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Introduction: A Literature Review, Methodology, and Main Arguments

Literature Review

"Yŏ tried to ride all the horses at once in order to be sure of coming home on the winner," remarked a British official to the British Foreign Office five months after Yŏ Un-hyŏng was shot to death by supposed assassin Hahn Jee-gheun.¹ However, the official misrepresented the political situation. Yŏ was sincerely driving a carriage called "Korea" very cautiously, trying to figure out how he could safely arrive at a station called "Unitary Socialism." One of the horses—Pak Hŏnyŏng—blinded by an ambition for power and hatred of the driver, selfishly kept nudging the other horse—the Southern Korean Workers' Party--toward the left even as the driver tried in vain to maintain his chariot at the center. The gunshots that screamed through the blistering summer heat did not just leave kisses of death on Yŏ's head and neck; it sealed shut the eyes of the Korean peninsula to non-ideological unification, eyes which remain tightly closed, pressed under the heavy weight of the 38th parallel to this day.

Recent historiography on the Korean War has largely focused on explaining the origins of the war. The most definitive scholarly breakthrough came from Bruce Cumings' magnum opus, *The Origins of the Korean War* (2002)². Cumings first extensively used secret Korean and American materials to critically reassess the Korean War, arguing that the war did not begin a few weeks before June 25, 1950. Rather, the war was a product of meticulous and complex political tensions between Right and Left-wing groups in the Korean peninsula that exploded during the late 1940s. Volume I especially persuasively demonstrated that the war's origins must be traced back to 1945, when liberation brought forth the questions of how Koreans ought to deal with the legacies of Japanese imperialism and with trusteeship, the latter of which intensely soured Left-Right division in southern Korea. His study importantly shows how a feedback of social and political changes on both sides of the Korean peninsula was responsible for the making of the Korean War. Cumings' recent re-examination of the Korean War from the perspective of American involvement hit another milestone with *The Korean War: A History* (2010). Armed with theoretical sophistication and incisive research, Cumings courageously revealed how the United States, China, and the two Koreas were all responsible for unleashing a painful historical stigma on both sides of the Korean peninsula by directing numerous atrocities against civilians. The book's biting analysis of America's air war especially solemnly

¹ "FO 371, piece no. 69937, Kermode to British Foreign Office," December 1, 1947. Adapted from Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War, Vol. II: The Roaring of the Cataract, 1947-1950* (Seoul: Yuksabipyungsa, 2002), 207. Cumings argues that Hahn "belonged to a small group of 'right-wing terrorists,'" but the exact circumstances behind Yŏ's assassination are still unclear and shrouded in mystery. It is speculated that either Kim Gu or The White Clothes Society hired Hahn, the latter being more likely. The White Clothes Society(Baek-eui-sa) was an extremely dangerous, secretive, ultra-conservative, and ultra-nationalist Fascist terrorist group led by Yeom Dong-jin (1902-1950?), an escapee from northern Korea. Yeom was deeply influenced by Jiang Jieshi's anti-Communist Blue Shirts' Society when Yeom was part of the Chinese anti-Japanese resistance movement during the 1920s. The Society was notorious not only for indiscriminately killing Socialists and Communists in southern Korea but also for sending secret agents to northern Korea to assassinate important Communist members, including Kim Il-sung and Nahm Il. Syngman Rhee might have secretly supported the Society to police Communist activities on behalf of the Blue House. The Society disbanded in 1948 under pressure from the American military government. For an account of Yŏ's assassination, see Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War, Vol. II: The Roaring of the Cataract, 1947-1950* (Seoul: Yuksabipyungsa, 2002), 205-206. On the White Clothes Society, see Jin-soon Doh, *Korean Nationalism and Relations between North and South Korea: Political History During the Age of Syngman Rhee and Kim Gu* (Seoul: Seoul National University Press, 2001), 76-80. I will use "Pak" for Pak for Pak Hŏnyŏng and "Yŏ" for Yŏ Un-hyŏng unless noted otherwise.

² Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War, Vol. I: Emergence of Separate Regimes, 1945-1947* (Seoul: Yuksabipyungsa, 2002); *The Origins of the Korean War, Vol. II: The Roaring of the Cataract, 1947-1950* (Seoul: Yuksabipyungsa, 2002).

reminds the importance of historical memory to many Americans for whom the Korean War is still contextually largely unknown.³

Research on North Korea's conduct before and during the war has also expanded our understanding of its complexities. Scholarship utilizing Record Group 242 have served as the vanguard of this effort. Charles Armstrong, Suzy Kim, and Wada Haruki have used previously unavailable North Korean documents to reveal the political and social ambience amid the turmoil of Pyoung-yang's revolution to create one of the most reclusive Communist regimes in the world. Armstrong's examination of the North Korean political system is valuable, because in discussing its colonial origins, Armstrong (2003) reveals how anti-imperialism, self-reliance, nationalism, and Communism combined together to produce the one-party state that North Korea currently is. Furthermore, using American, Chinese, East European, and Korean documents, Armstrong (2013) painstakingly demonstrates that North Korea had been highly involved in international affairs since her founding and resiliently struggled to assert political and economic autonomy.⁴ Suzy Kim (2013) skillfully complements Cumings' and Armstrong's research by examining the everyday life of ordinary citizens during the war, emphasizing how the North Korean revolution affected the Communist character of North Korean society, encouraging the efforts of workers and women to complete a Communist revolution as vanguards of the proletariat and by cultivating a Confucian-based motherhood to educate their children. Kim's work notably examines women in everyday life, which, by combining social and political history, helps broaden our understanding of North Korea beyond its cold image as an authoritarian Communist state. Wada Haruki (2014) employs an international analytical framework that accurately places the Korean War as a central focus of East Asian geopolitics. Using a vast array of Chinese, Russian, Japanese, Taiwanese, Korean, and American sources, he vividly demonstrates that the Korean War commenced not only from the Left-Right contest within the Korean peninsula, but also from Washington's deep concerns over maintaining an anti-Communist Japan and Taiwan against a probable Chinese-Soviet joint occupation of the Pacific.⁵

However, in stark contrast to such meticulous efforts to understand the Korean War as a conflict that involved both halves of the peninsula, very little has been discussed about the complexities of Communist activism in southern Korea under the leadership of Pak Hŏnyŏng and the Southern Korean Workers' Party (*Nahm Jo-suhn Noh-dong Dahng*), the largest Communist organization in southern Korea before the war. Dae-sook Suh (1967) provides the most original attempt to write a comprehensive history of the Korean Communist movement before the Korean War from its origins in 1918 to 1948, but he omits Pak and Yŏ's roles in shaping that history because no significant materials on these men were publicized while he was writing his book. Chong-sik Lee (1978) briefly surveyed the Northern and Southern sections of the Party, but he does not sufficiently contextualize the history

³ Bruce Cumings, *The Korean War: A History* (New York: Modern Library Classics, 2010).

⁴ Charles King Armstrong, *The North Korean Revolution, 1945-1950* (Ithaca, New York and London, England: Cornell University Press, 2003); *Tyranny of the Weak: North Korea and the World, 1950-1992* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2013).

⁵ Suzy Kim, *Everyday Life in the North Korean Revolution, 1945-1950* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2013); Wada Haruki, *The Korean War: An International History* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2014).

of the Southern Korean Workers' Party on the eve of the war, because he is more interested in providing a general institutional narrative of the Northern and Southern branches since the 1920s. Thus, he ignores how the SKWP was responsible for eliminating Yŏ's pacifist "Unitary Socialism" and, to a larger extent, the possibility of peaceful reconciliation before the war.⁶ The most recent attempts have a similar problem. Bonnie Oh's edited volume of essays (2002) does discuss the roles of moderates such as Kim Kyushik, American military advisors, and the American military government's rationale and framework for Democracy in Korea. Yet, there is no detailed discussion of the intense political environment of Rightist-Leftist antagonism in which the SKWP conceptualized its anti-American and anti-imperialist rhetoric against the Rightists and the American military government--the key political background which precipitated the Party's initial rise. Even Cumings (2002) only comments that the SKWP's founding "marked the radicalization of politics and an attempt to organize and coordinate the Left from a central locus."⁷

Methodology and Main Arguments

Yet, as Jack Chen aptly points out, history is always prone to have a lot of gaps, and the goal of writing history, especially hidden and secret history, is to widen the horizon of what can be reliably known--the "epistemological condition" of historiography.⁸ Following Chen's cue, I will fill these lacunae on the SKWP and more broadly, on 1946-1947 by closely examining the *Official Documents of the Southern Korean Workers' Party*--a two-volume collection of previously unpublicized official documents from the largest Communist organization in southern Korea during the late 1940s.⁹ I will examine this period from a history-of-ideas perspective, looking at the flow of political history through the SKWP's rhetoric.¹⁰ I will argue that looking at the 1946-1947 moment in the history of the Korean War from the SKWP's perspective offers an important ideational origin to the Korean War. The SKWP intensely battled against the Rightists to realize Communist political supremacy in southern Korea, and by extension, in the Korean peninsula. In attempting to thoroughly Communize itself and southern Korea, the SKWP was simultaneously responsible for completely eradicating Yŏ's "Unitary Socialism" and the possibility for any peaceful ideological unification. This simultaneous process explains an important ideational origin of the Korean War as a civil war because the war directly

⁶ Dae-sook Suh, *The Korean Communist Movement, 1918-1948* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1967); Chong-sik Lee, *The Korean Workers' Party: A Short History* (Stanford, California: Hoover Institute Press, 1978).

⁷ Bonnie C. Oh ed., *Korea under American Military Government, 1945-1948* (Westpoint, Connecticut: Praeger, 2002); Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, Vol. II, 238.

⁸ Jack W. Chen, "Blank Spaces and Secret Histories: Questions of Historiographic Epistemology in Medieval China," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 69, No. 4 (November, 2010), 1071.

⁹ Kim Nahm-shik ed., *Official Documents of the Southern Korean Workers' Party*, Vols. I and II (Seoul: Center for Asian Studies, Korea University, 1971; 1984) and Bruce Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2005), 263. Kim Nahm-shik (1925-2005) was a temporary member of the SKWP. He was also a researcher on the history of Korean Communism and North Korea who defected from Pyoung-yang in 1984 and released secret Communist documents for research purposes in South Korea. Previously banned by both Seoul and Pyoung-yang throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the *Official Documents* contain top secret meeting minutes, manifestos, and other important documents from the Southern Korean Workers' Party. The documents were, very fortunately, not censored; Nahm just published everything he had. They are also available in digitized form from Korea University's Asia Center (2010). Politically speaking, "South Korea" means "southern Korea," as there was no official Republic of Korea or Democratic People's Republic of Korea during 1946-1947. I will therefore use "southern Korea" and "northern Korea" in this paper. "Party" refers to the SKWP unless noted otherwise.

¹⁰ I hope to relate the SKWP's conceptualized thoughts to structural changes in the Korean political environment. On this point, see Melvin Richter, "Begriffsgeschichte and the History of Ideas," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 48, No. 2 (April-June 1987), 248.

inherited the leitmotif of a Manichean battle between the Left and the Right which the SKWP willingly engaged in to assure Communist supremacy in the south. Only four years later, the SKWP's plan would hotly intensify into a massive war which sought to Communize the entire peninsula.¹¹

More specifically, by focusing on a largely neglected and almost forgotten chapter in the history of the Korean War, I will demonstrate why the SKWP must not be shadowed by the familiarity of the Korean War as a primarily military conflict--a "familiarity" which neither fully constitutes nor guarantees reliability about the entire intellectual facts on the war.¹² If a secret, bold execution of stratagem is an essential ingredient to assure a definitive upper-hand in fighting an actual war, so is an ideational-political preparedness to create a political environment to guarantee the upper-hand.¹³ I will argue that the war began in the south from the SKWP's plot to completely destroy the possibility of a peaceful non-ideological unification--a loophole which Pyoung-yang later exploited to the extreme by sending soldiers south *en masse*. The SKWP thoroughly Communized itself and consolidated the Left to strategically and meticulously prepare for an effective implementation of a more perfect Communist revolution against Rightists. Although the Party initially only wanted to *punish* the anti-nationalist Rightists, Pak Hŏnyŏng's interpretation of "punishment" as a chance to transform the Party into a Communist hub quickly created an ideological divide between the American military government, himself, and Yŏ. That divide quickly established the Party's existential objectives. Using Pak's swift crisis-management skills and his acute sense for political outmaneuvering, the SKWP went on a wild roller-coaster ride to foremost establish a firm Communist presence in the south and to eradicate "Unitary Socialism" because it was a major obstacle to realizing the former. The Party, under Pak's dominance, launched an anti-imperialist and anti-American tirade, formulated Pak's personality cult, theoretically established "Communist exceptionalism," and identified with Pyoung-yang's Communism by supporting its land reforms. Even as the Party got itself embroiled in an internal minting scandal, Pak continued to emphasize Communist supremacy during a "war of principles," aborting Yŏ's final major attempt to reunite the Left and Right through the Seven Principles.

After defeating Yŏ's attempt, Pak closed in to stab the final dagger into the heart of "Unitary Socialism" through the Pyoung-yang Lobby. Pak secured a "Two-to-One Deal," in which he agreed to found the SKWP to establish a two-to-one superiority of the Communists in the peninsula over the Rightists. Upon witnessing the Rightists' and Americans' brutal suppression of two major workers' uprisings, Pak finally decided to found the SKWP, fulfilling the "Two-to-One Deal." This quest retrospectively succeeded due to Yŏ's lack of tact and political acumen, failure to appreciate the value of time, and lack of organizational control. Although Yŏ desperately struggled to realize "Unitary Socialism" even at the cost of risking his own life, by disbanding his own Korean Social Party, and surviving Pak's ruthless interrogation, Yŏ ultimately had no reliable allies to help him confidently

¹¹ My central focus is the Party's *internal* politics, for the whole process was largely a contest between Pak Hŏnyŏng, the Rightists, and Yŏ Un-hyŏng.

¹² On familiarity's negative influence on memory, see A. K. Rogers, "The Logic of Memory," *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. 31, No. 3 (May, 1922), 284.

¹³ Karl Von Clausewitz, *On War* (Penguin Classics, 1983), 275-276.

pursue "Unitary Socialism." Unfortunately, Yŏ would pay with his life for his mistakes a year later.

By contrast, the SKWP's survival and rise through *this very tumultuous order of events* ultimately secured the Party's legitimacy as the sole partner to help what Pyoung-yang still believes to be a postponed mission to Communize Korea. With no effective mechanism to ensure a peaceful and non-ideological unification and having secured a two-to-one superiority over the Rightists by the end of 1946, Pyoung-yang was *free* to choose whatever it wanted to do with the Rightists, ultimately sending bayonets down to the south on June 25, 1950. Thus, the two end-results of this meticulous quest--the death of "Unitary Socialism" and the fulfillment of the "Two-to-One Deal"--show how the rise of the SKWP is a major ideational origin of a war whose scar of Left-Right conflict still remains visibly manifest through the intra-peninsular tension across the 38th parallel. Korea's deep painful cut across her belly reminds her that the SKWP's ghost has yet to disappear.

1. In Search of a "Virtuous Victory": The Congregation of the Korean Communist Party and Its "Fervent Agitation" against an Unpatriotic and Non-Humanist "Democracy" (September 2, 1945)--Introduction of the Party (Sub-Section I) and Introduction of John Reed Hodge, Pak Hŏnyŏng, Yŏ Unhyŏng and Their Ideological Divide (Sub-Section II)

(I). The Korean Communist Party's Founding and the Origins of Anti-Rightist Rhetoric and Pro-Trusteeship Sentiment

Just as the sun sprayed its last thin rays of heat on September 2, 1945, the Korean Communist Party celebrated from its headquarters in central Seoul the "successful conclusion of the final congregation of fervent agitators," which effectively "secured its foothold in southern Korea." The intense fervor for Communism had materialized such that three of the largest Left-wing parties in Korea--the Korean Labor Party, the People's Party, and the Southern Korean New Citizens' Party--united together to reconsolidate Socialist and Communist members throughout the peninsula. The Leftists were no longer merely an anti-Rightist clan; they were now a firmly established political organization. Although it was a "pity that the supreme representative of the labor organizations was absent," the Party's founding was "most fortuitous" because "Japanese imperialists were still adamantly refusing to retreat" and the Soviet Union was expected to offer "support to securing the independence and liberty" of the Korean people. Unification was essential because it was the only means to prevent Left-Right polarization from consuming the Party and Korean peninsula. Yet, polarization was not purely negative, but was a triple-edged knife. On one hand, it would "strengthen the counterrevolutionary forces and severely disarm the Left," thereby forcing a genuine people's revolution to "lose considerable steam." On the other hand, it would "infinitely delay a true unification of the people," outcomes that will spell "despair for the entire Korean people." Alternatively, I would argue that it was precisely because of the polarization's existence that national unification had the potential to become both a private and a public good--the ultimate panacea that would salvage both the Party and the people. Privately, national unification would ensure the Party's political survival by catapulting Party members as the true nationalists. This reputation, in turn, would also publicly ensure

that the Party's political legitimacy increase as the Party of the Korean people.¹⁴

Fortunately, September 2, 1945 offered the perfect timing to do away with polarization's potentially alarming outcomes and focus on nurturing the positive ones. In tandem with the conclusion of the Second World War, September 2, 1945 seemed to be a ripe moment to finish a revolution of national liberation that had already commenced seven years ago through the "great underground struggles against Japanese imperialism." As Pak Hŏnyŏng, a fervent Communist and one of Party's original founders put it, establishing the Party offered a "golden opportunity for a more perfect Communist revolution," in which every Korean ought to partake in the completion of "a great revolution to overthrow imperialism and the bourgeoisie."¹⁵ Pak even argued that the Party would serve as the vanguard of that commitment, vowing to "fight to the end for a true Bolshevik revolution."¹⁶ The repeated use of "revolution" importantly suggests that national liberation was a form of and analogous to class liberation and vice-versa--a situation in which the former and the latter mutually had, borrowing Immanuel Wallerstein's apt phrase, an "ideological and a political relationship."¹⁷ Accordingly, the Communist revolution would be "perfected" when the ideological consolidation of the Left and the Right would politically eradicate two of the worst agents of oppression that could endanger the making of a harmonious nation—imperialism and its collaborators, who, under the guise of ethnically being Korean, kept their wealth and used it to *extend* imperialism by liberally brandishing economic power to torture the working class. In short, the Party was essentially declaring its *raison d' être*--the liberation of Korean workers, and to a larger extent, the Korean nation from that infamous history of oppression.¹⁸

Seventeen days later, with moderate Yŏ Unhyŏng agreement, the Party finalized its decision to unite the Left and the Right. Unity was necessary during a most fortuitous time when "Americans were finally disarming the Japanese," providing the most auspicious opportunity to "permanently expulse the Japanese from the peninsula." The consolidation of the Left would ideally produce a powerful Communist union, which in turn had a more explicit aim of "protecting the political, economic, and social interests of the peasantry, the intelligentsia, and laborers." Fulfilling this aim was necessary, for although the Second World War had ended with the "victory of internationalism over a myopic nationalism," Korea had unfortunately failed to play an important role in securing that victory. Furthermore, the Party must have been surely aware that most peasants and workers had hastily formed numerous "organizations" of varying shades of radicalism without being united under a

¹⁴ "Report on the Progress of the Fervent Agitators' Congregation," September 2, 1945 in Kim Nahm-shik ed., *Official Documents of the Southern Korean Workers' Party*, Vol. I, 2. Noted as *ODSKWP* hereafter.

¹⁵ "Report on the Progress of the Fervent Agitators' Congregation," September 2, 1945. *ODSKWP*, Vol. I, 4.

¹⁶ "The Party and the Precepts of Bolshevism," September 2, 1945. *ODSKWP*, Vol. I, 22.

¹⁷ Giovanni Arrighi, Terence K. Hopkins, and Immanuel Wallerstein, "The Liberation of Class Struggle?" *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (Winter, 1987), 403-404.

¹⁸ Although August 15, 1945 is still celebrated as Liberation Day in South and North Korea, September 2, 1945 ought to be the genuine Liberation Day, for no deal is ever complete until a national seal is stamped. The historian Herbert P. Bix has argued that the main reason for the Japanese' delay in acknowledging surrender is because of a two-week conflict between Hirohito and Japanese military leaders who supported the continuation of the war effort in the Pacific front. For a detailed discussion on this point, see Herbert P. Bix, *Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan* (Perennial Classics, 2001), 487-532.

singular leadership on the eve of national liberation. Therefore, the Party's inaugural speech was rhetorically and realistically justifying the establishment of a Communist Party was an effort to ensure that the Korean people also tasted a "virtuous victory" by "ousting the propertied classes and the bourgeoisie who had collaborated with the Japanese." Doing so would prepare a "moment for the Korean people enlighten themselves of the need to realize a genuine Communist revolution with their own hands." The Party was, in effect, declaring itself as a godsend to the Korean people, presenting three vital gifts that would definitively grant them true national liberation—the taste of victory after over three decades of bitter defeatism at the hands of imperialism, the empowerment of the Korean people as sovereigns of their own homeland, and finally, the realization of a more humanistic society where workers claimed control over their rightful property rather than workers degenerating into property of the bourgeoisie.¹⁹ Only the gifts of such enlightenment would liberate workers who had suffered from harsh labor conditions and met the dreadful fate of being bullet-bearers as they exchanged their lives fighting for the Japanese for the miserably meager wages while working in the Pacific front.²⁰

Yet, Pak and Yŏ had really founded the Party out of great disappointment with corrupt Korean politics. Instead of recognizing the urgency of rooting out imperialism and pro-Japanese collaborators, Syng-Man Rhee's ultra-Rightist Democratic Party of Korea chose to be a symbol of how decadently corrupt and immoral Korean politics had become. The DPK was a herd which learned to live "unhistorically" rather too soon, interpreting Nietzsche's emphasis on the need to forget history rather too literally and forgetting that Korea was under Japanese rule for over three decades.²¹ A notorious Right-wing favoritism within the Korean provisional government under Rhee's influence was most noticeable through his support of formerly pro-Japanese financiers and Conservative media such as Kim Suhng-soo and the *Jo-suhn Daily*. In addition to the DPK's shameful alliance with pro-Japanese financiers and media, its "unprincipled solution to unification," which emphasized "covering up the past for the sake of unity," was a great betrayal to the Korean people who had sacrificed their blood to earn their freedom. Rhee's attempt to pardon such national traitors was a direct abandonment of national honor and respect toward those who sacrificed themselves to restore it.²² Should this carry on, "Fascism would regain its strength" through Rhee's "willful betrayal of Democracy and freedom." By rebranding themselves immorally as nationalistic anti-Communist Democrats, Rightists were "slowing historical progress" and were busy turning "national traitors into counterrevolutionaries" under a

¹⁹ All quotes mentioned up to this citation number come from Pak Hŏnyŏng and Yŏ Unhyŏng, "The Korean Workers' Party is Finally United," September 19, 1945, *ODSKWP*, Vol. I, 6-7. On the scattered peasant and workers' organizations in 1945, see Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, Vol. I, 78-79.

