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In Search for Democracy:
The Korean Provisional Government

by

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Introduction

It took me a while to find the shabby building located in a remote corner of extravagantly westernized *Xin Tian* district, a former French concession in Shanghai. In contrast to the main road, full of shopping centers, fancy restaurants, bakeries, and coffee shops that resembled a typical European city, this building stood humbly by itself amongst local Chinese residential buildings. There were only a few visitors, mainly Korean tourists who had decided that leaving the luxurious streets for an hour or so was worth an opportunity to remember a piece of Korean history that cannot be found in mainland Korea.

The worn-out three floor building was one of the buildings used by the Korean Provisional Government during the Japanese colonial period. This one, which provided a sanctuary to the leaders of the Korean Provisional Government for about seven years from 1926 to 1932, is one of the better preserved buildings: it was assigned as a cultural site by Noman-gu district of China and was renovated in 1993 in collaboration with the government of the Republic of Korea. The tattered old Korean flag hung on the cold grey wall and old letters written by the leaders of the Korean Provisional Government to international conferences asking for Korea's independence brought to mind their activities.

The establishment of the Korean Provisional Government was a response to Korea's popular demand for independence from the Japanese colonial rule. When President Woodrow Wilson declared the principle of "self-determination," in 1918 after the end of World War I, Koreans joined Egypt, China, and India among others

who were inspired by Wilson's message and formed their own nationalist movement aimed at gaining independence from Japan, which had ruled Korea since 1910.[1]

On March 1st 1919, thirty independence leaders, mostly civil and religious leaders, gathered in Seoul and proclaimed their Declaration of Independence largely founded on Wilson's principle of self-determination. They asserted Korea's liberty and equality with other nations and voluntarily turned themselves in to Japanese police.[2] This incident led to country-wide demonstrations that continued for months: people came out to the streets with Korean flags shouting *"Dae Han Min Guk Man Sei.*[3]*"* In the first three months alone, more than two millions Koreans participated in this series of protests, which are now called the March 1st movement. The movement caused about 47,000 arrests, 7,509 deaths, and 15, 961 injured demonstrators.[4] It was a moment of unprecedented Korean nationalism that was no longer limited to the elites but included people of diverse social backgrounds.[5]

This popular uprising provided a catalyst for independence leaders in and out of Korea to agree on establishing a provisional government that would rightfully represent the Koreans and facilitate Korea's independence from Japan. By 1919, a majority of the prominent independence leaders had found the Japanese rule in Korea too repressive to carry out major independence movements and were leading patriotic organizations abroad, basing their activities in the United States, Russia, China, and

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[1] Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment : Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).
[2] Ibid.119
[3] Korean Word for "Long Live Korea." The March 1st Movement is sometimes referred to as the "Mansei Movement"
[4] Man-gil Kang, *A History of Contemporary Korea* (Folkstone: Global Oriental, 2005).335.
[5] Michael Edson. Robinson, *Cultural Nationalism in Colonial Korea : 1920 - 1925* (Seattle u.a.: Univ. of Washington Press, 1988).3-4

Japan.[6] Ironically, Korean students who were studying in Japan as part of Japanese assimilation policy were exposed to the liberal ideas advocating democracy and anti-colonialism and incorporated these ideas into their independence movements.[7]As a result of these dispersed leaders, the March 1st movement gave birth to three separate provisional governments at first: one in Vladivostok, one in Shanghai, and one in Seoul. The leaders of three separate provisional governments eventually decided that it was in their best interest to unite under the provisional government in Shanghai, as its location provided superior freedom and security for its independence activities. These disparate provisional governments united under the Korean Provisional Government in Shanghai in September of 1919.

United in Shanghai, the Korean Provisional Government persisted for twenty six years until the end of World War II when Japan finally granted Korea its independence. Although the Korean Provisional Government was ultimately unsuccessful in winning widespread international recognition, it was deeply significant for the political development of Korea and its legacy continues to influence even contemporary Korean politics more than sixty years after its dissolution.

