how deeply Japan became the integral part of the politics, civil warfare and human tragedies in post-liberation divided Korea.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ Those who were arrested for engaging in the “North Korean spy net in Japan” were tried at Occupation's provost courts. One of them was soon deported to South Korea during the Korean War, and it was said that he was sentenced to death in South Korea. I will discuss this issue in next chapter. Moreover, the background of another “spy” suspect named Yi Baek also tells us the tragedies that befell a *zainichi* Korean man who ended up becoming a North Korean agent. Yi was born in Okayama Prefecture, western Japan, in 1925. He became a civilian employee of the Japanese military and worked as a meteorologist at a military base in Chitose, Hokkaido. In 1944, he was sent to the Etorofu Island, part of the Kuril Islands across the Russian border, and worked there until Japan's surrender. Soon, the Soviet troops arrived at the island to disarm the Japanese soldiers and shipped them to a port in East Siberia. Yi was sent to a concentration camp in Khabarovsk for forced labor like other Japanese POWs. Later, he was moved to another camp where other captured Koreans were also interned and living separately from the Japanese – he lived in a Korean camp although he did not understand Korean language. When the repatriation of Koreans started in late 1948, Yi was sent “back” to North Korea in November with other Koreans. In North Korea, Yi asked the authorities to send him back to his family in Japan. The North Korean authorities told Yi to accept a mission in exchange for his return to Japan, a mission of working with other agents in Japan. Yi made a secret entry into Japan through a smuggling boat in March 1949, and soon found out his family tragedies: during U.S. airstrikes in the last year of the war, his house had burned to the ground, his older sister had gone insane and passed away, and his mother was now missing (Folder: Iwamura Yoshimatsu ni kansuru gunji saiban 4, Reel 10, *Fuse Papers*, KUL).

Tensions and Collaborations over the “Korean Problem”

The Yoshida and Rhee administrations shared the common agenda of diminishing the predominance of the Korean League among Korean communities in Japan. Since the aftermath of defeat, the Japanese government had confronted the Korean League as the chief obstacle to regaining full authority and control over Korean former colonial subjects in Japan.⁷⁸ For the Japanese government, the Korean League had represented the “lawlessness” and “self-granted extra-territoriality” of Koreans in Japan, and it now also had become the immediate target of U.S. and Japanese cold war politics after the establishment of the DPRK.

For instance, SCAP banned the Korean League from displaying the national flag of the DPRK in public, and political rallies held by the Korean League across Japan in celebration of DPRK’s inauguration often ended with violent clashes with the Japanese police over the display of the national flags.⁷⁹ In Sendai City, Miyagi Prefecture, some hundred armed U.S. military police and Japanese police officers carried out a raid on the Korean League’s rally held on October 12, 1948, and arrested three Korean League leaders for displaying DPRK’s national flags. The military police fired on a recalcitrant crowd, and six Korean and Japanese participants were severely injured. Among those arrested, three were sent to an Occupation’s provost court and sentenced to deportation to South Korea following the term of three years’ confinement with hard labor.⁸⁰ In Osaka on October 21, some eighty armed police stormed into the rally held by the Osaka branch of the Korean Democratic Youth Alliance in Japan and arrested its local

⁷⁸ See my previous chapter.

⁷⁹ See Pak Kyōngsik, *Kaihō go zainichi Chōsenjin undōshi* (Tokyo: San’ichi Shobō, 1989), p.209-214; O, *Dokumento Zainihon Chōsenjin Renmei*, pp.180-186.

⁸⁰ On this incident, see Pak, *Kaihō go zainichi Chōsenjin undōshi*, pp.210-211; Yi Hyōngnang, Ebina Ryōsuke, Mitsuhashi Osamu and Robāto Riketto [Robert Ricketts], “Senryōka ni okeru tai zainichi Chōsenjin kanri seisaku keisei katei no kenkyū (2),” *Seikyū gakujutsu ronshū* 13 (1998), pp.267-272.

branch leaders. The two of them were sentenced to eight years' confinement with hard labor and deportation to South Korea.⁸¹

The Korean League also became a primary target of South Korean diplomacy toward SCAP. It was the Rhee administration's immediate mission to uproot *zainichi* Korean Communists leaders and weaken the Korean League with the support of SCAP so that the rightist Korean Residents Union could take over and control *zainichi* Korean communities. When he dispatched a Korean diplomatic mission to Japan in December 1948, President Rhee explained to Ambassador Chŏng Han'gyŏng the significance of his tasks and explicitly instructed him to "disband the Korean League in Japan through the cooperation of SCAP."⁸² The U.S. Ambassador in Korea, John Muccio, also discussed this issue with Chŏng on December 22, and Muccio stressed the significance of "defeating the efforts of the Communist-controlled League of Korean Residing in Japan [the Korean League in Japan] in forwarding Communist aims in Japan and in Korea." Moreover, Muccio advised Chŏng to set up an "alert and progressive Korean residents' association" as early as possible which would be capable of "winning the support of Korean residents of Japan to the Government of the Republic of Korea."⁸³

Upon starting his diplomatic mission in Japan, Chŏng met with General Douglas MacArthur and William J. Sebald of the Diplomatic Section of SCAP on December 27. When Chŏng raised the question of "certain strong armed tactics used by Leftist Korean elements," MacArthur encouraged him by implying that SCAP would "dea[l] with severely" those Korean

⁸¹ *Haebang Sinmun*, October 27, 1948; Pak, *Kaihō go zainichi Chōsenjin undōshi*, p.211

⁸² Kang Nohyang, *Chui taep'yobu* (Seoul: Tonga PR Yŏn'gujo Ch'ulp'anbu, 1966), p.32.

⁸³ American Mission in Korea to Secretary of State, [no title] (December 27, 1948), Folder: 1948: 701 Korea, Box 30, RG 84, FSP 223, *USPOLAD Classified General Correspondence*, NDL.

Communists “using Japan as a base of operations to damage the Republic of Korea.”⁸⁴ Chông also approached the Government Section (GS) of SCAP and asked for its cooperation in undercutting the material resources of the *zainichi* Korean leftist forces. On January 17, 1949, the Korean Diplomatic Mission sent an official letter requesting the GS to “drastically cut” newsprint allocations to “leftist Korean newspapers” and stop allowing the Korean League and its branches to use gasoline “imported ... for the rehabilitation of the Japanese economy.” According to the Korean Diplomatic Mission, the Korean League and its members had been “successful” in obtaining allocations of special rations “under the guise that these special rations [were] to be distributed ... to all Korean residents in Japan,” which they had actually distributed only to “individuals who cooperate[d] with the League” in order to “foster communism.” In the letter, the Korean Diplomatic Mission presented its primary task as follows:

The curtailment of communist activity among the Koreans in Japan is of primary interest to this mission. The mission is anxious to cooperate with SCAP in all measures which will dislodge the League and lead to its eventual dissolution.⁸⁵

The South Korean government also took an active interest in forging an anti-communist political alignment with the former colonial power of Japan. Although President Rhee often stirred up and mobilized fiery popular anti-Japanese sentiments for his domestic political purposes, his diplomatic stance toward Japan was surprisingly conciliatory – or pragmatic – unlike his public image as an emotionally demonstrative “anti-Japanese nationalist leader”

⁸⁴ MacArthur suggested that the Korean Diplomatic Mission obtain and provide all relevant information on *zainichi* Korean Communist activities for SCAP. MacArthur also told Chông about his view on the “major problem now confronting” President Rhee. MacArthur understood that if “at least the first stages of unification” were not accomplished during the “next three or four months,” President Rhee would be “lose out entirely” and unification under the current government would “become impossible.” See U.S. Political Adviser for Japan, “Memorandum of Conversation” (December 27, 1948), Folder: 1948: 800 Korea, Box 34, RG 84, FSP 2498, *USPOLAD Classified General Correspondence*, NDL.

⁸⁵ A Letter from Korean Diplomatic Mission in Japan to GS, SCAP, (January 17, 1949), Folder: 1949: 350 Political Affairs – Korea, Box 48, RG 84, FSP 1416, *USPOLAD Classified General Correspondence*, NDL.

during the 1950s.⁸⁶ On October 22, 1948, shortly after the establishment of the ROK, President Rhee expressed his willingness to rebuild economic ties with Japan as follows:

I hope to reestablish normal trade relations between South Korea and Japan. We will try to forget about the past, and we will forget it. If the Japanese treat Koreans sincerely, amicable relations will be improved.⁸⁷

When President Rhee visited Japan and met with General MacArthur and Prime Minister Yoshida on February 18, 1950, Rhee characterized this visit to Japan as the “demonstration of Korean government’s will” to forget the past and cooperate with a different “democratic nation” in the locus of the “united front against communism.”⁸⁸ In a press interview on the same day, President Rhee stressed that the “cold war” was now “turning into a serious flame in Korea,” and appealed to Japanese people to “consider the fact” that the South Korean troops “fighting for the freedom of Koreans” were also “defending the freedom of Japanese people.”⁸⁹ The South Korean Minister portrayed the government’s diplomatic approach to Japan as “anti-communist cooperation” (*pan’gong hyōpcho*) or “preventive cooperation against communism” (*panggong hyōpcho*).⁹⁰ In fact, during Japan-South Korea trade talks held in Seoul in October 1949, South Korean government officials had even proposed setting up an “intelligence service” within the

⁸⁶ On Rhee administration’s anti-Japanese political rhetoric, see Sung-Hwa Cheong, *The Politics of Anti-Japanese Sentiment in Korea: Japanese-South Korean Relations under American Occupation, 1945-1952* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991). According to Chong-Sik Lee, scholars have attributed clashes in Japanese-South Korean normalization talks during the 1950s to President Rhee’s “truculent anti-Japanese attitude.” Lee also portrays Japan-South Korea relations during the Rhee administration as “the clash of emotions.” See Chong-Sik Lee, *Japan and Korea: The Political Dimension* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1985), pp.23-24.

⁸⁷ Syngman Rhee, “On South Korea-Japan Trade Relations” (October 23, 1948), in *Collections of President Syngman Rhee’s Speeches* (Seoul: Public Information Office, 1953), p.183, National Assembly Library, Seoul, Korea.

⁸⁸ *Chosŏn Ilbo*, February 19, 1950.

⁸⁹ *Kukto Sinmun*, February 19, 1950.

⁹⁰ *Chosŏn Ilbo*, February 22, 1950

Korean Diplomatic Mission in Japan so that the Mission could “work in cooperation with [the] Japanese police” against the “misdeeds” of Koreans in Japan.⁹¹

Although the cold war realpolitik for “anti-communist cooperation” brought the two top government leaders to the same table in February 1950, Japan-South Korea relations had in fact been infused with bitter discordance at the site of the “Korean problem in Japan.” For the South Korean authorities, the heavy-handed measures toward the “misdeeds” of Koreans in Japan that the Japanese government and police authorities had continued to employ appeared as the lack of respect for the new Korean government and its claim of sovereignty over overseas Koreans. On April 21, 1949, in the aftermath of the so-called “Fukagawa incident” where some six hundred Japanese police officers besieged a Korean residential area and searched every single Korean passerby to arrest suspects, the Korean Diplomatic Mission in Japan wrote to SCAP as follows:

In spite of the fact that due respect and proper pro[t]jection should be accorded to the right of the Korean residents in Japan as foreign nationals, there are still innumerable cases of maltreatment of Korean nationals by the Japanese.⁹²

There had been even some difficulty between Japanese and South Korean authorities to have pragmatic conversations together about the “Korean problem” in Japan. According to Cloyce Huston of SCAP Diplomatic Section, SCAP brought Japanese and South Korean officials into direct discussion with each other at “various times, with unfortunate results.” When SCAP arranged a conference between Korean Diplomatic Mission representatives and Japanese Ministry of Education officials in order to discuss the “Korean school question” in Japan, their

⁹¹ “Attitudes of the Korean Government towards Japan” [no date], attached to “Memorandum” (October 25, 1949), Folder: 1949: 510.1 Trade Arrangements – Korea, Box 52, RG 84, FSP 3688, *USPOLAD Classified General Correspondence*, NDL. Also see Ōta Osamu, “Daikan Minkoku juritsu to Nihon: Nikkan tsūshō kōshō no bunseki o chūshin ni,” *Chōsen gakuho* 173 (1999).

⁹² Letter from Korean Diplomatic Mission in Japan to Diplomatic Section, SCAP (April 21, 1949), Folder: 1949: 350 Political Affairs – Korea, Box 48, RG 84, FSP 1416, *USPOLAD Classified General Correspondence*, NDL.

talks “degenerated into a battle of bitterness and recrimination.” Huston described their emotional discordance as follows:

Although we have no doubt of the bona fide desire of high Korean Government officials to put aside *Korean prejudices* in favor of the practical advantages to be gained in recognizing the mutuality of Japanese-Korean interests, the fact remains that in almost every case when such direct negotiations or discussions have been permitted[,] the participants have betrayed their inability to control their sentiments and expressions thereof. [my emphasis]⁹³

In other words, what had characterized Japan-South Korea relations behind the scenes was not so much cold war realpolitik manifested as “anti-communist cooperation.” It was rather the politics of postcolonial recognition even at the government higher official level, or what Edward Said has called “politics of blame” between the former colonizers and colonized.⁹⁴ Moreover, although Huston attributed their discordance only to “Korean prejudices,” the idea of Japanese racial superiority that Japanese elites (and the general populace as well) still held was probably another obstacle in Japanese-South Korean direct negotiations. The following conversation the Director of the Control Bureau of the Japanese Foreign Office Wajima Eiji had with a SCAP official shows how Japanese imperial racial ideology still lingered in official parlance:

Mr. Wajima said that the Japanese have always considered the Koreans to be an inferior race. He said that a very elaborate study on the racial characteristics of Koreans had been prepared during the war and that it had concluded that the mental and social capacities of the Koreans were of a very primitive nature. He said that this feeling on the part of the Japanese that Koreans are inferior to a great extent motivates Japanese uncertainty and hostility in regard to the Koreans.⁹⁵

⁹³ Huston to Allison, [no title] (February 17, 1950), Folder: 1950-52: 510.1 Korea-Japan, Box 71, RG 84, FSP 429, *USPOLAD Classified General Correspondence*, NDL.

⁹⁴ Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Knopf, 1993), p.19.

⁹⁵ Richard Finn, “Memorandum of Conversation: Koreans in Japan” (February 3, 1949), enclosure to “Status of Koreans in Japan” (February 18, 1949), 894.4016/2-1849, Reel 15, *Records of the U.S. Department of State Relating to the Internal Affairs of Japan, 1945-1949*.

Indeed, the government policy where such “Japanese uncertainty and hostility” was most explicitly reflected was the unfulfilled project for the mass deportation of Koreans in Japan. The Japanese government desired to deport the entire Korean population from Japan, and Prime Minister Yoshida attempted in vain to convince SCAP of the necessity of mass deportation. On July 11, 1949, the time when the government had been reinforcing its counter-offensive against the JCP and a series of radicalized labor strikes, Prime Minister Yoshida sent his representatives to a SCAP official to discuss the “problems resulting from the large number of Koreans residing in Japan.” According to the memorandum of their conversations, Shirasu Jirō, one of the Japanese representatives, referred to “several recent outbreaks of violence and labor disorder” and claimed that “considerable numbers of Koreans” had been involved in these outbreaks and in some cases had “provided the initiatives.” As a possible countermeasure, Shirasu proposed the deportation of “some 500,000 or 600,000 Koreans, both of North Korean sympathy and of sympathy with the Republic of Korea.”⁹⁶ Soon, Prime Minister Yoshida wrote directly to MacArthur:

[W]e are compelled to seek an early solution of the question of the Korean residents, who total approximately 1,000,000, of whom about one half are illegal entrants. I would like to see all these Koreans repatriated to their home peninsula. My reasons are: (1) The food situation, now and in future, of Japan does not permit the maintenance of the excess population.... (2) A great majority of the Koreans are not contributing at all to the economic reconstruction of Japan. (3) Worse still, there is a large percentage of criminal elements among the Koreans....⁹⁷ [English from the original text]

⁹⁶ The Foreign Service of the United States of America, “Japanese Suggestion for Repatriation of Koreans” (July 11, 1949), Folder: 1949: 350 Political Affairs – Korea, Box 48, RG 84, FSP 1415, *USPOLAD Classified General Correspondence*, NDL. Shirasu also stated that Yoshida held “grave concern for the need of a drastic attack upon Japan’s Korean problem.”

⁹⁷ The letter has not date, but it is estimated that Yoshida sent it between August and early September. For the full text of this letter, see Rinjiro Sodei, ed., *Correspondence between General MacArthur, Prime Minister Yoshida and Other High Japanese Officials, 1945-1951* (Tokyo: Hosei University Press, 2000), pp.146-148.