²⁰ On this topic, see Brandon Palmer, *Fighting for the Enemy: Koreans in Japan's War, 1937-1945* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2013). For a detailed analysis of Japanese colonial rule in the eyes of Korean workers, see Ken C. Kawashima, *The Proletarian Gamble: Korean Workers in Interwar Japan* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2009). On the state of workers and peasant organizations in August, 1945, see Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, 77-78.

²¹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Advantages and Disadvantages of History for Life* (Indianapolis, Indiana: Hackett Publishing, 1980), 7-9.

²² Ahn Jae-sung, *Pak Hŏnyŏng : A Biography* (Seoul: Silcheon Publishing, 2009), 259.

dubious pursuit of an "unprincipled unity" of the nation.²³ Moreover, Rhee's inclusion of billionaires in the Democratic Reconstruction Council was akin to inviting "war criminals" and would serve as a "clear barometer" of Rhee's "irresponsible approach to uniting the nation."²⁴ By rendering "Pro-Democracy" synonymous with "nationalist" in gathering a Rightist clan that had little remorse for its pro-Japanese past, the Rhee faction was deliberately poisoning the blatant present of a liberated Korea—the most "un-Korean" sin that could ever be committed against Koreans who had suffered for over three decades under an extremely harsh and savage colonial regime.²⁵

Thus, the long-awaited arrival of national liberation on August 15 and the Party's official founding shortly after was a prime opportunity to complete the grand mission of removing pro-Japanese collaborators and realizing true independence of, by, and for the Korean people. The Party's deliberately alienating emphasis of the Rhee faction as a group of sycophantic national traitors also had the indirect effect of publicly advertising itself as the only rational and truly Korean party of the Korean people. By rendering nationalism as an ethical rationale for exercising governmentality, the Party was arguing that its anti-imperialist nationalism was the ultimate spiritual source of legitimacy that resonated directly with the Korean people.²⁶ Therefore, only a government led by Koreans with true patriotism had the right to govern Koreans as Koreans and was morally better than an institutionally "Democratic" government which protected Koreans who were physically Korean but spiritually Japanese.

Yet, that a traitorous group of Koreans were ruling in the name of "Democracy" meant Korea had to first seek experience and expertise from countries properly practicing institutional Democracy. Passion for independence had to be tamed by the rationality of defining and practicing good governance. What this "taming" really meant was that Koreans had to temporarily depend on the nations who had successfully defeated Japanese Fascism—China, Britain, the Soviet Union, and the United States—to "restore the dignity of a fully independent people through the installation of Democratic governance." Furthermore, because Japanese imperialism unfortunately bred "opportunists" and "completely destroyed the foundations" of the Korean economy, it was imperative that the trusteeship be approved "with utmost haste."²⁷ By using "foundation," the Party effectively prescribed a functional necessity to supporting trusteeship as the ultimate path to political and economic reconstruction of Korea to enhance the general welfare of the Korean people. In effect, "trusteeship" was another synonym for patriotism, and the Party was trying hard to prove that point as clearly as possible.²⁸ After all, the

²³ "Dr. Lee and the Resurgence of Fascism," March 27, 1945. *ODSKWP*, Vol. I, 77-78.

²⁴ "Dr. Lee and the Central Commission," March 7, 1945. *ODSKWP*, Vol. I, 50-53.

²⁵ "Dr. Lee and the National Reconstruction Fund," March 10, 1945. *ODSKWP* Vol. I, 60-61.

²⁶ If the core of governmentality rests on maintaining the "structural order of things" for the sake of political efficacy, then by declaring that nationalism be the yardstick for determining political rationality, the Party was *compartmentalizing* nationalism into an instrument for governmentality. For Foucault's original idea, see Michel Foucault, "Governmentality," in Graham Burchell, Coline Gordon, and Peter Miller eds., *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), especially 87-104.

²⁷ "The Moscow Conference and Its Decision on Korea," March 28, 1945. *ODSKWP*, Vol. I, 79.

²⁸ "The Moscow Conference and Its Decision on Korea," March 28, 1945, *ODSKWP*, Vol. I, 79. The SKWP's interpretation of "pro-trusteeship" as a patriotic stance draws direct contrast with the Rightist brand in terms of content and *consistency*. Rightists equated "pro-trusteeship" with "pro-Americanism," a position to which people such as Seung-mahn Lee were devoted for a very long time

Americans were already in Korea to "receive the surrender of Japanese forces" and "rehabilitate Korea for Koreans to enjoy life under a more Democratic rule."²⁹ Thus, the Party hoped that its anti-Rightist and nationalist sentiments would catapult it as the representative of the Korean people--a position it would rigorously defend once it mastered the practice of Democracy through the trusteeship. Or so the Party thought. It would only take a month for the ideological divide between the American military government, Pak, and Yŏ to rapidly and clearly emerge.

(II). The Great Ideological Divide between John Reed Hodge, Pak Hŏnyŏng, and Yŏ Unhyŏng in October and the Significance of September 2, 1945--Introduction of Hodge, Pak, and Yŏ's Ideas and Their Conflict

Unfortunately, in spite of its good will to become a voice of the people, the Party still invited much suspicion from the American military government. American officials were wary of Communists "trying to ferment a people's revolution against American imperialism," which would make achieving an airtight security nearly impossible and possibly inspire the Soviets to intervene on the Korean Communists' behalf. Therefore, the Americans had very little incentive to let "complete national liberation" be a euphemism for southern Korea's transformation into a haven for Communism. John Reed Hodge (1893-1963), head of the American military government, fully shared the American officials' view. Hodge inherited from his deeply Conservative family and his very rough climb to the top of the military bureaucracy a typical Conservative Manichean perception of the world as a contest between good and evil. Despite being, as Cumings describes, a "sincere, honest, and unpretentious man" with a sterling reputation as "Patton of the Pacific," Hodge was also a mental captive of his military career.³⁰ His success in protecting Democracy and the United States from Nazism simply told him that the only thing that had changed in the Korean peninsula was the opponent—Communism. This is probably why, as one scholar has argued, it was not difficult for Hodge to perceive southern Korea "merely as a base for anti-Communistic operations."³¹

However, Hodge's anti-Communism was also deeply racist, for he was a man whose body was living in the 20th century, but whose cultural mindset lived in the 19th century. Due to his lack of any prior experience with working in Asia, Hodge easily succumbed to the notorious disease of Orientalism, adhering firmly to the belief that Koreans were lazy, unreliable, and inefficient.³² It was no different from the leading English and French Orientalists and politicians who, as Edward Said points out, assumed that the Orient is "child-like, irrational, and different" while the Occident is "rational, virtuous, mature, and normal." Furthermore, like the French Orientalists Ernest Renan and Antoine Sacy, Hodge was intent on reducing the Korean to what Said describes as "a human flatness,

and a position which people such as Jin-woo Song supported merely because that position was convenient for joining the Rightist majority. On this point, see Sang-yong Choi, "Trusteeship and the Korean Cold War," in Bonnie Oh ed., *Korea Under the American Military Government, 1945-1948*, 16-17.

²⁹ John Reed Hodge, "Letter to the Korean People," adapted from Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, Vol. I, 448.

³⁰ Cumings, *The Korean War: A History*, 109-110.

³¹ Ahn, *Pak Hŏnyŏng: A Biography*, 295.

³² Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, Vol. I, 139; James Matray, "Hodge Podge: American Occupation Policy in Korea, 1945-1948," *Korean Studies*, Vol. 19 (1995), 17-20.

removed from its complex humanity, which only the Orientalist is capable of understanding the Orient, while the Oriental himself could not do the same."³³ The United States already had a tradition of reflecting a similar sentiment through the Roosevelt Corollary, "Dollar diplomacy" in the Caribbean, and "benevolent assimilation" in the Philippines.³⁴ The only difference with Korea was that, due to Soviet presence, benevolent assimilation had to be toned down to benevolent tutelage, focused on preparing the Koreans adequately to contain the spread of Communism. "Containing" did not just mean preventing the spread of Communism. It also implied demonstrating American prowess to Koreans and threatening the Communists by accusing them of suspending Democratic order, and, in a larger sense, jeopardizing national security against Soviet presence in northern Korea.

By doing so, Hodge hoped to advertise Democracy's higher pragmatic value over Communism in southern Korea and force Communist stalwart Pak Hŏnyŏng to abandon his plan to use the SKWP as a base for anti-American operations. This would ensure no significant local Korean threat was posed against American influence in the peninsula while Americans focused on "developing Korean self-government and amicable relations with the Soviets."³⁵ As for the spoilage resulting from whatever conflict that may ensue, Hodge knew that he could always use the Right-wing Rhee faction to clean it up. Without getting their own hands dirty, the Americans could maintain and promote a pure image of themselves as liberators and pacifiers, not as hypocritically undemocratic imperialists and breeders of factionalism.³⁶ On October 27, 1945, intending to lecture Pak about the impropriety of his Communist stance, Hodge ordered his staff to escort Pak to the Military Government's headquarters for a meeting. Hodge carefully concealed his Orientalism with a wrapping called "national security" and warned Pak that the right to enjoy freedom did not imply the right to usurp it in libertine fashion by vowing to punish political opponents. Furthermore, lest Pak was thinking about creating a "Communist paradise," Hodge warned that Pak better abandon that idea because it was just a euphemism for an utter destruction of civil order; civility could only exist from a solid guarantee of freedom of expression. Since the Party sought to deny and destroy that freedom, Hodge argued that the Party was a "grave threat to maintaining a Democratic peace." Communists would be unable to govern according to the people's will because the Party would be only interested in imposing its own plans on the Korean public if "stubborn ideologues" like Pak continued to lead it.³⁷ However, Pak did not care what Hodge had packaged because he saw through Hodge's anti-Communist wrapping and could not

³³ Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991), 40, 150, 289.

³⁴ For accounts of American "Dollar diplomacy" in the Caribbean, see Michel Gobat, *Confronting the American Dream: Nicaragua under U. S. Imperial Rule* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2005); Scott Nearing and Joseph Freeman, *Dollar Diplomacy: A Study of American Imperialism* (New York: B. W. Huesch and Viking Press, 1925) and Emily S. Rosenberg, *Financial Missionaries to the World: The Politics and Culture of Dollar Diplomacy* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2005). On American colonization of the Philippines, see Paul A. Kramer, *Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States, and the Philippines* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina and London, England, 2006) and Alfred McCoy, *Policing America's Empire: America, the Philippines, and the Rise of the American Security State* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009).

³⁵ "Telegram from the Secretary of State to the Political Adviser in Korea," April 5, 1946. *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS)*, Vol. VIII: The Far East, Korea, 657; John Lewis Gaddis, "Containment and the Logic of Strategy," *The National Interest*, Vol. 10 (Winter, 1987/88), 27-38.

³⁶ The Americans would later reveal their hypocrisy by constructing the Representative Democratic Council to better manage the Rightists. See Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, Vol. I, 234.

³⁷ Ahn, *Pak Hŏnyŏng: A Biography*, 297.

conceal his intense dislike of Hodge's condescending manner of speech. Pak sharply retorted that the Party only wanted to exterminate imperialism, national traitors, and Americans, having defeated Japanese Fascism, ought to be Korea's allies, not enemies. Should the Americans attempt to sabotage the Communists' plan, Pak warned, it was a natural and moral duty to "fight unwelcome occupiers to the end." If the Americans ignored his warning, the Party had no choice but to consider "Americans as despicable substitutes of Japanese imperialists." Hodge, who had prepared "freedom" as his lucky punch to knock out Pak, ended up replying nothing as Pak offered "nationalism" and "anti-Fascism," values which Democracy could also accept if it was a political system desiring to reflect the will of a people long oppressed under harsh imperial rule.³⁸ In short, Hodge's first and only debate with Pak had ended in defeat.

Pak's early intellectual and political career best explains his bitter but confident reply to Hodge. Contrary to American suspicion that Pak's control of the SKWP was evidence of the Communists "being under complete Russian control," Pak (1900-1955) already had an impressive résumé as a seasoned theorist and a revolutionary.³⁹ Although Pak only stood barely over 5 feet tall, his aspiration for power compensated for his height. Seizing the leadership of a Communist party had always been Pak's ambition, and as he personally believed, his destiny. A precocious polyglot and an avid reader of Marxist theory who called *Capital* "my Bible," Pak had built an extensive and deep knowledge of Marxism such that he won all the top honors as a student at the University for Toilers of the East. Pak's reputation was such that Stalin personally met and praised him as the "most respectable and reliable comrade to complete Korean national liberation."⁴⁰ Furthermore, Pak was no stranger to Party politics, since he had tasted success in unifying the Left in the 1920s. His official founding of the original Korean Communist Party (*Jo-suhn Gong-sahn Dahng*) in 1925 was a milestone, for it rapidly eliminated Communist factionalism by absorbing the Shanghai and Ikurtsk clans which had been warring against each other throughout 1919-1920.⁴¹ The KCP's revival in September 1945 was a welcome sign for Pak because it was an auspicious opportunity to reclaim his former glory as the foremost representative of Korean Communism. Moreover, having already forcibly incorporated many former members of the old factions from the 1920s as well as some of Yŏ's closest comrades in August of 1945, Pak had enough confidence in his political power to reject Hodge's effort to convert him into a Rightist.⁴²

³⁸ Ahn, *Pak Hŏnyŏng: A Biography*, 297-298.

³⁹ "Telegram from General of the Army Douglas MacArthur to the Secretary of State," Telegram 2-2446, *FRUS*, 1946, Vol. VIII, 640.

⁴⁰ Ahn, *Pak Hŏnyŏng: A Biography*, 45. Thanks to his rich and deep theoretical knowledge, Pak also made a lot of friends as a student in the University for Toilers of the East--an anomaly for a man who was an extreme introvert. Among those friends was Ho Chi Minh. The two were close friends throughout Pak's lifetime. On a state visit to Hanoi, Pak is reported to have presented Ho with *Mok Min Shim Suh (On a Proper Mindset for Good Governance)*, the magnum opus of Jung Yahk-yong (1762-1836), who is considered the greatest political theorist and sociologist of the Jo-suhn Dynasty. Ho would treasure the book, signed "friend" in Chinese on the front cover in Pak's own script, his entire life. Ho's copy is preserved at Hanoi's Museum of National History.

⁴¹ The Shanghai and Ikurtsk clans had themselves combined numerous factions under the Goryuh Communist Party in 1921, but the old factional belligerence was still very much alive between the Shanghai and Ikurtsk clans began an infighting amongst themselves until the GCP disintegrated in 1922. For details regarding the factional struggle, see Suh, *The Korean Communist Movement, 1918-1948*, 20-52.

⁴² Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, Vol. I, 83.

Although he lost the oral boxing match with Pak, only two months later, Hodge realized that his stance from the debate was not incorrect. The Moscow Conference had ended without definitively promising anything--a barking dog without a bite.⁴³ Hodge was dismayed by the highly unsatisfying decision that Korea be placed under a joint American-Soviet trusteeship for five years, because as the philosopher Béla Szabados argues, while a hypocrite may use tricks to deceive others, the deception *itself* becomes the hypocrite's main weakness.⁴⁴ The Americans had entered Korea harboring fundamentally a contradictory objective that yielded no space for any joint cooperation. They wished to implement "Democracy" which in principle upheld the open participation of all parties in Korea, but actually only accepted Rightists because of their staunch anti-Communism. With Pak's flat refusal to cooperate in finding a solution to this perplexing problem, Hodge now confronted the problem of finding reliable political consultants in Korea. It was going to be extremely difficult, for it meant finding a reliable Korean partner in a country where Rightists were numerous but had very little nationalist credentials to win the Korean public's approval and Leftists were few but fiercely devoted to an ideology that could possibly invite Soviet intervention at the worst.⁴⁵

As much as the American military government had its own reasons to agonize over answering this dilemma, Yŏ Unhyŏng (1886-1947) also had a good reason to be increasingly frustrated with Pak and Hodge's uncooperative attitudes. Yŏ thought both Pak and Hodge were deluded; meaningless bickering about whether one form of "Democracy" was better than another would offer nothing but mutual hatred. Incorporation and harmony were more necessary than accusations of national treason against the Right, for Pak's strategy of attacking the Rhee faction with anti-imperialist rhetoric would invite more unnecessary animosity from the Right. Furthermore, with the Americans essentially possessing actual administrative and military control, Yŏ knew that the only realistic solution for the Left was to work toward uniting with the Right to form a joint coalition and work toward restoring Korean self-government. A more fundamental reason behind Yŏ's consideration of Right-Left cooperation as the only plausible solution was due to his discomfort with the conception of Left-Right antagonism itself. Although he, like Pak, desired the expulsion of pro-Japanese collaborators and had established the Alliance for National Reconstruction in 1944 to promote a "great union" of the Korean people, Yŏ was by no means a strict Leftist, or like Pak was, an orthodox Communist.⁴⁶ After an illustrious career as a Korean representative to the Versailles Conference and as a renowned independence fighter in Beijing during the 1910s, Yŏ joined the original KCP in 1921 because he believed that the Party was institutionally "ready to deliver a truly egalitarian socialism" to the Korean people. Although he had served the Korean Provisional Government until 1919, he was disgusted with

43 James Jongsoo Lee, *The Partition of Korea after World War II: A Global History* (Palgrave-MacMillan, 2006), 86. See also 69-91 for further analysis on the Moscow Conference's outcome. The problem of which country would dictate the terms of the trusteeship would occupy American and Soviet political thinking on Korea until 1948. On this point, see Hakjoon Kim, "The American Military Government in South Korea, 1945-1948: Its Formation, Policies, and Legacies," *Asian Perspective*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (Spring-Summer, 1988), 66-75.

44 Béla Szabados, "Hypocrisy," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (June, 1979), 195.

45 Ahn, *Pak Hŏnyŏng: A Biography*, 142.

46 Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, Vol. I, 79.

the government's perversion into a Rightist hotbed under the influence of members such as Syngman Rhee, and Kim Gu rather than functioning as a unifier of the Korean people. Yŏ was especially annoyed with the Rightists' insistence on the label *Daehan*, which he felt was historically inappropriate because it was "inauspicious for a country to name itself after an 'empire' ransacked by Japanese imperialists." 'United Korea' (*Tong-il Josuhn*) was a more favorable term because "Korea was a country that Koreans had long ruled as Koreans with perfect historical autonomy."⁴⁷ "Historical autonomy" shows how Yŏ, as a good patriot, believed that a country's people had to collectively uphold, what sociologist Craig Calhoun calls the "sanctity of historical nationalism" derived from the country's name to truly declare themselves sovereign. History, as a non-ideological and collective creation with the hands of the people was *the* chicken which laid the egg of national sovereignty.⁴⁸ Unfortunately, while Yŏ's decision to promptly leave the Party to search another organization that would allow him to realize his meaning of "History" was correct, his subsequent decision to join the old KCP to continue that search, was not. Instead of allowing Yŏ to concentrate on fighting the Japanese under a unified banner of the Left, Pak Hŏnyŏng seemed only interested in Communist indoctrination until the Party had to close down because the Japanese police arrested Lee Dong-hwi, the KCP's head of treasury and most officials for embezzling the Party's funds.⁴⁹ An immensely disappointed Yŏ had no choice but to walk out. Yŏ then went to Taiwan in 1924, where he was briefly a member of the Blue Shirts Society under the leadership of Jiang Jieshi, but he soon became disillusioned with the harshly Manichean conception of Jiang's anti-Communism. After hearing news of the Shanghai Massacre in 1927, a furious and frustrated Yŏ walked out of the Blue Shirts Society a year later.⁵⁰

The more original a mind, the more inclined it is to solitude.⁵¹ Yŏ left all three parties because of the myopic Left-Right antagonism he saw in these organizations. That divide was just incompatible with his unique and sophisticated neutral approach to Korean unification--"unitary Socialism"--what Cumings has called "a mixture of Christianity, Wilsonian Democracy, and Socialism."⁵² Yet, "Unitary Socialism" was not merely an amalgamation of diverse ideologies; it was an integrative philosophy which sought to neutrally unite both Left and Right, encouraging both sides to mutually cooperate under the banners of "humanism" and "egalitarianism," best shown in his poem "Zhuxi's Joke for a Visitor." (1943) Yŏ delivers the idea concisely and clearly with his superb command of the lyricism and philosophical succinctness of classical Chinese poetry:

人我人, 我不喜 (people I people, I am not happy)
人我不人, 我不怒 (People I not people, I am not angry)

⁴⁷ Kim Sahm-woong, *Mong-yang Yŏ Un-hyŏng: A Biography of a Progressive Nationalist* (Seoul: Chaeryun Publishing, 2015), 172. Yŏ referred to the Japanese-led establishment of the Korean Empire (1907), which began a *de jure* Japanese colonial rule of Korea.

⁴⁸ Craig Calhoun, "Nationalism and Ethnicity," *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 19 (1993), 225. I am arguing that Yŏ believed similarly to what Calhoun is arguing in this entire citation.

⁴⁹ Kim, *Mong-yang Yŏ Un-hyŏng*, 177.

⁵⁰ Kim, *Mong-yang Yŏ Un-hyŏng*, 178.

⁵¹ Aldous Huxley's quote from an interview in 1962.

⁵² Bruce Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2005), 191.

我人, 人我不人, 我人 (I people, people I not human, I, human)
 我不人, 人我人, 我不人 (I am not human, people I human, I am not human)
 欲知我 人不人, (Wish to know me, people not human)
 我人, 我不人 人之人不人 (I am human, I am not human, people's human not human)
 人我不人欲怒知之 (people I am not human, learn to be angry from knowing)
 (Even if people call me human, it is no cause to be happy;
 Though some may say I am not human, it is no cause for me to express fury.
 If I am human, though others may say I am not so, I still am human.
 If I am not human, even if people may say that I am, I still am not human.
 To know whether I myself am a human, first know whether those who call me 'human' or 'not human' are themselves human.)⁵³

At first glance, the meaningless repetition of "people-I-people-I" gives the impression that Yō wrote a poem which Edward Lear would have written, had Lear known Chinese characters. However, like all Chinese poems, Yō's poem requires a grammatical transliteration of "people" into "human" to make the smooth delivery of the philosophical message of humanism. The necessity of transliteration is the critical difference between Lear and Yō. Lear's poems are naturally meaningless because their objective is to deliver poetic musicality and light joviality to children; entertainment becomes the chief target over substance. By contrast, Yō's poem displays the opposite relationship. It is more *deliberately* meaningless because he wants to show the obvious frequency of the Chinese character "人" compared with other characters.⁵⁴ Put differently, the *virtutem vitae* of the poem is "人." By rendering a word's frequency in appearance as the ultimate measure of its importance, the poem succinctly and elaborately captures the centrality of the human and the sanctity of respecting individuality. In other words, the dominant appearance of this character clearly demonstrates how importantly "Unitary Socialism" prized a healthy mutual respect for individuality as the basis for political and social harmony.