The significance of the Korean Provisional Government can be summarized in two parts. Firstly, it can be understood in terms of the history of the independence movement during the Japanese colonial period. Despite the fact that it was unable to create a strong united front, the Korean Provisional Government found a number of ways to unite different independence movements to facilitate Korea's independence

[6] Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment : Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism*.125
[7] Ibid 125

from Japan, adopting both diplomatic and militaristic tactics to adjust to changing conditions.

Secondly, as the first form of self-declared democratic republican government, albeit a provisional entity, the Korean Provisional Government acted as bridge, facilitating the transition from Korean traditional monarchy to Democratic Republic. Declarations made by the Korean Provisional Government, including the constitution of the Korean Provisional Government declared in 1919 and Fundamental Principles of Governing National Reconstruction declared in 1941, were the blueprints used to create independent Korea's governing framework, including South Korea's1948 Constitution.[8]

Despite the significance of the Korean Provisional Government in Korea's history, the evaluation of the Korean Provisional Government remains contentious. At an international level, the Korean Provisional Government as Korea's first form of democratic republican government has rarely been appreciated. This lack of recognition is due to a number of factors. First, Korean Provisional Government was not exactly a government in exile. That is, it was not created by the Korean royal family who had ruled Korea prior to the Japanese annexation, but it was a government that was initiated by different leaders of the Korea's independence movement. Therefore, the Korean Provisional Government was not a continuing body of the old Korean government but a new chapter in Korea's history, which, strictly speaking, lacked legitimate rule over the Korean people.

[8] Hee Kyung &Park Seo, Myung Rim, "The Founding of South Korea's Democratic Republic and Its Constitution (Minjugonghwajuyiwa Daehanminguk Hunbup Yineomeui Hyungsung)," *Jungshin Munhwa Yeongu* 30, no. 1 (2007). 81

Secondly, the Korean Provisional Government was, for the most part, located outside of Korean territory. Without a physical presence in the country it claimed to rule, the extent to which the Korean Provisional Government could actually govern is dubious. Thirdly, the Korean Provisional Government was plagued by its internal conflicts. Comprised of leaders who had been influenced by liberal, socialist, and nationalist movements, the Korean Provisional Government was a breeding ground of fierce competition among these different competing ideologies and complete reconciliations of the differing ideologies was never achieved.

Finally, the Koreans themselves are divided in the way that they perceive the Korean Provisional Government. From the perspective of North Korea, neither the March 1st movement nor the Korean Provisional Government successfully carried out the proletariat revolution to "free the masses".[9] In North Korea's depiction of modern Korean history, the March 1st movement and the Korean Provisional Government have largely been described as the movement of the privileged social class who had been highly influenced by Western philosophy.[10] On the other hand, South Koreans' view of the Korean Provisional Government is rather sentimental. The March 1st movement and the Provisional Government of Korea are seen as the beginning of a new chapter in Korea's history of democracy. The preamble of South Korea's constitution adopted in 1948 states: "We the people of Korea, proud of a resplendent history and traditions dating from time immemorial," uphold "the cause of the Provisional Republic of Korea Government born of the March First Independence

[9] Dae Won Yoon, "North and South Korea's Perceptions of the March 1st Movement and the Korean Provisional Government (3.1undonggwa Imshijungbuae Daehan Nambukeui Yuksainshik) " *Tongilro* no. 227 (2002). 34-43. 39
[10] Ibid.34-43. 40

Movement of 1919."[11] Although the government of South Korea has traditionally upheld the Korean Provisional Government as a harbinger of Korea's democracy, there have recently been disputes among Korean historians about how to evaluate the Korean Provisional Government in terms of South Korea's history of democracy.

Controversy around the Korean Provisional Government in South Korea

In 2008, South Korea celebrated its 60th anniversary of its establishment. The present South Korean government, which is dominated by conservatives after eight years of control by liberals, prepared for an extravagant celebration of this event. The South Korean government's efforts to rewrite Korea's modern history in light of celebrating its 60th anniversary created a number of controversies over how to perceive the Korean Provisional Government in its relations to South Korea's development of democracy.