Undoubtedly, the South Korean government would not want, nor agree to, the deportation of the entire Korean population that Yoshida described as “not contributing at all to the economic reconstruction of Japan.” However, to a certain degree, South Korean President Rhee did hold one thing in common with Yoshida – the idea that the deportation of certain groups of Koreans in Japan to the South Korean regime was necessary. Since its inauguration in August 1948, President Rhee repeatedly asked SCAP to deport Korean “troublemakers” and “terrorists” (read: Communists) to South Korea, the undesirable elements that the Rhee administration believed were damaging its reputation outside Korea. In early September 1948, within a month after Rhee had seized presidential power, one U.S. official in South Korea informed the U.S. Political Advisor in Japan that “it was [President Rhee’s] intention to repatriate all the low class and criminal Koreans living in Japan who were giving a Korea bad reputation” and Rhee had expressed this idea to him “several times before.”⁹⁸ Likewise, in April 1949, President Rhee notified SCAP that the South Korean government would be “pleased to facilitate the return to Korea some of the Koreans who may cause trouble in Japan by agitation, by spreading pernicious propaganda, by violation of laws, or by disturbance of peace.”⁹⁹ The Korean Diplomatic Mission in Japan even sent a list to SCAP of those whom the Mission recommended for deportation, a list filled mostly with the names of *zainichi* Korean Communist leaders.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ A memorandum from Drumright to Sebald (September 9, 1948), Folder: 1948: 701 Korea, Box 30, RG 84, FSP 223, *USPOLAD Classified General Correspondence*, NDL.

⁹⁹ A letter from the Korean Diplomatic Mission in Japan to SCAP (April 7, 1949), Folder: Chinese, Koreans, Formosans, Legislation Affecting, Box 1040, Legal Section, RG 331, NARA (LS 13375, *GHQ/SCAP Records*, NDL).

¹⁰⁰ “Korean Communists in Japan” (June 9, 1950), Folder: 1950-52: 350.21 Communism, Box 9, RG 84, FSP 1892, *USPOLAD General Records*, NDL. Also see the Korean Diplomatic Mission’s letter included in a check sheet titled “Korean Terrorists” (February 11, 1949), Folder: 1949: 350.2 Political Movements, Organizations, and Activities, Box 49, RG 84, FSP 1423, *USPOLAD Classified General Correspondence*, NDL.

SCAP never accepted the South Korean proposals, nor gave the green light to the Japanese government for its drastic deportation plan. However, the forcible mass deportation of Koreans from Japan indeed had been a serious option among SCAP policy-planners seeking a “solution” to the “Korean problem” in Japan. According to a SCAP report sent to the Secretary of State on May 6, 1948, policy-planners within SCAP had previously suggested during the early stage of occupation that “all Koreans in Japan should be forcibly repatriated to Korea” – a recommendation that had been declined by “higher authority.” Later, in the wake of what the Occupation authorities called “Kobe riots” in late April 1948, “informal suggestions” emerged within SCAP that “forcible repatriation might be the only solution to the Korean problem in Japan.”¹⁰¹ In August 1948, when SCAP policy-planners began to draft the first comprehensive “staff study” on the Korean problem in Japan, the possibility of forcible deportation became an issue for consideration again. The intelligence section (G-2) admitted that the “ideal solution” to the Korean problem would be to “rid Japan of this large national minority,” by means of either “compulsory, progressive repatriation” or the “election of Japanese nationality” on the part of Koreans. Yet, G-2 understood that a “compulsory solution” would be “undesirable.”¹⁰² The Legal Section of SCAP also warned that “any official statement to the effect that a minority in Japan ought to leave, [*sic*] might be cause for concern and misinterpretation by other minorities in the Far East.”¹⁰³

It is important to note that these concerns within SCAP about the “compulsory solution” came up amidst increasing global concern over the treatment of racial minorities and racial

¹⁰¹ Sebald to the Secretary of State, “Status of Koreans in Japan” (May 6, 1948), 895.012/5-648, Reel 5, *Records of the U.S. Department of State Relating to the Internal Affairs of Korea, 1945-1949*.

¹⁰² The G-2 stated: “The ideal solution of the Korean problem would be to rid Japan of this large national minority, either by compulsory, progressive repatriation or election of Japanese nationality on the part of said Koreans.” See G-2 to Diplomatic Section, Check Sheet “Policies for Treatment of Koreans in Japan” (August 14, 1948), Folder: 1948: 701 Korea, Box 30, RG 84, FSP 224, *USPOLAD Classified General Correspondence*, NDL.

¹⁰³ Legal Section to Diplomatic Section, Check Sheet, “Policies for Treatment of Koreans in Japan” (August 16, 1948), *ibid*.

discrimination. The United Nations established the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities within the Commission on Human Rights in 1947, and the UN Assembly often became the locus of the international criticism not only of South Africa's apartheid policies and violations of human rights but also of U.S. domestic race relations. As historian Penny M. Von Eschen has succinctly argued, the Truman administration understood "racial discrimination in America as its Achilles heel in a propaganda battle with the Soviet Union for the allegiance of Africa and Asia."¹⁰⁴ "Race" emerged as a crucial ideological component in the U.S. pursuit of global hegemony and anti-communist alignment. As I have shown in the previous chapter, a SCAP report sent to the Secretary of State in early May 1948 presented the significance of the "Korean problem in Japan" and emphasized that "[a]ny failure to resolve a minority problem of this sort would undoubtedly have unfortunate effects on United States foreign policy and might readily provide opportunity for subversive forces to exploit the situation to their own ends."¹⁰⁵

Obviously, SCAP was aware of the growing significance of race and minority issues in the international arena and abandoned the "ideal solution" of "rid[ding] Japan of this large national minority." Instead, SCAP decided to get rid of the symbol and source of postwar *zainichi* Korean empowerment, the Korean League in Japan. On August 22, 1949, Colonel Jack Napier of the Government Section of SCAP had a meeting with Japanese government officials in

¹⁰⁴ Penny M. Von Eschen, *Race against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937-1957* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), p.126.

¹⁰⁵ Sebald to the Secretary of State, "Status of Koreans in Japan" (May 6, 1948), 895.012/5-648, Reel 5, *Records of the U.S. Department of State Relating to the Internal Affairs of Korea, 1945-1949*. It seemed that many Occupation officials had in their mind the so-called American "Negro question" in dealing with the "Korean problem" in Japan. In a different context, a U.S. military official in Japan compared Japanese racism toward Koreans with U.S. domestic race relations. One U.S. military documents shows: "At the outset Major Goff compared the Koreans in Japan to the Negro in the U.S. The average Jap thinks the Korean is inferior. Yet it is hard to tell the two peoples apart, he said, especially the short Koreans." "Repatriation (Korean)" [August 1947], Folder: Orders and Directives: Japanese Surrender and Status of Non-Japanese, Controlled Korea, Box 45, United States Army Forces in Korea, XXIV, Corps, G-2, Historical Section, RG 554, NARA.

the wake of a shocking incident in Yamaguchi Prefecture on August 19, where members of the Korean League carried out assaults on the office of rightist Residents Union and its members as a result of ongoing conflicts.¹⁰⁶ Napier told the Japanese officials, Attorney-General Ueda and the Chief of the Special Investigation Bureau Yoshikawa, that the incident in Yamaguchi Prefecture “gave bad impressions to the people of the world” concerning the Korean League and thus it was the “best time to dissolve” the Korean League as an “undemocratic and terroristic organization.”¹⁰⁷

The Japanese officials supported SCAP’s decision. In the meeting, Attorney-General Ueda told Napier that he had “always felt the necessity” of disbanding the Korean League. Ueda even proposed the dissolution of the rightist Korean Residents Union as well, claiming:

Furthermore, the Korean League is not the only one that resorts to mass violence. There is a group in Mindan (other Korean organization) who resorts to mass violence in cooperation with Japanese gangs and bosses. It is necessary to take steps against this group.

However, Napier held a different view. Apparently, SCAP expected the Korean Residents Union to become a useful collaborator for the U.S. occupation of Japan. Napier explained to the Japanese officials that the Korean Residents Union “should be strengthened” because it had been working for “a certain foreign country” (read the United States).¹⁰⁸

The Japanese government soon began to prepare for the compulsory dissolution of the Korean League. The Chief of the Special Investigation Bureau Yoshikawa Mitsusada, a former Higher Thought Police officer who had earned a reputation by breaking the Richard Sorge spy

¹⁰⁶ On the process and background of SCAP’s decision to ban the Korean League, see Kim, *Sengo Nihon seiji to zainichi Chōsenjin mondai*, pp.561-569.

¹⁰⁷ Memorandum of the Conversations between Napier, Ueda and Yoshikawa (August 22, 1949), Folder: Choren: Chosenjin Remmei (Korean League) Book I (1949), Box 2275HH, Government Section, RG 331, NARA (GS(B) 04270, *GHQ/SCAP Records*, NDL).

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

ring in 1941, took the lead in crafting a dissolution plan in the Japanese government.¹⁰⁹

Yoshikawa and Attorney-General Ueda took advantage of the Organization Control Ordinance that the government had enacted in April 1949 for cracking down “anti-democratic organizations,” and targeted the entire organization of the Korean League and the leftist Korean Youth Alliance in Japan. On September 8, the Japanese government ordered the Korean League and Korean Democratic Youth Alliance to disband their organizations, including Korean League’s 48 local headquarters, 620 branches and 1,214 offices and Youth Alliance’s 48 local headquarters, 458 branches and 306 offices.¹¹⁰ The Japanese government also confiscated all their properties. A Japanese major newspaper characterized these countermeasures as “the first shot at the extreme left,”¹¹¹ and the clampdown on the two major *zainichi* Korean leftist associations indeed marked the “declaration of war on leftist forces” by the Japanese government.¹¹²

Conclusion

In a press interview on September 16, 1949, a week after the Japanese government ordered the dissolution of the Korean League and Korean Democratic Youth Alliance in Japan, South Korean President Rhee expressed his view on the Japanese government’s action as follows:

I heard that a Korean communist party in Japan [sic] was disbanded. Yet, it is nonsense if the Japanese government imposed dissolution *only* on Korean organizations for the reason that communist parties were not desirable.... If the

¹⁰⁹ Takemae, *The Allied Occupation of Japan*, p.479.

¹¹⁰ The numbers are cited from Pak, *Kaihō go zainichi Chōsenjin undōshi*, p.241. The Japanese government also ordered the dissolution of one local headquarters (with two branches and two offices) of the rightist Korean Residents Union in Japan and one local headquarters of the rightist youth association as well.

¹¹¹ *Asahi Shimbun*, September 9, 1949.

¹¹² Ogino, *Sengo chian taisei no kakuritsu*, p.93.

Japanese government launches countermeasures against communist parties, it should deal with the Japanese Communist Party as well....¹¹³ [my emphasis]

In this statement, President Rhee criticized the Japanese government for not so much disbanding Korean “communist” organizations in Japan but for targeting “only” Koreans and not doing the same to the Japanese Communist Party. In other words, President Rhee, known as an “anti-Japanese” nationalist leader, did not necessarily take a “nationalist” approach to the Korean problem in Japan when the “problem” required “anti-communist cooperation” with the Japanese government.

Yet, while both South Korean and Japanese governments shared common concerns in consolidating their anti-communist regimes respectively, particularly over the “Korean problem” in Japan, the two governments approached the problem with conflicting interests as revealed in the deportation issue. The South Korean government limited the scope of deportation within the frame of communist containment, with the objective of uprooting *zainichi* Korean Communist leaders. However, Japanese Prime Minister Yoshida approached deportation measures as an ultimate solution to the “Korean problem” by means of uprooting the entire postcolonial Korean population in Japan, which the South Korean government would not accept.

Likewise, their approaches to the “problem” of the Korean League in Japan differed in a fundamental level. The Rhee administration targeted the Korean League primarily out of concern over its close ties with the North Korean regime and its anti-South activities and propaganda spreading among Koreans in Japan. On the other hand, the Japanese government had been striving to regain full authority and control over Korean former colonial subjects in Japan since the aftermath of defeat, and viewed the Korean League as the symbol and source of *zainichi* Korean empowerment. During 1949, the Yoshida administration took full advantage of

¹¹³ *Chosŏn Ilbo*, September 17, 1949.

emerging global cold war politics in order to subjugate and possibly eliminate the Korean population in Japan. In short, the “Korean problem” became a locus of possible mutual collaborations and postcolonial frictions between anti-communist governments in the former metropole and colony.

In this sense, U.S. “informal empire” in East Asia was not necessarily the monolithic transnational regime of communist containment. As I have discussed above, Japanese Prime Minister Yoshida and South Korean President Rhee emerged as the critical local actors of U.S. “informal empire,” the political “collaborators” in the U.S. cold war strategy of global communist containment. During 1948 and 1950, both administrations respectively consolidated their anti-communist regimes through either U.S. direct or indirect control. Japanese and South Korean governments also started to work on the establishment of political and economic ties for “anti-communist cooperation.” However, the political alliance between the two local collaborators was still deeply anchored in racial antagonism and the postcolonial “politics of blame” behind the scenes. In their bilateral relations, the immediate issue of how to treat the postcolonial Korean population in Japan often prevailed over the necessities of cold war realpolitik that the United States was pushing forward.

Although the Japanese and South Korean political alliance took the form of more indirect and rather fragile cooperation in their cold war diplomacy, their efforts to contain *zainichi* Korean leftist movements developed in tandem in the both countries, constituting the transnational regime of communist containment. The Syngman Rhee administration extended the reach of its oppressive state structures to cover even the Korean communities in Japan. In other words, the Rhee administration attempted to construct a trans-border anti-communist regimentation of Korean society – whether on the peninsula or in Japan. The Rhee regime

transformed the two major *zainichi* Korean rightist organizations into an arm of the South Korean state apparatus of social control and mobilization, such as the National Society and the *Taehan* Youth Corps. The rightist Korean Residents Union also accepted its role as a *zainichi* Korean collaborator to implement U.S. cold war strategy on the ground. In Japan, the Yoshida administration reinforced its counter-offensive against radicalizing Communist-led labor movements and the growing inter-racial solidarity between Japanese and *zainichi* Korean leftists. Under the instruction of SCAP, the Yoshida administration prepared for the aggressive countermeasure of disbanding the Korean League in Japan, the symbol and source of postwar *zainichi* Korean empowerment. The compulsory dissolution of the Korean League in September 1949 heralded the Japanese government's "declaration of war on leftist forces."

In contrast to the cold war collaborator regimes and their fragile and indirect "anti-communist cooperation," the JCP and the Korean League in Japan demonstrated strong inter-racial solidarity on the ground. During 1949, the Korean League leaders launched a campaign to spur local Korean residents to join the JCP and fight together against Japanese reactionary politics fueled by the Yoshida administration. Moreover, *zainichi* Korean leftist movements established close ties with the North Korean regime. Soon, during the Korean War, the collaboration between *zainichi* Korean leftists' and JCP's "anti-war" (and anti-U.S.) movements would mark the critical convergence between Japanese revolutionary struggles in U.S./Allied-occupied Japan and North Korean revolutionary war in the Korean peninsula. The next chapter provides a further examination of the transnational linkages between (*zainichi*) Korean and Japanese revolutionary movements.

PART III
The Korean War Comes to U.S./Allied-Occupied Japan, 1950-1952

CHAPTER 5

*Fighting the Korean War in Japan:
Revolutionary and Counter-Revolutionary Struggles and Blurred National
Boundaries*

Introduction

National unification [*choguk t'ong'il*] is the first and most important wish that every single Korean brethren has been hoping will be fulfilled.... The thirty million brethren are now at a critical juncture where we have to fight and beat off any obstacle that interferes and intervenes in our war for liberation [*haebang chŏn*], the war to recover our national lands by our own efforts and seek the complete fulfillment of the happiness and freedom of the nation.
—Korean United Democratic Front in Japan (*Chaeil Chosŏn T'ong'il Minju Chŏnsŏn*), July 20, 1950.¹

The Korea problem [*Chōsen mondai*] is the principal locus of current struggles for the Japanese revolution. ... Ever since the war of imperialist aggression against Korea began, the masses of both the Japanese and Korean peoples [*minzoku*] came to see clearly who the common enemy is. Now is the time to form joint struggles against the common enemy, and it is the glorious duty mandated by proletarian internationalism.
—Japanese Communist Party, September 3, 1950.²

[T]he Japanese say that deportation of from two to three hundred [subversive Koreans in Japan] would make a great difference in the behavior of the remainder. ... [A]t one time the Rhee government expressed a willingness to take on all whom SCAP wished to send there, but it was generally understood that this would be sending the deportees to certain death. Now, of course, deportees could be sent to a UN camp.
—Committee on Counter Measures against Communism in the Far East, June 15, 1951.³

¹ Korean United Democratic Front in Japan, “An Appeal to All Brethren concerning the Establishment of the Korean Democratic Front in Japan for Unification” (July 20, 1950), reprinted in Pak Kyōngsik, *Zainichi Chōsenjin kankei shiryō shūsei (sengo hen) vol.4: Zainichi Chōsen Tōitsu Minshu Sensen kankei* (Tokyo: Fujishuppan, 2000), p.3.