Thus, the status of "人" as the pivot of the poem's meaning proves the character's irreplaceable nature; likewise "Unitary Socialism" sought to integrate both the Left and the Right because Yō firmly believed that humanism cannot be replaced by a greed for political power, for the latter only promotes needless conflict and survives by destroying the former. "Unitary Socialism" also understood humanism as the condition of establishing the individual as an independent self-perceptive being, for the third line suggests that the idea of being capable of becoming a human being rests not on the judgment of others but that of one's very own. The final line complements the third line and reveals the respect "Unitary Socialism" had for the Christian precept, "Do unto others as others would do unto you." Holistically, "Unitary Socialism" favored non-ideological unity because people can only become human when they are masters of their own character and learn the wisdom of treating others as they would themselves. Such egalitarian humanism is most pronounced in the last two lines, for they suggest that the universe does not revolve around an individual but revolves with people as its axis. The very last line most notably proves this, for it

⁵³ Yō Un-hyōng, "Zhuxi's Joke for a Visitor," (1943) in Lee Ki-hyung, *Yō Un-hyōng: A Biography* (Seoul: Silcheon Publishing, 2004), 317.

⁵⁴ I am suggesting that Yō's nonsensical poem is of a higher order because it is only outwardly humorous to maximize the impact of delivering the deeper philosophy of humanism. The origins of this philosophy can be traced back to 1908, when Yō liberated his slaves by burning government documents that legalized slavery. See Kim, *Mong-yang Yō Un-hyōng*, 62-64.

emphasizes how the best leader is one who is able to understand that the condition of being human compels politicians to be equal, not superior to the people--an echo of Confucius on the art of good governance:

"In ruling a state of a thousand chariots, one is reverent in the handling of affairs and shows himself to be trustworthy. One is economical in expenditures, loves the people, and uses them only at the proper season."⁵⁵

Just as Confucius emphasized the importance of a politician being the prime servant of the public good, Yŏ's "Unitary Socialism" stressed that performing political duties is not a privilege or a power, but a non-ideological service to enhance the betterment of society as a whole. Only with this perception can politicians truly declare themselves to be human beings. Yŏ believed that government whose central value is humanism existed purely for the service of the people; as soon as it abandoned that sacred principle, a politician was but a member of a private clique embroiled in an immoral collusion for power. Thus, it was so natural for Yŏ to be uncomfortable about Pak's perverse use of Communism and the Party only to counter the Rightists instead of combining heads to debate on Korea's future and to love the Korean people as Koreans--the only road for politicians to be proper human beings. This eclectic and non-ideological humanism was the basis for "Unitary Socialism," since Yŏ wanted to harmonize Socialists, Democrats, and Communists toward realizing a truly non-ideological unification of the Korean peninsula.

Yŏ was frustrated with the Americans because they refused to understand this message, perceiving "Unitary Socialism" as a philosophy completely at odds with Washington's anti-Communism.⁵⁶ For American officials keen on containing Soviet influence in Korea, such a middle-of-the-road approach was not only unhelpful but also irrelevant. In the face of a constantly high risk of Soviet invasion, cooperating with Yŏ seemed to be a dangerous bet, for the Americans could not find from the man any answers to how Communism must be confronted. The Soviets were busy establishing 'people's parties' and 'democratic societies' all over northern Korea, which forced Hodge to recommend Washington's revision of its original strategy of "benign supervision" with a heavily ideologically colored objective of ensuring a "thoroughly Democratic government in Korea."⁵⁷ From the Americans' perspective, "Unitary Socialism" was not only incompatible with the ideological crisis in the peninsula but also a direct obstacle to maintaining stability under Rightist dominance. Even though the Moscow Conference had separately established southern Korea as an American zone, a lack of a formal government in southern Korea other than a "provisional government" meant that Washington's interest in forming a joint commission with Moscow was highly necessary to curb any possibility of strengthening the Communist movement in southern Korea. Hence, what mattered foremost for Americans was assuring the victory of an electoral Democracy against a Soviet-inspired authoritarian

⁵⁵ Confucius, *The Analects* (Oxford University Press, 2008), 22.

⁵⁶ Hence, "Unitary Socialism" is Socialist in being a middle-of-the-road ideology and unitary in trying to unite the Left and Right. The facts mentioned thus far explain why Conservative political scientists such as James Jongsoo Lee are wrong to contradictorily and erroneously assert that Yŏ was "popular with American officials *despite* being pro-Soviet"--an egregiously incorrect and heavily ideological interpretation of a man about whom further research is much desired. See Lee, *The Partition of Korea after World War II*, 102. Italics are my emphasis.

⁵⁷ "Telegram from the Political Adviser in Korea (Benninghoff) to the Secretary of State," January 23, 1946. *FRUS*, 1946, Vol. VIII: Korea, 616.

"democracy of the proletariat" centered on a personality cult without losing a single soldier. The urgency behind fulfilling this objective explains why American officials thought "Unitary Socialism" critically misunderstood Democrat-Communist bipolarity--the ideal of an "opportunist with no political backing."⁵⁸

Thus, for Hodge and his associates, Yŏ was a chicken's rib—they were only keeping him as their "important" ally to prevent the Communists from taking over southern Korea, but that was also the precise purpose for which Yŏ was so dispensable.⁵⁹ For men like Hodge who had spent most of their lives on the battlefield constantly fighting on rough terrain *against* enemies, stability did not allow for a freedom of thought whose core value was *for* ideological reconciliation; stability could only promise peace which sought to exclude those who dreamed of anything close to Socialism or Communism. There was no such thing as a "family" of ideologies. One could always be against Communism, but never respect or accept it as a brother or sister to Democracy--a dictum which Hodge later proved by declaring war against the SKWP in December, which in turn led the KCP and Yŏ to intensify their opposition to trusteeship.⁶⁰ The real tragedy was the sheer lack of American understanding of "Unitary Socialism" which forced, as Bruce Cumings points out, Yŏ to be "a man for many seasons," but not for the Manichean world of Communism or Democracy with nothing in between—one that still haunts the Korean peninsula.⁶¹

In retrospect, Hodge, Pak, and Yŏ's philosophical portraits reveal that September 2, 1945 was a major defeat for Pak and Yŏ. Under Pak and Yŏ's leadership, the KCP rose in indignation against the Conservative KDP's pardoning of pro-Japanese sinners, believing that Korea's true national liberation was only complete when the sinners were thoroughly punished in the name of the people--peasants and workers. Yet, the KCP had arisen also out of disappointment, for Hodge confirmed for the Leftists that Americans needed anti-Communist Democratic allies rather than Nationalists. More specifically, Hodge confirmed the validity of the Party's anger by authorizing the pardon and inclusion of Japanese collaborators who continued with their careers in the Korean National Police and the National Assembly. The Americans had instituted a highly ideological Democracy whose sole objective was opposing Communism, completely devoid of nationalism. In doing so, they had betrayed Pak,

58 "Telegram from the Political Adviser in Korea (Bennington) to the Secretary of State," January 22, 1946. *FRUS*, 1946, Vol. VIII: Korea, 614.

59 A "chicken's rib" refers to an object which brings no great profit or advantage but is equally not worth entirely discarding because of its future potential. The phrase comes from Luo Guanzhong and Moss Roberts ed., *The Three Kingdoms* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 2008). The uniqueness of "Unitary Socialism" is apparent if we compare it with Kyu-shik Kim, a moderate. Kim was known for his staunch opposition to a separate south Korean government, but Kim was closer to a Rightist, distancing himself from even moderate Leftists like Yŏ. This moderate stance made the Americans feel more comfortable dealing with Kim rather than Lyuh or Pak. On Kim Kyushik, see James Jongsoo Lee, *The Partition of Korea after World War II*, 101-102, 148-151 and Bonnie C. Oh, "Kim Kyu-shik and the Coalition Effort," in Oh ed., *Korea Under American Military Government*, 103-122. For a general discussion of the American military government's policies toward Korean moderates, see Sang-sook Jeon, "U. S. Korean Policy and the Moderates During the U.S. Military Government Era," in Oh ed., *Korea Under American Military Government*, 79-102.

60 Bruce Cumings, *North Korea: Another Country* (New York: The New Press, 2004), ix; Tae-shik Jung (KCP Member), "Statement of Opposition to Trusteeship," *Seoul Shinmoon* (Seoul Newspaper), December 29, 1945 and Yŏ Unhyŏng, "Statement of Opposition to Trusteeship," *Jayui Shinmoon* (Free Newspaper), December 30, 1945. Adapted from Sang-yong Choi, "Trusteeship Debate and the Korean Cold War," in Bonnie Oh ed., *Korea Under American Military Government*, 20.

61 Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun*, 471-472.

preventing him from punishing the DKP's un-Korean sin of rebranding Japanese collaborators as patriotic Democrats. However, Hodge and Pak had also frustrated Yŏ because they refused to understand the importance of achieving a humanist, non-ideological unity of Koreans under the banner of "Unitary Socialism." 1945 drew to a close with a Rightist and American victory over the SKWP, for they had succeeded in fulfilling their chief goal of creating politics without a heart or soul. In their eyes, political expediency trumped historical and popular legitimacy, blurring the line between a Democrat and a Japanese collaborator, making it impossible to tell the two apart. Nevertheless, the Party believed that it *could* and did not take long to demonstrate this by intensifying its pro-Soviet support for the trusteeship and consolidating Pak's personality cult.

2. "Without the Party, There Would be No Independence": The SKWP's Intensification of Pro-Soviet and Pro-Trusteeship Tendencies and the Rise of Pak's Personality Cult (January, 1946)

(I). The Party's Shift to a Pro-Soviet Stance toward the Trusteeship (January 5-15, 1946)

Despite its defeat on September 2, 1945, the Party refused to acknowledge it, publishing a panegyric denouncing Hodge's "hypocritical and perverse 'Democracy.'" It was hypocritical and perverse because although the Rhee faction was Right-wing and "pro-Democracy" in terms of ideological inclination, it was also merely an imperial tool of the Americans to govern Leftists whom the Americans considered threatening to their authority. If imperialism is, as Edward Said put it, "the practice of a dominant metropolitan center ruling a distant territory," the SKWP perceived Hodge's "Democracy" as a form of imperialism because the American-Rightist "coordinative administration" was nothing more than an extended chapter of Korea's bitter history of colonial subjugation.⁶² Inviting a trusteeship to govern the peninsula was a humiliating repetition of Japanese imperialism because inviting the United States--a geographically and culturally distant nation to "rule" the peninsula--only served to reinforce Korea's inability for self-government. Should such a "major tragedy" befall Korea, Koreans incurred the risk of repeating "35 years of shame, guilt, and sadness." Americans had to be "resisted at all costs" because passivity would only lead to "exchanging one imperialist for another." This would forestall "genuine progress" and prevent Koreans from becoming a "world-historical people."⁶³

The key to understanding the panegyric's anti-imperialist discourse lies in the notion of "exchange," for it reflects the Party's consciousness about what the sociologist Johan Galtung has described as a "structural theory of imperialism." It is not only geographical distance that creates alienation between two nations with an imperial relationship. Imperialism is a direct negation of Marxist historical materialism, creating a vertically stratified distinction of a core nation and a peripheral nation which easily transforms the relationship between two nations into that between a dominant bourgeois and an oppressed proletariat.⁶⁴ Korea had already experienced this relationship with Japan and there was no

⁶² Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 9; "Lieutenant Hodge and 'Democracy,'" January 15, 1946. *ODSKWP*, Vol. I, 97.

⁶³ "Lieutenant Hodge and 'Democracy,'" January 15, 1946. *ODSKWP*, Vol. I, 97.

⁶⁴ Johan Galtung, "A Structural Theory of Imperialism," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (June, 1971), 92-93.

need to repeat it with the United States. Thus, opposing trusteeship was the Party's ultimate means to protect its ideological roots and by extension, prevent the repetition of Galtungian imperialism in Korean history. From the Party's perspective, its fear of the trusteeship's degradation into a tool for the American occupation to extend, rather than end imperialism was not unfounded. Beyond the hated prospect of indefinitely suspending the delivery of national liberation to peasants and workers due to intense American and Rightist opposition, American administration was nearly intelligible from Japanese imperial rule. Indeed, the former was expected to unfold much worse than the latter because the United States' attempt to introduce Democracy was, as Pak put it, a scheme to turn the Pacific Ocean into an "American lake."⁶⁵

However, the generally belligerent anti-Americanism that Pak had forced upon the SKWP must not be understood purely as a fear of repeating an unwanted historical chapter. Ideology has the power to force a subject to live in an ideological world and allows for an active rejection and regulation of history by presenting the ideological world as the embodiment of the good life.⁶⁶ By combining anti-Rightist and anti-American rhetoric to make Rightists and Americans' stances intelligible, Pak and his followers made sure that their powerful appeal of nationalism emphasized the moral superiority of the Party's Communism over the Rightists' feigned "Democracy." Following the anthropologist James Scott's (1985) argument about material interests, if Pak's desire to prove such moral superiority is a materialized interest--one that requires gaining comparative positional advantage over adversaries--then such "positionality" is also a prize in itself, earned through an intense political struggle.⁶⁷ To acquire positionality, however, one must first fundamentally clarify one's position; Pak decided to cement his reputation as an orthodox Communist. Hence, on January 5, during an interview with the *New York Times*, Pak supported extending Soviet trusteeship over Korea, just to delineate his opinion as different from the Rightists without elaborating on its implications. Yet, the American reporter who conducted the interview was a staunch follower of Hodge's anti-Communism, unjustifiably refashioned "support" as though Pak was calling for Korea's transformation into a Soviet satellite. Unsurprisingly, the Rightists easily caught and exploited the bait; like piranhas swarming over a chunk of flesh, they struck while the iron was hot, defaming Pak as a "turncoat" willing to Russify Korea.⁶⁸ "Turncoat" importantly reflected the Rightists' wish that their protest the trusteeship's "colonial" aspect of transferring sovereignty to a foreign power would solidify their supremacy in the southern Korea.

However, the Rightists had underestimated Pak's pride as a Communist. Shortly after the fiasco with the reporter from *The New York Times*, Pak published a biting rebuttal to the Rightists, arguing that accepting trusteeship was not a sin, but a "necessary strategy for the eternal destruction of Fascism." Opposing trusteeship was the real disgrace, for it exposed an ugly truth. The Rightists and landholding classes were merely hiding behind a thin curtain of "Democracy," naively wishing that it

⁶⁵ Ahn, *Pak Hŏnyŏng: A Biography*, 249.

⁶⁶ John Gerring, "Ideology: A Definitional Analysis," *Political Research Quarterly*, Vol. 50, No. 4 (December, 1997), 972.

⁶⁷ James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Struggle* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 193-194.

⁶⁸ Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, Vol. I, 224.

would completely conceal their shameful past as collaborators of Japanese Fascist imperialism. Their conflation of "Democracy" with "anti-Communism" was nothing more than a camouflage to conceal their grave crime as "country-sellers" and to feign blind and deaf to their despicably sin-stained souls. Pak's such defense of the trusteeship was important because it directly countered the Rightists' charge that the Party was a group of country-sellers by arguing that accepting trusteeship was not repeating a shameful history of foreign domination. On the contrary, the trusteeship was a panacea to eternally throw imperialism into the garbage can of history.⁶⁹ Furthermore, Pak sought to salvage his reputation as a nationalistic Communist against the Rightists' accusation based on incorrect information and to show that supporting the trusteeship was necessary to prevent the Americans from reintroducing imperialism into a country which had already suffered enough from it.⁷⁰ Thus, supporting trusteeship had a dual function of being a strategy for the Party's political survival in a hostile environment and of emphasizing Communism's uniqueness that distinguished it from the Rightists' and Americans' un-nationalistic "Democracy."

An imminent American monopoly on dictating the trusteeship's terms following the Soviets' softened stance toward using the Korean peninsula only to secure supplies of coal and electricity further convinced Pak and his followers to qualify their support of the trusteeship.⁷¹ More specifically, they perceived the trusteeship's plan to divide the peninsula into Democratic and Communist spheres as an American plot to colonize Korea, and identified the American military government as the prime culprit behind the division. Barely a week after the Soviets ceded a firm foothold in Korea to the Americans, Pak severely criticized the "mysterious intentions" of Lieutenant Hodge and the American military government to "stir up disorder and confusion." Hodge was responsible for conflating "Democratic" Koreans with "patriotic Koreans" when most of the Rightists in Korea did not understand the importance of eliminating Fascism. Since Hodge was a "demagogue who was bent on promoting conflict and division among the Korean people," it was pompous for the American military government to be claiming that it was promoting genuine "Democracy." If anything, Hodge was eager to oust as many Leftists as possible from an ideally Rightist-led political order. Thus, it was this exclusionary nature of Hodge's "Democracy" which also made it dangerous in Party members' eyes--there was no concept of the "people," much less of "protection" for the public interest when the "public" constituted mostly of peasants and farmers. Proper Democracy was always about serving such an underprivileged majority to enhance the general public welfare. Without a proper understanding of the exact composition of the "people," the Americans seemed highly unfit to rule Korea in the name of "Democracy."⁷²

⁶⁹ It is striking to note how similar the SKWP's urgency in doing away with imperialism was with Leon Trotsky's in his original use of the phrase. For a detailed discussion of the background to this famous phrase, see Bertrand M. Patenaude, *Stalin's Nemesis: The Exile and Murder of Leon Trotsky* (London: Faber, 2009), 193-194, 252.

⁷⁰ Pak Hŏnyŏng, "Fascism and the Trusteeship," January 5, 1946. *ODSKWP*, Vol. I, 88-93.

⁷¹ John Reed Hodge, "Letter to General Chistiakov," January 9, 1946, in "Secret Telegram from Lieutenant General John Reed Hodge to the Secretary of State," January 12, 1946. *FRUS*, Vol. VIII: Korea, 608-609.

⁷² "Lieutenant Hodge and 'Democracy,'" January 15, 1946. *ODSKWP*, Vol. I, 86-87.

By emphasizing "people," Pak was essentially arguing that defining "Democracy" was a competition between what the sociologist Susan Eckstein has termed, "Substantive versus Formal Democracy." The former emphasizes the maintenance of public welfare by guaranteeing consistent means of livelihood for the people, and the latter merely functions as "Democracy" by holding elections in which politicians "buy" votes from the poor in exchange for offering select services. The Party chose former over the latter because they believed that "Democracy" could only be Democracy if it provided and guaranteed consistent means of livelihood of the people; Pak thought that the Americans were too Manichean, concentrating on building a "Democratic veneer" to justify Rightist hegemony while crushing organizational opposition from the Left.⁷³ More precisely, the main problem with the Americans' desiring a representative government as an emblem of Democracy was that the approach was too conscious of a certain political form that American officials were too willing to fill the government with men who had served the Japanese based on the singular reason of having more expertise. From the Leftists' perspective, such an action was nothing more than encouraging historical amnesia in the name of political efficiency--a decision that only invited more suspicion that the Americans were interested in making the DPK a private servant of the American military government rather than a public servant of the Korean people. In doing so, Hodge was introducing anarchy through a libertine use of the Korean military police to arrest anyone without a warrant. Such an unprincipled use of authority was doing much harm to Korean society by pushing it into unnecessary chaos and disorder. Hence, Pak wished to demonstrate to the Americans what order and discipline precisely were. To do so, Pak knew that he had to convince the Party to solidify its commitment to promoting a strictly Communist political culture within its own ranks.

Thus, Pak chose to balance his anti-Americanism with Communism by equating pro-trusteeship with a pro-Soviet attitude. In comparison with his earlier opposition to the trusteeship, Pak praised the Soviet agreement to the Moscow Conference's trusteeship as "the most progressive decision ever made for the Korean people," allowing Koreans to "develop a true people's Democracy." Pak now quickly reconfigured "pro-trusteeship" into "pro-Soviet," and intensely blamed the Rightists for "purposely distorting" such a "noble intention" and for manipulating the masses to continue a "false struggle against anti-imperialism." The real sin that the Rightist "lackeys" of Japanese imperialism had committed against the Korean people was a blind worship of Fascism, and the trusteeship would serve "the most righteous cause of completely uprooting" it. In other words, placing Koreans under trusteeship was not subjecting the country under foreign domination, but an opportunity for them to learn the correct path to Democracy. Supporting trusteeship was the Party's interpretation of the proverb "a sound mind rests in a sound body"; it was the ultimate corrective that would ensure that a thoroughly moral politics would be practiced with the sound mind of rejecting the shameful past of Japanese colonial rule, which would in turn allow for the emergence of a sound body politic in which

⁷³ Susan Eckstein, "Formal versus Substantive Democracy: Poor People's Politics in Mexico City," *Mexican Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (Summer, 1990), 226-227.

every Korean would prosper and enjoy liberty--the fulfillment of the people's will, and hence, of Democracy.⁷⁴ By blurring the identity of "supporting trusteeship" between a symbol of nationalism and a symbol of a pro-Soviet attitude, the Party sought to demonstrate its commitment to the liberation of the workers and peasantry to promote itself as a group of genuinely patriotic Koreans. Yet, the Party simultaneously wanted to promote itself as a nationalistic group, to monopolize political legitimacy among the people and exclude the Rightists as much as possible from claiming their share. In just a few days, the Party would choose the rise of Pak's personality cult to interpret patriotism as a complex form of nationalism. The Party's more important task of becoming a unique Communist organization, which required centralized leadership and the primacy of Communism over nationalism, would eclipse the Party's image as a group of patriotic Koreans.⁷⁵

(II). Pak's Personality Cult, the Perversion of Nationalism into a Hypnotized Captive of Communism, and Yŏ's Subsequent Exit from the Party (January 17-22, 1946)

Once the Party finished advertising its patriotism and nationalism, members quickly realized that a personality cult was also a key ingredient for the Party to further distinguish itself as a pro-Soviet and Communist organization. As Robert Tucker (1979) argues, a personality cult catches two birds with one stone, hunting heretics and establishes political solidarity among Party members through indoctrination--functions which Pak precisely needed to identify any intra-Party subversives and to indoctrinate pseudo-Leftists of Pak's unquestionable authority.⁷⁶ Less than two weeks after the general meeting, the Party's propaganda staff summoned all members and demanded that they pledge to consider all those who criticized Pak as "counterrevolutionaries who fail to grasp the true meaning of a revolution." Any detractors willing to make snide remarks about Pak were "ignoramuses" unaware of how "rigorously Comrade Park toiled to build the Party." It was only under Pak's leadership that the Party could "cruise toward a determinate victory of Bolshevism."⁷⁷ Those slandering Pak were merely former collaborators of the Japanese opportunistically branding and selling their anti-Communism as "patriotism." Such people were doing themselves a major disservice by "foolishly adding a crime to their criminal records" and must realize themselves that "unfavorable consequences" will befall on them. The Party wasted no time in identifying the "fools" demanding that "General Hodge and his evil pro-Japanese cronies" assume "full responsibility" for the highly unequal distribution of land, which resulted in a mere 3.3% of the entire population owned over half of Korean farmland. By invoking the existence of such "fools" as a just cause to establish a personality cult, the Party was advertising Communism as an ideology ready to exercise *effectively* concentrated power to deliver justice to the peasantry. In contrast to the Rightists' conception of "Democracy," which only safeguarded the interests of decadent landlords, the SKWP was arguing that Communism was superior because, in

⁷⁴ Pak Hŏnyŏng, "Let's Support the Decision of the Moscow Conference," January 16, 1946. *ODSKWP*, Vol. I, 97-98.