On October 30th of 2008, South Korea's Ministry of Education, Science and Technology directed the authors of history books published by different publishers to "delete or revise 55 sections that it said "undermine the legitimacy of the South Korean government."[12] The controversial part of one of the publishers' text book, which had been targeted by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, read that "it was not our national flag that was hoisted to replace the Japanese flag. The flag that flew in its place was the American Stars and Stripes," and that "Our liberation through the Allied forces' victory prevented us from building a new

[11] Quoted in Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment : Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism*.213

[12]Sang-Hun Choe, "Textbooks on Past Offend South Korea's Conservatives," *The New York Times* 2008, November 18th.

country according to our own wishes."[13] The conservatives argued that these wordings debilitate the national pride and should be reworded. The critics of current Korean history books included Lee Myung Bak, the conservative who was elected President because of his pledge "to overturn a decade of liberal policies that he said had coddled North Korea and denigrated the American alliance — the alliance that liberals have accused of propping up South Korean dictators in the name of anti-Communism."[14]

The recent controversy about how to perceive the Korean Provisional Government as part of South Korea's history exacerbated as the Ministry of Culture and Tourism published a 200 page pamphlet on modern Korean history of democracy and development called "60 Years of Korea: Great Citizens- New Dreams" in October of 2008. The pamphlet repudiated the Korean Provisional Government as the beginning of Korea's democracy, writing that:

> "Although the Korean Provisional Government established after the March 1st movement in 1919 founded a democratic republic as the political system of Korea and its constitution guaranteed equality, liberty, right to property, and right to education, the Korean Provisional Government never attained the establishment of a nation state with recognition from the international community. In this respect, we have to trace the birth of democracy in Korea to August of 1948 when the Republic of Korea was first established. While we should remember the Korean Provisional Government, realistically, we should acknowledge those who established the South Korean government in 1948 as the founders of the Korean democracy. The foundation of Korea's democracy was in fact consolidated during 1945-1948. Korea adopted the American system of democracy as the South Korea was launching its efforts to establish a nation state."[15]

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[13] Ibid
[14] Ibid
[15] Park Hyo Joong, "60 Years of Korea: Great Citizens- New Dreams," ed Nam Do Hyun. (Ministry of Culture and Tourism 2008), http://www.dmook.co.kr/gallery/view.asp?seq=86984&page.

Distribution of three million copies of these pamphlets around South Korea's elementary, middle, and high schools, universities, and other government organizations instigated strong opposition.[16] The Korean Liberation Association, *Kwangbokhui*, comprised of descendents of the participants of the Korean Provisional Government, as well as related independence leaders during the colonial period, protested by returning their national medals of honor to the Korean government.[17] In March of 2009, the Ministry of Culture finally announced that it would modify the controversial part before reprinting.[18]

The heated nature of this controversy of the historical understanding of an organization that disbanded more than sixty years ago reveals a number of puzzles about Korea's political history: Why do South Koreans disagree about the role of Korean Provisional Government in South Korea's democratization? Why do the liberals in South Korea place more emphasis on the legitimacy of the Korean Provisional Government whereas the conservatives overlook the contribution of the Korean Provisional Government in modern history? What is more, why are the Korean Provisional Government and the contemporary South Korean government, despite the fact that the current constitution traces its origin to the provisional government, often seen as unrelated, or even incompatible?

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[16] Soh Yun Park, "Ministry of Culture Decides to Modify Its Pamphlet as Controversy around the Korean Provisional Government Continues (Munhwabu Imshijungbubuptong Nonran Hongbuchaekja Sujunghanda)," *Asia Economy News* 2009 March 4th.
[17] Bong Suk Son, "Kwangbokhui Calles the New Rightist, Pathetic and Pitiful (Kwangbokhui, New Right, Hanshimhago Bulsanghada)," *Kyunghyang News* 2008,Dec 31st.
[18]Park, "Ministry of Culture Decides to Modify Its Pamphlet as Controversy around the Korean Provisional Government Continues (Munhwabu Imshijungbubuptong Nonran Hongbuchaekja Sujunghanda)."