² Japanese Communist Party, “Directive 415: On *Zainichi* Korean Movements” (September 3, 1950), Reel 5, *Sengo Nihon Kyōsantō kankei shiryō* (Tokyo: Fuji Shuppan, 2007-2008).

³ “Minutes of Fourth Meeting of Committee on Counter Measures against Communist in the Far East” (June 15, 1951), Folder: Committee on Counter Measures against Communism in the Far East, Box 2223, Government Section, SCAP, Record Group 331 (Allied Operational and Occupation Headquarters, World War II), National Archives and Record Administration, College Park, MD. (Henceforth, RG 331, NARA.)

If the Korean War eventually became memorialized as the “forgotten war” for the mainstream American public, then the war, from its outset, was already the “fire on the opposite shore” (*taigan no kaji*) for the Japanese – a Japanese saying which means watching someone else’s misfortune as a bystander. On July 1, 1950, a week after the outbreak of the war across the sea, the Japanese major national newspaper *Asahi Shimbun* published an editorial titled “The War in Korea and the Stance of Japan,” where the editors asserted that Japan and Japanese people had “nothing to do with this war” and that they were “outsiders” (*daisansha*).⁴ For the Japanese in the midst of a still-tottering economic recovery, the war across the sea even appeared as a possible welcome “boom” in their eyes. On July 18, *Asahi* also published another editorial about the impact of the war on the Japanese economy, titled “The Korean Boom.” Within a month after the outbreak of the war in Korea, people had already started to believe in an economic “boom” so much so that *Asahi* warned its readers against being “too optimistic.”⁵

Japanese Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru later called the Korean War “a gift of the gods,”⁶ and scholars in turn have also replicated this narrative framework by portraying Japan as simply the one-dimensional beneficiary of the wartime boom. Yet, Japan under U.S./Allied occupation was not at all a passive bystander or outsider in the Korean War. When the full-fledged civil war broke out in the Korean peninsula on June 25, 1950, Washington expanded the authority of General Douglas MacArthur, who was the Supreme Commander for Allied Powers in Japan, to become also the commander of the United Nations Forces in Korea. MacArthur immediately mobilized the U.S. military troops occupying Japan to fight against North Korean forces in Korea. As a result, U.S./Allied-occupied Japan emerged as an indispensable “rear

⁴ *Asahi Shimbun*, July 1, 1950.

⁵ *Asahi Shimbun*, July 18, 1950.

⁶ John W. Dower, *Empire and Aftermath: Yoshida Shigeru and the Japanese Experience, 1878-1954* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1979), p.316.

base” for the UN war effort in Korea. “[W]ith amazing speed,” in the words of Robert Murphy, the first postwar U.S. Ambassador to Japan, the Japanese government “did transform their islands into one huge supply depot, without which the Korean War could not have been fought.”⁷ The government and people in Japan provided practically everything that the UN Command needed: from the production of munitions to the manpower and transportation for sending these materials to Korea, and even the minesweeping of the Korean coast – everything but soldiers.⁸

Although the Korean War, as Murphy emphasizes, “could not have been fought” without Japan’s commitment, Japan occupies little space in the scholarship of Korean War history. International and Cold War histories focus primarily on state actors who directly fought in or maneuvered the first “hot war” of the Cold War: the United States, Soviet Union, mainland China and the North and South Koreans. The new counter-narratives of social history that South Korean scholars have recently put forth center their focus on the Korean peninsula, in search of “people” in Korean War history.⁹ In both historical narratives, however, Japan is almost

⁷ Robert Murphy, *Diplomat among Warriors* (New York: Doubleday, 1964), p.347.

⁸ For an important work on Japan’s role as a rear base during the Korean War, see Yamazaki Shizuo, *Shijitsu de kataru Chōsen Sensō kyōryoku no zen’yō* (Tokyo: Hon No Izumisha, 1998); Nam Kijōng, “Han’guk chōnjaeng kwa ilbon: ‘kiji kukka’ ūi chōngjaeng kwa p’yōnghwa,” *P’yonghwa yōn’gu* 9 (2000). See also Reinhard Drifte, “Japan’s Involvement in the Korean War,” in James Cotton and Ian Neary, eds., *The Korean War in History* (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press International, 1989). In fact, historian Tessa Morris-Suzuki recently revealed that over 100 Japanese civilians actually served for U.S. military units in Korea, mostly as cooks, drivers, and “houseboys” in U.S. uniforms, and in some cases engaged in battles against North Korean and Chinese enemies (Tessa Morris-Suzuki, “Post-War Warriors: Japanese Combatants in the Korean War,” *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, Vol 10, Issue 31, No 1, July 30, 2012).

⁹ For a comprehensive overview on the state of the field, see Allan Reed Millett, *The Korean War* (Washington D.C.: Potomac Books, 2007). Recent studies of Korean War history have revealed previously unknown stories by taking full advantage of newly-declassified Russian and Chinese documents, which has enabled historians to pursue questions such as: “Why did Stalin give the green light to North Korean leader Kim Il-sung for the war?” and “Why did Chinese Communist leader Mao Zedong decide to participate in the war?” Particularly, the Cold War International History Project of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars has published numerous new works and English translations of those newly-declassified documents. Their “international history” approach focuses mostly on policy-makers and “inter-state” relations. On the other hand, recent studies published by Korean scholars in South Korea have started to shed new light on the social history of the Korean War, such as on civilian massacres and “popular experiences” of wartime violence and mobilization. Their primary concern is centered on how Koreans living in the Korean peninsula suffered and lived through the tragedy of the war, and thus their narrative framework and unit of analysis is uni-nationally focused. For a ground-breaking work of the social history of the Korean War, see Kim Tongch’un, *Chōnjaeng kwa sahwe: Uri ege Han’guk chōnjaeng ūn muōsiōnna?*

completely missing. On the other hand, in the history of postwar Japan, the Korean War appears as no more than a distant historical event that changed or impacted the trajectory of postwar reconstruction, particularly Japan's remilitarization and economic recovery.¹⁰ While Japan is portrayed as an outsider in Korean War history, Korea is nowhere to be found in the historical account of postwar Japan.

In order to reveal and trace the complexity of the transnational linkages of the Korean War, this chapter discusses previously unexplored issues regarding the scope of the war: How was the Korean War fought in Japan? In particular, this chapter illuminates the political dynamics of the Korean and Japanese Communist-led "anti-war" (anti-U.S. military intervention) movement and the U.S.-Japan-South Korea communist containment. Moreover, I demonstrate that the Korean War brought the two separate national entities of Japan and South Korea into the same field of vision and practice of revolution and counterrevolution.

Indeed, what was at stake during the Korean War was the newly established national boundaries of a post-empire nation-state Japan and two-state Korea. The U.S./Allied defeat of Japan in World War II and their subsequent occupation of Japan and Korea shattered, if not completely destroyed, the structural edifice of the Japanese empire and disintegrated the forced unity of *Naisen-ittai*, the Japanese imperial agenda of forging "Japan and Korea as one body."

(Kyōnggi-do: Tolbege, 2000) (English translation, *The Unending Korean War: A Social History* [Larkspur: Tamal Vista Publications, 2009]). Since the publication of Kim's monograph, numerous works that address civilian massacres and popular experiences in Korea during the Korean War have been published in South Korean academia and journalism.

¹⁰ For instance, Michael Schaller, *The American Occupation of Japan: The Origins of the Cold War in Asia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), pp.288-289; William F. Nimmo, ed., *The Occupation of Japan: The Impact of the Korean War* (Norfolk: General Douglas MacArthur Foundation, 1990); Roger Dingman, "The Dagger and the Gift: The Impact of the Korean War on Japan," *The Journal of American-East Asian Relations* vol.2, 1 (Spring 1993); Walter LaFeber, *The Clash: U.S.-Japanese Relations throughout History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1998), pp.283-295; John W. Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1999), pp.541-545; Michael Schaller, "The Korean War: The Economic and Strategic Impact on Japan, 1950-1953," in William Stueck, ed., *The Korean War in World History* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2004). Exception is Reinhard Drifte's article. He rather focuses on Japan's "involvement" in the Korean War (Drifte, "Japan's Involvement in the Korean War").

The former metropole of Japan and the former colony of Korea became separate entities as new nation-states, although the Korean nation had two state structures. The outbreak of the Korean War blurred this separation between these two national entities. UN Commander General MacArthur seized command of the ROK (Republic of Korea) Army and reined in wartime South Korea as the de facto sovereign power. MacArthur of Supreme Commander for Allied Powers (SCAP), the sovereign power of U.S./Allied-occupied Japan, transformed Japan into a rear base that was directly linked with the UN war effort in Korea; “Korea” now became part and parcel of the objectives of the U.S./Allied occupation of Japan. Under the single de facto sovereign power of the U.S. military authorities, Japan and ROK functioned as two overlapping regions rather than two separate national entities. If, as historian Steven Hugh Lee has discussed, the U.S. global cold war strategy of containment took the form of “informal empire” building in Asia, this chapter shows that the Korean War marked a critical event that revealed what this “informal empire” looked like.¹¹

Moreover, the blurring between Korea and Japan under the UN war effort created a new space for *zainichi* Koreans (Koreans in Japan) to fight directly for the ongoing civil war in Korea ever since at least 1949. In June 1950, *zainichi* Korean rightist leaders of ROK-affiliated associations launched a campaign for recruiting “volunteer soldiers,” and sent some 600 *zainichi* Korean youths to South Korea via the UN Command.¹² On the other hand, *zainichi* Korean Communist leaders, who belonged to the Japanese Communist Party (JCP), mobilized a massive anti-war campaign that protested against and also tried to sabotage the U.S. remaking of Japan as a rear base for military intervention in the Korean War. Working for the cause of national

¹¹ Steven Hugh Lee, *Outposts of Empire: Korea, Vietnam and Origins of the Cold War in Asia, 1949-1954* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1995).

¹² I have examined this issue in my “Chōsen sensō to zainichi Chōsenjin: giyūhei haken no mondai o chūshin ni,” Dōjidaishi Gakkai, ed., *Chōsen hantō to Nihon no dōjidaishi* (Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Hyōronsha, 2005).

unification under the North Korean regime, the *zainichi* Korean Communist leaders also participated in JCP-led revolutionary movements in Japan, believing that the Communist seizure of power in the rear base would be the only way to defeat the ongoing U.S. military “invasion” of their nation that was fighting a war for unification. In this chapter, I discuss how Japan became a crucial locus of the transnationally linked revolutionary and counter-revolutionary struggles conterminous with the development of the civil war in the Korean peninsula. I first briefly analyze the impact of the Korean War on *zainichi* Korean and Japanese Communist revolutionary strategy in the following section, and then examine the political dynamics between *zainichi* Korean and Japanese Communist anti-war campaigns and U.S.-Japan-South Korea communist containment.

Converging Visions: *Zainichi* Korean and Japanese Communists for Solidarity

Nation/class, nationalism/proletarian internationalism, and Korea/Japan – the questions of the proper aim, scope, and method of revolution had always haunted *zainichi* Korean Communist revolutionaries. *Zainichi* Korean leaders, whether Communist or not, all shared a great passion for participating directly or indirectly in the new nation-state building in their now-liberated homeland of Korea under U.S. and Soviet occupations. Simultaneously, *zainichi* Korean leaders were also faced with the reality that their own physical and material lives and those of their over 600,000 liberated brethren, other *zainichi* Koreans, were still anchored in the former metropole, Japanese society. The *zainichi* Korean Communist leaders, who had been serving both Korean Communities in Japan and the Japanese Communist Party, understood that the thorough “liberation” of Koreans remaining in Japan would depend primarily on the radical “democratic revolution” of Japan that the JCP was fighting against the Japanese ancien régime. They

believed that the liberation of *zainichi* Koreans from “exploitation” and institutionalized racial discrimination in Japanese society was contingent on the elimination of old “reactionary forces” and ultimately the emperor system. Thus, the task in front of the *zainichi* Korean Communists was a twofold nature to their commitment to revolution. One side required their devotion to the establishment of a unified, democratic government in Korea – what they called “democratic revolution in the homeland.” The other side was for joint struggle together with the rising democratic revolutionary movements in Japan.

The core question confronting *zainichi* Korean Communists was how to synthesize the Korean national agenda and the communist principle of class-based internationalist solidarity. Forging the synthesis of these two different but simultaneous tasks of *zainichi* Korean Communists presented a critical conundrum. For Kim Tuyong, a long-time *zainichi* Korean independence fighter and one of the JCP leaders, a Korean “national question” (*minzoku mondai*) had to be “completely subordinate” to a class struggle when “nation’s interests” (*minzokuteki rieki*) and “class interests” were incompatible with each other.¹³ From the “standpoint of the communist principle,” according to Kim’s article published in May 1947, *zainichi* Korean Communists were obliged to work beyond “Korean” movements on behalf of “broader revolutionary movements.” The “nationalist bias” of both *zainichi* Koreans and the Japanese would only divide the two movements and thereby would “prevent the Party from uniting together through internationalism.” Thus, Kim believed that *zainichi* Korean Communists had to work toward both allying themselves with the Japanese proletariat and also “integrating correctly” the *zainichi* Korean movements into the Japanese revolutionary movements led by the JCP, the only party that would represent both the Japanese proletariat and *zainichi* Koreans.

¹³ Kim Tuyong, “Chōsenjin undō no tadashii hatten no tameni,” *Zen’ei* 16 (May 1947).

But, other *zainichi* Korean Communist leaders and the JCP leadership held a different theory and approach to the reconciliation between two supposed binaries. Apparently, Kim's "standpoint of the communist principle" regarding the binary of "nation" and "class" appeared too dichotomous and inflexible to other *zainichi* Korean Communist leaders and the JCP leadership. In the JCP's directive of September 7, 1947, a document titled "For the Strengthening of Korean Movements," the Party declared that the "two tasks" of *zainichi* Korean Communists could achieve a "harmonious synthesis."¹⁴ According to the directive, the current *zainichi* Korean movements contained two types of "pernicious" approaches to the national issue of building a unified, democratic nation-state in Korea. On the one hand, *zainichi* Korean rightist leaders were establishing close ties with the leader of the "reactionary camp" in Korea, those responsible for hindering the democratic united front in the Korean nation-state building. On the other hand, some leftists only believed in the necessity of fighting against reactionary forces in Japan, underestimating the Korean "nation's [*minzoku no*] strong passion for accomplishing the full independence of their homeland." The JCP leadership presented the latter, let alone the former, approach as "pernicious" because it formulated the two tasks of *zainichi* Korean Communists as if they were in conflict. In other words, it was wrong to "ask what [would come] first, the homeland's revolution or Japan's revolution, and nationalism [*minzokushugi*] or class principle [*kaikyūshugi*]." The Party insisted that a "harmonious synthesis" between two tasks of *zainichi* Korean Communists would be possible in the locus of democratic revolutionary movements in Japan.

Yet, the question still remained: how would the "harmonious synthesis" take place in the locus of democratic movements in Japan? What was the logic behind the possible "harmonious

¹⁴ Japanese Communist Party, "Directive 140: For the Strengthening of Korean Movements" (September 7, 1947), Reel 4, *Sengo Nihon Kyōsantō kankei shiryō* (Tokyo: Fuji Shuppan, 2007-2008).

synthesis” between the “national” question and “class” interests, nationalism and internationalism, the homeland’s revolution and Japan’s revolution? What was the rationale that would satisfy *zainichi* Koreans’ “strong passion for accomplishing the full independence of their homeland” and the necessity of fighting together with Japanese revolutionary movements?

The JCP leadership did not elaborate upon any concrete details to achieve the synthesis between the “two tasks” of *zainichi* Korean Communists in the directive. It simply pointed out the significance of the democratic revolution of Japan for Korea’s independence: “We cannot allow Japan to become an aggressor toward Korean independence again[.]”¹⁵ In fact, it was the “independence of Korea” that *zainichi* Korean Communist leaders often presented as the rationale for *zainichi* Korean collaboration with the JCP fighting for the radical democratic revolution that would uproot the vestiges of the Japanese ancien régime and the surviving emperor system in particular.¹⁶ According to their logic, the fight against the emperor system would not only liberate both *zainichi* Koreans and Japanese people from the oppressive regime but also influence the fate of the Korean nation. For instance, Kim Ch’ŏnhae, a *zainichi* Korean leader and one of the core members of the JCP leadership, believed that the “independence of Korea,” as well as “world peace,” would be secured “only” through “eliminating the Japanese emperor system responsible for aggression” and “establishing the government of a pacifist, democratic people’s republic in Japan.”¹⁷ However, it was still not evident how the *zainichi* Korean fight for the “independence of Korea” was directly linked to their participation in the Japanese revolution. In short, the two did not constitute a thoroughly identical task in the communist revolutionary strategy. The “harmonious synthesis” between the two tasks of

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Chŏng Yŏnghwang, “Kim Tuyong to puroretaria kokusaishugi,” *Zainichi Chōsenjin shi kenkyū* 33 (October 2003).