⁷⁵ "Against Those Who Criticize Comrade Pak's Leadership," January 17, 1946. *ODSKWP*, Vol. I, 103; on the theoretical relationship between patriotism and nationalism, see Daniel Druckman, "Nationalism, Patriotism, and Group Loyalty," *Mershon International Studies Review*, Vol. 38, No. 1 (April, 1994), 47-49. By "primacy," I mean that Communism had a higher priority over nationalism, with both eclipsing patriotism.

⁷⁶ Robert C. Tucker, "The Rise of Stalin's Personality Cult," *American Historical Review*, Vol. 84, No. 2 (April, 1979), 352.

⁷⁷ "Against Those Who Criticize Comrade Pak's Leadership," January 17, 1946. *ODSKWP*, Vol. I, 103.

addition to being nationalistic, it respected fairness and equity as principal ethics of public welfare. The Party therefore had the moral legitimacy to assert itself as the institutional representative of the Korean people.⁷⁸

Morality and political power, however, never binds perfectly well together. If a person pursues the latter to an absolute degree, morality can be relegated in favor of self-interest. To ensure that the peasantry's support of the Party and himself be intelligible, Pak was ordering through the speech that a Party member's verbal support of Communism was no longer enough because that alone did not ascertain a Party's member's spiritual devotion to the ideology. A strong leadership accompanied by charisma and theoretical expertise was desirable to translate Communism into a systemic practice in a generally hostile region. Furthermore, as Dae-sook Suh and Bruce Cumings have poignantly pointed out, individuals with a near perfect balance between revolutionary education and experience such as Pak were pure rarities in Korea. Very few so-called Leftist leaders had a firm grasp of orthodox Marxist-Leninism. Most members joined the Communist cause because of its anti-imperialistic appeal, not because they perfectly grasped the concept of bourgeois capitalist exploitation. Thus, despite welcoming "anyone well aware of the urgency in achieving the Korean people's complete independence" in principle, the Party's selection of the theoretically and politically experienced Pak as its leader was a natural choice expressing its strong determination to succeed in that translation.⁷⁹ The evolution of a political symbiosis between Pak and the Party into an organic unity had thereby become a permanent reality of SKWP's political culture.

Yet, Pak was chosen as leader not just because he literally proved Max Weber's adage, "politics is made with the head, not with other parts of the body, nor the soul."⁸⁰ The Party's choice of Pak more importantly meant that "awareness" specifically was an unquestioned acceptance of Nationalism as strictly as a Communist promise which had to permanently remain as such. The Party's determination to "cruise toward a Bolshevik victory" directly makes this nature of "awareness" very clear, since the "victory" was a conscious echo of the Party's existential objective--to "fight to the end for a true Bolshevik revolution."⁸¹ Of course, the Party well knew that the time was not ripe to declare this objective outright, for the Rightists could gang up with the Americans anytime to hunt down Party members. Yet, to engrave this objective deeply within every member's mind while also making sure to externally signal to the Americans and Rightists that the Party had the urge to become Communist, the Party had to secretly select a leader who was theoretically orthodox and mentally devoted to the objective as though it was a creed without publicizing the choice of leadership to enemies. To apply philosopher John Kultgen's argument, the Party well understood that the art of publicity always involves an intentional concealment of private motives. More precisely, the Party understood that the

⁷⁸ "Against Those Who Criticize Comrade Pak's Leadership," January 17, 1946. *ODSKWP*, Vol. I, 103-104.

⁷⁹ "The Party and the Precepts of Bolshevism," September, 1945. *ODSKWP*, Vol. I, 22; see Suh, *The Korean Communist Movement*, 121-122 and Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War* Vol. I, 85-86.

⁸⁰ Max Weber, *Weber's Rationalism and Modern Society* (New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2015), 181.

⁸¹ "Against Those Who Criticize Comrade Pak's Leadership," 104; "The Party and the Precepts of Bolshevism," September, 1945. *ODSKWP*, Vol. I, 22.

distinction between public and private presupposes the publicity in principle of all in the perceptual world and the publicity in fact of barriers. Publicity entails intentionality on part of the private perceiver. Consequently, what is publicized fundamentally advertises what is externally observable while making sure to knowingly conceal what is intentional as much as possible.⁸²

Nevertheless, art is a desire of individuals to record the reactions of their personality to the world they live in. Put differently, art becomes inseparable from the desire and objectives of its creator. No matter how suitable Pak was as a leader in the eyes of the Party members, qualification is only a necessary condition demonstrating fitness to perform a vocation. One must have a firm objective that guarantees superb vocational conduct--the sufficient condition which defines the value of the qualification. For Pak, that objective was prohibiting Yŏ from ever entering the Party again. If Yŏ saw the possibility of reconciliation in the Right, Pak considered Yŏ's "moderation" as a euphemism for procrastination and a disguise to poise as a bogus Communist. For Pak, who fundamentally understood a revolution as a process of workers subjugating the bourgeoisie, Yŏ's effort to unify the Left and Right was a complete anathema, because Pak feared that it might result in the workers eternally being the pawns of bourgeois capitalists and prevent the realization of Marxist historical materialism in practice. Pak also believed that Yŏ, as a "member of the landholding class," was trying to establish a "quasi-Democratic order dominated by the bourgeoisie." Thus, from Pak's perspective, Yŏ was a perplexing enigma—a hypocritical member of the bourgeoisie who supported a mysteriously eclectic socialism while feigning political neutrality to conceal such hypocrisy and ultimately "eat the Party from inside-out."⁸³ Thus, in Pak's view, a harmonious relationship with Yŏ was highly detrimental to preserving the Party's internal solidarity.

It was not only such ambiguity that annoyed Pak. When a person hates someone, it is not simply a dislike of character or whatever can be physically seen; a deeper hatred of an individual is essentially a hatred of the person's philosophy, for the mind is what gives life to character. Pak wanted to prohibit Yŏ from rejoining the Party because in addition to Yŏ's supposed bourgeois origin, Pak feared that Yŏ's Christian aspect of "Unitary Socialism" would theoretically pollute orthodox Communism. For Pak, Christianity was but "a golden ticket to oppress workers" because it "protected a lord's property in the Medieval age and that of the capitalist in a capitalist society." Put differently, Pak believed that no matter how much time would progress, the livelihood of workers was sure to deteriorate, for Christianity was breeding the same hackneyed sense of elitism and forced the bourgeoisie to be addicted to capital production and hence, more exploitation of labor. Hence, it was crucial that workers quickly "overthrow those lazy landlords and be masters of their own lives." Furthermore, since

⁸² John Kultgen, "Intentionality and the Publicity of the Perceptual World," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. 33, No. 4 (June, 1973), 509.

⁸³ My thinking about vocational qualification and purpose was influenced by Michael Ehaut, "The Role and Use of Vocational Qualification," *National Institute of Economic Review*, No. 178 (October, 2001), 94; Bahk Byung-yup, *Record of Secret Rendezvous between Kim Il-sung, Pak Hŏnyŏng, and Yŏ Un-hyŏng* (Seoul: Sun-in Publishing, 2010), 95. Noted as *RSR* hereafter. This collection of first-hand accounts is highly valuable for its balanced insights on the political discussions between the three men mentioned in the title during the SKWP's existence. Bahk Byung-yup was the First Secretary of the SKWP and had intricate and deep knowledge of the Party's internal affairs. He was also intimate with all three men whose names appear on the title of the book and often accompanied Pak and Yŏ on their visits to Pyoung-yang.

imperialism was a product of a perverse addiction to an unrestrained accumulation of capital, Pak believed that Christianity was a servant of bourgeois toadyism, whose history in Korea originates from the March First Movement, during which many Western missionaries had either cooperated or were indifferent toward Japanese imperial rule.⁸⁴ Pak's hatred of Christianity, however, was bi-layered. It was not merely in opposition to imperialism, but was also evidence of how dedicated Pak was *for* Communism such that Pak would have even grimaced at the father of Communism's explanation of Christianity's service to Socialism:

"Nothing is easier than to give Christian asceticism a Socialist tinge. Has not Christianity declaimed against private property, against marriage, and against the State? Has it not preached in the place of these, charity and poverty, celibacy and mortification of the flesh, monastic life, and Mother Church? Christian Socialism is but the holy water with which the priest consecrates the heart-burnings of the aristocrat."⁸⁵

For Marx, the Christianization of Socialism is a religious conversion allowing Socialism to evolve into a major panacea against a hierarchical society. Alternatively, because the customs against which Christianity practices abstinence are exactly the same list of bourgeois elements from which Socialism also abstains, the former does not harm or kill the latter but instead mixes well together to mockingly celebrate the aristocrat's delusion--the belief in the persistence of a feudal order. By contrast, Pak would have favored Communism's complete *eradication* of Christianity. Pak would have shuddered at Marx's argument. Christian Socialism did not deserve the idolatry that Christians have toward holy water; the heart-burning aristocrat will just have to accept his fate and confess to the world the sin of believing in a pro-imperialist religion. Since countries such as Japan had morally poisoned itself by perverting Christianity into an agent of imperialism--preaching it to illegally occupy the lands of another, Pak would have replied to Marx that the latter ought to have argued that Christianity in practice is theoretically incompatible with Socialism. Instead, it is an impure dross with which the priest can do *nothing* to calm down the aristocrat's heart-burn. Christianity must not and cannot have any positive influence on Socialist or Communist movements because of its dangerous potential to be perversely politicized as a cultural lackey of imperialism.

Ultimately, the Party's promotion of Pak's personality cult and Pak's hatred of Yŏ converged together to mask a selfish desire to indulge in the Party's narcissism that it solely had the authority to determine southern Korea's future. As an article in the *Liberation Daily* had put it, "without the Party, there would be no independence," and this self-aggrandizement would be the "foundational cornerstone" to engineer a "true revolution for a complete ideological unification in the name of Lenin and Stalin." Thus, national independence had to be "complete" not only for the sake of the people's liberation, but also because the Party could launch a "new war against counterrevolutionaries" without having to worry about unnecessary foreign interference.⁸⁶ Put differently, the Party was caught

⁸⁴ Pak Hŏnyŏng, "An Historical Inquiry on the Genuine Nature of Christianity," *Enlightenment*, November, 1925. Adapted from Ahn Jae-sung, *Pak Hŏnyŏng: A Biography*, 109. On Western missionaries' cooperation with the Japanese, see Donald N. Clark, "'Surely God Will Work out Their Salvation:' Protestant Missionaries in the March First Movement," *Korean Studies*, Vol. 13 (1989), 42-43, 47-48.

⁸⁵ Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "The Communist Manifesto," in Robert C. Tucker ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader* (New York and London, England: W. W. Norton & Co., 1978), 492.

⁸⁶ "The Party and the Precepts of Bolshevism," September, 1945. *ODSKWP*, Vol. I, 23-24; the same points were repeated in "On Principles for Uniting the People," January 29, 1946. *ODSKWP*, Vol. I, 112-113.

between the urge to maintain its authenticity as an orthodox Marxist group by reserving no place for nationalism in Communist thought and an urge to become a devoted follower of Pyoung-yang where nationalistic Communism became the ultimate norm. The allure of successfully translating principles into practicable policies--the hallmark of activism--was so appealing to Pak because if the Party successfully consolidated under Communism, he could dream of reviving the truly orthodox KCP that had closed down two decades before.⁸⁷ Hence, Pak's rise to cult status also confirmed that the Party had perverted Nationalism into a hypnotized captive of Communism. It would be a condition which the Spring of 1946 would confirm to be immutable as the Party treaded along a rocky road to consolidate its Communist identity by urging "Unitary socialism" to walk the gallows. With Pak making the Party's Communist culture highly visible, leaving no room for "Unitary Socialism" in the Party's ideology, Yŏ had no clear reason to stay in the Party. Thus, Yŏ, not wishing to take part in this immoral mutation of the Party, walked out of the SKWP's headquarters on January 22, 1946.⁸⁸

The Haitian anthropologist Michel Trouillot astutely observed that history is a product of power, or more specifically, of the conditions and processes by which historical narratives are produced.⁸⁹ At the root of this idea is a strong rejection of Hegelian "natural progressivism" based on the simple but powerful principle that history consists of two layers—power and an effective strategy to harness it. More specifically, history is never *naturally* geared toward progress; it must have an original productive power which allows historians write the histories of those who had the power to make it. Power, in turn, is never given, but acquired as a skill to dictate the creation of history through meticulous planning of a clear strategy and outlook.⁹⁰ Pak's rise to a cult expressed such Trouillottian power by identifying three central objectives of the Party: rendering nationalism as an exclusively hypnotized captive of Communism, which in turn would be achieved by identifying the promotion of the SKWP as the singularly genuine nationalists, prohibiting Yŏ's return to the SKWP because of Pak's intense anti-Christian sentiment. Put differently, because Pak had fully used such a rich potential of Trouillottian power by institutionalizing a pro-Soviet stance and a personality cult to ultimately pressure Yŏ to leave the Party, Pak could now look forward to clearly reviving and consolidating his authority as the founder of the Korean Communist Party.

Or so Pak thought. The Spring of 1946 was not going to be a rosy one for Pak; the Party would face a massive tradeoff. While the Party would succeed in theoretically distinguishing itself from the Rightists and by pragmatically supporting the northern land reforms, that success had to compromise with the outbreak of a minting scandal, forcing Pak to determinedly vow to permanently expulse Yŏ and make "Unitary Socialism" walk the gallows.

⁸⁷ Ahn, *Pak Hŏnyŏng: A Biography*, 103-104.

⁸⁸ "Telegram from the Political Advisor in Korea (Benninghoff) to the Secretary of State," *FRUS*, Vol. VIII: Korea, 614. It is not exactly certain under what circumstances Yŏ walked out of the SKWP, for there is no collection of Yŏ's private documents to verify much of the thinking behind his decisions and political activities. Hence, I am only able to speculate that Pak's increasing Communization of the SKWP's culture made Yŏ realize that he no longer had any hope of practicing "Unitary Socialism."

⁸⁹ Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 25.

⁹⁰ For Hegel's idea of history as a natural evolutionary process toward progress, see Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Philosophy of History* (Dover Classics, 1956); for Trouillot's rejection of Hegel's argument, see Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 29.

3. "Walking the Gallows": "Communist Exceptionalism," the Land Reforms, and the Minting Scandal (March-May 1946)--The SKWP's Identification with Pyoung-yang's Communist Line and Pak's Vow to Permanently Expulse Yŏ from the Party

(I). The Theoretical Preparation of "Communist Exceptionalism" (March, 1946)

From Pak's perspective, the personality cult's construction and Yŏ's early exit from the Party also meant that the Party could now begin to devote its attention to successfully building what I call, "Communist exceptionalism," or an emphasis on class liberation as national liberation to distinguish the Party from the Rightists. As Pak triumphantly declared on March 21, 1946, "Success" in the Communist lexicon did not simply mean "defeating opponents," but securing their utter obliteration to assert the Party's thorough Communization. To that end, class liberation had to be synonymous with national liberation. Imperialism was never purely an external instrument of oppression exercised by a foreign nation. It was still alive as long as the capitalist bourgeoisie and pro-Japanese collaborators remained drugged by the sweet nectar of wealth they drunk through workers' properties. Only by engaging in a prolonged struggle to realize justice and liberation from the "piggish bourgeoisie" could workers "live a life that is their very own." Accordingly, opposition to the Moscow Decision was nothing more than "treason," for any attempt to "obstruct implementation was an obstruction of Democracy and worse, postponement of genuine national liberation." Supporting the Moscow Decision was the only way to "thoroughly root out imperialism" and end the "disgraceful history of Japanese flunkeyism" in Korea. However, for an ideology to have binding power, it must publicize the empirical situation in which a collective group finds itself, for only then does the ideology become an authoritative norm dictating the group's directional future. Therefore, Pak urged all Party members to deliver speeches and publish essays encouraging the execution of counterrevolutionaries and all who disapproved of the Moscow Conference's decision on trusteeship.⁹¹

The speech is not only important because Pak discovered in supporting the Moscow Decision, a radical objective of the Party's future struggles--the workers' overthrow of the bourgeoisie as an elimination of the last relic of imperialism. In declaring that objective, Pak had also solved a major Marxist dilemma on the relationship between class and national consciousness. In *The German Ideology*, Karl Marx argued that contradictions occur between a division of labor and national consciousness because,

"Division of labor only becomes truly natural from the moment when a division of material and mental labor appears. From this moment onwards consciousness can really flatter itself that it is something other than consciousness of existing practice, that it really represents something without representing something real; from now on consciousness is in a position to emancipate itself from the world and to proceed to the formation of "pure" theory, theology, philosophy, ethics, etc. But even if these [theories] come into contradiction with existing relations, this can only occur because existing social relations have come into contradiction with existing forces of production; *this moreover, can also occur in a particular national sphere of relations through the appearance of the contradiction, not within the national orbit, but between this national consciousness and the practice of other nations between the national and the general consciousness of a nation.*"⁹²

⁹¹ Pak Hŏnyŏng, "On the American-Soviet Joint Commission and Our Expectations," March, 21, 1946. *ODSKWP*, Vol. I, 142. On the process behind ideology's evolution as a authoritative norm, see Talcott Parsons, *The Social System* (Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press, 1951), 349.

⁹² Karl Marx, *The German Ideology*, Part I in Robert C. Tucker ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 159. Italics are my own emphasis.

If division of labor is a social relationship, Marx was asking whether class consciousness as a *reality* arising from contradictions between an employer-worker relationship could also theoretically evolve, *concretized* to coexist with national consciousness, promoting a universal recognition of those contradictions. Pak not only recognized the contradiction between the worker's social inferiority to the bourgeoisie despite the superior importance of the former's productivity to the latter's right of domination. He also found a solution to facilitate the emancipation of a general consciousness: merge class liberation with nationalism such that the former is pursued for the sake of the latter. In a country where workers and peasants constituted more than half of the entire population, the workers and peasants as the chief forces of production had numerical superiority over the bourgeoisie to overturn the social relationship of the former's subjugation to the latter. Furthermore, because workers and peasants suffered the most under Japanese rule, their liberation was equivalent to the liberation of the Korean public, or national liberation. This was why although Pak still believed that national liberation was essential to class liberation, in contrast to his original dictum of September 1945, a lunar eclipse was happening in his mind--a shift to "Communist exceptionalism." Class liberation was now the dominant goal to which national liberation played a secondary role. In other words, class liberation was, to use Wallerstein's term, to *only* have a political relationship with national liberation--a goal in and of itself that had to be pursued as though it *was* national liberation--because the latter, if led by the bourgeoisie, would not necessarily guarantee the former.⁹³

Pak made this theoretical shift because he realized that national liberation fundamentally requires passion arising directly from an individual's heart; a personal fervor and the will to dedicate and sacrifice oneself for nationalism are the most critical variables determining the success or failure of national liberation. By contrast, class liberation is a collective interest, rooted in a communal social consciousness. The interest attains political power by achieving popularity, which means that acquiring numerical majority is more essential for the success of class liberation than for national liberation. With his deep experience in revolutionary organization and politics, it is unsurprising that Pak strongly believed that class struggle had to continue in southern Korea to allow for a true liberation of the proletariat who would earnestly be committed to nationalism in body and soul. What this qualification meant was that any suggestion for alliance with Rightists who had objected to the trusteeship was undesirable because the Party's vision of "complete independence" would be tainted by pro-Japanese collaborators who masked their past as traitors by appealing to a misled sense of nationalism. Pak's article in the Party's paper *Constructing Korean Democracy*, responding to the Lee faction's continued protests against the trusteeship and the faction's hiring of administrative officials and officers who served under the Japanese, accurately captured this sentiment:

"...We[the Party] oppose the inclusion of pro-Japanese collaborators in the construction of the Korean national government. Such "Americanized" groups must be unquestionably excluded, and those who organized and promoted the anti-trusteeship movement must also be prohibited from participating or expressing their opinions. Likewise, we refuse to ally with such hypocritical groups who simply disguise

93 Arrighi, Hopkins, and Wallerstein, "Liberation of Class Struggle," 404.

their xenophobia toward Soviets as supporting "Democracy" and equate 'anti-trusteeship' with 'pro-Democracy.'⁹⁴

Pak's strategic mindset behind publishing the article is apparent in his deliberate omission of "class liberation" while defining another necessary condition to realize "Communist exceptionalism"--a complete and eternal divorce from the Rightists. Pak was confident that the Rightists' folly could be exposed by their very own exclusionary policy. In declaring the Rightists' opposition to trusteeship as the singular condition under which their freedom of expression must "unquestionably excluded," Pak was essentially forcing the Rightists to stand on their heads. How could they, a group of thieves who had sold Korea to the Japanese, dare pretend to side with justice and to unfairly brand Communists as "country-sellers" when Communists were supporting trusteeship out of a genuinely patriotic interest to see Koreans have their own nationalist government? The Rightists' lack of nationalistic credentials was not the only reason that prompted Pak to ask this question. The Rightists were hypocritical because while they claimed to represent the people, they understood nothing of the people's will. The Rightists' opposition to trusteeship was close to political nihilism because their opposition to trusteeship was not balanced with a *support* for anything.

Furthermore, because the position of "opposing trusteeship" was an American position transplanted in the minds of the Rightists, the Rightists were in Pak's view, Americanized ideologues who could not claim that they were "Korean nationalists" at all. What the Rightists were truly afraid of was the introduction of Soviet influence in Korea or Communism, not the destruction of Democracy in itself. Given that opposing trusteeship was a fundamentally non-nationalistic position for the Communists, and that Democracy was about fulfilling the will of the people through an independent Korean government, the Rightists' misconstrued equation of 'anti-trusteeship=pro-Democracy' was nothing but a fantastical delusion. The speech's most notable feature is its use of the collective "we," for it most clearly illustrates Pak's acute perception that engaging in politics is like playing poker: the best politician is not one who has the best ideas, but one who knows the right timing to reveal them to acquire both uniqueness and communal acceptability. Indeed, with his main rival out of the Party and highly optimistic evaluations of the northern land reforms pouring out from the Leftist press on a daily basis, Pak had met his "poker moment." By using "we" as a synecdoche, Pak was making full use of the inseparability of collective consciousness from individual consciousness. As the sociologist Maurice Halbwachs argues, it is necessarily the latter that allows for the existence and realization of the former, and collective consciousness is but a particular arrangement of individual minds. If so, then I would argue that collective consciousness is dependent on individual consciousness and as an individual controlling a collective group, Pak could afford to manipulate his subjective mind as though it was representing the more objective collective mind of the Party.⁹⁵ To perfectly mask his desire to separate the Party from the Rightists, Pak knew that he could conveniently disguise that desire into the

⁹⁴ "On the Declaration of the 'Democratic' Senators," March, 1946. *ODSKWP*, Vol. I, 149-150.

⁹⁵ Maurice Halbwachs, "Individual Consciousness and Collective Mind," *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 44, No. 6 (May, 1939), 818.