Democratic Republican form of Government

Another crucial puzzle that remains unanswered about the Korean Provisional Government is its significance as a political body that upheld democratic ideologies for the first time in Korean history—and the failure of those ideologies. As the conservatives in South Korea have pointed out, the Korean Provisional Government was unable to govern Korea because it was located outside the country and had no real governance structure within Korean borders. It is unreasonable to argue that the mere articulation of democratic ideals by the Korean Provisional Government could suffice to bring democracy to Korea.

Nevertheless, since the liberation of Korea did not lead to democratic government in Korea but separate governments in South and North Korea, neither of which were democratic, we are forced to re-examine the history of the Korean Provisional Government to discover "what went wrong" or at least to ascertain whether if any alternative to the two nondemocratic regimes was possible. Ultimately, the core question of this thesis is: Why did the Korean Provisional Government, which was so hopeful in 1919 failed to play a more significant role in promoting democracy in either South Korea or North Korea?

Subsequent years following establishment of the two separate regimes in both Koreas are characterized by repressive governments extremely hostile to each other and to its people. North Korea launched communist economic reforms that placed state before the citizens in its fierce competition to outdo South Korea and it remains to this day the most repressive state in the world. Democracy did not arrive in South Korea either. The twelve years following the establishment of the South Korean

government in 1948 was characterized by dictatorial dominance of the "state power over the rest of the society" and Rhee's rise to dictatorship.[19] South Korea would continue to experience repressive governments of military dictators who frequently justified their authoritarian rule by asserting the need to strengthen South Korea's security against North Korea. In fact, it was not until 1992, after the collapse of Soviet Union and unification of the two Germanys that the first civilian government in South Korea was elected.

In the two Koreas, the existence of an opposing political ideology next door provided the justification for placing the state before its citizens. In this respect, I find Robert Dahl's argument regarding development of democracy convincingly applicable to the case of the two Koreas, especially South Korea, where the importation of the western model of democracy was intended to democratize the country.

Dahl introduces the notion of polyarchy, a nation state which may be insufficient but satisfies necessary conditions for the development of democracy. Dahl presents seven sets of conditions for the development of polyarchy.[20] In doing so, Dahl also specifies conditions which render the development of polyarchy more difficult then others. He writes:

> "Imagine a dispute in which a large segment of a country believes that its way of life and highest values are severely menaced by another element of population. Faced with a conflict of this kind, a polyarchy is likely to dissolve into civil war or to be displaced by a nondemocratic regime or both. While a nondemocratic regime might successfully suppress the public manifestation of the latent conflict

[19] Han, Sung Joo. *The Failure of Democracy in South Korea*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1974.7

[20] Robert Dahl, *Democracy and Its Critics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989). 233

> by employing its resources for violent coercion, a polyarchy could not do so without ceasing to be a polyarchy."[21]

Eric Posner shares the idea that existence of threats to security obstructs the development of democracy. He introduces the Security-Liberty Frontier to explain different levels of civil liberties in different situations.[22] According to the Security-Liberty Frontier, security and liberty are the two primary goods that a government provides to its citizens and are constantly in a zero-sum competition with each other; an increase in government's efforts to provide security inevitably decreases the level of liberty it provides to the citizens, and vice versa. Thus, when a state is under an external threat and is urged to tighten its national security, the liberties bestowed on its citizens necessarily decrease.

Structure of the Thesis

Ultimately, I will attempt to answer two major questions in this thesis. First, why is there still a strong controversy, even within South Korea, as to how to perceive the Korean Provisional Government? Second, why were leaders of the Korean Provisional Government, who had upheld the democracy in 1919, were unable to exert a greater influence in making Korea democratic when the country had gained its sovereignty?