¹⁷ Kim Chŏnhae, “Waga sokoku no kensetsu o kataru,” *Minshu Chōsen* 3 (June 1946), p.24.

zainichi Korean Communists remained unresolved until “Korea” emerged as the central site of the Japanese revolutionary movement during the Korean War.

The outbreak of the full-fledged war in Korea in June 1950 heralded a transformative event for the JCP and *zainichi* Korean Communist leaders in synthesizing the three key binaries: nation and class, nationalism and internationalism, and Korean national question and the Japanese revolutionary movement. On September 3, 1950, the JCP leadership issued a new directive titled “On *Zainichi* Korean Movements,” where the JCP declared the “Korea problem” (*Chōsen mondai*) as the “principal locus of current struggles for the Japanese revolution.”¹⁸ The directive stated that ever since the “war of imperialist aggression against Korea” began, the current Yoshida administration, “the puppet of international imperialism,” had revealed its willingness to transform Japan into a rear base and to involve Japanese people in the war for the “invasion of Korea.” *Zainichi* Korean Communist members were fighting to defend their “homeland” against foreign military intervention, making determined efforts to sabotage the production and transportation of munitions through collaboration with Japanese workers. The JCP leadership praised the *zainichi* Korean nationalistic struggles as “identical” (*icchi suru*) with the task of the Japanese revolutionary movement, the objective of “sweeping imperialist forces from Japan and smashing their puppet, domestic reactionaries.”

Here, the puzzling “two tasks” conundrum of *zainichi* Korean Communists finally became a “harmonious synthesis,” and the outbreak of the Korean War brought the two national entities, Korea and Japan, into the same field of vision of *zainichi* Korean and Japanese Communist strategy. Moreover, the nationalistic struggles of the *zainichi* Korean Communists now resonated with the JCP leadership, who had drastically shifted their revolutionary

¹⁸ Japanese Communist Party, “Directive 415: On *Zainichi* Korean Movements” (September 3, 1950), Reel 5, *Sengo Nihon Kyōsantō kankei shiryō*.

orientation toward a nationalistic anti-imperialism – Japanese “national liberation” (*minzoku kaihō*) – since early 1950 in line with the Cominform in Moscow.¹⁹ Ironically, it was the JCP’s and *zainichi* Korean Communists’ nationalistic visions that enabled internationalist solidarity. Fighting the Korean War in Japan emerged as the principal locus of nationalistic synthesis between the Japanese and *zainichi* Korean movements in the JCP agenda. Now was the time, in the words of the JCP directive, to “form joint struggles against the common enemy” in accordance with the “glorious duty mandated by proletarian internationalism.”²⁰

Blurred Boundaries: The UN War Effort in Korea and the U.S./Allied Occupation in Japan

As soon as news of the Korean War reached the shores of Japan, appeals for proletarian internationalism burst out onto the streets. *Zainichi* Korean and Japanese activists, although not necessarily Communists, spearheaded guerrilla-like “anti-war” campaigns by scattering leaflets and handbills that blared protests against U.S. and Japanese intervention in the Korean affairs. On June 27, the Japanese local police found a group of Koreans in Sendai City printing leaflets that contained the slogans such as “Non-intervention with racial [*sic*] independence,” “Crush the war-mongers” and “Do not repeat Hiroshima.”²¹ In Nagasaki Prefecture on July 1, Japanese Communist members in Sasebo City distributed to passersby anti-American handbills that accused “American imperialism” of “plotting to wage a war with the blood of the Japanese nation [*minzoku*].”²² In Shimane Prefecture on July 2, one Communist day laborer posted a wall

¹⁹ On this issue, see Ueda Kōichirō, *Sengo kakumei ronsōshi* (Tokyo: Ōtsuki Shoten, 1956), part II; Koyama Hirotake, *Sengo Nihon Kyōsantō shi* (Kyoto: Sangatsu Shobō, 1958), chapter 2; J. Victor Koschmann, *Revolution and Subjectivity in Postwar Japan* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), chapter 5.

²⁰ Japanese Communist Party, “Directive 415: On *Zainichi* Korean Movements” (September 3, 1950), *ibid.*

²¹ CIC Spot Report, “Reactions of Koreans in Japan to Situation in Korea: Oita, Hiroshima, and Hyogo” (June 29, 1950), Folder: CIC Spot Report, 22 June to 15 July 1950, Box 314, G-2, RG 331, NARA (microfiche, G-2 03715, GHQ/SCAP Records, National Diet Library, Tokyo, Japan. Henceforth, *GHQ/SCAP Records*, NDL).

²² Japanese Police, “Concerning the Arrest of Suspects for the Violation of Imperial Ordinance No.311” (July 5, 1950), Folder: Anti-Occupation, Box 279, G-2, RG 331, NARA.

newspaper with the headline, “North Korean Army is the liberation army” on a bulletin board in front of a train station.²³ In Kanagawa Prefecture on July 4, two Korean men carried anti-war handbills into a train and scattered them at several train stations. The handbills exclaimed: “Do not drive Japan into war! Do not send weapons to South Korea!”²⁴ In Yamaguchi Prefecture on July 11, local Korean leaders distributed handbills calling upon railway workers, stevedores and factory workers in Shimonoseki City to “stop railway transportation of American arms to Korea,” “delay sailing of vessels to Korea,” and “investigate which factory or factories [*sic*] are manufacturing arms for Korea.”²⁵ Similarly, the police found several Koreans putting up antiwar leaflets that blared, “Do not let Japan become a powder keg!” and “Oppose the loading of arms in Yokosuka and Yokohama!”²⁶

The Tokyo-Yokohama metropolitan area, particularly the bay area in the vicinity of the military ports in Yokohama and U.S. military base in Yokosuka, became the first and primary site of on-the-ground Korean and Japanese resistance against U.S. intervention in the Korean War. On June 27 at the Tsurumi Ward Employment Office in Yokohama, the office assigned seventeen day laborers to load munitions in the Yokosuka area. The day laborers were about to get on a truck. Soon, a group of Korean Communist members of the Day Laborers’ Union approached the laborers and told them to refuse the job and oppose the war. The Koreans successfully dissuaded them from working for the loading of munitions. The following day, some 300 day laborers, mostly Koreans, held a mass meeting in front of the office and adopted a resolution that none of them would accept the job of loading ammunition destined for South

²³ Japanese Police, “Arrest of Suspects for the Violation of Imperial Ordinance No.311 (Shimane Prefecture)” (July 1, 1950), *ibid*.

²⁴ Japanese Police, “Concerning the Arrest of Persons Who Violated Imperial Ordinance No.311 by Scattering Anti-war Handbills” (July 4, 1950), *ibid*.

²⁵ CIC Spot Report, “Anti-American Handbills, Yamaguchi” (July 13, 1950), Folder: CIC Spot Report, 22 June to 15 July 1950, Box 314, G-2, RG 331, NARA (G-2 03712, *GHQ/SCAP Records*. NDL).

²⁶ Japanese Police, “Concerning the Arrest of Suspects for the Violation of Imperial Ordinance No.311 (Kanagawa Prefecture)” (July 12, 1950), Folder: Anti-Occupation, Box 279, G-2, RG 331, NARA.

Korea. Similarly, on June 29, eleven Koreans appeared at the branch office of the Suzue Gumi Stevedoring Company in Yokohama and told the manager not to send workers to the dock for the loading of ammunition. When the manager simply ignored them, the Koreans started to pass out leaflets and post handwritten posters that stated their opposition to the “shipment of arms to South Korea” and “foreign intervention in the liberation of South Korea.”²⁷ A U.S. official in Yokohama reported that “Communist groups, particularly Korean Communists, during July threatened prospective workers, agitated against the acceptance by laborers of employment and otherwise attempted to impede the flow of ammunition and materials to South Korea.”²⁸

The Japanese police and Occupation authorities in Yokohama took “prompt action” in arresting “dissident elements.”²⁹ On July 3, the police arrested one of the Koreans who had visited the branch office of the Suzue Gumi Stevedoring Company in Yokohama on June 29 and had made, in the words of the police, “inflammatory remarks slandering the United States and Allied Powers.”³⁰ On July 6, the police caught a Japanese Communist member who also had engaged in the dissuasion of the day laborers at the Tsurumi Ward Employment Office on June 27. The man was arrested on charges of “slandering the occupation policy of the Allied Powers” with his allegedly “inflammatory” remarks: “The so-called service for the Occupation forces is the job of loading bullets. You know where those bullets are used. Those are for killing fellow

²⁷ U.S. POLAD in Yokohama to U.S. POLAD in Tokyo, “Opposition to American Intervention in Korea” (July 6, 1950), Folder: 1950-1952: 350.21 Communism, July-Dec 1950, Box 67, Office of the U.S. Political Advisor for Japan, Tokyo, Classified General Correspondence, 1945-1952, Record Group 84 (Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State) National Archives and Record Administration, College Park, MD (microfiche, FSP 379, National Diet Library, Tokyo, Japan. Henceforth, *USPOLAD Classified General Correspondence*, NDL).

²⁸ U.S. POLAD in Yokohama to U.S. POLAD in Tokyo, “Political Summary for July 1950” (July 31, 1950), Reel 1, *Records of the U.S. Department of State Relating to the Internal Affairs of Japan, 1950-1954* (microfilm from Scholarly Resources Inc).

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Japanese Police, “Concerning the Arrest of Suspects for the Violation of Imperial Ordinance No.311” (July 4, 1950), Folder: Anti-Occupation, Box 279, G-2, RG 331, NARA.

Koreans in Korea.”³¹ According to the U.S. official in Yokohama, the Yokohama City Police, acting “under instructions from the Occupation authorities,” arrested 102 Japanese and Korean suspects on June 30 and subsequently 39 more for “distributing anti-American propaganda.”³² Furthermore, the police launched a massive raid on Communist students’ cells at several universities and the homes of Communist student leaders in the Yokohama area on July 13. The police confiscated anti-war pamphlets at multiple sites.³³

The Japanese police and Occupation authorities were determined not only to contain every single Japanese and Korean “dissident” voice but also to punish any activity that supported Koreans fighting in Japan against foreign military intervention in the civil war in Korea. For instance, the local police headquarters in Yamanashi Prefecture issued a statement warning that anyone who helped pro-North Korean elements or worked for their “anti-war propaganda” would be arrested for “offenses against the interests of the Occupation” under Japanese Imperial Ordinance No. 311 – the ordinance that prohibited “an act prejudicial to the objectives of the U.S./Allied Occupation forces.”³⁴ The statement declared:

Any act which solicits or invites contributions of money or goods to any Korean association (or body) in support of the North Korean army. This includes the printing aimed at such support. Person producing or distributing anti-war propaganda will also be punished.³⁵

In Hiroshima Prefecture, for instance, the police arrested 35 Koreans, 22 Japanese Communists and 13 Japanese for the violation of the Imperial Ordinance 311 during the week from July 1 to

³¹ Japanese Police, “Arrest of Imperial Ordinance No.311 Violators” (July 7, 1950), *ibid.*

³² U.S. POLAD in Yokohama to U.S. POLAD in Tokyo, “Opposition to American Intervention in Korea” (July 6, 1950) and “Communist Activities in Yokohama Area” (July 12, 1950), Folder: 1950-1952: 350.21 Communism, July-Dec 1950, Box 67, RG 84, FSP 379, *USPOLAD Classified General Correspondence*, NDL.

³³ U.S. POLAD in Yokohama to U.S. POLAD in Tokyo, “Further Anti-Communist Police Measures” (July 17, 1950), Reel 8, *Records of the U.S. Department of State Relating to the Internal Affairs of Japan, 1950-1954.*

³⁴ Imperial Ordinance No. 311 was issued on June 12, 1946.

³⁵ U.S. POLAD in Yokohama to U.S. POLAD in Tokyo, “Further Anti-Communist Police Measures” (July 17, 1950), Reel 8, *Records of the U.S. Department of State Relating to the Internal Affairs of Japan, 1950-1954.*

July 7.³⁶ According to Japanese police reports, the total number of the arrests across Japan during the period between June 1 and July 21 amounted to 363, including 132 Koreans, 97 Japanese Communists, 84 labor union members and others. By August 31, the number increased to 613, including 215 Koreans, 216 Japanese Communists, 116 labor union members and others.³⁷ Their arrests were mostly for distributing anti-war leaflets, and some even for possessing the leaflets.

Those arrested for anti-war activities often had to pay a heavy price for raising a voice against foreign intervention and Japanese involvement in the Korean War. Pak Chōnho, who was arrested for distributing anti-war leaflets in Yokohama on July 1, was tried by Yokohama Provost Court on July 11. The provost court sentenced him to five years' confinement with hard labor.³⁸ On July 14, the Yokohama Provost Court also put on trial three Koreans who were arrested in Kawasaki City for distributing leaflets that appealed to Japanese workers not to send arms to South Korea. The provost court sentenced the three to six years' confinement with hard labor.³⁹ In Tokyo, a provost court sentenced a Korean man to deportation to South Korea, in addition to five years' confinement at hard labor.⁴⁰ Similarly, two Korean college students were also sentenced by a provost court to deportation to South Korea following the term of three years' confinement with hard labor.⁴¹

³⁶ Japanese Police, "Concerning the Arrest of Imperial Ordinance No.311 Violators (Hiroshima Prefecture)" (July 11, 1950), Folder: Anti-Occupation, Box 279, G-2, RG 331, NARA.

³⁷ Japanese Police, "Concerning the Arrest of Suspects for the Violation of Imperial Ordinance No.311" (July 21, 1950), *ibid*; Japanese Police, "Arrest of Suspects for the Violation of Imperial Ordinance No.311" (August 31, 1950), Folder: Arrests – Imperial Order 311 (Japanese Forms), Box 279, G-2, RG 331, NARA (G-2 02838, *GHQ/SCAP Records*, NDL).

³⁸ CIC Spot Report, "Provost Court Trial of Boku, Ten Ko" (July 12, 1950), Folder: CIC Spot Report, 22 June to 15 July 1950, Box 314, G-2, RG 331, NARA (G-2 03712, *GHQ/SCAP Records*, NDL); U.S. POLAD in Yokohama to U.S. POLAD in Tokyo, "Communist Activities in Yokohama Area" (July 12, 1950), Folder: 1950-1952: 350.21 Communism, July-Dec 1950, Box 67, FSP 379, RG 84, *USPOLAD Classified General Correspondence*, NDL.

³⁹ *Kaihō*, July 17, 1950. (Reel 21, *Sengo Nihon Kyōsantō kankei shiryō*.)

⁴⁰ *Asahi Shimbun*, July 29, 1950.

⁴¹ *Asahi Shimbun*, July 27, 1950; *Kaihō* August 2, 1950.

With a more than hint of protest against the disproportionately harsh punishments, one *zainichi* Korean newspaper compared those sentences for anti-war activities to the fate of Japanese Class-A war criminal Shigemitsu Mamoru, who had been sentenced to seven years' imprisonment without hard labor.⁴² A local branch of the Korean Liberation Relief Association (*Chōsen Kaihō Kyūenkai*) wrote in its statement that some 200 Korean anti-war “patriots” were arrested and detained in Sugamo Prison without a warrant, while Japanese war criminals had been pardoned and were walking out of the prison gates.⁴³ This stark contrast between Japanese war criminals walking out as free men from Sugamo Prison and anti-war Koreans sentenced to hard labor or multiple-year imprisonment exposed the reality of the so-called “reverse course” in occupation policy, SCAP’s reactionary turn from its initial project of “demilitarization” and “democratization.” It was ironic that SCAP, the very authorities that had disarmed Japan’s militarist regime and institutionalized the new democratic, “pacifist” constitution, now criminalized pacifist dissident voices opposing Japan’s involvement in the Korean War.

In fact, the Occupation’s criminalization of anti-war voices by means of the Imperial Ordinance 311 raised a fundamental question of how “anti-war” activities could be considered “anti-American” and “anti-Occupation,” or “an act prejudicial to the objectives of the U.S./Allied Occupation forces.” People began to raise a simple question: “What is wrong about anti-war movements?” In its handbill, a JCP local committee in Kagawa Prefecture claimed that the reason the Japanese were opposing the war was that people had suffered enough from the previous war and did not want to be dragged into another war. Given their immediate memories

⁴² *Kaihō*, August 2, 1950.