Party's obvious collective disagreement with the Rightists' opposition to the trusteeship, while emphasizing the Party's political solidarity. Pak also knew that he needed a scapegoat to blame and complain about the Party's delay in adopting Communism without giving the impression that the delay was due to any fault or weakness of the Party. The use of "we" was also Pak's insurance to assure that he could externally and internally advertise how firm his authority as Party leader really was. If there was any source of threat to the Party's solidarity, it necessarily had to be an external one. Thus, the use of "we" was Pak's strategy to distance the Leftists as far away from the Rightists to show that the former were never willing to cooperate with the latter who grossly conflated the meaning of "pro" and "anti" as well as a policy with a governmental system. In the Party's eyes, the Rightists simply did not have any clear ideology that could solidly stand its own ground.

To emphasize the nihilism and ambiguity of the Rightists' position, the Party decided to launch a massive tirade against the Right to teach them how, as proper Koreans, they ought to learn the virtue of first having correct thought to produce correct actions. The fundamental thought that the Right ought to have had was that all ideologies owe their origins to a clear perception of the present as a result of the past. The main problem with the Right was that they did not understand that rejecting trusteeship was a symptom of historical dementia. The Rightists wrongly conflated nationalism with anti-trusteeship because they forgot that nationalism could only arise within a people who could claim their land as their own and fight against imperialists willing to steal it. Nationalism, as another article published three days later put it, "arose from sacrificing blood." Unfortunately, the Rightists were "like vampires" because they twisted the meaning "sacrifice," into excessive offerings of blood, concocting nationalism and anti-Communism imported from American ideologues to force the Koreans to "fight one another for blood to beget more blood."⁹⁶ Unlike January, the Party now equated "anti-trusteeship" with being a "vampire," a gross form of inhumanity. Through the usage of such metaphorical extremity, the Party expressed its clear intent to present *supporting trusteeship and itself* as the only ethical and humane political choice available for the Korean people. This in turn, demonstrated how ideology can be neatly packaged with morality to produce the ultimate political strategy of advertising the Party as the only humane and just option available in Korean politics. However, because vampires can unpredictably turn even a trusted human being into one of their own kin, the invocation of "vampires" also suggest the Party's determination to prevent all possible suspects within and without from poisoning the infrastructural integrity of the Party. Hence, Pak's supporters were sternly warning both members of the Party and the Rightists that whoever made derogatory remarks about class liberation were to be punished and that "Anti-Communism" was a euphemism for "sub-human." "Communist exceptionalism" was thereby theoretically secure. All Pak needed now was confidence in actually validating the exceptionalism by showing concrete evidence of exercising Communism as a policy. To his surprise, Pyoung-yang would promptly confirm that validity for him through the northern land reforms in March.

96 "Undemocratic Laws and the Responsibility of the 'Democratic Senators,'" March 17, 1946. *ODSKWP*, Vol. I, 151-152.

(II). The Party and Its Rationale for Supporting the Land Reforms (March, 1946)⁹⁷

Despite Pak's success in formulating a theoretical "Communist exceptionalism," March was largely a month of fear, doubt, and skepticism for most SKWP members. Angry Leftists' screams of resistance against the Korean National Police continued to pour throughout provinces which had already witnessed numerous hideous blood-baths. To make things worse, the Rightists created the extremist and militant Federation of Korean Trade Unions, which cooperated with the American Military Government to destroy as many Leftist workers' unions as possible. Faced with such an immense crisis, the Party desperately wished to know if Communism was an ideal worth defending with their lives.⁹⁸ Fortunately, for Pak, Pyoung-yang's successful completion of land reforms helped Party members easily dismiss that skepticism. The program required an immediate seizure of all lands formerly under Japanese ownership, national traitors who collaborated with them, and finally escapees to southern Korea. These lands were then distributed to and cultivated by farmers with no additional costs. Most importantly, in adherence to the Marxian dictum, "religion is the opium of the masses," Kim Il-sung ordered all church properties "above 12.5 acres" to be seized and distributed.⁹⁹ The Party supported land reforms because they convincingly demonstrated how the northern Koreans secured the marriage of theoretical commitment to Communism (overthrowing the bourgeoisie) and a popular nationalist sentiment (overthrowing Japanese collaborators). Yet, the Party's support is also odd. The land reforms showed Pyoung-yang's autonomous will to define an oxymoronic "Nationalist Marxism." More precisely, the reforms were oxymoronic because they were anti-Marxist in rejecting Marxism's flawed assumption of what Shlomo Avineri has called, the attempt to "reduce all phenomena--including the cultural aspects of nationalism--to socio-economic causes and to deny nationalism and culture in general an autonomous status in the scheme of human things."¹⁰⁰ Thus, Kim was a Marxist by rejecting religion but non-Marxist for committing an "unorthodox crime" of combining theoretical Communism and historical nationalism to maximize Communism's realistic function of overcoming a hated relic of imperialism--bourgeois capitalism.

The land reforms' genuine importance was that the Party interpreted supporting them as a practical means to confirm solidarity with Pyoung-yang. The Party's *Liberation Daily* proudly parroted Pyoung-yang's celebration of the land reforms, praising that they were "welcome signs" of progress because it completed the expulsion of all pro-Japanese elements. The completion, in turn, was a beacon of hope

⁹⁷ After the northern land reforms were announced on March 1946, land reform became an extremely important political issue that produced clearly divided public opinion in southern Korea as well. In this paper, I only focus on the SKWP's response, but to better assess the land reforms' overall importance, see Yoo In-ho, "The Character of Land Reform after Liberation," in Kon-ho Song et al. ed., *Interpreting Korean History Before and After Liberation*, Vol. I (Seoul: Hankilsa, 1979), 371-448.

⁹⁸ For a detailed discussion of American counter-insurgency operations in the provinces, see Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, chapter 9. On the Conservative and militant origin and purpose of the FKTU, see Hagen Koo, "The State, Minjoong, and the Working Class in South Korea," in Hagen Koo ed., *State and Society in Contemporary Korea* (Ithaca, New York, and London, England: Cornell University Press, 1993), 135.

⁹⁹ "Secret Telegram from the Political Adviser in Korea (Langdon) to the Secretary of State," March 19, 1946. *FRUS, 1946*, Vol. VIII, 650; Armstrong, *The North Korean Revolution*, 76-80. See also Chong-sik Lee, "Land Reform, Collectivization, and the Peasants in North Korea," *China Quarterly*, No. 14 (April-June, 1963), 65-81 for a more detailed discussion on the northern implementation of the land reforms.

¹⁰⁰ Shlomo Avineri, "Marxism and Nationalism," *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 26, No. 3/4 (September, 1991), 649.

for southern Korea, promising the continuation of "a relentless and an all-out" effort to eliminate Japanese imperialism and to construct a "people's politics" in which "people" exclusively meant the peasantry. The land reforms were "products of the people's autonomous will," and confirmed that the Party could maintain its faith in the trusteeship.¹⁰¹ However, the *Liberation Daily's* language was not all just propaganda, because both Pyoung-yang's leaders and the Party knew that land reform was a problem about which debate was already something of a historical tradition. As Charles Armstrong points out, the North Korean version was a direct heir of the Josuhn Dynasty's *Kyoon-juhn*, or "equal-field" system, based on the philosophy that an equal distribution of land was the foundational root of an ideal state. The land reforms were essentially a double reformation, for on one hand, it restored justice by cleaning out a hated relic of the past. On the other hand, the land reforms, in proclaiming equal distribution as its foremost principle, reformed the Party's perception of Democracy. Unlike the Americans who conceived of a representative council as an institutional basis for a formal procedural "Democracy," the northern Koreans focused on a simple and somewhat crudely literal "rule by the people" through a return of power to the public such that every peasant and laborer exercised control over themselves and the bourgeoisie. The land reforms thereby posed a firm challenge to the Rightists' conception of "Democracy" by branding it as a perverse plutocracy. This branding in turn, would demonstrate how critically the land reforms further increased the Party's existential legitimacy, for the realization of a fully Communist Korean peninsula now rested entirely on the Party's successful repetition of the northern revolution.¹⁰² By appeasing to the numerical majority of the peasantry, the article embodied the Party's ambition of ensuring its popularity and showing that the Rightists were unjustified in assailing the Leftists, for they were oppressing the true representatives of the people. The article was also echoing Karl Polanyi's diagnosis of the social character of "the economic man" or what I would call *homo economicus*, in the following manner:

"The outstanding discovery of recent historical and anthropological research is that man's economy, as a rule, is submerged in his social relationships. *He does not act so as to safeguard his individual interest in the possession of material goods; he acts so as to safeguard his social standing, his social claims, his social assets. He values material goods only in so far as it serves this end.* Neither the process of production nor that of distribution is linked to specific economic interests attached to the possession of goods; but every single step in that process is geared to a number of social interests which eventually ensure that the required step be taken. These interests will be very different in a small hunting or fishing community from those in a vast despotic society, but in either case *the economic system will be run on noneconomic motives.*"¹⁰³

Applying the italicized parts, I would argue that by fervently supporting the economic land reforms, Pak was urging the Party to self-consciously evolve into a group of political *homo-economicuses*, waking its non-economic desire to identify Pyoung-yang's economic system--Communism--as its own political goal. Pak himself was already a *homo-economicus*, essentially supporting Pyoung-yang's success in implementing Communism for a major non-economic motive: to take, albeit silently, two

101 "We Fully Support the Land Reform," April 28, 1946. *ODSKWP*, Vol. I, 186-187. Pak originally distributed this article to all Party members in mid-March.

102 "We Fully Support the Land Reforms," April 28, 1946. *ODSKWP*, Vol. I, 188.

103 Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Times* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2003), 48. (Italics are my own emphasis).

huge steps closer to enhancing and protecting his chances to elevate his socio-political status by becoming Kim Il-sung's sole right-hand man. First, it could increase Pyoung-yang's favorable perception of Pak's performance, which would ease his making connections with the leadership. Although Yŏ was busy in Pyoung-yang criticizing how wrong-headed Pak was in directing the SKWP, as long as Pak strongly endorsed Pyoung-yang's policies, Pak knew that Kim would be uncomfortable about forfeiting his cooperation toward increasing Communist control in the peninsula. Furthermore, with Yŏ's younger brother voluntarily out of the Party and Kim Il-sung suspecting the affair as an "American conspiracy," a clear consensus on land reform would allow Pak and his supporters to form a closer bond with Pyoung-yang by isolating opposition and strengthen the supremacy of Communist leadership in the Leftist alliance. Yŏ was still heavily dependent on the Communists for organizational support, and his brother's exit from the Party made Yŏ extremely vulnerable to Pak's future manipulation. Although Yŏ had anti-Pak allies such as Baek Nahm-woon, Baek's New Social Democratic Party, being the smallest of the three Left-wing parties, was virtually a follower of Yŏ's Korean Societal Party and had little political autonomy of its own--a shrimp which would have its back burst during a battle of whales. Pak's faction could swallow it up any time without flexing a muscle.¹⁰⁴ The success of the northern land reforms was therefore a welcoming sign for Pak since it showed how to practice Communism systematically and practically that Yŏ's "Unitary Socialism" was politically out of sync with the reform's clear intentions, which would give Pak a significant edge in the competition to become the most loyal ally to Pyoung-yang.

However, Pak knew that future success of implementing the policy in the south and Communization cannot be guaranteed without an effective centralization of political authority; the relationship between centricity, reciprocity, and redistribution is such that centricity "will meet halfway" the needs of the latter two. As Polanyi explained, centricity ensures that

"As long as social organization runs in its ruts, no individual economic motives need come into play; no shirking of personal effort need to be feared... the idea of profit is barred; higgling and haggling is decried...*the economic system is in effect, a mere function of social organization.*"¹⁰⁵

If Polanyi is right, then Communization, as an economic policy derived from a party's decision-making process is a mere function of social mobilization. The ultimate measure of an economic policy's success is dependent on its capability to inspire mass societal support from ordinary citizens to elite politicians. Since political power is essential to maximize the capability's efficacy, we may also argue that the economic system is also a mere function of political organization. Accordingly, Pak knew that land reforms would only have meaning if they succeeded in winning the Korean peasantry's hearts and minds; to realize that end, the reforms' success would function as a catalyst to help the Party concentrate on socially mobilizing the peasantry toward the classic, larger Communist objective of overthrowing the Korean bourgeoisie who had turned in lackeys for the American imperialists. The

¹⁰⁴ All the political circumstances described can be found in Bahk, *RSR*, 69. A "shrimp whose back is burst during a battle of whales" is a Korean proverb describing a situation in which a person who has no connections to an ongoing feud between two people gets unexpectedly involved in the feud themselves, only to suffer from the feud's consequences him or herself.

¹⁰⁵ Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, 51-52. Italics are my emphasis.

more passionately the Party would advertise the success of the land reforms and the need to repeat it in the south, the more willingly workers and peasants would become Party members, cementing the Party's reputation as a genuine comrade of the people. Increased membership, in turn, would send to Pyoung-yang the ideal signal that the Party was ready to implement land reforms in the south. Once the Party finished indoctrinating new members into die-hard Communists, that Yŏ would have no place in the Party would be apparent. If Pak could assure that his rival was completely out of power, he could dream of even becoming Kim's right-hand man if he should decide to go north.¹⁰⁶ Thus, from Pak's perspective, supporting the northern land reforms was the royal road to power, increasing both the Party's and his reputation as Pyoung-yang's most trustworthy and legitimate partner. However, was it *really* a royal road? An anti-Pak critique and an unexpected minting scandal would tell Pak to more harshly and definitively swear to make all opponents, including Yŏ, "walk the gallows."

(III). A Skeptical Anti-Pak Critique, the Minting Scandal, and Pak's Firm Resolve to Force Yŏ to "Walk the Gallows" (May, 1946)

Policies are like roses. A policy may look beautiful upon a cursory glance, but upon close examination, even the most perfect policies have thorns embedded within, easily inviting intense criticism. Likewise, Pak's fervent support of the land reforms could not escape confronting doubtful skepticism within the Party. Without any visual proof of the land reform's success, did the Party's support and participation in these struggles alone demonstrate that Pak and his followers understand the importance of history deeply enough themselves? In the eyes of moderate Party members, the answer was a clear "no"; the Party's self-aggrandizement seemed excessive and premature. Pak and his followers had not properly solved the problem of whether anti-imperialism or Communism was the *raison d'être* of the Party. If the latter was what the Party had in mind—the goal of Communist supremacy—then the Party ought to know how to be humble before the noble truth that no theoretical-political problem could be more important than a concretely unsolved historical problem.

As Baek Nahm-woon, the Party's chief economist, argued in an essay published in an April issue of the *Liberation Daily*, earning supremacy did not mean overtaking rivals, but simply solving the greatest problem confronting the Korean people—Korea's painful legacy of colonial subjugation. A blind pursuit of Communism as an "international fad" would be akin to "forfeiting political autonomy" and inviting the "resurgence of Fascism." Finally, an all-out war against the bourgeoisie in the name of conducting land reforms would be an "unprincipled action," for it forgets how some of the bourgeoisie had their "heart and soul resting with the nation," and fought for Korean independence. Baek was essentially questioning whether Pak's objective in supporting land reforms in southern Korea was to make farmers economically better off or to consolidate his own power as a sect leader, launching an

¹⁰⁶ Pak Hŏnyŏng actually fulfilled, albeit briefly, his third and most important expectation in his lifetime. He moved to the North after the end of the Korean War and became the second most powerful man in North Korea as Chairman of the Great People's Congress in 1954. However, he did not get to savor his glory for too long, and died a lonely death in front of a firing squad as a victim of Kim Il-sung's fanatical purge of "subversive opponents" barely a year later. See Ahn, *Pak Hŏnyŏng: A Biography*, 559-595.

indiscriminate witch-hunt for the bourgeoisie by considering them as anti-Communist heretics.¹⁰⁷ Baek was, to use Thomas Nagel's term, suspicious of Pak's "common standpoint" that made his stance on a nationalist Communism acceptable to every Party member. He was challenging Pak's political legitimacy, implicitly probing Pak's questionable credential as a pure Communist dedicated to the people, the very foundation of his legitimacy as the leader of the SKWP.¹⁰⁸ By pointing out how imperfect Pak's policies were, Baek's acute critique was an incisive reminder to Pak that politics could be like an endless series of staircases. Each step one takes to climb up is another step to go down a staircase, but one cannot guarantee what the next direction would be. On some days, success may naturally seem greater than failure; on others, failure teaches more than success.¹⁰⁹ Thus, Baek was warning that politics as a way of life often inevitably confronts this relativity, and Pak's clan was trying to dig the Party's grave by foolishly ignoring this maxim.

Baek's warning became an omen for immense trouble. For Pak, May was a disappointing and anxiety-ridden month. The first American-Soviet joint commission to negotiate the terms of trusteeship ended in failure. The Americans and Soviets had spent all their time playing a poker game with no cards but pure bluffing, careful not to let one version of "Democracy" dominate and erase traces of another. To make things worse, Pak and Yŏ's relationship plunged to rock-bottom with the outbreak of the so-called "minting scandal" a month later, which strengthened Park's resolve to severely punish Communist members displaying unprincipled and unruly behavior. In early May, the Korean National Police raided a printing station in central Seoul and found in its basement ten million Won in counterfeit bank notes. The Party strongly denied the counterfeiting charge, but the police accused the Party of "clandestinely preparing funds to finance its internal operations" and for "plotting to sabotage southern Korea's economy." Lee Chang-su, a banker suspected of being a Communist sympathizer, Lee Gwan-soo, the Party's Finance Minister, and Gwon Oh-jik, a Party member, were immediately arrested. Lee was sentenced to life imprisonment without parole, while the other two received temporary imprisonment. A few days later, American officials closed down most medium and small Left-wing newspaper companies, citing security concerns.¹¹⁰

As political scientist Herbert Alexander correctly observes, communication serves two major functions in politics: electing people to public offices and exercising control over "the direction and activity of government, and the incorporation of opinion and advice on the proper exercise of policies." The scandal was detrimental to the Party because it resulted in the loss of communication's

¹⁰⁷ Baek Nahm-woon, "The Future of the Korean People," April 15, 1946. *ODSKWP*, Vol. I, 155-159. Born in Go-chang, North Juhlla province, Baek (1894-1979) was a Marxist-heterodox economist, educator, and politician. An economics professor at Yuhn-hee College (now Yuhnse University) during his stint in southern Korea, Baek was a leading theorist of anti-imperialism and socialism. In addition to being a leading critic of Pak Hŏnyŏng within the Southern Korean Workers' Party, Baek was also a member of Doo-bong Kim's New People's Party and the Nationalist Front in 1946. In the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, where he relocated after the end of the Korean War, Baek served as the first Minister of Education and the Chairman of the Great People's Council from the early 1970s until his death.

¹⁰⁸ Thomas Nagel, "Moral Conflict and Political Legitimacy," *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, Vol. 16, No. 3 (Summer, 1987), 218.

¹⁰⁹ For this theory of relativity, consult Max C. Escher's "Relativity." (1953)

¹¹⁰ Ahn, *Pak Hŏnyŏng: A Biography*, 350-351.

second function.¹¹¹ The scandal did not just cause the SKWP to lose several members, but more fatally, a crucial source of information about domestic politics and the global socialist movements. The scandal severely curtailed the influence of the Leftist press in southern Korea and saw restrictions imposed on newspapers such as the British *Independent* from delivering news about Europe and the Soviet Union. Most importantly, the Party had lost the ultimate means to gather information about Pyoung-yang's policies, which could serve as the yardstick to determine the legitimacy of the SKWP's operations. Future operations would be a complete gamble. With counterrevolutionaries possibly lurking around every corner of southern Korea and even within the Party, a limited access to outside information left the Communists wondering whether they should strike first or whether they would be subject to an unexpected and ferocious counterrevolutionary coup. What made things worse is that this incredibility was so great that the Party was not able to calm down its agitation, torn between anger and nervousness. While some members harshly criticized the "deceptive and foxy demeanor" of the Americans, others were more reserved, anxiously voicing the need for "a brand new strategy to counter a storm that is about to come."¹¹² However, panic and fear were generally common among Party members out of a deep concern that the Leftist movement would be quickly fragmented and worse, give more opportunities for the Americans to crack down on the Party for causing unnecessary socio-political confusion. Panic and fear quickly mushroomed into desperation that the Party's life could unexpectedly be cut short—a potentially severe blow to the strength of the Leftists in the peninsula.¹¹³ Furthermore, as the political scientist Paul J. Quirk argues, a scandal fundamentally has the devastating potential to "destroy useful careers, disrupt proper governance, and invite cynicism and alienation. Accordingly, Pak was especially suspicious of the possibility that Yŏ might use the scandal to gather pro-Pak followers and turn the Party's public opinion against him. Should that happen, Yŏ could seize the chance to robustly push "Unitary Socialism" as the Party's main agenda, which in turn, might translate into Yŏ's replacement of Pak as Kim Il-sung's most trusted ally.¹¹⁴ The Party and Pak were thereby thrust into a blindfolded cat-and-mouse game, no longer certain about its own policies or the genuine intentions and identities of its enemies. It had lost a critical means to follow rule #1 of the art of war: know yourself and your enemies to win every battle.

Fortunately for Pak, Yŏ *did not* get a chance to dominate him; rather Pak had seized a great chance to drive Yŏ to a corner. Since the scandal served as a sharp alarm for Pak to re-examine the loyalty of Party members, it would be inauspicious for Yŏ to suggest any effort for non-ideological reconciliation, in addition to the grim reality that Yŏ no longer had any allies in the Party. His last major ally was his younger brother Woon-hong, who had left the Party in April, expressing disgust at Pak's authoritarian leadership. Ultimately, the chaos ensuing from the police's round-up of the

¹¹¹ Herbert E. Alexander, "Communications and Politics: The Media and the Message," *Law and Contemporary Problems*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (Spring, 1969), 255.

¹¹² Ahn, *Pak Hŏnyŏng: A Biography*, 350-354.

¹¹³ Ahn, *Pak Hŏnyŏng: A Biography*, 354.