In answering both of these questions, I turn to the factionalism that developed within the Korean Provisional Government. The factionalism within the Korean Provisional Government developed around three larger forces: the Pro-western liberalists, the Nationalists, and the Socialists. These three different groups competed

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[21] Ibid. 254

[22] Eric A. Posner and Adrian Vermeule, *Terror in the Balance : Security, Liberty, and the Courts* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).26

with each other in gaining foreign support to carry out independence movements and to exert a greater influence over the Korean Provisional Government. Although there were periods of collaborations between the three factions, the twenty-six years of the Korean Provisional Government are full of periods of competition among these factions. In order to form a coalition, leaders of the Korean Provisional Government widely used nationalism to overcome the ideological differences and successfully assimilated leaders with moderate political ideologies but failed to include those more radical in their political beliefs.

This thesis is divided into five chapters organized in a chronological order. Chapter one will introduce a brief history of colonial Korea prior to 1919. This section will examine the early independence movements in different regions as well as the evolution of these independence movements into the establishment of the Korean Provisional Government. Chapter two will focus on the Korean Provisional Government during its period in Shanghai (1919-1932). A close analysis of the Korean Provisional Governments' earliest leaders' different policies toward obtaining independence, as well as their efforts to unify these differing ideologies, will disclose characters of the different factions and their conflicts. This chapter will also reveal how the leaders of the Korean Provisional Government switched from supporting diplomacy with the Western democracies as the major strategy in gaining independence to bolstering the policy of military struggles against the Japanese.

Chapter three examines the eight years of the Moving Period (1932-1940) when leaders of the Korean Provisional Government had to travel from city to city as the assassination of a Japanese officer in Hongqiao Park carried out by the Korean

Provisional Government forced it to leave Shanghai. The examination of the Korean Provisional Government during this period will reveal the growing competition within the Korean Provisional Government sparked by the emergence of the socialist faction as a major power and its opposition to the nationalists. Chapter four will examine the years between 1940 and 1945 when the Korean Provisional Government settled in Chongqing and finally succeeded in exerting some united efforts of the pro-western liberalists, nationalists, and the socialists by utilizing the World War II as an opportunity to consolidate nationalism as a means to overcome differing ideologies.

Finally, chapter five will examine post-independence Korea distinguished by the tension from the competition between the advocates of pro-Soviet communists and pro-American conservatives. The chapter will show that Korean Provisional Government's leaders' reliance on nationalism as a means to mitigate the rift between the right and left was ultimately unsuccessful in overcoming the political differences when they returned to Korea. This chapter will exhibit the development of different political parties in South Korea and how the leaders of the Korean Provisional Government were perceived in Korean politics, thereby fully explaining why the Korean Provisional Government continues to be a topic of heated dispute to this day.

Chapter One

Development of Nationalism

Foreign invasion has never been an aberrant part of Korea's history. Located between China, Russia, and Japan, Korea had been a battleground for whoever wanted to conquer and expand in the region. Yet Japan's annexation of Korea in 1910 was an unprecedented experience for Koreans, as this was the first time Korea had fully succumbed to a foreign rule, thereby completely losing its sovereignty.

With its victory in the Russo-Japanese War in 1905 fought over Korea and Manchuria, Japan affirmed itself as a newly emerging world power. Japan's victory forced other countries to acknowledge this non-Western country as a new international potentate. President Theodore Roosevelt of the United States mediated the drafting of the Portsmouth Treaty in 1905 in New Hampshire to ensure post-war peace between Japan and Russia, guaranteeing the Japanese right to "protect interests in Korea." [23]

Less than three months after the Portsmouth Treaty, the Eulsa treaty was signed between Japan and Korea, appropriating Korea's diplomatic sovereignty and making Korea Japan's protectorate. The emperor Kojong of Korea, who himself had refused to sign the Eulsa treaty, deemed the treaty illegal. The treaty was signed by five Korean ministers who did not have emperor Kojong's authorization to make treaties on behalf of Korea. The emperor secretly sent Rhee Syngman, who would later be the first president of the Korean Provisional Government, and the first president of the Republic of Korea, to the United States, hoping he would be able to