⁴³ Arakawa Branch of the Korean Liberation Relief Association, “Let’s Support the Patriots Who Are Fighting behind Bars” (November 30 [1950]), Reel 23, *Sengo Nihon Kyōsantō kankei shiryō*.

of wartime hardships, they wondered, “What is wrong about anti-war movements?”⁴⁴ A Korean who witnessed the trial and conviction of the three Korean men at the Yokohama Provost Court questioned how their protest against Japanese involvement in the Korean War could become a crime of “anti-American propaganda”:

They call it anti-American that we Koreans expressed our opposition to the transportation of arms and ammunition that would [be used to] destroy our homeland and kill our family. Yet, did we really do anti-American propaganda?⁴⁵

More fundamental criticism of the criminalization of anti-war voices came from the courtroom. In the trial of Pak Chōnho who was arrested for distributing anti-war leaflets, his lawyer disputed whether it was legally valid to apply the Imperial Ordinance 311 to peaceful anti-war activities under the pacifist constitution of Japan. The lawyer emphasized that the message articulated in the leaflets Pak had distributed was the promotion of pacifism in Japan and thus the message was consonant with the “renouncement of the use of force” declared in the Japanese new constitution – therefore, the distribution of the leaflets would not constitute a “prejudicial” action. The lawyer also pointed out that the Imperial Ordinance 311, which prohibited an act prejudicial to the “objectives of the U.S./Allied Occupation forces,” could not be applied to an act aimed toward “Korea.”⁴⁶ In other words, the lawyer argued that the objectives of the U.S./Allied occupation of Japan were supposed to have nothing to do with the Korean War.

What was at stake in the Occupations’ provost court was not only the legal rationale for silencing Korean and Japanese anti-war voices under the new Japanese pacifist constitution that U.S./Allied Occupation had institutionalized. At stake was also the supposed separation between

⁴⁴ JCP Takamatsu City Committee, “What Is Wrong about ‘Anti-war Movements?’” (July 5, 1950), attached to Shikoku Civil Affairs Region to Civil Affairs Section, “Communist Handbill” (July 19, 1950), Folder: Korean Incidents, Box 2294, SCAP, Civil Affairs Section, RG 331, NARA.

⁴⁵ *Kaihō*, July 17, 1950.

⁴⁶ *Kaihō*, July 14, 1950.

the UN war effort in Korea and the U.S./Allied occupation of Japan. How could Korean and Japanese peaceful protests against the UN war effort constitute a crime “prejudicial” to the occupation of Japan?

The provost court most likely did not have a convincing answer to this question. Even among the U.S. policy-makers of the Occupation authorities, there was not a clear consensus concerning how to articulate officially the relationship between the UN war effort in Korea and the objectives of the U.S./Allied Occupation forces. For the Judge Advocate Section (JA) of the General Headquarters for the Far East Command, the two were legally, if not practically, separate matters and SCAP should officially declare the two to be identical if provost courts were responsible for “the prosecution of individuals resisting the effort of the United Nations in the present conflict.”⁴⁷ In its memorandum to SCAP on August 1, 1950, the JA argued that in a legal sense, “the military assistance being given the Republic of Korea by the United Nations against the armed forces of the so-called Democratic People’s Republic of (North) Korea [had] no connection per se [*sic*] with the objectives of the military occupation, under SCAP, of the main islands of Japan”:

Therefore, all [*sic*] acts which may be detrimental to the military efforts of the United Nations in Korea cannot be considered by virtue of that fact alone to be offenses prejudicial to the objectives of the occupation of Japan and punishable as such.⁴⁸

In order for provost courts to impose punishment on peaceful anti-war activities, the UN war effort in Korea had to be declared as part of the objectives of the Occupation in Japan. Thus, the JA proposed that SCAP take legislative action by promulgating a Military Proclamation that any

⁴⁷ Judge Advocate Section, Far East Command, “Provost Court Jurisdiction over Offenses against United Nations” (July 25, 1950), Folder: 091: Korean War, Box 1256, Legal Section, RG 331, NARA (LS 20077, *GHQ/SCAP Records*, NDL).

⁴⁸ JA to DS through G-1 and LS, “Provost Court Jurisdiction over Offenses against United Nations” (August 1, 1950), *ibid.*

acts aimed at supporting North Korea would be “deemed to commit an act prejudicial to the security of the Occupation.” The JA understood that such action would mean the official declaration of the “unneutral position” of Japan.⁴⁹

In reality, it was self-evident that U.S./Allied-occupied Japan was committed to playing a critical role in the internationalized Korean civil war. Japan was a critical site of the first “hot war” of the cold war, as the Legal Section of SCAP admitted in its response to the JA: “The Occupation Forces are now committed in the United Nations effort to suppress unlawful aggression which threatens the peace of Japan and the world.”⁵⁰ In official discourse, however, Japan had to be separate from the war in Korea – officially, Japan was not at all involved in “the threat and use of force as means of settling international disputes,” as the SCAP-drafted new Japanese Constitution renounced. Opposing the JA’s proposal as “unwise and dangerous” to the position of SCAP, the Government Section of SCAP refused to take any action that would result in admitting that “the present U.N. effort in defense of the Republic of South Korea [*sic*]” had become “an objective of the Occupation of Japan under SCAP.” The Government Section even went as far as to deny the Legal Section’s acknowledgement of the self-evident reality that “Japan [was] committed to the support of the objectives of the U.N., including the present action in Korea.”⁵¹

Indeed, this sheer denial of Japan’s commitment also characterized the official parlance of the Japanese government, although taking a more rhetorical form. On July 15, 1950, when SCAP and the Japanese government had already started mobilizing Japanese resources, materials and manpower for the UN forces fighting in Korea, Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru portrayed

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ LS to GS and G-1, “Provost Court Jurisdiction over Offenses against United Nations” (August 8, 1950), *ibid.*

⁵¹ GS to G-1, “Provost Court Jurisdiction over Offenses against United Nations” (August 15, 1950), *ibid.*

Japan's stance on the UN war effort as "spiritual cooperation" (*seishin teki ni kyōryoku suru*).⁵² Moreover, the Japanese government also refused to admit the reality that the practical separation between the occupation of Japan and the UN war effort in Korea had become virtually impossible. In the National Diet on July 29, a Communist lawmaker argued that Japanese people were "getting confused" about whether recent Occupation directives were aimed for Japan or Korea – blurred boundaries of the occupation. The lawmaker questioned how the Japanese government was drawing a distinction and was dealing with those Occupation directives unrelated to Japan. The Japanese government official, Attorney-General Ōhashi Takeo, simply insisted that the government should not care about such distinctions because General MacArthur never issued Occupation directives in the name of the UN Commander. In other words, the distinction, whether those directives were "practically" (*jisshitsu teki ni*) aimed for the occupation of Japan or the UN war effort in Korea, would not matter as long as the directives were issued in the "form" (*keishiki*) of a SCAP directive, in the name of General MacArthur as the Supreme Commander for Allied Powers, not as the UN Commander.⁵³ In this logic – or the rhetoric of separation between Japan and Korea – Japan was supposedly not committed to the Korean War, and the Japanese government and SCAP clung to this rhetoric to the end, fighting the Korean War in Japan.

Overlapping Struggles: For the Revolution of Japan and the "Homeland Defense" of Korea

As Koreans' guerrilla-like anti-war activities spread across Japan, *zainichi* Korean Communist leaders, who had been preparing a new Korean united front, took swift action to

⁵² *Japanese National Diet Records*, House of Representatives, 8th Assembly, Plenary Session, July 15, 1950 (National Diet Library, Tokyo, Japan).

⁵³ *Japanese National Diet Records*, House of Representatives, 8th Assembly, Subcommittee ("Gaimu iinkai"), July 29, 1950.

reorganize leftist *zainichi* Korean youths into a new movement. On June 28, 1950, the Korean Communist leaders held a meeting at the headquarters of the JCP and discussed a plan to set up a new *zainichi* Korean agency that would direct military action for the “defense of the homeland.” In this meeting, the leaders decided to launch an underground campaign for organizing “Homeland Defense” (*sokoku bōei*) committees and youth corps across Japan and also to issue a statement to the *zainichi* Korean population.⁵⁴ Their statement appeared in a *zainichi* Korean newspaper, *Haebang Sinmun*, on July 6. In the statement, the Homeland Defense Committee made an appeal to all *zainichi* Koreans “fighting for national independence” to unite under the “control and leadership” of the Homeland Defense Committee. The Committee particularly emphasized the necessity of organized action to defend the homeland against Japanese-made weapons: “We have to ... fight against the production and transportation of weapons that will be sent from our neighborhood to Syngman Rhee and his conspirators.”⁵⁵ On August 27, some thirty *zainichi* Korean Communist leaders from all over Japan gathered at the JCP headquarters in Tokyo and formulated an overall strategy for the future *zainichi* Korean movements. The leaders agreed to mobilize Homeland Defense Corps and other youth groups to sabotage the production and transportation of munitions through collaboration with Japanese workers.⁵⁶

While *zainichi* Korean Communist leaders were developing the “homeland defense” campaign across Japan, the JCP issued a directive to Party members and declared that the “Korea problem” had become “the principal locus of current struggles for the Japanese revolution.”⁵⁷

The JCP leadership emphasized that the *zainichi* Koreans who were fighting against Japan’s role

⁵⁴ Tsuboi Toyokichi, *Senzen sengo zainichi dōhō no ugoki: zainichi Kankokujin (Chōsen) kankei shiryō* (Tokyo: Jiyū Seikatsusha, 1975), pp.298-299.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.299-300.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.301-302.

⁵⁷ Japanese Communist Party, “Directive 415: On *Zainichi* Korean Movements” (September 3, 1950), Reel 5, *Sengo Nihon Kyōsantō kankei shiryō*.

in foreign military intervention in the Korean War were also fighting for the Japanese revolution, in helping to “sweep imperialist forces from Japan and smash their puppet, domestic reactionaries.” The JCP leadership admitted that Japanese members in the Party were still not engaging enough in *zainichi* Korean movements and thus the *zainichi* Korean anti-war movements had developed separately from mass-based daily struggles. For instance, *zainichi* Korean youth activists had distributed “highly political” leaflets that had “nothing to do with issues in the everyday life of Japanese workers” and thus had sometimes ended up rather intimidating the workers. The JCP leadership urged the Party members to strengthen their leadership in *zainichi* Korean activities in order to expand Korean movements into mass-based, joint struggles with Japanese people (*Nihon jinmin*).

One major agenda that had emerged as a possible key locus of a mass-based, joint movement at that moment was what the JCP called “anti-tax struggles.” On July 31, the Yoshida administration passed the new Local Tax Law in the National Diet despite mounting criticism and opposition. The JCP soon reenergized a campaign against the newly-institutionalized local tax collection, in an attempt to mobilize workers and labor unions against the current regime. For the Party heavily damaged by its internal conflict and SCAP’s anti-communist offensive, the “anti-tax” appeared to be a critical opportunity to seize the initiative of mass-based “people’s struggles” (*jinmin tōsō*).⁵⁸ Moreover, the JCP’s “anti-tax struggles” agenda was also closely linked with its fight against the “red purge” offensive that had been escalating ever since the outbreak of the Korean War.⁵⁹ In their resistance against companies’ “unlawful” firing and expelling of Communist members and sympathizers from the workplace, Communist workers

⁵⁸ Hōmufu Tokubetsu Shinsakyoku [Special Investigation Bureau, Attorney-General’s Office], *Tokushin Geppō* [Monthly Bulletin] no. 1 (November 1950), pp.132-135.

⁵⁹ For a recent comprehensive work on “red purge,” see Hirata Tetsuo, *Reddo pāji no shiteki kyūmei* (Tokyo: Shin Nihon Shuppansha, 2002).

often found themselves lacking broad support from other workers and unions. The JCP leadership believed (and hoped) that the “anti-tax” campaign would allow the JCP to form a mass joint struggle against the “red purge” offensive by uniting Communist and non-Communist workers as well as unions from different sectors.⁶⁰ Simultaneously, the JCP leaders held a meeting in late September with some twenty *zainichi* Korean Communist leaders from all over Japan and discussed their new task. According to a Japanese intelligence report, their new tasks were now centered on daily life issues like “anti-tax struggles” rather than “spy tactics.”⁶¹

Parallel to the changing revolutionary strategy among the *zainichi* Korean Communist leaders, the orientation of their underground “homeland defense” activities also began to shift toward “mass-based struggles.” On October 29, at a crucial moment after the UN forces had crossed the 38th parallel and the Chinese People’s Volunteer Army had just crossed the Yalu River into Korea, some seventy representatives of youth corps across Japan and leaders of the Homeland Defense Committee held an underground convention to form a new youth front, called “*Zainichi* Korean Youth Front for Homeland Defense (*Sokoku Bōei Zainichi Chōsen Seinen Sensen*).⁶² According to the Youth Front’s resolution statement obtained by the Japanese intelligence, the new policy that the Youth Front adopted was mass-based, Korean-Japanese joint struggle aimed at making a revolution in Japan. The Youth Front declared that “interests” of the

⁶⁰ *Tokushin Geppō*, no. 1 (November 1950), pp.111-115. Apparently, the JCP was not successful enough to forge the broader workers’ solidarity against the “red purge” offensive. Later in late December, the U.S. POLAD in Tokyo reported on the impact of the “red purge” as follows: “The purge of approximately 11,000 Japanese Communists and their sympathizers from government agencies and key industries has been practically completed with a minimum of public disorder. Opposition to the purge has arisen chiefly from the Japan Communist Party, the Socialist Party, and non-Communist labor organizations, although, in general, effective opposition has been lacking. A strong counter-purge policy by the Communist Party has been hindered by the Party’s low prestige within the labor unions and internal dissent within the Party itself. U.S. POLAD in Tokyo to Department of State, “The Red Purge and Its Political Implications” (December 26, 1950), 794.00/12-2650, Reel 1, *Records of the U.S. Department of State Relating to the Internal Affairs of Japan, 1950-1954*.

⁶¹ [Special Investigation Bureau, Attorney-General’s Office], “Meeting of Central Group of Koreans of Japan Communist Party” (October 9, 1950), Folder: Korean and Japan Communist Party, Box 2275HH, Government Section, RG 331, NARA (GS(B) 04250, *GHQ/SCAP Records*, NDL).

⁶² Tsuboi, *Senzen sengo zainichi dōhō no ugoki*, p.313.

Korean nation (*minzoku*) had become completely identical with those of Japanese people (*Nihon jinmin*) under the current situation. In other words, the Japanese people's revolutionary movement for "national independence" (*minzoku dokuritsu*) was now simply "our [*zainichi* Korean] own struggles." The Youth Front also emphasized that in order to make a real revolution against "American imperialism" (*beitei*) and its "puppet reactionary" regime in Japan, it was no longer sufficient simply to maintain the current form of activities that had attempted to sabotage the production and transportation of munitions from Japan to South Korea. Thus, it was time for *zainichi* Korean youths to demonstrate their strong determination to "make a revolution not a street demonstration."⁶³

Then, what was the new task of the determined *zainichi* Korean youths? The task that the Youth Front presented in its new policy was indeed, to paraphrase Mao Zedong's famous revolutionary strategy, "from the masses to the masses." According to the Youth Front resolution, the current *zainichi* Korean movements failed to take seriously the everyday problems of *zainichi* Korean livelihood, such as tax burdens and pervasive unemployment, or treated them simply as economic issues through an "economism" approach. *Zainichi* Korean activists had to address those everyday problems from the "viewpoint of class and nation" (*kaikyūteki minzokuteki kanten*). In other words, those problems had to be understood in terms of "class," on the one hand, as the problems that the majority of both *zainichi* Korean and Japanese masses were facing. On the other hand, those problems were also closely associated with the current issue of the "national" independence of both Korea and Japan or, as the resolution presented, the current U.S. "invasion of the homeland" and "colonization of Japan." Therefore, in the logic of

⁶³ *Zainichi* Korean Youth Front for Homeland Defense [Sokoku Bōei Zainichi Chōsen Seinen Sensen], "The Resolution Adopted in the *Zainichi* Korean Youth General Convention" [Zainichi Chōsen seinen zenkoku daihyōsha kaigi ketteisho] (November 1950), reproduced in Hōmu Kenshūjo, *Zainichi Chōsenjin dantai jūyō shiryōshū* (Tokyo: Kohokusha, 1975).

the Youth Front, *zainichi* Korean mass struggles over their livelihood could develop into mass-based, Korean-Japanese joint political action and further into a joint revolutionary struggle. In the resolution, the Youth Front declared:

We have to ... make a drastic leap in advancing the local-based people's struggles that will lead to the masses' seizure of power by force....⁶⁴

Before long, during late November to early December, small-scale, local popular uprisings suddenly started to take place one after another across Japan, particularly in the Kinki region. The Japanese intelligence agency reported on numerous Korean and Japanese demonstrations that had often ended up with a violent clash with the local police forces. As many as some hundred Korean and Japanese local residents and day workers took to the streets and besieged local municipal offices with urgent demands for jobs, tax reduction, social welfare, or the right to have Korean-led education. The popular uprisings demanding employment and protesting against new local taxes resulted in seventeen cases of arrest in Osaka, Kyoto and Hyogo Prefectures of the Kansai area alone from November 28 to December 6.⁶⁵ According to a government investigation, the total of 7,000 to 9,000 participated in those demonstrations across the Kinki region, including protests against the "red purge," during mid-September to early December.⁶⁶

In Kobe City, Korean residents – men, women, students, and schoolchildren – particularly fought hard for their subsistence by demanding social welfare. Approximately 16,500 Koreans were living in Kobe City, which constituted nearly the one-third of the Korean population in Hyogo Prefecture. Among the Korean residents in Kobe City, 7,600 to 9,000 were

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Chairman of the Committee on Judicial Affairs [Hōmu Iinchō], "An Investigation Report on Riots in Kobe and Other Areas" [Kokusei chōsa hōkokusho: Kōbe sonota no chi ni okeru sōjōjiken jitsujō chōsa hōkokusho] (February 16, 1951), reprinted in Kim Kyōnghae and Horiuchi Minoru, *Zainichi Chōsenjin seikatsu yōgo no tataikai* (Kobe: Kōbe Gakusei Seinen Sentā Shuppanbu, 1991).