¹¹⁴ Paul J. Quirk, "Coping with the Politics of Scandal," *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (Fall, 1998), 898; Byung-yup Bahk, *RSR*, 66-68.

counterfeiters was a clear warning that Pak would concentrate on rooting out non-Communist suspects from making trouble in the future. The scandal and its ramifications seemed to reflect the destiny of Yŏ's "Unitary Socialism"—a wet seed drying away in an ideologically hot and blind country.¹¹⁵ Retrospectively, Yŏ's loss was Pak's joy; the internal disorder that the scandal had created was merely being repeated outside, confirming that Yŏ's pacifist approach was too nebulous to promise a firm political consolidation of the Party. Furthermore, the arrests gave Pak full confidence that his commitment to Communism was morally correct compared with Rightist "Democracy," which only seemed synonymous with a virulent hatred of the Left. The rest of May offered nothing but an endless cycle of chaos—one that would go on well into fall. When the Korean National Police made hundreds of arrests, the Leftists tried to fight back, only to meet a devastating retaliatory shower of bullets. Democracy was nowhere to be seen, senselessly butchered by the knives and guns of crazed mobs; mayhem and chaos ruled supreme like cold tyrants, as the streets were ceaselessly smothered with bullets and blood.¹¹⁶

As if to reflect the ambience on the streets, Pak's mood also took a violent turn. If Pak only had anathema toward "Unitary Socialism" in the Fall of 1945, by Spring of 1946, antipathy had mutated into a desire for complete expulsion. Yŏ's repeated obstinate insistence that a true Socialist party had to incorporate members from both the Right and the Left finally sapped the last remaining inch of patience within Pak. In a secret speech aimed at blaming Yŏ's loyalists, Pak expressed his frustration with their "naïve assumption" that supporting Pyoung-yang's policies was "practicing Communism." On the contrary, the Party was supporting "the people's will," as such policies "gave happiness to the people." Providing happiness was "the essence of Democracy" and a firm dedication to crushing "counterrevolutionaries" was the only way to realize Democracy in southern Korea, where farmers, despite being the majority, have "most of their aspirations for prosperity completely ignored." Therefore, supporting Pyoung-yang's Communism was a "moral gesture born purely out of the heart" to enhance the peasants' livelihood, thereby fulfilling the majority's will and upholding Democracy. Pak also did not forget to taunt Yŏ, warning that all who opposed following Pyoung-yang would have to "walk the gallows" along with pro-Japanese collaborators.¹¹⁷ In other words, happiness was a product of destruction rather than creation, of political exclusion rather than integration. This ironic production of happiness was politically very expedient for Pak because it allowed him to skillfully disguise his personal allegiance to Pyoung-yang into a public virtue. In a Humean sense, Pak understood that creating a virtue requires sympathy, which in turn translates into political collusion, which transforms into political allegiance.¹¹⁸ The equation of "Democracy" with "happiness" strongly reflects Pak's effort to rebrand and buttress a Leftist and humanist "Democracy" with morality to win

115 Kim, *Mongyang Yŏ Un-hyŏng*, 282.

116 Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, Vol. I, 249-252.

117 "Democracy and Land Reform," May 14, 1946. *ODSKWP*, Vol. I, 210-213.

118 Rachel Cohon, "The Shackles of Virtue: Hume on Allegiance to Government," *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (October, 2001), 409.

sympathy from the people while also criticizing the Rightists' anti-humanist vision. Pak was thereby also *colluding* with Pyoung-yang's practice of "Democracy" by emulating its strategy of shunning the Rightists and championing the peasantry as the only legitimate representatives of the people, for he was emphasizing that it was only their happiness that ascribed "Democracy" significance. Finally, by emphasizing the "Demo" part of the ideology to woo farmers who were in the majority, Pak believed that the peasantry's popular support would translate into Communism's moral victory in the south. Once this was confirmed, Yŏ's "Unitary Socialism" would become ineffective, solidifying Pak's *allegiance* to Pyoung-yang.

Alternatively, by ascribing such a Humean connection between "Democracy" and "happiness" to the "people's will," Pak was also facilitating Communism as a tool to identify *all* non-Communists as un-Democratic enemies of the Korean people. Supporting Pyoung-yang's policies was a moral gesture from the heart because by eliminating these enemies, it would allow peasants to realize their humanity by pursuing a natural desire for prosperity. Since the desire to be rich fundamentally resides within self-consciousness, the humanity of supporting northern policies arose from its public ability to communalize an private awareness of selfhood in every peasant. Supporting Communism was therefore not only necessary but *natural* condition to liberate the peasant into a proper human being. Pak's emphasis on the Party's such clarity in supporting Communism was also probably a deliberate attempt to highlight how unambiguous it was compared with Yŏ's "Unitary Socialism" and those who worshipped a very nebulous pacifist unification that neither had any direction or program. Hence, Pak's implicit message to Yŏ was "clarify your position or leave politics for good." Yet, Pak would have to engage in two decisive battles with Yŏ before Pyoung-yang ultimately agreed with Pak's message and recognized Pak as its ultimate partner--a war between the Five, Eight, and Seven Principles and the fateful Pyoung-yang Lobby. The twilight and decisive political defeat of "Unitary Socialism" were on the horizon.

4. Yŏ Lonesome, Miserable, and Frustrating Search for "Distribution According to Need": An Assassination Attempt and a War of Principles (July-September, 1946)--The Twilight of "Unitary Socialism"

In mid-July, Pak and Yŏ had heard a news that was as unbearably frustrating as the summer--the hottest that Koreans had ever experienced in forty years. A fifth round of negotiations between the Americans and Soviets on whether to adopt a multi-party Democracy which would incorporate all parties in Korea or one which would exclude pro-Japanese collaborators had ended without reaching any conclusion. Both had wasted their time playing an illusionary poker game, unwilling to reveal their cards, only engaging in bluffing as each men stubbornly refused to cede the ultimate authority to each other on defining "representative democracy." Unable to reach a clear consensus on the issue, the trusteeship negotiations were postponed until July. The postponement of the negotiations was a major warning sign for the Party because it meant that the Americans had no interest in stopping their

oppression of the Left, whose intensity, as Pak put it, "surpassed that of medieval witch-hunts."¹¹⁹

Yet, as Hannah Arendt (1973) argues, violence is by nature, instrumental, needing guidance in justifying the end it pursues. This dependence clearly proves that violence does not represent the essence of anything, and the ongoing witch-hunt for Leftists reflected Arendt's point.¹²⁰ Yet, the American military government could not erase its fear that Communists were still lurking in southern Korea and that the Soviets were sending spies to encourage the Communists. Realizing that they needed an ideologically neutral mediator to stop the chaos while also maintaining Rightist supremacy, Americans changed their earlier negative view of Yŏ and believed that drawing the charismatic orator to their side would definitively fulfill both of the desired objectives.¹²¹ Therefore, a desperate but resolute Hodge called Yŏ many times to convert him into a Rightist. Unfortunately, for Yŏ, Hodge's final effort at reconciliation on July 17 through a meeting between Yŏ and General Dwight E. Beach disappointingly produced empty promises of unification without any concrete details. The Americans displayed frustration and impatience while lecturing Yŏ that the American Military Government was not very lenient toward failed negotiations, and that Yŏ had to make every effort to turn Pak into a pro-Rightist politician. The American officials' icy eyes seemed to monitor Yŏ's every gesture and word as though Yŏ was more of a prisoner under custody than a negotiator. As a report later explained, the lukewarm response given that night clearly reflected the Americans' deep suspicion that Yŏ "simply lacked moral courage or was too deeply involved with the Communists."¹²² The statement reveals that the Americans felt like a dentist walking in to perform a heart surgery. They had no idea what to do about Yŏ because they themselves were reflecting their *own* illness of "lacking moral courage" to admit that it was the Americans who created the diametric divide between Rightist and Leftist, ally and foe. The Americans were the victims of the very disease they had spread because the statement implies that to have moral courage is to not be involved with Communism. This equation not only represented the Americans' refusal to acknowledge the moral courage of uniting the people on non-ideological grounds but also a refusal to abandon their Manichean mentality of creating an enemy out of Communism.

Disappointed that the Americans merely confirmed that relations had crossed a river of no return, Yŏ walked out of the military government's headquarters, tired and frustrated. Despite the warm night air, he felt cold and abandoned. He slouched through the muddy road, his feet feeling as though they were two anvils. He was going to meet an acquaintances to deliver news about the meeting's outcome. Suddenly, several hooded men jumped out, blind-folded his eyes, and tied his legs together. The men beat Yŏ nearly to death until he was finally taken to a nearby hospital, profusely bleeding. He was later informed that one of the men had left a white identification card which read "KDYL, chairman

¹¹⁹ Bahk, *RSR*, 80-81.

¹²⁰ Hannah Arendt, *On Violence* (New York: Harvest Books, 1973), 51.

¹²¹ Bahk, *RSR*, 156.

¹²² "The Political Adviser in Korea (Langdon) to the Secretary of State," August, 2, 1946. *FRUS*, 1946, Volume VIII, 723.

Kim Doo-hahn" while fleeing from the scene.¹²³ While Yŏ sighed in relief that he had survived the vicious clubbing, he was terrified that someone might be outside the hospital room waiting to plunge a dagger into his heart. It rained all night.¹²⁴

The incident proved Tennessee William's chilling adage that distrust is the only effective weapon against potential betrayal. Yŏ could believe nothing and trust no one. Pak or a Rightist might be lurking around every street corner to claim his life. In comparison with January, Yŏ immediately realized how vulnerable his position was and how few choices he had. Returning to the SKWP under Pak's leadership would be dishonorable, since it would be a definite sign that Yŏ had forfeited his ambition and succumbed to Leftists. Should that happen, he would be subject to more suspicion from the Americans who no longer trusted him. Yŏ became very uneasy about entering his Korean Societal Party headquarters. Too many furtive glances at his desk and the increasing number of requests to be dismissed early soon forced Yŏ to grow suspicious of his closest friend as well. The Pak of Yŏ's imagination had proven hallucinatory and even disappeared. Pak was now a far more strategically cunning man; he had already planted so many spies in Yŏ's office, watching Yŏ's every move and hearing every word from his lips. Many workers came to Yŏ's desk and asked for permission to leave the office early. Most said that they were ill or had family emergencies, but the excuses all became too routine to be plausible. He even saw some workers head toward Pak's house, but did not dare ask his employees where they were going. Pak was just too powerful and meticulous; after spies, Pak could send assassins, lest Yŏ found out the truth. Yŏ was in a dilemma. As a last resort, he could continue leading the fledgling Korean Social Party, but there was no telling when Pak might have planted spies. If so, the Korean Societal Party would be nothing more than the SKWP's puppet and be Pak's surveillance tool. However, abandoning the Party leadership was also undesirable, because it would leave Yŏ with no party and reduce him to a politically homeless man. That would be committing political suicide and unexpectedly doing Pak a favor, because once the last independently functioning Leftist party was gone, Pak's Communization of the Left would only be a matter of time. Thus, July was a frustrating month for Yŏ, being forced to sit on a cushion full of needles.¹²⁵

Desperate to ensure that he will not be politically absorbed by Pak and to have a speck of hope to salvage "Unitary Socialism," Yŏ reached out to Baek Nahm-woon, planning to visit the KCP headquarters with Baek to coax Pak into rescinding his plan of turning the Leftist coalition into a Communist-controlled one-party apparatus. Yŏ trusted Baek because they both shared the belief that the antagonism between the Left and the Right was fundamentally flawed, for all patriotic Koreans regardless of ideological orientation had, like Pak and Yŏ, steadfastly devoted themselves for the

¹²³ Born as the only son of independence fighter and anarchist Kim Jwa-jin (1889-1930), Kim Doo-hahn (1918-1972) was a self-proclaimed "independence fighter on the streets" as a gang-leader fighting against Japanese Yakuza in southern Korea. A fervent and banefully ignorant Rightist extremist, Kim was chairman of the extreme Rightist Korean Democratic Youth League, which ferociously hunted down Leftists on behalf of Syng-Man Rhee. He was briefly a protégé of Yeom Dong-jin and cooperated with the White Clothes Society. It is rumored that Kim was also involved in the assassination of Song Woo-jin.

¹²⁴ "Mr. Yŏ targeted by unidentified assailants," July 17, 1946. *Independence and the Left-Right Alliance*. Adapted from *ODSKWP*, Vol. II, 311.

¹²⁵ A "cushion full of needles" describes a situation in which a person is tormented by the reality of being powerless against an unwanted but definite outcome.

liberation of the Korean people. However, at the back of his mind, Yŏ wished that he did not have to coax Pak at all. Yŏ wanted to believe that Pak still shared this passion, and refused to heed to V. N. Volosinov's wise adage that "any current truth must inevitably sound like the greatest lie."¹²⁶ Although Yŏ was fourteen years senior to Pak, they had spent a long time as friends, even as brothers. It was Yŏ who first introduced him to Marxism and Communism; Yŏ even officiated Pak's first marriage, delivering many encouraging words. If Pak shared these memories and treasured their friendship, Yŏ hoped that Pak would easily agree with his creed that realizing a united, non-ideological Korea for Koreans was the most patriotic ideal worth realizing to get out of the maelstrom of the Cold War as soon as possible.¹²⁷

Unfortunately, Yŏ's plan failed before it could even commence; Yŏ was too naive, believing that a long friendship was an insurance for an eternal maintenance of a consistent personality. As the philosopher Victoria McGeer argues, an individual's privileged access to the mind of another person does not guarantee a principled understanding of psychological differences between one mind and another. Unstudied utterances are not disclosures of a mind, but the mind's "updating" process to reflect a totally new personality. Far from remaining as an understanding friend, Pak was now a man who embodied Zarathustra's prophecy that "great indebtedness does not make people thankful and if a small kindness is not forgotten it would become a gnawing worm."¹²⁸ When Pak found out that Yŏ visited Pyoung-yang for the fourth time on July 27, Pak quickly replied in action that he would not calmly tolerate such slander for long. In Yŏ's absence, Pak deliberately announced, under Yŏ's name five principles to unite the Party. Clearly intending to make sure that no traces of "Unitary Socialism" existed within the Party and to strongly assert the Party's belief in orthodox Communism, Pak especially emphasized that all lands must be redistributed equally without charge; all "Fascists, pro-Japanese elements, and counterrevolutionaries be thoroughly exterminated"; finally, "all attempts by the American military government to establish a legislating body had to be opposed."¹²⁹

The Five Principles aroused much controversy throughout Korea. Pak had displayed his militaristic Communism outright, and thereby announced that the SKWP's chief objective was the total subjugation of both the Left and the Right under his own and Pyoung-yang's authority. In other words, what was most insidious about the Five Principles was its embodiment of a fiercely independent and radical devotion to orthodox Communism and violence as a means to rapidly realize it in southern Korea. The political impact of the Five Principles' controversy was such that even Kim Il-sung was shocked by what he perceived as "a most shocking sign of refusal to see an inkling of peace in the Korean peninsula."¹³⁰ Kim Il-sung's response was unsurprising, because Pak had not informed or

¹²⁶ V. N. Volosinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1973), 23.

¹²⁷ For Yŏ's plan and his wish to rekindle his friendship with Pak, see Ahn, *Pak Hŏnyŏng: A Biography*, 279-285.

¹²⁸ Victoria McGeer, "Is 'Self-Knowledge' an Empirical Problem?: Renegotiating the Space for Philosophical Explanation," *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 93, Issue 10 (October, 1996), 514; Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for All and None* (Cambridge University Press, 2006), 68.

¹²⁹ For the quotes, see Bahk, *RSR*, 158. On the incident in July, see *RSR*, 192.

¹³⁰ Bahk, *RSR*, 158.

discussed with him about revealing the ambition of Communist supremacy outright. Should the Americans choose to cooperate with the Rightists and plan to subvert Communist operations in the south, they might in the near future try to overthrow the northern regime by force. Thus, the Five Principles forced Pak to be in a political limbo, not only increasing the Rightists' animosity toward Pak, but also influencing Pyoung-yang to have reservations about voicing fervent support for a Communist program, especially when the political climate in the south was increasingly unfavorable for the Party. .

However, the Five Principles' real significance turned out to be their creation of what I call a "political butterfly effect."¹³¹ Kim's shock at Pak's announcement unexpectedly translated into panic for the Rightists and Yŏ, since they were both in danger of losing their political positions. If the Rightists were to really punish "pro-Japanese elements and Fascists," the Rightists would lose critical inflows of financial aid and support from the Korean National Police, since they were dependent on magnates and officials such as Kim Suhng-soo and Jahng Taek-sahng. Most critically, the inclusion of the demand for an equal distribution of land irrespective of class background was practically trying to force-feed Communism down everyone's throats, blocking the SKWP's ears to opinions from the center-right or center-left. If the SKWP adopted the Five Principles, it would also mean a huge defeat for Yŏ, since a Leftist-dominated government especially under Pak's command would not welcome any ideological solidarity in the name of national reunification. Most devastatingly, although Kim still respected Yŏ's efforts, such an outcome would convince Kim that Yŏ had completely lost his political finesse. Hence, they promised nothing for anyone besides the Leftists, and in effect, was a manifesto calling for a Korea for, of, and by Leftists alone. To counter Pak's aggressive and uncompromising attitude and to justify the necessity of maintaining an alliance with the American military government, the DPK quickly published its Eight Principles barely a week after Pak had published his Five Principles. The Rightists took Pak head on, explicitly promising a "liberal Democracy completely excluding Leftists" under the supervision of the American military government. It also promised freedom for the press and of expression and proclaimed that a full legislative assembly would be established to "promote the Korean public's clear understanding of Democratic principles." Yet, the Eight Principles did not radically challenge the Five Principles, because like Pak, the Rightists included no clause promising unity with the Leftists or the realization of a unified peninsula, only mentioning that Korea would be monitored by the American military government "until an appropriate time for independence" came.¹³²

Although he well knew that he no longer possessed any political strength to challenge Pak, Yŏ refused to back down without a fight. From his perspective, the fundamental problem with both proposals was that phrases such as "thoroughly exterminate" or "completely excluding" were definitely showing that both Pak and the Rightists did not understand that political radicalism, when

¹³¹ My thinking was inspired by Edward Lorenz's classic, *The Essence of Chaos* (Seattle, Washington: University of Washington, 1994).

¹³² Democratic Party of Korea, "Eight Principles on Uniting the Parties," September 3, 1946, *ODSKWP*, Vol. I, 226-227.

taken to the extreme, is a form of nihilism. I am arguing that radicalism intrinsically becomes immersed with itself such that there is no room for mutual understanding and is blinded by a desire to affirm an unchallenged dominance. However, what makes radicalism especially dangerous is that once it becomes engulfed by that desire, there is no other motivation to propel the idea forward. The idea becomes its own captive.¹³³ Furthermore, Yŏ firmly believed that implementing and abiding by the Five and Eight Principles were all detrimental to the prospect of a united Korean peninsula, for the two diametrically opposed programs only confirmed the long distance between the SKWP and the Right; the same distance that kept growing farther with every drop of blood spilt on the streets of Seoul, had only increased, with black ink replacing blood. To put a brake to this potential tragedy, Yŏ proposed a mediated seven-point version. Unlike the intensely ideologically colored Five and Eight Principles, the Seven Principles importantly reflected the essentials of "Unitary Socialism" at its pure best—fervently nationalist, integrative, and thoroughly politically neutral. The Seven Principles were Yŏ's last trump card to preserve and more hopefully publicize the necessity of his neutral and moral approach to political unification. The Seven Principles deliberately sought to balance Pak's and the Rightists' demands. To satisfy the Rightist demand for electoral Democracy, Yŏ urged the "unity of Left and Right in forming a Democratic provisional government" and "the release of all political prisoners illegally imprisoned by the Rightists." To satisfy Pak and the SKWP, Yŏ called for the "resumption of the American-Soviet Joint Administrative Council," and the guarantee of complete freedom of expression and the right to assembly, regardless of ideological orientation." In short, the ideologically balanced Seven Principles clearly reflected Yŏ's urge to put a stop to the Rightists' and Americans' witch-hunt for Communists as well as Pak's overly domineering and dictatorial control of the Party.¹³⁴

However, the feature of the Seven Principles that best represented the socialist nature of "Unitary Socialism" was Yŏ's uncompromising commitment to what he called a "balanced redistribution of land." Peasants who were unable to till their land would receive assistance from the state, while the wealthy would be left to their own devices. While he agreed with Pak to "swiftly punish all pro-Japanese elements," he did not endorse Pak's proposal to distribute land gratis to every citizen in Korea. Unlike Pak, Yŏ believed that distributing land had to be a practice of welfare economics, providing more to the poor and less to the rich. Only by doing so could the Left at least dream of reconciling with the Right. Furthermore, Pak's fourth principle was clear evidence for Yŏ's intense dislike of Pak's extremism. Yŏ did not believe that anyone who opposed the Communist line was a "counterrevolutionary," and not all landholders who briefly cooperated with the Japanese were naturally "pro-Japanese." As a populist, Yŏ could not abandon his creed that the ultimate task of politicians was to ensure that every citizen had the right and ability to "put rice on their tables."¹³⁵ However, Yŏ firmly believed that if one had sufficient financial ability to do so, it was morally just for

¹³³ My thinking developed from William Clarke, "The Political Defects of Old Radicalism," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (March, 1899), 69-86.

¹³⁴ Yŏ Unhyŏng, "Seven Principles on Uniting the Parties," October 8, 1946 in Bahk, *RSR*, 187-188. The first draft was already completed in mid-September.

¹³⁵ Bahk, *RSR*, 189.

that person to relinquish the right to financial compensation based on his or her moral conscience. Thus, he rejected Pak's proposal to carry out the policy without financial compensation. Instead, he favored what he called "distribution according to need," which would be determined by one's ability to cultivate land. Yŏ essentially interpreted the distribution of land as a policy of privatization. In other words, Yŏ thought that Pak's scheme for land reforms *literally* forgot the important qualifier to Marx's famous dictum, "to each according to his needs"--to each according to his *ability*. This qualifier is important for it explains why Yŏ specifically disagreed with Pak that all pro-Japanese elements had to be eliminated. While Yŏ agreed with the Leftists that all land which had been under pro-Japanese landholders' ownership be returned to their rightful owners, he favored "socialism with capitalistic characteristics."

Beyond the obvious fact that Yŏ wanted to put an end to Pak's infatuation with Communist dogmatism through the Seven Principles, Yŏ's opposition to Communism is also a notable feature of the Seven Principles. Whereas Marx used "to each according to his needs" to justify the state's dominance in land distribution, Yŏ thought that Communistic state-led land distribution was too inflexible and inept to address Korea's urgency in having a stable economy. Peasants needed land but redistribution was meaningless if there was no genuine market to which peasants could sell their produce. Therefore, to construct the market, Yŏ believed, albeit grudgingly and contradictorily to his passionate nationalism, that Korea needed support from financiers *regardless* of whether they had collaborated with the Japanese.¹³⁶ Wealthy tycoons had no need for governmental support, for they already controlled the mainstream flow of capital. Hence, it was necessary to ally with them to receive enough funding to revive national industries, raise the employment rate, and thereby recuperate an extremely sluggish economy. Thus, Yŏ understood that nationalism was not a feeling, but a principle. Feelings are willow leaves to which reality would act as a wild wind, swaying them to and fro relentlessly against their will; nationalism was an instrument of rationality, dedicated impartially and strictly to answering the ultimate question, "What is best for the political and economic advancement of a people?" In making this distinction, Yŏ believed in the Kohnian creed that a true nationalist should be a realist, willing to fulfill the people's will even at the cost of negotiating with those who lived in the shade of comfort as national traitors but who also possessed money which would lighten up the faces of the poor and rich alike.¹³⁷ Economic strengthening was the essential means to which non-ideological integration would be an ultimate end. Yŏ was essentially impatient about how Pak, as a dedicated Marxist in theory and action, could pragmatically ignore this fact. An elevation of living standards was a goal worth pursuing by all means necessary to make sure that peasants and the workers could look forward to a stable future--an active and effective promotion of public welfare. In

¹³⁶ Yŏ Unhyŏng and Kim Kyu-shik, "Seven Principles on Uniting the Party," Bahk, *RSR*, 179. Yŏ and Kim both harbored a deep hatred toward Pak, which fostered their cooperation; for a general discussion of the historical background to the rise of entrepreneurs such as Kim Suhng-soo, see Carter J. Eckert, *Offspring of Empire: The Ko'chang Kims and the Colonial Origins of Korean Capitalism, 1876-1945* (Seattle and London: Washington University Press, 1991; 2003). Kim Suhng-soo was also the founder of Bo-suhng College, which later became Korea University.