⁶⁶ Ibid.

living in Nagata Ward, where the series of large Korean demonstrations and bloody clashes with the police took place during the week between November 20 and 27.

In the early morning on November 20, local Korean youth activists made door-to-door visits to Korean residents in Nagata Ward and told them, “If you have difficulty in paying tax or making ends meet, please join us at the [Korean] school. We are going [to the Nagata Ward Office] to present a petition now.”⁶⁷ Some eighty Korean residents, mostly women and children, gathered at the Nishi-Kobe Korean School nearby and visited the mayor’s office in droves led by two local Korean leaders. The group met the mayor and demanded that the ward office provide them with a means of livelihood, help the poor by granting welfare benefits, and exempt them from local tax. Unsatisfied with the mayor’s response, the group refused to leave the mayor’s office and continued to push for their demands. Meanwhile, teachers from the Korean school brought some 200 junior high school (middle school) students to the Nagata Ward Office. The students started to cheer the group in the mayor’s office by singing upbeat, rousing songs of Korean national liberation outside the office building. The group pressed the mayor harder to accept their demands. Soon, nearly 100 police men arrived and surrounded the office building, and ordered the group to dismiss. While the group was exiting out of the building, there was a minor scuffle between some Koreans and policemen and the police arrested one Korean leader.

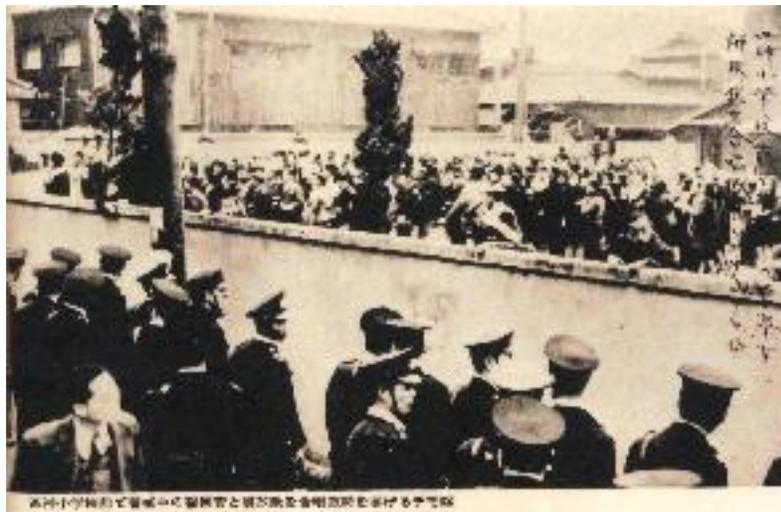
This incident spelled further confrontation between Korean residents and the local authorities in Kobe City. On November 24, four days after this incident, some 400 Korean residents and students gathered at the Nishi-Kobe Korean School near the Nagata Ward Office

⁶⁷ In the descriptions I give on the Kobe incidents, all quotes given are taken from the following sources. Japanese police intelligence reports submitted to SCAP, in Folder: Kobe Case, Box 2275HH, Government Section, RG 331, NARA (GS(B) 04295, *GHQ/SCAP Records*, NDL); “On Activities of Korean Residents in Japan after the Japanese Korean Amalgamation” (December 20, 1950), Folder: Presentation of the Book, Box 1, RG 61 (Papers of Colonel Jack Napier, Deputy Chief, Government Section, SCAP), General Douglas MacArthur Memorial Archives, Norfolk, VA (microfilm, Reel 1082. Henceforth, Napier Papers, MMA.); Chairman of the Committee on Judicial Affairs “An Investigation Report on Riots in Kobe and Other Areas” (February 16, 1951); *Kōbeshi keisatsushi* (Kobe: Kōbeshi Keisatsubu, 1956); Kim and Horiuchi, *Zainichi Chōsenjin seikatsu yōgo no tataikai*.

again. A group of some 300 Koreans launched a demonstration in front of the ward office, and another group of some 120 Koreans headed toward the Nagata Police Station to demand the release of the Korean leader arrested on November 20. At the ward office, the mass of Koreans occupied the square outside the office building and a group of leaders crowded into the building to present the demands they had made previously. Simultaneously, the group of Koreans carrying out their demonstration at the Nagata Police Station found that police officers were ready to be dispatched to the ward office where another group was making a demonstration. The Korean students staged a sit-in in front of police cars and tried in vain to stop the police. Meanwhile, the police officers arrived at the ward office and started to drag the demonstrators out of the building, cracking them over the head with nightsticks. The demonstrators resisted hard the police raid, throwing red pepper powder in the face of police officers, and some were severely injured, including students. The police arrested 22 Koreans and 4 Japanese participants.

The climax of the Korean demonstrations in Kobe City came on November 27. After the bloody crush of November 24, the Korean local activists spread words on the police violence and arrest of demonstrators and called for urgent support from Korean residents outside Nagata Ward. In the morning of November 27, crowds of agitated and concerned Koreans started to gather across Hyogo Prefecture at the Nishi-Kobe School, where nearly 900 Koreans – men, women, students, schoolchildren, and one Japanese teacher of the Korean school – held a mass rally and adopted a resolution to make a group appeal for social welfare and the release of those arrested at previous demonstrations. The Kobe Municipal Police ordered the rally to disband immediately, putting 2600 police officers on standby outside the school and its vicinity. The angry crowd responded by throwing stones over the fence at the police officers besieging the school. Soon, the crowd, arming themselves with wooden sticks, stones and powdered red pepper, launched a

demonstration march toward the Nagata Ward Office, led by a group of determined young men with their arms locked together. When the demonstrators came to the vicinity of the ward office, large police squads stormed out of alleyways and started to arrest the demonstrators, beating them up with nightsticks. The crowd scattered, and some fought back, stoning the police. Those who escaped arrest by the police burst into the ward office and ward tax office, where they smashed doors, desks, and windows in a frenzy. According to a police report, the police arrested 181 on the spot, and 50 police officers and 37 “suspects” were injured – the number of injuries on the side of the police was allegedly higher than the demonstrators.



The Japanese police surrounding the Nishi-Kōbe Korean School. *Kōbeshi Keisatsushi* (Kobe: Kōbeshi Keisatsubu, 1956).

The so-called “Kobe incident” marked the largest and most crucial event in the series of Korean demonstrations at that time, sparking other uprisings outside Hyogo Prefecture, in the Kinki region. The following table shows the outline of Korean demonstrations in Hyogo and other prefectures during late November to early December.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ The sources for the table are *Asahi Shimbun*, December 5, 1950; “On Activities of Korean Residents in Japan after the Japanese Korean Amalgamation” (December 20, 1950), Folder: Presentation of the Book, Box 1, Reel 1082,

*Hyogo Prefecture

Date	Location	Number of Participants	Demands
Nov			
20	Fukiai Ward Office, Kobe	50 Koreans	social welfare, reduction of tax
20	Nagata Ward Office, Kobe	80 Koreans and 200 students	social welfare, reduction of tax
24	Nagata Ward Office, Kobe	300-400 Koreans, including students	food, social welfare, reduction of tax
	Nagata Police Station, Kobe	120 Koreans, including 100 students 350 Koreans, including 200 students	release of a Korean leader who was arrested during the demonstration at the Nagata Ward Office on November 20 release of the Koreans who were arrested during the demonstrations at the Nagata Ward Office on November 20 and 24
	Nada Ward Office, Kobe	20 Koreans	social welfare, reduction of tax
	Fukiai Ward Office, Kobe	150 Koreans	social welfare, reduction of tax
	Okubo Town Office, Akashi	120-130 day laborers, mostly Koreans	employment
	Akashi City Office, Akashi	70 Korean children and a teacher	Korean education
	Asada Chemical, Inc. Mitsubishi Electric, Inc Nihon Satetsu, Inc, Himeji	Koreans and Japanese	protest against “red purge” firing
25	Himeji Police Station, Himeji	50 Koreans including students	release of a Korean who was arrested during the anti-“red purge” protest at the Mitsubishi Electric on November 24
	Ikuta Ward Office, Kobe	30 day laborers	social welfare
27	Itami City Office,	30 Koreans	reduction of tax, employment
	Ikuta Ward Office, Kobe	40 day laborers	[unknown]
	Nagata Ward Office, Kobe	800-900 Koreans, including schoolchildren	social welfare, release of arrested Koreans

Napier Papers, MMA; Chairman of the Committee on Judicial Affairs, “An Investigation Report on Riots in Kobe and Other Areas” (February 16, 1951); Kurihara Satoshi, *Shūdan hanzai sōsa ni kansuru jissshōteki kōsatsu* (Tokyo: Kensatsu Kenkyūjo, 1951) [excerpt reprinted in Kim and Horiuchi, *Zainichi Chōsenjin seikatsu yōgo no tataikai*].

*Other Prefectures

Nov.			
27	Aichi Prefectural Office	250-300 Koreans, including students	Korean education, social welfare
28	Aichi Prefectural Office	100-150 Koreans, including students	release of Koreans who were arrested during the demonstration at the Aichi Prefectural Office on the previous day
Dec.			
1	Kyoto City Office	100 Koreans, including 30 schoolchildren	Korean education
	Otsu City Office, Otsu District Prosecutor's Office	100 Korean and Japanese day laborers	social welfare, release of arrested day laborers
	Otsu District Prosecutor's Office, Shiga Prefecture	100-150 Koreans, including students	release of arrested Koreans and Japanese
		200 Koreans	release of arrested Koreans and Japanese
4	Kawasaki City Office, Kanagawa Prefecture	30-50 Koreans and Japanese	social welfare, reduction of tax
	Tsurumi Ward Office, Yokohama, Kanagawa	40 Koreans and 20 Japanese	reduction of tax
	Isoko Ward Office, Yokohama, Kanagawa	30 Koreans and Japanese	reduction of tax
	Kita Ward Office, Nagoya, Aichi	16 Koreans	reduction of tax
	Morioka District Prosecutor's Office, Iwate Prefecture	70 Koreans, including children	release of an arrested Korean school superintendent

The Japanese government and major media characterized the Korean demonstrations as “riots” and a “Communist plot” to launch a “revolution by force.” *Asahi Shimbun* reported on the Korean men, women and children demanding social welfare at the Nagata Ward Office on November 24 in Kobe City and portrayed them as a “red mob” in its news article, titled: “Four Hundred Children and Others Participated. A ‘Red Mob’ Made a Disturbance in Kobe, Attacking City Office, etc.”⁶⁹ In the National Diet, Attorney-General Ōhashi Takeo gave a speech and explicitly linked the Korean demonstrations with the JCP and “international

⁶⁹ *Asahi Shimbun*, November 25, 1950.

communist forces” fighting the war in Korea.⁷⁰ A government investigation team submitted a report to the House of Representatives on February 16, 1951 and presented the series of Korean and Japanese “riots” (*sōran*) during late November to early December as the harbinger of the Communist offensive for “revolution by force” (*bōryoku kakumeika*). The investigation report concluded that the series of the disturbance ranging from the workers’ counter-“red purge” offensive to the Korean daily protests, which had emerged in tandem with the “course of the war in Korea,” seemed to be “a plot to obstruct [Japan’s] cooperation with the UN forces.”⁷¹

It was true that the JCP was radically shifting toward becoming a more aggressive revolutionary vanguard at that time. Since the JCP leadership had accepted the Cominform’s harsh criticism of its initial revolutionary strategy of “peaceful revolution” (*heiwa kakumei*) – or the peaceful seizure of power through the parliamentary system under U.S./Allied occupation – the JCP leadership started to tread a more radical path toward making revolution by force. In the middle of the Party’s festering internal conflict, the mainstream faction proposed “armed struggles” in October 1950 through its underground journals and soon established a militant strategy in the Party’s Fourth Congress of February 1951.⁷² The new militant line was modeled on the Chinese Communist revolution, although it only partially adopted the Maoist strategy of guerrilla warfare “from the countryside to the cities.”⁷³ Moreover, the JCP also stressed in its

⁷⁰ *Japanese National Diet Records*, House of Representatives, 9th Assembly, Subcommittee (“*Gaimu iinkai*”), December 2, 1950; *Asahi Shimbun*, December 3, 1950.

⁷¹ Chairman of the Committee on Judicial Affairs, “An Investigation Report on Riots in Kobe and Other Areas” (February 16, 1951).

⁷² Ueda, *Sengo kakumei ronsōshi*, pp.218-226; Koyama, *Sengo Nihon Kyōsantō shi*, pp.96-102. For an English language work on this issue, see Robert A. Scalapino, *The Japanese Communist Movement, 1920-1966* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), pp.79-96.

⁷³ Koschmann, *Revolution and Subjectivity in Postwar Japan*, p.222.

Fourth Congress resolution that the Party would reinforce the collaboration with “ethnic minorities in Japan” (*zainichi shōsū minzoku*) fighting for their “rights and interests.”⁷⁴

However, the Korean mass demonstrations and local uprisings were not simply the product of the JCP’s radicalization. Even though the Japanese intelligence agency believed that the JCP took advantage of Korean ethnic minority “in the van” of “terroristic revolution,” it was not the case.⁷⁵ In the case of the “Kobe incident,” the JCP and *zainichi* Korean Communist leaders probably played a certain role behind the local Korean leaders in mobilizing the demonstrations.⁷⁶ Yet, ordinary Koreans had their own reasons to rise up. Some observers correctly understood that what had caused those uprisings was the “discontent of a large element of the Korean minority resulting from their inability to obtain regular employment in Japan.”⁷⁷ Indeed, according to a survey of the *zainichi* Korean livelihood in 1952, 50 to 60 percent of the workforce was jobless or only held a temporary job.⁷⁸ A lawmaker and former Socialist Party member Adachi Umeichi, who had participated in a non-governmental investigation of the “Kobe incident,” expressed a similar view on the causes of the incident. He pointed out that Koreans were “jobless,” “deprived of freedom in education,” and “suffering from extreme poverty.” Adachi regarded the Korean uprisings as the Koreans’ attempt to “protect themselves from hard living for this reason and not for some political reason[s].”⁷⁹

⁷⁴ “JCP Fourth Congress Resolution” (February 23-27, 1951), in *Nihon Kyōsantō, Nihon Kyōsantō tōsei kōyō bunken* (Tokyo: Shundaisha, 1952).

⁷⁵ Special Investigation Bureau, Attorney-General’s Office to Government Section, SCAP, “Plotted Mass Violence of Koreans Residing in Japan in Hyogo Prefecture (First Report)” (December 1, 1950), Folder: Kobe Case, Box 2275HH, Government Section, RG 331, NARA (GS(B) 04295, *GHQ/SCAP Records*, NDL).

⁷⁶ On JCP’s and *zainichi* Korean Communists’ involvement in the “Kobe incident,” see Kurihara, *Shūdan hanzai sōsa ni kansuru jishshōteki kōsatsu*, pp.29-34.

⁷⁷ U.S. POLAD in Yokohama to U.S. POLAD in Tokyo, “Political Summary for December 1950” (December 29, 1950), 794.00/12-2950, Reel 1, *Records of the U.S. Department of State Relating to the Internal Affairs of Japan, 1950-1954*.

⁷⁸ Pak Chaeil, *Zainichi Chōsenjin ni kansuru sōgō chōsa kenkyū* (Tokyo: Shin Kigensha, 1957), pp.68-70.

⁷⁹ [Special Investigation Bureau, Attorney-General’s Office], “On the Despatch of Investigation Group by a Left-wing Organization for Inquiry into the Kobe Case” (December 21, 1950), Folder: Kobe Case, Box 2275HH, Government Section, RG 331 (GS(B) 04295, *GHQ/SCAP Records*, NDL).

Adachi was only half right. There were certain “political” reasons and motivations behind the Korean uprisings in Kobe, although those motivations had mostly nothing to do with the “revolution” in Japan that the JCP and *zainichi* Korean Communist leaders had been pursuing. For instance, Ri Ponghak, who was a member of a local Korean youth group in Kobe, believed that if *zainichi* Koreans rose up to demand social welfare, they would force the Japanese government to spend more money and thereby would be able to do certain “damage to Japanese reactionary forces” collaborating with the U.S. war effort in Korea. Ri encouraged local Korean residents to participate in the mass demonstration at the Nagata Ward Office on November 20 by telling them that obtaining social welfare would reduce the Japanese government’s budget for remilitarization aimed at “invading our [Korean] homeland again.”⁸⁰ It was this rationale that the local leaders pushed forward for the demonstration, and a number of *zainichi* Koreans in need of livelihood and social welfare embraced it, too. Ro Chaesok, who was a teacher at a Korean school in Himeji City, traveled to Kobe with other Koreans and participated in the local uprising of November 27 for the same reason. He considered it crucial to make a collective demand for social welfare not only for the sake of the *zainichi* Korean livelihood itself, but also for their homeland.⁸¹ The ordinary Koreans had their own reasons to rise up. They took to the streets demanding for social welfare out of poverty and also out of concern for their homeland.

Intertwined Fates: Korean Deportation

The Japanese government immediately took advantage of the surge in Korean “riots” to prepare extreme measures against *zainichi* Korean leftists – namely, the compulsory deportation of Korean “subversives” to South Korea. A Japanese newspaper reported on December 24, 1950

⁸⁰ Kim and Horiuchi, *Zainichi Chōsenjin seikatsu yōgo no tatakai*, pp.105-109.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp.117-120.

that the government had decided to work on the deportation of Korean “subversive elements” with the permission of SCAP.⁸² The Chief Cabinet Secretary issued a statement on December 26 and announced that the Japanese government was planning to deport those Koreans who “had broken the law and disturbed public security” to South Korea.⁸³ The South Korean government also responded favorably. On January 13, 1951, the Korean Diplomatic Mission in Japan delivered its statement to the Japanese press and declared that the South Korean government would request SCAP and the Japanese government to send back “malignant elements” (*akushitsu bunshi*) among Korean residents in Japan.⁸⁴ Moreover, a major South Korean newspaper reported that the South Korean Ministry of Justice was planning to devise new countermeasures that would introduce the tactics of “thought war” (*sasang chŏn*) into the ideological rehabilitation of leftist Koreans in Japan. What the Ministry of Justice had in mind as a successful example was the National Guidance Alliance (*Kungmin Podo Yŏnmaeng*), a state ideological device for the conversion and reeducation of leftists and leftist sympathizers that the South Korean regime had learned from Japanese colonial rule.⁸⁵

Simultaneously, the Foreign Office of the Japanese government formulated a proposal to deport the “undesirable Koreans in Japan” to South Korea and submitted it to the Government Section of SCAP for consideration. In the proposal, the Foreign Office acknowledged that the “behavior and actions of the undesirable Korean elements may not have posed up to [then] a serious threat to law and order in Japan.” However, the Foreign Office maintained that the “antipathy of the Japanese people in general” toward Koreans in Japan had been increasing since Japan’s defeat, and thus in the interest of “fostering friendly relations” between Japanese and

⁸² *Asahi Shimbun*, December 24, 1950.

⁸³ *Asahi Shimbun*, December 27, 1950.

⁸⁴ *Asahi Shimbun*, January 13, 1951.

⁸⁵ *Tong’a Ilbo*, February 6, 1951. On the National Guidance Alliance, see my chapter 4.

Koreans, it would be desirable if “these destructive elements be removed from the scene by such measure as deportation.”⁸⁶

For SCAP, who had categorized and treated Korean residents in Japan as a postcolonial population still retaining Japanese nationality, the mass deportation of Korean “Japanese nationals” was a sensitive matter in both the legal and political sense. Particularly, in the wake of the local *zainichi* Korean uprisings of late 1950 that was coterminous with the ongoing war in Korea, the deportation issue became a highly political concern and required SCAP and the Japanese government to invent a sophisticated legal device. Amidst the Korean War, SCAP was concerned considerably about the possible grave impact that the compulsory deportation of Korean leftists to South Korea might have on the North Korean treatment of American POWs.⁸⁷ At the same time, SCAP was fully aware that “[t]he Japanese Government [was] faced with the problem of moving from Japan by deportation in a legal manner and with due principles of human rights a group of individual aliens who [were] now undermining the stability of the country[.]”⁸⁸ Soon, the Government Section of SCAP started to work with American immigration expert Nicholas D. Collaer, a retired senior official of the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service, in order to help the Japanese government craft effective migration controls “in agreement with generally accepted international practice.”⁸⁹

⁸⁶ Japanese Foreign Office, “The Deportation of Koreans in Japan” (December 30, 1950), Folder: Japanese Government, Foreign Office: The Departure of Korean in Japan, Box 2, Reel 1082, Napier Papers, MMA.

⁸⁷ A Japanese government official stated that General Staff-1 (G-1) took into consideration the treatment of American POWs in dealing with the Korean deportation issue. See “Deportation of Korean Issue [*sic*]” (March 9, 1950), Folder: Immigration, Box 2189, Government Section, RG 331 (GS(B) 01602, *GHQ/SCAP Records*, NDL).

⁸⁸ Cottrell to Napier, “Laws Relating to Immigration and Control of Aliens in Japan” (March 13, 1951), *ibid.*

⁸⁹ For the detail of Collaer’s role in making a postwar Japanese immigration system, see Ōnuma Yasuaki, *Tan ’itsu minzoku shakai no shinwa o koete: zainichi Kankoku Chōsenjin to shutsunyūkoku kanri taisei* (Tokyo: Tōshindō, 1986), pp.77-94; Robāto Riketto [Robert Ricketts], “Chōsen Sensō zengo ni okeru zainichi Chōsenjin seisaku” in Ōnuma Hisao, ed., *Chōsen Sensō to Nihon* (Tokyo: Shinkansha, 2006), pp.222-232; Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *Borderline Japan: Foreigners and Frontier Controls in the Postwar Era* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp.97-115.

While Collaer and the Japanese government were drafting new Japanese immigration laws together, the deportation of “subversive Koreans” also emerged as a critical agenda in an Occupation’s inter-staff meeting of the “Committee on Countermeasures against Communism in the Far East.” The newly appointed Supreme Commander, General Matthew B. Ridgway, set up the Committee in May 1951, and in the Committee, the U.S. officials from SCAP, Eighth Army and the Far East Command discussed broad issues concerning Communist influence and designed various proposals for SCAP policy.⁹⁰

In the wake of SCAP intelligence’s exposure of the so-called “North Korean spy net in Japan” in May 1951, the Committee began discussing the possibility of deportation in earnest.⁹¹ In the fourth meeting held on June 15, Colonel Jack Napier from the Government Section of SCAP first informed the Committee about the Japanese government’s pro-deportation stance.⁹² According to Napier, the Japanese government officials with whom he had discussed this issue believed that “the deportation of from two to three hundred would make a great difference in the behavior of remainder.” However, the Japanese government did not have any “exact legal authority for such action,” and there was also another problem concerning the deportation of “subversive Koreans.” Napier mentioned that the problem was “where to send the deportees and what [would] happen to them once they [were] deported.” He continued:

[A]t one time the Rhee Government expressed a willingness to take on all whom SCAP wished to send there, but *it was generally understood that this would be sending the deportees to certain death.* [my emphasis]

⁹⁰ On the members and roles of this Committee, see Eiji Takemae, *The Allied Occupation of Japan* (New York: Continuum, 2003), pp.197, 493.

⁹¹ This spy case was suddenly exposed as the U.S. Occupation authorities prepared to put eighteen suspects (sixteen Koreans and two Japanese) on the Occupation provost court on May 11, 1951. See *Asahi Shimbun*, May 9, 1951; *Washington Post*, May 12, 1951; *New York Times*, May 15, 1951.

⁹² “Minutes of Fourth Meeting of Committee on Counter Measures against Communist in the Far East” (June 15, 1951), Folder: Committee on Counter Measures against Communism in the Far East, Box 2223, Government Section, RG 331, NARA.

Napier also added that “[n]ow, of course, deportees could be sent to a UN camp. It was decided that G-1 [General Staff-1 Section] would undertake a Staff Study on the subject.”⁹³

The UN camp to which Napier referred as the possible destination of Korean deportees was wartime POW camps in South Korea, where the United Nations Command held North Korean and Chinese soldiers and Korean civilians captured by UN and South Korean troops. Quickly, the U.S. policy-makers of the Occupation authorities formulated a “top secret” plan to send “undesirable” Koreans in Japan to UN-controlled POW camps in South Korea.

After the June 15th meeting, the Committee members discussed the deportation issue further in a subcommittee called the “Planning Subcommittee of the Committee on Counter Measures against Communism in the Far East.” In the subcommittee meeting held on July 3, the members reached an agreement that the compulsory deportation of “undesirable aliens” from Japan would be a “beneficial counter measure against Communism in the Far East.” According to the short proposal the Subcommittee had drawn up and classified “top secret,” SCAP, in lieu of the Japanese government, would direct the deportation of aliens “whose continued presence in Japan [was] determined to be undesirable,” including Koreans in Japan. For this purpose, the Subcommittee proposed that SCAP establish a board that would review “individual cases of potential ‘undesirables’” and make recommendations to deport those aliens deemed “undesirable.” Moreover, the Subcommittee also clarified where “undesirable” Koreans should be sent – a UN POW camp in South Korea. The Subcommittee presented:

Upon arrival of a deportee within the area of jurisdiction of the Commander, United Nations Forces in Korea, that Commander will take such deportee into custody as a potential threat to the security of his Command and will intern the deportees ... in a UN POW camp.⁹⁴

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Military Intelligence Section, GHQ, Far East Command, “Sentence of Deportation by Occupation Court in Spy Ring Trials” (July 3, 1951), Folder: Top Secret File No.3: Covering the Period from 4 August 1948, Box 1, Legal

The policy-makers acknowledged that such action might unfavorably affect the ongoing preparation for a ceasefire negotiation in Korea. Therefore, they recommend that “no actual deportation take place” until the completion of the ceasefire negotiations.

The deportation plan that the Committee on Measures against Communism in the Far East had formulated would have had serious repercussions not only for the delicate politics surrounding the possible ceasefire in the Korean War but also for the U.S. global confrontation with communist anti-U.S. propaganda in the international arena. On July 17, the Legal Section (LS) of SCAP sent a long internal memorandum that expressed its deep concern over the deportation policy proposed by the Committee. The LS contended that the method and procedure formulated in the proposal for Korean deportation were highly problematic both legally and politically. In the “true legal sense of the word,” the LS argued, Koreans who had been continuously living in Japan before Japan’s official surrender (September 2, 1945) were not “aliens” and would retain the “status quo of Japanese nationals” until their nationality issue was settled in the future.⁹⁵

Politically, the deportation project seemed to entail too many political “risks and dangers” from the viewpoint of the LS. The deportation of “undesirable” legal Korean residents would be not only “interpreted by the world at large as a discrimination against a racial minority” but also “conflict with basic UN policy.” The LS also called attention to the fact that the “civilized world” had always condemned the “Russian practice of deporting politically undesirables to Siberia” and that “[t]he history of the two world wars offer[ed] similar examples.” Moreover, the LS believed that if SCAP created the screening agency that would

Section, Formerly Top Secret Administrative Correspondence, RG 331, NARA (TS 00327, *GHQ/SCAP Records*, NDL).

⁹⁵ Legal Section, “Deportation of Subversive Aliens” (July 17, 1951), *ibid.*

determine suspected subversives aliens for deportation, “Red propaganda” would exploit such “star-chamber proceedings” by claiming that SCAP had established an “American Gestapo” in Japan.⁹⁶

In the end, SCAP did not enforce the Committee’s secret proposal, and the mass deportation of “undesirable” legal Korean residents from Japan became an unfulfilled project. But, SCAP and the Japanese government took full advantage of an existing legal-governmental device that rendered “undesirable” Koreans deportable to South Korea. As discussed above, Occupation’s provost courts often sentenced to deportation those Korean anti-war activists who were charged with “an act prejudicial to the objectives of the U.S./Allied Occupation forces,” the violation of the Imperial Ordinance No. 311. Deportees like anti-war activists who belonged to the Japanese Communist Party and leftist *zainichi* Korean groups might have been doomed to death in South Korea, as SCAP official Colonel Napier had once worried in planning the mass deportation of “subversive Koreans” to the Syngman Rhee regime: “[I]t was generally understood that this would be sending the deportees to certain death.” Later, one South Korean diplomat denied such a “generally understood” fate of Korean deportees after their arrival in South Korea. In a meeting between South Korean and Japanese representatives held on February 28, 1952, a South Korean diplomat told the Japanese representatives that Korean deportees would “not be punished by death, if blacklisted, *only for joining the Communist Party in Japan*” (my emphasis).⁹⁷ Apparently, however, the fate of deportees with a political background of more than simply joining the Japanese Communist Party was not the case, and indeed certain punishment would await those deportees once they arrived in South Korea.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, “Unofficial Talk between Japan and ROK concerning the Treatment of Nationality” (February 28, 1952), Folder: Kokuseki shogū mondai ni kansuru nikkans hikōshiki kaidan, declassified and published on <http://www.f8.wx301.smilestart.ne.jp/nihonkokai/list.htm>.

For instance, Ri Pyŏnggho found his younger brother who had been deported to South Korea imprisoned in Pusan, the port city where Korean deportees from Japan were turned over to the South Korean authorities. In October 1948, his brother Ri Yŏngmun, a local leader of a leftist *zainichi* Korean youth group, was arrested for the violation of the Imperial Ordinance 311, for arranging a display of the North Korean national flag at a convention of the Osaka branch of the Korean Democratic Youth Alliance in Japan.⁹⁸ A provost court tried Ri Yŏngmun and sentenced him to eight years' confinement with hard labor and deportation. At midnight on March 24, 1950, the Occupation authorities suddenly took him out of a prison in Osaka and sent him in prison garb to a deportation camp in Nagasaki Prefecture via train.⁹⁹ Ri Pyŏnggho, concerned about what would happen to his younger brother once deported to South Korea, secretly travelled to Pusan and found out that his brother had been put in jail again after deportation.¹⁰⁰

Similarly, the deportation to South Korea meant death sentence to Kim Posŏng, a "North Korean spy" who had been captured in Japan in August 1950. Kim Posŏng grew up in Wonsan in northern Korea, a port city located in the north-east coast of the Korean peninsula. According to Japanese police interrogation and defense attorney's investigation, Kim went to Japan at the age of sixteen to find a job and worked in Osaka for some twelve years, until 1927 when he returned to his family in Wonsan. There, Kim worked for a cargo company and became the captain of a cargo ship. In March 1949, he asked the mayor of the Wonsan City under the North Korean regime to find a different job for him. The mayor, in contact with a local branch of the

⁹⁸ On this incident, see chapter 4.

⁹⁹ See *Haebang Sinmun*, March 30, 1950.

¹⁰⁰ I found this story about Ri Pyŏnggho's brother in Ri's testimony recorded in Japanese police interrogation reports. In September 1950, Ri was arrested for engaging in the so-called "North Korean spy net in Japan," and his defense attorney Fuse Tatsuji obtained and preserved the police interrogation records with his investigation reports. See Folder: Iwamura Yoshimatsu ni kansuru gunji saiban 1, Reel 8, *Fuse Tatsuji Papers*, Korea University Library, Tokyo, Japan. (Henceforth, *Fuse Papers*, KUL.)

North Korean Worker's Party, arranged a new job for Kim – a mission of gathering information on how to set up a money-making business in Japan. In February 1950, Kim visited the government agency in Pyongyang and received training in gathering information and making an intelligence network. Kim successfully made a secret entry into Japan in April, but soon he was arrested by the Japanese police in August, when they discovered that he was carrying a counterfeit alien registration card.¹⁰¹

The Japanese and Occupation authorities sent Kim Posōng to a provost court in May 1951, with other seventeen Korean and Japanese suspects for the so-called “North Korean spy net in Japan.”¹⁰² According to CIC (Counter Intelligence Corps) records, Kim was released “from Occupation custody to the custody of the Japanese Government” due to the “unavailability of a key witness to testify” against him in the provost court. Soon, the Japanese authorities put Kim in a deportation camp for having entered Japan illegally, and deported him to South – not North – Korea on July 31. Kim arrived in Pusan next day, and CIC agents in Pusan, who had been informed of Kim's arrival through the CIC in Japan, placed him “protective custody” until August 3 and then turned him over to the South Korean counterintelligence agency.¹⁰³ Later, a leftist *zainichi* Korean association reported that Kim Posōng had been “sentenced to death” immediately after his arrival in South Korea.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ Police interrogation reports on Kim Posōng; Defense attorney's investigation reports on Kim Posōng, Folder: Iwamura Yoshimatsu ni kansuru gunji saiban 1 and 4, Reel 8 and 10, *Fuse Papers*, KUL.

¹⁰² *Asahi Shimbun*, May 9, 1951, May 12, 1951; *Washington Post*, May 12, 1951; *New York Times*, May 15, 1951.

¹⁰³ 441st CIC Detachment to 704th CIC Detachment, “North Korean Espionage Ring in Japan” (August 3, 1951); 704th CIC Detachment to 308th CIC Detachment, “North Korean Espionage Ring in Japan” (August 9, 1951), Folder: G-2 Action File, vol.16, Box 59, Eighth U.S. Army 1946-56, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, Record Group 338 (Records of U.S. Army Operational, Tactical, and Support Organizations [World War II and Thereafter]), NARA.