¹³⁷ Hans Kohn, "The Nature of Nationalism," *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 33, No. 6 (December, 1939), 1001.

the end, it was an increasingly frustrated Yŏ who suffered genuine defeat in the "war of principles," critically failing to place a brake to the seemingly endless Rightist-SKWP antagonism.

Twilight is a vague existence, hanging between dusk and sunset. One could, as Nietzsche did, celebrate a positive death of blind idolatry by declaring that Christianity is the "metaphysics of the hangman"--a solemn and sharp call for the liberation of humankind from the tyranny of an excessively and infectiously moral theology.¹³⁸ Yet, twilight could also be a moment of hopelessness--an impending feeling that one's ideal is slowly, but surely fading away. For Yŏ, the disappointing summer of 1946 saw a negative twilight of "Unitary Socialism" and was a frustrating and miserably lonesome one. If the meeting with the Americans and the assassination attempt in July had exposed the Rightists' clear and extreme rejection of "Unitary Socialism," the "war of principles" and Yŏ's failed quest for "distribution according to need" only confirmed the ever-growing and irreconcilable ideological distance between the two men, due to Pak's extreme passion for Communism. Yŏ painfully realized that both the Americans and his most trusted friend had completely ignored "Unitary Socialism" by misunderstanding and even deliberately wishing its complete extermination. To make things worse, Yŏ had failed to reconcile with Pak, helplessly watching Pak teeter toward an uncompromising and extremist Communism by unilaterally announcing the Five Principles. Unfortunately, with the Seven Principles merely confirming Pak and Yŏ's disagreement over equal distribution and distribution according to need, Yŏ's last hope to mediate reconciliation lay with Kim Il-sung. Unfortunately, the misfortunes of July and August were only the tip of a iceberg. For Yŏ, the autumn of 1946 would be harsh, cold, and dismal. In addition to the Pyoung-yang Lobby, in which Kim Il-sung would betray Yŏ by cooperating with Pak to render "Unitary Socialism" into a lonely sandcastle standing before tall waves, the political fragmentation of Yŏ's Korean Societal Party, and the official founding of the SKWP in accordance with the "Two-to-One Deal" would completely sap out the strength of "Unitary Socialism" to rage against the dying of its light.

5. When "Irresponsibility" Squared Off against "Deviousness": The Pyoung-yang Lobby, the Korean Societal Party's Fragmentation, the Two Workers' Strikes, and the Korean Communist Party's Second Coming (September-November, 1946)--The Realization of the "Two-to-One Deal"

(I) The Pyoung-yang Lobby and the "Two-to-One Deal" (September, 1946)

While the Americans and the Soviets were busy scuffling over the appropriate date to reschedule a meeting about the proper form of "Democracy" for Korea in Moscow, Pyoung-yang transformed into a frantic lobbying warzone for Yŏ and Pak. For two months, both men visited Pyoung-yang fifteen times, each lobbying the Pyoung-yang leadership about how just their respective positions were compared with each other. Yŏ frequently complained that Pak was "the most irresponsible man ever known" and accused Pak of distorting unification into a "private scheme to be a dictator." Yŏ also complained yet again about Pak's "unreasonable" support of an equal redistribution of land, as it did not really address how desperately poor most peasants were in southern Korea. If class liberation was

¹³⁸ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols* (Indiana, Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1997), 36.

truly one of Pak's goals, then the Party's overly propagandistic support of violence against pro-Japanese collaborators and landlords was outright wrong-headed, for it would beget nothing but more unnecessary violence. Where was the promise of peace? Why must Koreans be divided into landlords and peasants and why should anti-imperialism be the *only* criterion to verify one's patriotism?¹³⁹

As the philosopher Stephen Nathanson has argued, patriotism has the capacity to be "moderate," or to be restricted within the bounds of humane ethical judgments. Thus, patriotism can be rationally restrained by morality from becoming an extremist passion. Accordingly, I would argue that Yŏ's questions reflected his distaste for Pak's ignorance of Nathansonian "moderate patriotism."¹⁴⁰ Yŏ believed that patriotism must not be perverted into a line for dividing the just and the unjust; it should be a circle, morally uniting both the rich and the poor under the sole motivation of working toward the progress of Korea as Koreans. Furthermore, Pak's Manichean outlook was economically unsound. If the Korean people should remain eternally divided into peasants and workers against the bourgeoisie, division of labor and specialization, essential for reviving the country's main industries, would not be realized. In such a case, it would be impossible for anyone to be materially happy because no one would willingly contribute to raising the public's standard of living out of the suspicion that one class is going to take advantage of another class's labor. In making this remark, Yŏ intended to cast Pak as a hypocrite feigning a fervent support of the peasantry in words but not following up with actions. To emphasize this hypocrisy further and increase his chances of winning a Weberian legal authority to guide the SKWP to unification with Pyoung-yang, Yŏ advertised his innocence, reminding Kim that he was a "pure and honest man" who sincerely wished for reconciliation between the Left and the Right. A Left-Right alliance was necessary solely for the "complete unification of the Korean people," and all other ideological ambitions had to be discarded.¹⁴¹ The tirade reveals that Yŏ was in an emotionally mixed bag. What lay underneath this anti-Pak speech were Yŏ's deep frustration with the postponement of his ultimate vision of non-ideological unification and Yŏ's hope that Kim, unlike Pak, shared his belief in a harmonious and cooperative relationship between Communism and "Unitary Socialism."

However, Pak did not take such slander lightly. He unleashed an even more vehement and damning anti-Yŏ tirade, warning Pyoung-yang not to be "misled or deceived" by Yŏ's "nebulous plans." When Kim Il-sung asked him to abide by Yŏ's wish to reconcile with the Right, Pak flatly refused, arguing that Kim "simply did not know how devious" Yŏ was as a human being. Pak complained that Yŏ was "a born propagandist who liked to stir up confusion, was thoroughly pro-American," and had so much "blue blood as a snotty landholder" that he probably favored a "bourgeois Democracy." Pak was in effect, trying to dismantle the divide between Weberian charismatic authority and legal authority. Since Pak already had charismatic authority, he sought to also earn the latter by exploiting the

¹³⁹ Yŏ was repeating his sentiments he expressed in Kim Il-sung, "Meeting with KSP President Yŏ Unhyŏng," February 11, 1946, in Bahk, *RSR*, 117-120.

¹⁴⁰ Stephen Nathanson, "In Defense of 'Moderate Patriotism,'" *Ethics*, Vol. 99, No. 3 (April, 1988), 539.

¹⁴¹ Kim Il-sung, "Meeting with KSP President Yŏ Unhyŏng," February 11, 1946, in Bahk, *RSR*, 117-120.

nebulous nature of "Unitary Socialism." To that end, he was expressing his frustration with that nebulous nature itself so that Kim would share that frustration and acknowledge an inevitable transfer of power from Yŏ to Pak. Hence, the Pyoung-yang lobby was essentially an important rhetorical wrestling match between Pak and Yŏ to win as much Weberian sources of legitimacy from Pyoung-yang as possible. The more weaknesses each man found about his opponent, the more likely it was for Kim to be their ally. Winning Kim's support would assure two important advantages: a full recognition of the legitimacy of each man's ambition and a firm consolidation of power within the SKWP under a single authority. In such a winner-takes-all situation, it is not surprising that currying favor with Kim was the prime calculation that occupied Pak and Yŏ's heads throughout September.¹⁴²

After a strenuous and long September, Pak ultimately emerged victorious. Yŏ had made the fatal error of wasting his time, only bombarding Pyoung-yang with personal critiques of Pak instead of offering his own vision or plans for unification. Hence, Kim felt uncomfortable after Yŏ's tirade because when Kim met Pak, he had a firm assurance that Pak clearly understood his mission—to unify Korea such that the ratio between Left and Right became two to one. This is why, despite concurring with Yŏ's opinion that unification had to be peaceful and be a goal in itself, Kim was largely silent throughout the meeting. Tired of Pak and Yŏ's seemingly endless struggle against each other to pull Kim to their side in the tug-of-war for political legitimacy, Kim decided to snap the rope into two by coaxing Yŏ into cooperating with Pak. The more Yŏ pleaded Kim to severely reprimand Pak, the more ambivalent Kim's response became, repeatedly answering that he would "consider it with deliberation." This lukewarm response was undeniable evidence of how loose Yŏ's grip on power had become in the tug-of-war for the Party leadership. Feeling "an immense amount of betrayal and distrust," an exhausted and disappointed Yŏ said nothing; the meeting ended in a silence cold enough to freeze the warm summer night.¹⁴³ In short, the Pyoung-yang lobby was more than a slugfest of character defamation; it was the final contest between Pak and Yŏ to determine who was genuinely winning Pyongyang's trust as Kim's most reliable ally. The lobby was the pivotal conclusion of Pak and Yŏ's ever-growing antagonism, for Kim had definitively tipped the balance of power to Pak once and for all.

Pak made sure to capitalize on the lobby's such significance as much as possible by directly suggesting to Kim Il-sung a plan for Communist domination of the Korean peninsula. In the middle of September, Pak held a series of secret meetings with Kim about the prospect of a Communist revolution in the peninsula. The most notable agreement from the meetings was the "Two-to-One Deal." Kim told Pak that the disorganized hullabaloo over the Five, Seven, and Eight Principles was all due to the absence of a clear strategy to consolidate power in the Party. Since Kim believed the "war of principles" showed that reconciliation between Pak and Yŏ was "nearly impossible," the ultimate mission of the SKWP was to strengthen itself into "the major Leftist representative." Only by

¹⁴² Bahk, *RSR*, 75.

¹⁴³ Yŏ Unhyŏng, "I Sense Betrayal and Distrust from the North and Pak Hŏnyŏng," (undated) in Bahk, *RSR*, 192.

doing so could the ratio between Leftists and Rightists become two to one, enabling the Leftists assume a "formidable presence" and "annihilate" the latter with "full force." Kim offered strong encouragement, firmly assuring Pak that there "was absolutely no reason to fear the Americans" once Pak could establish "the most formidable Communist force in the south." Pyoung-yang would cautiously monitor and assess the situation in the south and be careful not to "provoke any unnecessary military clashes," but it would equally not hesitate to use that option if confrontation had to "inevitably become bloody" due to "unexpected circumstances." A two-to-one ratio would assure the Communists' "formidable presence," for it would fundamentally guarantee numerical superiority, which could potentially mean more human resources to build a military.¹⁴⁴ The "Two-to-One Deal" clearly shows Pyoung-yang's blueprint of the terrible war that would commence three years later. In an Althusserian sense, the "Two-to-One Deal" established, from Pyoung-yang's perspective, a positively non-historical ideology of the war. Put differently, the goal of the "Two-to-One Deal" would later provide a structure and form of the war--finishing a Communist nationalist liberation through the structural establishment of a Communist numerical superiority over the Rightists--a structure which North Korea would translate during the initial stage of the Korean War as an overwhelming display of thorough strategic and technical preparation.¹⁴⁵ With Americans already having a firm institutional foothold in southern Korea and superiority in weaponry, and the Soviets ready to exit the peninsula at any moment, regrouping the Communist forces to assume numerical superiority at least over the Rightists was realistically the only insurance policy that Pyoung-yang could prepare. If successful, Pyoung-yang could counter American influence by pressuring the Rightists with quantitatively superior Communist pressure.

Pak had much to gain from the agreement as well. On one hand, the assurance of "absolutely no reason to fear the Americans" served as a definitive conclusion to the fierce Pyoung-yang lobby. By winning Kim's consent to carry forth with the "Two-to-One Deal", Pak could now be assured that Kim and the Pyoung-yang leadership would no longer drift toward Yŏ's neutral stance. More specifically, by earning Kim's solid trust, Pak could enjoy the indirect effect of becoming a silent but major threat to his political rivals in Pyoung-yang. Although there were formidable opponents in Pyoung-yang's military leadership such as Choi Yong-guhn, Pak well knew that the best key to survival--the limbo between annihilating or being annihilated with full force--was information. Pak had more than enough of it; he was the sole operative who had a bird's-eye view of the political situation in southern Korea. Hence, Francis Bacon's adage, "knowledge is power" had literally proven its worth. He could use his knowledge of southern Korean affairs to become Kim's closest protégé. On the other hand, the "Two-to-One Deal" further solidified Pak's hold on the SKWP leadership and assured the Party's increased influence in Korean politics. Before the deal, the Party was just one of many Leftist groups to be

¹⁴⁴ Bahk, *RSR*, 182.

¹⁴⁵ This explains why if ideology has no history in a positive sense, then the Korean War, by having the "Two-to-One Deal" as an ideology, has no history, for the war has now become a seemingly unending "non-historical"--omni-historical--reality. It still indefinitely waits for peaceful unification to be its conclusion. See Louis Althusser, *On the Reproduction of Capitalism: Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses* (London, England, and New York: Verso, 2014). 175.

hunted down mercilessly by the Korean National Police and American authorities--two colossal allies of the Right. Now, with Pyoung-yang's promise to firmly support Pak's plan to establish a firm Communist base in southern Korea, and because Yŏ and Baek no longer had any significant power to challenge his dominance, Pak could now look forward to claiming himself as an undisputed bigwig, if not the supreme leader, of the Left in the Korean peninsula. Most importantly, the Korean Societal Party's fragmentation and workers' strikes in September and October would confirm a near-total defeat of "Unitary Socialism" and accelerate Pak's plan to reincarnate the old KCP into a new SKWP.

(II). The Korean Societal Party's Political Fragmentation and the September and October Workers' Strikes (September-October, 1946)

By contrast, in addition to his bitter defeat in the Pyoung-yang Lobby, Yŏ's political career was nearly about to jump off the cliff; his KSP headquarters became poisoned by factionalism. Upon returning to Seoul after his meeting with Kim, Yŏ opened a general session to discuss the prospects for a Leftist alliance. To his dismay, a feud had already spread uncontrollably among members even before any earnest debate could commence. On one hand, there was the "Group of 31," represented by Yŏ himself, who yearned for a partnership with the Right and opposed any extremist Leftism from ruining that prospect. Unfortunately, the opposition, calling themselves the "Group of 47," had no wish to let Yŏ assume the reins of power. In favoring an immediate and unconditional merger with the Communists, this group shamelessly declared itself as Pak's ally and offered no compromise or regret in willingly betraying "Unitary Socialism." The deeper the KSP was embroiled in a confused and pointless internal struggle, the more it resembled the *Titanic* without any lifeboats, sinking slowly but inevitably into the cold waters of oblivion and neglect. What was most unfortunate is that unlike the actual *Titanic*, the KSP did not sink because it *accidentally* hit an iceberg. Even as they were sinking, neither the Group of 31 nor the Group of 47 had the urge to swim or find wooden planks and helping hands to prevent themselves from drowning.

While no one had the will or sense of responsibility to clean up the spoils of the internal schism, Yŏ suffered the most wounds for which he did not have a cure. Yŏ could only hope that he would not be preparing a coffin for his political career with his own hands. The factionalism was devastating, for it "enlightened" Yŏ to face the bitter life of a politically homeless man—shunned and shoved around by an equally antagonistic Right and Left. Flustered with confusion and anger by betrayal from the Americans and then his best friend, Yŏ spent the next month like a ship without a captain, drifting here and there, swaying dangerously while actually going nowhere, only counting days until a whirlpool would swallow it up. Pak might fortunately grant sanctuary by accepting Yŏ as a Party member, but that would be a humiliating sell-out of his soul to cold-hearted Communists. Feeling a "severe lack of trust and deep humiliation," Yŏ instinctively realized that Pak's Communist Party *was* the whirlpool.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁶ On details about the internal factionalism, see Byung-yup Bahk, *RSR*, 165-172. The quote is from "Yŏ Unhyŏng's Secret Meeting with Kim Il-sung," Russian State Department Archives, top secret, September 28, 1946, adapted from Bahk, *RSR*, 193-194. Yŏ even admitted to Kim later that he felt like an "old wagon trailing a young soldier"; "Meeting between, Yŏ Unhyŏng, Kim Il-sung, and Sergeant Romanenko of the Soviet Occupation Forces in Northern Korea," September 23, 1946 in Bahk, *RSR*, 201.

Hence, rather than let himself sink in the whirlpool and butcher the morality of "Unitary Socialism" with his own hands, Yŏ abandoned ship on September 27, 1946. The KSP and the final gasp of hope for national unity had completely disappeared. "Unitary Socialism" no longer effectively had any institutional leverage with which Yŏ could rigorously critique Pak's Communization of the Left or to convince the Right to stop its senseless butchering of Leftists. Most importantly, the KSP's disintegration was Yŏ's political suicide and a great boon for Pak in the competition to win Kim Il-sung's trust because Yŏ had no means to demonstrate that "Unitary Socialism" was institutionally functioning successfully in southern Korea. Yŏ could only sigh with relief that as a politically homeless man, he avoided being embroiled in two of the biggest and tumultuous workers' protests in modern Korean history--the September general strike and the October uprising. Laborers demanding higher wages and better working conditions had called for the overthrow of the American military government; the bullets of the Korean National Police sunk into the flesh of the demonstrators, drunk with blood and yet, thirsty for more, ultimately crushing both protests mercilessly.

Nevertheless, Pak remained unperturbed. Yŏ was now essentially powerless and although the September and October uprisings had failed, the failure resulted in what I call a "Goldilocks' *realpolitik*," producing an outcome neither too good nor too bad. Although Pak's speech encouraging workers' militancy in Daegu against the American military government had limited impact, the uprisings had exposed the political, economic, and social failures of the American military government, ended the people's committees, and thereby made the Left more vulnerable to disorganization, and given an upper-hand to the Rightists and the Korean National Police.¹⁴⁷ However, beyond such important but immediate achievements of the uprising and the strike, the events also confirmed two important outcomes that strengthened Pak's resolve to fight for the Party's survival. First, as Pak reported to Kim Il-sung during a meeting P'yŏng-yang, the upheavals were "glorious and righteous" struggles of the Korean people against American imperialism, which Pak hoped to use as a focal point to strengthen the Party's solidarity and "subdue the American military government." Applying Jürgen Habermas's theory on the relationship between Democracy and civil disobedience, I would argue that for Pak, the upheavals were political litmus tests which refused, on the grounds of the gravity of an illegitimate Rightist oppression of the Leftists, to believe that possibilities for a radical proletarian revolution were exhausted.¹⁴⁸ By exposing the failures of the Americans' social and economic policies, the strike and the rebellion achieved a "glorious" victory of delivering the clear message to the Rightists that they were blindly trusting the brute force of an unreliable and irresponsible ally. Pak believed that this failure would warn all opposing factions within the Party as well, for waging a similar revolution would serve as concrete evidence that the people were mostly supportive of the Party leadership. Pak excitedly informed Kim Il-sung that he could now expulse all opposing factions under the "grave charge of delaying the unification of the Party," confirming his

¹⁴⁷ Bahk, *RSR*, 93. For the outcome of the uprising, see Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, Vol. I, 246.

¹⁴⁸ Bahk, *RSR*, 94-95; Jürgen Habermas "Civil Disobedience: Litmus Test for the Democratic Constitutional State," *Berkeley Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 30 (1985), 100.

complete control of the Party bureaucracy.¹⁴⁹ Thus, the struggle served as a stern warning of Leftist revolutionary potential to the Rightists and was also an accelerating Pak's unchallenged and permanent control of the, SKWP which Pak believed would further solidify Pyoung-yang's trust.

Furthermore, the uprising confirmed that the Rhee faction was clearly changing anti-Communism from an Ideological State Apparatus to a Repressive State Apparatus, which, as Althusser puts it, "functions in overwhelmingly preponderant fashion on repression, while functioning secondarily on ideology."¹⁵⁰ The uprising had "righteously" revealed that the Korean National Police was the cog of this wheel of perverse transformation and maintenance of a gross hierarchy. The Police were penultimate national traitors, for they were shamelessly murdering Koreans without being aware that their very weakness came from the source of their power—collaboration with imperialism. The Police had merely borrowed the hands of one imperialist power for those of another to spray bullets in the name of "security" at their fellow citizens. Unfortunately, for the Rightists, this violence incurred a high cost. The Police had exposed the Rightists' fear of being overpowered by the Left, for, as Hannah Arendt astutely points out, violence appears when power is in jeopardy, but it is only power that disappears. Yet, it is also simultaneously true that when violence is absent, power dominates, and once the Police's wrath came to an end, the Party had a clear goal to achieve while taking the reins of power back in its hands: to "re-educate" these poor students of history.¹⁵¹ This meant tracing the correct trajectory of history by punishing collaborators of Japanese imperialism and redistributing land to help the underprivileged lead humane lives—an act representing true patriotism and championing "Democracy for the people." Thus, although the great upheavals of September and October ended in failure, they, as a litmus test to determine the political climate, were also successful in definitively exposing the adamancy of the Right in its refusal to reconcile with the Left. The upheavals gave Pak confidence that he was ready to "rebuild another house in which one may be lodged while one's work is in progress" in case a house gets demolished.¹⁵² It was time for the Party to undesirably but inevitably draw its last trump card: uniting the Left and assuring the SKWP's evolution as a thoroughly Communist organization.

(III). A Kidnapping and the SKWP's Founding as the KCP's Political Second Coming (October-November, 1946)

Yet, how was unity to be achieved? While some Party members favored a general reconciliation with the Right under the common goal of overthrowing imperialism, for Pak, that option was out of the question; he had already fulfilled his vow to eternally ostracize Yŏ from the leadership. However, that Yŏ had consistently tried to assert his presence to Pyoung-yang posed a true dilemma for Pak.

¹⁴⁹ Bahk, *RSR*, 95.

¹⁵⁰ Althusser, *On the Reproduction of Capitalism*, 85-87. It is a shift because ideology becomes secondary to repression both in theory and according to the historical reality of Korean politics during this time. The Korean National Police did not exercise a Foucauldian disciplinary action, because while it was not a triumphant power, the action was not modest or restrained by any calculations. See *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 170.

¹⁵¹ Arendt, *On Violence*, 56.

¹⁵² René Descartes, *A Discourse on the Method* (Oxford University Press, 2006), 21.