¹⁰⁴ Korean Liberation Relief Association, “The Japanese Police Arrested Our Released Patriots” (May 1, 1952), Folder: Chōsen [uncataloged documents], Ohara Institute for Social Research, Hosei University, Tokyo, Japan; Korean Liberation Relief Association, “The Japanese Police Arrested Our Released Patriots” (May 6, 1952), reprinted in Pak Kyōngsik, *Zainichi Chōsenjin kankei shiryō shūsei (sengo hen) vol.4: Zainichi Chōsen Tōitsu Minshu Sensen kankei* (Tokyo: Fujishuppan, 2000), p.324.

The fates of Ri Yŏngmun and Kim Posŏng were not unique. Their stories had parallels with multitudes of those in Korea who were suspected or fingered as “reds” or leftist sympathizers under the South Korean regime. If lucky, these victims ended up being arrested and imprisoned, or sent to UN-controlled POW camps as a civilian internee. But, it was more likely that immediate execution awaited them during the Korean War. The “special decree” that President Syngman Rhee had proclaimed on June 28, 1950 mandated the swift execution and severe punishment of those who committed acts of sabotage and collaboration with the enemy. This decree, “Special Decree on the Punishment of Criminals under a State of Emergency,” fomented a subsequent massive wave of state terror where the South Korean military police and rightist youth corps massacred and executed those suspected as leftists on the spot. When the South Korean regime occupied the North, the military police and rightist youth corps also executed, with the connivance of the UN forces, thousands North Korean residents without any legal procedure, often in retaliation for what the North Korean regime had done in the South.¹⁰⁵ The North Korean regime also did the same against South Korean rightists and rightist sympathizers. For instance, the CIC reported that in Taejŏn “[a]pproximately five hundred such bodies [of South Korean rightists and rightist sympathizers] were found in mass graves which were left uncovered in the haste of the NK [North Korean] Army retreat” in late September 1950.¹⁰⁶ The fate of Kim Posŏng, who was captured in Japan and executed in South Korea, became part of those North and South Korean – and their allies’ – atrocities during the civil war.

¹⁰⁵ On “Special Decree on the Punishment of Criminals under a State of Emergency” and its significance in understanding South Korean atrocities during the Korean War, see Sŏ Chungŏk, *Cho Pong-am kwa 1950-yŏndae* (Seoul: Yŏksa Pip’yongsa, 1999), pp.612-615, 673-681. For important studies on civilian massacres during the Korean War, Kim, *Chŏnjaeng kwa sahwe*; Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War: The Roaring of the Cataract, 1947-1950*; Kim Kijin, *Miguk kimil munsŏ uŏi ch’oech’o chuŏngoŏn: Han’guk Choŏnjaeng kwa chiptan haksal* (Seoul: P’urŏn Yŏksa, 2006).

¹⁰⁶ “Monthly Report of Counter Intelligence Corps Activities” (October 1, 1950), Folder: 322 CIC, Box 52, G-2, RG 338, NARA.

Conclusion

The political and social dynamics of U.S./Allied-occupied Japan during the Korean War were deeply intertwined and coterminous with the development of the civil war in Korea. The new social history of the Korean War, as well as the dominant international history approach, has overlooked such intertwined and coterminous experiences of the war beyond the Korean peninsula. The internationalized civil war in Korea involved multiple state and non-state actors outside the Korean peninsula, whose experiences demonstrated the significance of transnationally linked revolutionary and counter-revolutionary struggles between *zainichi* Koreans, Japanese, and the United States. The outbreak of the Korean War and the subsequent Japan's transformation into a rear base under U.S./Allied occupation brought the two national entities of Korea and Japan into the same field of vision of Japanese and *zainichi* Korean Communist strategy. The Japanese Communist Party declared the "Korea problem" to be the "principal locus of current struggles for the Japanese revolution." The Korean War heralded a transformative event for *zainichi* Korean and Japanese Communist leaders in dissolving the two nationalisms in the move against the U.S. "imperialism," who was the common enemy both "invading Korea" and "colonizing Japan."

Although SCAP and Japanese government never officially admitted this structural reality, the UN war effort in Korea had become part and parcel of the objectives of the U.S./Allied occupation of Japan. SCAP transformed Japan into a rear base that was directly linked with the UN military intervention in Korea. It was ironic that SCAP, the very authorities that had disarmed Japan's militarist regime and institutionalized the new democratic, "pacifist" constitution, began to criminalize even pacifist "anti-war" voices opposing Japan's involvement in the Korean War. The Occupation and Japanese authorities contained every single *zainichi*

Korean and Japanese protest against the UN war effort in Korea as “an act prejudicial to the objectives of the U.S./Allied Occupation forces.”

Moreover, the deportation of *zainichi* Korean Communists also emerged as a critical agenda of U.S. containment policy in Japan. U.S., Japanese and South Korean authorities agreed on the necessity of deporting “Korean subversives” in Japan, and a group of Occupation policy-makers crafted a top secret plan to send groups of leftist “undesirable” Koreans in Japan to UN-controlled POW camps in South Korea. Whereas the Occupation in the end did not enforce this top secret plan for mass deportation, SCAP and the Japanese government deported *zainichi* Korean dissidents to South Korea through the criminalization of their anti-war activities. For those who had worked for the cause of national unification under the North Korean regime, the deportation to South Korea meant, as an Occupation official understood, “certain death” amidst chaos and a state of emergency during the civil war. In any sense, Japan was not merely committed to collaborating on the U.S. (UN) war effort in Korea. U.S./Allied-occupied Japan was a critical locus of revolutionary and counter-revolutionary struggles coterminous with the internationalized civil war in the Korean peninsula.

Epilogue

On September 8, 1951, six years after Japan's surrender, Japanese Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru signed a peace treaty with forty-eight nations in San Francisco. On the same day, Yoshida signed another treaty with the United States, the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States and Japan. The conclusion of the two treaties marked Japan's official return to the international arena as a U.S. cold war ally, and Japanese scholars designate this historical event as the inception of the "San Francisco System" (San Francisco *taisei*), the beginning of "subordinate independence."

The so-called "San Francisco System" was also premised upon the marginalization of the "postcolonial." The peace treaty did not include Japan's former colony Korea, nor China. The U.S. government instead arranged direct meetings between South Korea and Japan in October for future normalization, and these talks started in February 1952. At these talks, the typical "politics of blame" soon developed – if South Korean delegates condemned what Japan had done in Korea as an unjust colonial rule, the Japanese fought back by claiming that Japan modernized Korea. As a result, it took more than a decade to reach their diplomatic rapprochement in 1965, after a series of negotiations and breakdowns. Moreover, there were strong protests against normalization in both countries, particularly in South Korea, for different reasons. South Koreans opposed normalization because the treaty did not address at all popular demands for justice and compensation for Japan's past colonial victimization of Koreans. On the other hand, the dismissal of past colonial issues was not a serious matter with the Japanese majority. Rather, what made Japanese pacifists worried about the normalization was that the official diplomatic

ties with South Korea might result in dragging their country into Korean affairs, the North-South Korean cold war confrontation across the shore.

The exclusion of South Korea from the peace treaty of 1951 also shows us what was at stake in post-empire Japanese-Korean relations. During the process of planning a peace treaty, Prime Minister Yoshida and Japanese government officials expressed their concern about a U.S. plan to include South Korea in a peace treaty. In negotiations with the U.S. Delegate to Japan, John Foster Dulles, Yoshida insisted that South Korea should not become a signatory to the treaty because the “one million Koreans residing in Japan, most of them Communist,” would acquire the status of Allied nationals and have “property and compensation rights.”¹ Yoshida even brought to table again his unfulfilled proposal of sending “all Koreans in Japan” to Korea.²

In fact, the “San Francisco System” was characterized not only by the exclusion of Japan’s former colony and China from the peace treaty, but also by the elimination of the domestic postcolonial “minority question” in Japan. On April 19, 1952, the Japanese General-Attorney office issued a notice – not a law or ordinance – declaring that Koreans and Taiwanese would lose Japanese nationality when the peace treaty came into effect on April 28. Under the legal system of new independent Japan, Korean and Taiwanese postcolonial populations were categorized into “foreigners,” a category that erased the colonial origins of the “minority question.” Indeed, this drastic measure the Japanese government took was something even SCAP had never took into consideration as an “ideal solution” to the Korean minority question.

As I mentioned in chapter 4, the intelligence section of SCAP had claimed in mid-August 1948

¹ “Memorandum of Conversation, by Mr. Robert A. Fearey of the Office of Northeast Asia Affairs” (April 23, 1951), Lot 54 D 423, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1951, Volume VI* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1977), pp.1006-1011.

² According the memorandum of conversation, Yoshida said that he had raised the matter with General Douglas MacArthur before and MacArthur had opposed the forcible repatriation of Koreans to South Korea, partly on the grounds that they were mostly North Koreans and “would have their heads cut off” in South Korea. Yoshida also stated that “the Government had determined that the assassination of the President of the National Railways [President Shimoyama] in the summer of 1949 had been by a Korean.”

that “[t]he ideal solution of the Korean problem would be to rid Japan of this large national minority, either by compulsory, progressive repatriation or election of Japanese nationality on the part of said Koreans.”³ Although the Japanese government had once considered granting Japanese nationality to Koreans based on elective choice, the solution that the government finally took up after giving up its compulsory deportation plan was completely different kind of “solution.” As a result, Japan as a homogeneously reimagined nation could now disavow the urgent presence of a “racial minority” question within its national bounds – Japan now only held a “foreign” population of Koreans.

Most probably, Japanese people were not ready to embrace Koreans and Taiwanese in Japan as fellow members of the same national state after the end of the “multi-ethnic” empire. One Japanese anthropologist carried out an interesting survey of Japanese racial views right before the peace treaty conference started in San Francisco on September 4, 1951. The anthropologist, Izumi Seiichi, focused his survey on the two days before the treaty conference started because, in his words, “it was considered the time when Japanese positive sentiment toward the United States was reaching a peak amidst the journalistic frenzy of discussing the peace treaty conference.”⁴ According to his survey targeting 385 Tokyo residents, the category of “Americans” had the highest favorability rating among the whole sixteen racial and national categories. The category of Koreans (*Chōsenjin*) had the second lowest rating, next to the category of “Negroes” (*nigurojin*). The survey also showed that Koreans had the highest or

³ G-2 to Diplomatic Section, Check Sheet “Policies for Treatment of Koreans in Japan” (August 14, 1948), Folder: 1948: 701 Korea, Box 30, Office of the U.S. Political Advisor for Japan, Tokyo, Classified General Correspondence, 1945-1952, Record Group 84 (Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State) National Archives and Record Administration, College Park, MD (microfiche, FSP 224, National Diet Library, Tokyo, Japan).

⁴ Izumi Seiichi, “Tōkyō shōshimin no iminzou ni taisuru taido,” in Nihon Jinbun Kagakukai, ed., *Shakaiteki kinchō no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Yūhikaku, 1953); “Nihonjin no jinshuteki henken: Chōsen mondai to kanren shite,” *Sekai* 207 (March 1963).

second highest rating for a group that the interviewees considered “insulting the Japanese,” “holding a grudge against Japan,” or “not useful for Japan.”

This survey provides us with a glimpse of the unchanged structure of feeling that Japanese society was creating through everyday encounters with now-liberated Koreans and the ideological reformulation of the “Korean problem” in public discourse. As I examined in chapters 1 and 2, Koreans celebrating Japan’s defeat and demonstrating “liberation” simply appeared as insulting or vengeful in the eyes of the Japanese majority. The racialized view of social problems that the government and media had spread intersected with popular anxiety toward Koreans in Japan. In their letters sent to Generous Douglas MacArthur during late 1946 and 1947, in the aftermath of the government’s making of the “Korean problem,” the Japanese requested MacArthur to get rid of the entire Korean population in Japan, portraying this population as the obstacle to the reconstruction of Japan. Such views did not easily change thereafter. Indeed, one can see the same kind of language and phrase in Japanese letters sent to MacArthur during 1949. A curious difference one will find in those letters is that the Japanese also began to request the expatriation of Communists out of Japan, often in the same letters asking for the deportation of Koreans.⁵ Communists and Koreans were now juxtaposed together as troublemakers and obstacles.

With historical hindsight, it was rather tragic that Communists and Koreans became associated with each other as the target of blame and hatred among the majority of the Japanese populace, if not among everyone. As the CIA correctly understood, the Japanese Communist

⁵ For instance, see the following folders: “312.1 Japanese Letters” in Box 645, Adjutant General Section and “Petitions to General Headquarters” in Box 5896, Civil Information and Education Section, SCAP, Record Group 331 (Allied Operational and Occupation Headquarters, World War II), National Archives and Record Administration, College Park, MD.

Party (JCP) had been “the only political party sympathetic to the Koreans’ problems” in Japan,⁶ and Japanese and *zainichi* Korean Communists were trying hard to build international (inter-racial) solidarity on the ground. As I argued in chapter 4, a number of *zainichi* Koreans participated in the JCP during 1949 in order to overcome grassroots racial estrangement. However, the JCP’s drastic radicalization during the Korean War, particularly its new militant strategy officially established in the Party’s Fourth Congress of February 1951, resulted in further popular estrangement from the Party itself. So-called “firebomb struggles” (*kaenbin tōsō*) Japanese and *zainichi* Korean militants employed in their anti-war and revolutionary movements during 1952 both outraged and frightened the nation that had just started to tread a new path as an independent country. The reputation of the Party was severely damaged, and the JCP lost all seats in the Lower House as a result of the general election of October 1952. In the Party’s Fifth Congress of July 1955, the JCP officially denied and criticized its previous militant activities as “extreme-leftist adventurism” (*kyokusa bōkenshugi*). The Party’s about-face deeply shocked and hurt those who had devoted themselves to the Party’s militant policy, both Japanese and *zainichi* Korean Party members, and many left the Party thereafter.

In the same year of 1955, *zainichi* Korean leftist leaders also made an abrupt about-face. In May, the leftist leaders transformed the existing Korean United Democratic Front in Japan into a new entity affiliated directly with the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), a new association named “the General Association of Korean Residents in Japan” or so-called *Chōsen Sōren*. Under the new Korean General Association, past post-liberation *zainichi* Korean movements were negatively judged as the “deviation from the correct line,” as misguided “intervention” in Japanese political affairs. The “correct” line now became DPRK-oriented, not

⁶ CIA, “Communist Strength in Japan” (September 28, 1948), Folder: Central Intelligence Reports, Box 216, PSF: Intelligence File, 1946-1953, Central Intelligence Reports File, Papers of Harry S. Truman, Truman Library, Independence, MO.

JCP-led, *zainichi* Korean movements united under the banner of the DPRK and the great leader Kim Il Sung. Since 1955, the memories of Japanese and Korean radical international solidarity receded into marginalized positions in Communist and *zainichi* Korean leftist official histories.

The so-called “1955 system” (*gojūgonen taisei*) is not about these painful stories of the JCP and *zainichi* Korean movements. In postwar Japanese historiography, 1955 is a year that marked another significant turning point after the treaties of 1951 in San Francisco, a critical watershed in Japanese politics that marked the consolidation of Japanese conservative hegemony and the beginning of the long one-party-dominant regime (“1955 system”). However, the separation between the JCP and *zainichi* Korean movements in 1955 – or some might characterize it as the end of the subordination of *zainichi* Korean movements to the JCP – epitomizes, I would say, the end of the “crucible of the post-empire” in Japan. The Japanese empire brought metropolitan and colonial societies and peoples into a single sphere of dominance, even though such integration operated on multi-layered racial and legal hierarchy (asymmetrical relations of dominance) as well as uneven and combined development. As the empire expanded, so did “contact zones” and thereby boundaries became blurred in every dimension under the empire.⁷ The post-empire was the crucible from which new symmetrical solidarities and non-monolithic entities and “national” identities could come out. Until 1955, the Japanese and *zainichi* Korean fight against the revival of the Japanese old guard regime and U.S. cold war interventionism could have become such crucible, although even Japanese and *zainichi* Korean Communist solidarity was not necessarily a symmetrical relationship.

Simultaneously, Korean decolonization turned out to become an unfulfilled project by then as well. In the Korean peninsula, political struggles over the vision of a decolonized nation

⁷ But, the Japanese imperial government never discarded the hierarchical distinction in the legal status between the metropole and colonies.

escalated into the division of the nation into two separate regimes and ended up with a civil war. The war for unification, the North Korean attempt to accomplish the full decolonization of the Korean peninsula, immediately developed into an internationalized civil war through U.S. cold war interventionism. When an armistice was signed in July 1953, the ceasefire line between the north and the south remained almost the same as the previous 38th parallel dividing line. The armistice agreement stipulated the future “peaceful settlement of the Korean question.” Although the Korean question was discussed in the international Geneva Conference in 1954 – where the partition of Vietnam was agreed – no progress was made. The ceasefire line gradually turned into a de facto borderline as the two-Korea problem was left behind, and it marked the end of the “crucible of the post-empire” in Korea.

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