Inviting Yŏ back to the Party was out of the question, for Yŏ would surely rekindle his desire to realize "Unitary Socialism," and the bitter rivalry would then resume full circle again. Pak did not wish to relinquish his hard-earned power so easily. Yet, simultaneously, Pak had no wish to end his antipathy toward the Americans or the Rhee faction, for doing so would be capitulating to Yŏ's wish to reconcile with the Rightists, dishonoring the Party's commitment to Communism. Murdering Yŏ was equally undesirable, for it could send out the wrong signal to Kim Il-sung that Pak was an untrustworthy cold-hearted man who could easily betray a close friend to curry favor with power. At the worst, Kim might, out of strong distrust in Pak, urge him to call off the entire southern operation, and execute Pak out of the suspicion that he had betrayed Pyoung-yang.¹⁵³ Running out of ideas on what to do with Yŏ, an extremely frustrated Pak chose to secretly kidnap Yŏ and harshly interrogate him. On October 8, Pak imprisoned Yŏ in the former's private residence and interrogated Yŏ relentlessly throughout the night, but did not get any convincing answers. The exact exchanges between Pak and Yŏ are unclear, but it is highly likely that Yŏ was forced to admit that he and Kim Kyu-shik had drafted "Seven Principles for Uniting the Party." The document was irksome enough for Pak, especially the seventh principle, since it promised the administration of free elections, which gave Pak the impression that Yŏ had decided to side with the Rightists and was collaborating with the American military government. Pak threatened Yŏ that there will be "consequences" if Yŏ should "sell the Party to the Americans," and sent him home long past midnight.¹⁵⁴

However, Pak's decision seems pointless if its objective was to merely coerce Yŏ into pledging not to cooperate with the Americans; Yŏ neither had a formidable political party nor great popularity among Party members to attempt such a thing. It is also unlikely that Pak kidnapped Yŏ merely to question the content of the Seven Principles, since Yŏ had published them in one of the Party's newspapers; Pak could always get a copy if he wanted one. September's Pyoung-yang Lobby is the most likely explanation for the kidnapping, since it occurred barely less than a month after the Lobby. Torture does not merely inflict wounds, it forces a subject to remember them, and be haunted by the fear of that memory itself. The memory becomes an ineradicable stigma which evolves into a phobia. Pak was probably more interested in letting such Foucauldian "pain of the idea of pain" punish Yŏ and eternally prevent him from visiting Pyoung-yang ever again.¹⁵⁵ Pak's impatience with Yŏ's effort to unite the Left and the Right had finally reached its limit, and he had been continuously suspicious about Lyuh's absence from Party meetings all throughout September, thinking that Yŏ had gone to Pyongyang to persuade Kim Il-sung to sabotage Pak's plans to "paint the entire peninsula red." Indeed, his hunch was extremely accurate. Three days before the kidnapping, Pak had visited Pyoung-yang, where Kim Il-sung told him of Yŏ's opposition to Pak's proposal to indiscriminately punish all pro-Japanese financiers and Yŏ's scheme for distributing land according to need.¹⁵⁶ From Pak's perspective,

¹⁵³ The worst possible scenario is actually what happened to Pak in 1955. For details on Pak's execution, see Ahn, *Pak Hŏnyŏng: A Biography*, 359-395.

¹⁵⁴ Bahk, *RSR*, 186-187.

¹⁵⁵ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 94-95.

¹⁵⁶ Bahk, *RSR*, 190-191.

Yŏ seemed determined to do anything to prevent the Five Principles from solidly confirming the Party's Communist identity, even casting them as utterly pointless and even dangerous. In addition, although the September Lobby had assured Pak's victory, Pak was still wary of the possibility that Kim could change his mind and accept Yŏ's recommendation to coax Pak into smothering the Five Principles' extremist language. Should Kim become more favorable toward Yŏ, Pak would lose his chance to become Kim's right hand man. Tired of such undesirable scenarios toying with his mind, Pak must have sincerely wished to end his conflict with Yŏ even by kidnapping him, if that ensured Yŏ's politically vegetative state--an inability to pose any significant challenges to Pak's affairs.

Anxious to definitively thwart Yŏ's and, by extension, Rightists' plans to challenge the Five Principles, Pak furiously lashed out an intense tirade against both of them. In an article written for the *Liberation Daily* on October 26, he harshly criticized proponents of a harmonious unity between the Left and the Right, calling it the "greatest betrayal" to the Korean people. Such people were a "bunch of nation-sellers" who were intent on using reconciliation as an indulgence to hide their sins. Such an act served to "dupe the people," and was befitting for "cowards" who were afraid of the Left's "valiant and belligerent spirit" to wage a "continuous revolution to eliminate national traitors." What made these "cowards" worse was that they were also big liars. "Democracy" represented solely by a "legislative council" was nothing but a façade to hide the truth that they were "puppets of the Americans." How could these people claim to run a council making decisions in the name of Korean citizens when they were undemocratically rubber-stamping decisions which the American military government had already determined? Pak was essentially arguing that the decisions had no passion, no humanity, and no aim of completely liberating the nation from such hypocritical Rightists; they would never spiritually resonate with the true Korean people--peasants and workers. Hence, Koreans were not obliged to follow orders from these "despicable Koreans posing as lackeys of the foreigners." Pak was certain that the Rightists had sold their souls to the Devil, for the proposal to combine the Left into a more "Democratic" union was a "huge sinister plot" to convert the Left into "a bunch of counterrevolutionaries." Thus, the Rightists' gravest crime was that their neglect of Korea's historical reality of an incomplete anti-imperialist revolution, juggling the word "independence" like a jester while having no sincere desire to know what the word really meant. The Rightists were poor students of Aeschylus's aphorism, "through suffering comes wisdom."¹⁵⁷ They were a group of sly opportunists who pretended to be patriots even though they never demonstrated an inch of it, merely currying favor with whoever was beneficial for the Rightists' maintenance of power. Alternatively, Pak was also implicitly expressing his frustration at Yŏ's attempt to unite the moral Leftists with such despicable opportunists. He must have been perplexed about why Yŏ could not understand the necessity of punishing the Rightists' cowardliness based on a simple comprehension of a grave crisis: the Left's political lifeline was on the verge of meeting a violent end. Conflict and chaos kept pouring forth

¹⁵⁷ Pak Hŏnyŏng, "Critique of the Seven Principles, October 26, 1946. *ODSKWP*, Vol. I, 332-335. The "Legislative Council" refers to the Representative Democratic Council that Syngman Rhee established to monitor Rightists.

incessantly like a wild cataract as the Americans and the Korean National Police once again launched a ruthless "find all, catch or kill all" campaign against the Leftists across southern Korea, burning down whole villages, even massacring children in the process.¹⁵⁸

Yet, Pak knew that a crisis is a symbiotic relationship between danger and opportunity such that a danger has the capacity to morph into an opportunity and vice-versa. To make the best use of this relationship, it is always important to grasp *only* the particular moment in which danger morphs into opportunity.¹⁵⁹ After seeing no end to the arrests of Leftists, it took less than a month for Pak and his collaborators to decide that a complete institutional separation from the Americans and the Rightists was the only road to survival, for the past conduct of the Conservatives only demonstrated that they were intent on killing Communists on sight. Thus, on November 23, 1946, under Pak's watchful eye, a day-long session produced the final draft of a resolution to establish a single, unified Communist organization. Institutional unification was "highly necessary," for "Fascists, under the guise of supporting American-led Democracy," were still intent on "jeopardizing the people's livelihood." A Leftist unity was not only a political expedient to maintain a balance of power against the Right, but a necessary step to realize justice—"crushing counterrevolutionaries to establish a genuinely Democratic front." Hence, unity assigned justice a moral character and force that were synonymous with political legitimacy, because only those who sacrificed their sweat and blood were truly patriotic Koreans. "Crushing counterrevolutionaries" to protect the "livelihood of the people" was therefore, a rite of passage for a dedicated nationalist.¹⁶⁰ It was a manifesto declaring the Party's oath to an eternal non-cooperation and separation from the Rightists and the Americans. Not wishing to degenerate into the same "liars and sinister plotters" as the Rightists and to avoid being victimized by the American authorities' Communist witch-hunt, the Party's resolve to eternally ally with Communism and Pyoung-yang was now final. Instead of slinging empty barrages of taunts and threats, the manifesto was a product of Pak's realization that the Party had no choice but to institutionally divorce itself from the Rightists by exclusively dedicating itself to the promotion of Communism and, from Pak's perspective, fulfilling his part in the "Two-to-One Deal."

However, the manifesto was not merely conscious of Pak's diplomatic obligation to fulfill his pact with Pyoung-yang, for it also laid the groundwork for two different ambitions. First, the manifesto confirmed the Second Coming of the Korean Communist Party and ripened the prospects of Pak's ambition to be *the* Korean Communist leader. Since the manifesto had realized the "Two-to-One Deal" by institutionally establishing the Communists' political superiority over the Rightists, Pak had ample reason to expect that he would be able to help Kim Il-sung complete a more perfect Communist revolution. If the revolution should become successful, the theoretically orthodox and more genuinely Communist Pak could even surpass Kim Il-sung in terms of reputation and become the undisputed Communist leader of all Korea. In short, through the ushering of the SKWP's birth, Pak had rekindled

¹⁵⁸ Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, Vol. I, 356-380.

¹⁵⁹ "Crisis" in Chinese characters literally denote this composite nature because "危機" literally means "danger with opportunities."

¹⁶⁰ "Launching the Southern Korean Workers' Party," November 23, 1946. *ODSKWP*, Vol. I, 342.

the hope of clinching his destiny that was postponed twenty years ago due to intense Japanese censorship. November 23, 1946 was to become the historical moment for Pak to translate the hope into reality. Second, from a strategic viewpoint, the Communists now had a better chance to realize their ambition of what I call a "Gramscian hegemony," in which the SKWP would unite with its northern counterpart to reshape the political landscape for Communist supremacy. The union would allow the Communists to achieve ideological hegemony by becoming the dominant class that unites the people around Communism. Once this hegemony is realized the Party expected Communism to be a societal common sense, delivering the liberation of peasants and workers as the popular-national will and erase the false claim of a Rightist "Democracy." Korea's Communization would then be complete, establishing Communism as a hegemonic interest manifest in individual and collective life, winning popular support from the peasants and workers for Communist supremacy.¹⁶¹

Hence, November 23, 1946 deserves a mixed blessing. For Communists, the Korean Communist Party, the Korean Labor Party, and the Korean Socialist Party had merged together into the SKWP and solidly prepared a strong foothold for a potential Communization of the entire peninsula. For Pak, it was a moment of triumph, for he could declare "mission accomplished" to Pyoung-yang and expect a considerable compensation from Pyoung-yang. With the two largest Communist parties in the country eyeing the Rightists as an eagle would while cornering its prey, Pak could look forward to realizing a Communist paradise in Korea once the SKWP received military assistance to subdue national traitors. Pak could also envision fulfilling his personal dream of becoming a "Great Leader of the People" when he returned to Pyoung-yang. In short, Pak had now secured everything--wealth, power, and national notoriety to the Rightists. Most importantly, for Pyoung-yang's leadership, Pak's reputation as a flawless revolutionary who had achieved the ideally perfect marriage between ideology and reality in pursuing Communist supremacy. Yet, the Party was also ironically a sinner, invoking spirituality only to "belligerently" crush the Right, signaling the beginning of national unity's tragic death; Pak had ensured peaceful non-ideological unity's "non-Democratic" expulsion, reinforcing the Party's Communist identity through a mutative evolution of Communism as a perverse metonym for the Left. However, November 23, 1946 is simultaneously a day of mourning, for the merger represented the cruel nakedness of *realpolitik*—a highly calculated cornerstone to realize Pak's personal ambition to tell Koreans that red is the only color which can strictly represent Communism, placing a stop-sign in front of Yō's eyes to tell him that his vision of "Unitary Socialism" had all but effectively disappeared. The Party's founding was the victory of a highly strategic, cold, and *institutional* political unity over a much needed abandonment of private ideological passions in favor of a publicly pure *spiritual* independence and unity of the Korean people. Most importantly, the "Two-to-One Deal" was now complete. With Communist superiority in the peninsula assured and political neutrality rendered into an ineffective option for national unification, Pyoung-yang was free to do whatever it wished with

¹⁶¹ Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 53, 181-182, 260, 328; J. Woolcock, "Politics, Ideology, and Hegemony in Gramsci's Theory," *Social and Economic Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (September, 1985), 205-207.

southern Korea. Barely four years later, with Pak's strong encouragement, Kim Il-sung would unleash the carefully planned tragedy of June 25, 1950.

Epilogue: The Haunting Call for a "More Perfect Communist Revolution" and Korea's Unfinished Dream of Unification--The 38th Parallel as a Disturbing Legacy of the Death of "Unitary Socialism" (July 19, 1947-?)

July 19, 1947. Two bullets whizzed past the humid air of a blisteringly hot July summer afternoon. Pak's uncomfortable rivalry with Yŏ ended in a staccato; "Unitary Socialism" met a premature and tragic death. Yŏ managed to weakly whisper his unfulfilled dream of "*Tong-il Jo-suhn*" (Unified Korea) with his last fading breath. By contrast, Pak, upon hearing the news of Yŏ's death, quickly mixed a false sadness with a genuine celebration for the Party's opportunity to finally politically unite with Pyongyang's leaders. Even as he feigned his condolences to "our great anti-imperialist comrade's death," Pak was already keenly aware of how emotions were paupers in front of power. Pak did not waste his chance to explicitly express the Party's belligerently pro-Communist sentiment in the guise of morally revenging for his friend's unexpected tragedy. Indeed, he frankly declared that the Party would "completely avenge" Yŏ's death by considering it as a wake-up call "for a more perfect Communist revolution."¹⁶²

What was particularly cruel about the elegy is that Pak had the Party announce the most deliberately un-Yŏ fashion of waging the revolution, vowing to "crush all counterrevolutionaries and pro-Japanese collaborators to death in the name of the people."¹⁶³ The elegy was essentially the SKWP's mockingly anti-Yŏ manifesto. Although the words written on paper lamented the "passing of our great comrade Yŏ," the brief elegiac words were only shallowly written as a publicity stunt, quickly shadowed by fervent praises of the trusteeship and a firm pledge of alliance with the Northern Korean Workers' Party. Instead of throwing a rose to sincerely commemorate Yŏ's death, the Party had thrown a tulip with one hand as if to coldly mock at Yŏ's naïve dream of achieving an ideologically neutral unification of the Korean people. With its free hand, it had poisoned Lyuh and overdosed itself with Communism *in extremis*, leaving no room for peaceful unification. "Unitary Socialism" had unexpectedly suffered two simultaneous deaths: Yŏ's physical death by an assassin's bullet and a spiritual death of his lifelong dream of non-ideological unification. Conversely, Pak could now look forward to realizing the "Two-to-One Deal" and fulfill his ambition of establishing Korea as a Communist haven even if it had to pay the price of waging an extremist, one-sided, and unnecessarily violent unification of the peninsula. Hence, Pak quickly seized the moment to replaced "Unitary Socialism" with Communism to now fully unleashed his frustration toward Lyuh by forcedly relegating the death of "Unitary Socialism" merely into a cause to justify his own ambition of Communist supremacy. Achieving political success, Pak seemed to tell Yŏ, requires no human heart or emotions. Therefore, even an old friendship, merely being an emotional product, could be disposable

¹⁶² Lee, *Yŏ Unhyŏng: A Biography*, 351; "Crush the Counter-revolutionaries and Defend the Joint American-Soviet Commission to the Death to Salvage the Nation," July 20, 1947, *ODSKWP*, Vol. I, 388.

¹⁶³ "Crush the Counter-revolutionaries," July 20, 1947, *ODSKWP*, Vol. I, 388-389.

like an old piece of paper in a garbage can, if doing so guarantees the realization of one's ideal, or in Pak's case, a very firm philosophical conviction. The false elegy which moved no one in the Party was a manifesto that completely shattered any possibility of "Unitary Socialism," just as a glass filled with ice would shatter on a cold winter day. Yŏ and "Unitary Socialism" were, physically and spiritually, dead.

Isaiah Berlin, in his highly popular essay, *The Fox and the Hedgehog*, argues that a crafty person, like a fox, understands many things, while a steadfast and principled person, like a hedgehog, may lack quick calculation but ultimately knows one big thing. Berlin implicitly favors the hedgehog, because it is a reflection of himself: a deep philosopher who understands that the ultimate wisdom of life is to know that an individual must have patience, resolve, and resilience to mark the most definitive imprint in life. A fox may be quick in calculation, but it is a victim of its own intelligence, failing to recognize that the wisdom of living a slowly progressing life is precisely in being more organized. Foxes do understand the importance of planning, but they do so in a more quantitative rather than qualitative fashion. The fox ends up having too many plans that he does not have the time to understand which one has matured into the best option.¹⁶⁴ The long ten months from September, 1946 to July 1947 demonstrated that Pak was a hedgehog who had a superior understanding of political clarity than Yŏ did. With a mind for quick thinking, meticulous planning, and an instinctual acumen for political opportunities, Pak had long understood the one big thing he created the SKWP for: the Communization of Korea--his life's ultimate ambition. He was perceptive about the vagueness of "Unitary Socialism" and exploited that as much as possible, capturing opportunities to slander Yŏ's character and taking steps closer to realizing Pak's vision of Communist supremacy in Korea. Thus, Pak could surely afford to ingeniously mix a fake respect for Yŏ and simultaneously mock him in the elegy because he understood that clarity and rapidity in perceptiveness provide the essential measures of faith in an idea. If Communizing southern Korea was that golden ticket, Pak could put politics before partnership and stain friendship with concealed and feigned emotions. He was a man like quartz, having a clear head and a mind cold and piercingly sharp like the stone's edges.

However, Berlin would have been surprised to find that Pak fits into neither category, because Pak perversely *acted* like a fox while ultimately *thinking* like a hedgehog. Like a fox, he knew how to use anti-imperialist and anti-American rhetoric to morally justify the necessity of the Party's existence as the principal vanguard of the Korean people. Pak also did not forget that a mixture of nationalist and pro-Pyongyang rhetoric was necessary for demonstrating to northern Koreans the SKWP's legitimacy as *the* partner to Pyongyang. However, most importantly, like a hedgehog, he knew that all of these tactics had a single objective: to completely prevent Yŏ from interfering with the Party's policies and to assure that "Unitary Socialism" would not be a bulwark against the coming of a "more perfect Communist revolution." By contrast, for Yŏ, clarity was like a mosquito's bite--noticeable yet too quick to vanish. Yŏ, who did not have Pak's almost ferocious resilience in pursuing a political

¹⁶⁴ Isaiah Berlin, *The Hedgehog and the Fox: An Essay on Tolstoy's View of History* (Chicago: Elephant Paperbacks, 1993), 3-4.

goal, was constantly put on the defensive, unable to fight back. Although Yŏ understood the need to unite the Left and the Right through "Unitary Socialism," he lacked a sufficient arsenal of tact and political acumen. Yŏ simply lacked effective control over the KSP, helplessly watching its internal schism explode and his employees betray him, ultimately siding with Pak. This error proved fatal, as it left him with no powerful allies to help him realize "Unitary Socialism" in a more concrete fashion. Most importantly, Yŏ did not treat time like gold. Instead of persuading Kim Il-sung and the Pyoung-yang leadership to help him prevent Pak's radicalism from derailing the Right-Left alliance, his tirade against Pak's personality made Pyoung-yang very reluctant and even suspicious about Yŏ's plans. As a result, although he never relinquished his vision for "Unitary Socialism, even at the risk of narrowly escaping an assassination attempt and enduring a sleepless night of Pak's interrogation, Yŏ ended up losing virtually everything. He lost Pyoung-yang's support for "Unitary Socialism," his political party, and most importantly, on July 19, 1947, along with "Unitary Socialism," his own life.

The tragic demise of "Unitary Socialism" and the SKWP's rise as Pyoung-yang's sole partner in the quest for a "more perfect Communist revolution" was no accident. They resulted from Pak's meticulously strategic and organizational scheme to consolidate Communist power in southern Korea and drive Yŏ into absolute political isolation in preparation for what it expected to be the full Communization of the Korean peninsula. From the moment Yŏ walked out of the Party in January 1946 until the founding of the SKWP ten months later, Pak had continuously cornered the man who was once his friend but who died as a sworn opponent. Although Pak and Yŏ were initially united in their dislike of Syng-Man Rhee and the pro-Japanese collaborators, Pak could not ignore the intense passion for Communism. To transform that passion into an ideal of creating the Korean peninsula into a Communist paradise, Pak willingly went on a wild roller-coaster ride to kill "Unitary Socialism" and lay the groundwork for that ideal. He theoretically established Communism's separation from the Rightists, built a personality cult, found solid confidence in Communism as a policy by supporting Pyoung-yang's land reforms, survived an intra-party scandal, a tiresome lobby which produced the ultimate agreement to establish a united Communist front between Pak and Kim Il-sung, and had witnessed the failure of two major workers' strikes before defeating "Unitary Socialism." Pak and the SKWP were able to survive this maelstrom, all thanks to Pak's meticulous use of strategic and propagandistic rhetoric and acutely instinctive political outmaneuvering. With Yŏ's exit from the Party and ultimate death, the SKWP was undeterred from formally establish itself as the official representative of Communism in southern Korea and realize its *raison d'etre*: the complete elimination of any possibility for a peaceful unification of the Korean peninsula. More specifically, by mixing a moral rhetoric of punishing pro-Japanese collaborators and the bourgeoisie with nationalism to liberate the peasantry and combine all Leftist parties for the sole goal of eliminating all opposition, the SKWP was instrumental in creating an environment in which "Left" became synonymous with "Communism"--a critical ambience to prepare for what both the Party and Pyoung-yang wished--a full Communist takeover of Korea. "Unitary Socialism" would soon turn as cold as a corpse, quickly

forgotten in the frenzy of a short but extremely hot war to realize that wish.

Of course, the SKWP's founding itself did not completely realize a "more perfect Communist revolution." Yet, the SKWP's complete Communization of itself, erasure of "Unitary Socialism," procurement of legitimacy as Pyoung-yang's sole partner through a heated contest with Rightists, and Yŏ's political exclusion and eventual assassination laid a *blueprint* for that revolution, making the peninsula forget about non-ideological unity. The Party not only consolidated the Left in the south, but made sure that the ideational wind of Communist revolution blew from the south to the north, for the SKWP succeeded in creating the ultimate condition for which the Korean War would become inevitable: a two-to-one superiority of Communist forces in Korea. It was through the Party's fulfillment of this lethal objective that peace became, to use Nietzsche's terms, actively suppressed and a fleeting existence, "inanimate" in Seoul and Pyoung-yang's consciousness, as food does during the process of digestion.¹⁶⁵ The Korean War was a Korean conflict because it ideationally originated with the SKWP and was militarily initiated by northern Koreans, unleashing the real-life horror of June 25, 1950. By planning the complete elimination of "Unitary Socialism" as early as 1946 through a cunning mixture of strategic rhetoric and political calculation, the SKWP was responsible for orchestrating the foundations of a nightmare that would haunt southern Korea barely four years later. Sadly, the nightmare refuses to disappear as Korea tosses and turns, haunted by an unfinished dream of unification. "How can I heal the long and deep scar that runs across my belly?" she asks every morning, wincing in pain. So Korea still waits, hopefully and anxiously for an answer. She is waiting for an *ubermensch* of a Pacifist and Non-ideological Unifier to apply the ointment of "Unitary Socialism" on her old scar she got from a war that Pyoung-yang waged to realize a "more perfect Communist revolution."¹⁶⁶

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¹⁶⁵ Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality* (Indianapolis, Indiana and London, England: Hackett Publishing, 1998), 35.

¹⁶⁶ For the concept of *ubermensch*, see *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 36.

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