[23] Alexis Dudden, *Japan's Colonization of Korea : Discourse and Power* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005). 7

persuade President Theodore Roosevelt to act on Korea's behalf.[24] However, when Rhee arrived in the United States, Japan and the United States had already signed the Taft-Katsura Treaty, which officially affirmed Japanese influence in Korea in exchange for United States' presence in the Philippines.

Emperor Kojong's attempt to save his country from annexation once again failed in the 1907's Second World Peace Conference in Hague. He sent three secret emissaries, Yi Jun, Yi Sang Seol, and Yi Wi Jong with a letter from Kojong, to appeal for international support to denounce the legality of the 1905 Eulsa treaty. However, the world was not on Korea's side: the three envoys were barred from entering the conference as legitimate representatives of Korea.[25] The international community had already decided that Japan had the right to represent Koreans and the Eulsa treaty was legal. This incident, which is not widely known today, attests that what is today remembered as one of the first successful international collaborations to set up the foundations for modern international law was, in fact, disinclined to the lesser known and weak.

Enraged by the reality of world politics, one of the three emissaries, Yi Jun committed suicide while he was still in Hague. The Hague Diplomacy was a failure and emperor Kojong was forcefully ousted to be replaced by his son, Sunjong, who would remain as a puppet emperor until the full annexation of Korea, five years later. In 1910, Korea came under complete Japanese rule under the Japan-Korea annexation treaty.

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[24] Kenneth Lee, *Korea and East Asia: The Story of Phoenix* (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 1997).138
[25] Dudden, *Japan's Colonization of Korea : Discourse and Power*. 7

The Japanese encroachment in Korea instigated the development of diverse nationalist movements. During the first nine years of the Japanese colonial period (1910-1919), the *subjugation* period, when military threat and violence were the most repressive, various independence movements spurred Korean nationalism.[26] By 1919, however, most of the major independence leaders found the Japanese rule in Korea too repressive to pursue their independence activities and chose instead to carry out their independence movements abroad. The United States, Shanghai, Manchuria, and Japan were major destinations for these leaders who would later play a crucial role during the March 1st movement and the founding of the Korean Provisional Government.

Demand for Reform

Efforts to advance learning of Korean history and language were especially widespread during this interim period. Shin Chae Ho, a historian, who would later briefly join the Korean Provisional Government, wrote a number of articles that emphasized the Korean people's role in creating their country's history. One such article was "Toksa sillon", which he wrote in a 1908 newspaper. The opening paragraph begins:

> "The history of a state is that which renders a precise record of the rise and/or fall, prosperity and/or decay of the people. Without the minjok (people), there is no history; without history, the minjok cannot have a clear perception of the state…" [27]

[26] Hildi Kang, *Under the Black Umbrella : Voices from Colonial Korea, 1910-1945* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001). 2

[27] Gi-Wook Shin and Michael Edson Robinson, *Colonial Modernity in Korea*, Harvard East Asian Monographs ; (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center : Distributed by Harvard University Press, 1999). 343

Robinson argues that Shin Chae Ho's "identification of a country's history with the history of the people (minjok) parallels the revolutionary shift that occurred with the French revolution, the shift from *L'etat c'est moi to l'etat c'est le people."*[28]

In the meantime, Confucianism, which had been the most influential set of teachings in the composition of traditional Korean society, began to be challenged. Park Eun Shik, a scholar of Confucianism who would later become the second president of the Korean Provisional Government in 1925, criticized the three problems of Confucianism in his writing "The Old Confucianism" in 1909. He wrote:

> "There are three problems with Confucianism. The First problem is that the Confucius' spirit only sides with the authority of an emperor and renders the citizen as submissive subject. The second problem is that Confucius spirit encourages the weak working for the powerful instead of the powerful protecting the weak. The third problem is that Confucianism refuses to teach easy and concise teachings for a wide audience, but tends to emphasize the Sung Confucianism that is only excessive and garbling to the general audience"[29]

In addition to the scholars' efforts to reform old values, civil movements that demanded social reform were also a crucial component in Korean nationalism. One of the notable civil movements was the Tonghak movement. The Tonghak movement, which began as early as the end of Choson dynasty as a religious social movement to challenge the power of corrupted bureaucrats and denunciate hierarchical social structure, was also a significant part of early Korean nationalism. .

Kim Ku, one of the most influential leaders of the Korean Provisional Government, was a follower of the Tonghak movement. Deeply inspired by Tonghak's revolutionary emphasis on equality that challenged hierarchical social

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[28] Ibid 343

[29] Han Jong and others Kim, *Korean Modern History (Hanguk Geunhyundaesa)* (Seoul: Kumsung Publisher, 2003). 135

structure, he chronicles one of his first few encounters with the followers of Tonghak teaching:

> "When I called at the house, a young and handsome man of the *yangban* class appeared, wearing a gentleman's hat. As I politely bowed, he politely bowed back. I was very much impressed and, after telling him my name and address, said "Even if I were a mature man with a proper hat, a gentleman of *yangban* birth would not bow to me. Now, seeing that I am only a boy of the commoner's class, you are treating be overcourteously." He smiled and said that he was a follower of Tonghak and that in the teachings of the founder there was no discrimination according to wealth or birth, and hence all were to be treated equally." [30]

Another notable patriotic movement was the military resistance of the Righteous Army (*Uibyung*). The Righteous Army was mainly comprised of farmers and peasants who had voluntarily organized themselves to fight against foreign invaders. The Righteous Army, which had existed throughout Korean history in times of foreign invasion,[31] played an important role in keeping up the morale of the citizens. With the announcement of the Eulsa treaty, a number of Righteous Armies in different parts of Korea actively fought in Korea for at least 13 years. Later in the colonial period, the Righteous Army was most active in the Korean-Manchurian border where the fighting continued until 1940.[32]

Independence Movements Abroad

Japan's appropriation of Korea's national sovereignty in 1910 spurred the growth of various independence movements. However, repression against such organizations rendered them no longer able to remain in Korea and many leaders

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[30] Chong-Sik Lee, *The Politics of Korean Nationalism* (Berkeley,: University of California Press, 1963).24

[31] The history of Righteous Army goes back to the Japanese invasion in 1592-1598 when farmers and peasants voluntarily organized themselves to fight the foreign invadors. The spirit of the Righteous Army was restored with the 1905 Eulsa treaty as the farmers and peasants once again organized themselves to confront the invasion.

[32] Lee, *Korea and East Asia: The Story of Phoenix* 162

chose to go abroad. The 105 incident of the New People's Society (Shinminhui) was one of the major events that prompted the dispersion of independence activities abroad. The New People's Society was an organization established in 1907 in Korea as a response to the repressive Newspaper Law that banned free activities of newspapers. It was established by Ahn Chang Ho with Li Tong Hwi, Yang Ki Tak, Yi Kap, Lee Seung Hoon, Lee Tong Nyong, and Shin Chae Ho, all of whom were prominent independence leaders.[33] The New People's Society sought to propagate reforms in different areas, including politics, media, society, and education in the hope that it would modernize the country and bring back its sovereignty.[34] This organization founded schools in Pyongyang and Chongju and established a bilingual newspaper, Korea Daily News (Taehan maeil sinbo). [35]

The New People's Society continued to grow and by 1910, included more than three hundred members.[36] In 1911, the organization was accused of attempting to assassinate the Japanese governor-general Terauchi and a large number of its members were arrested. Despite ample evidence acquitting the organization's plot to assassinate Terauchi, 105 of the arrested members were sent to prison for up to ten years.[37] This incident disbanded the organization. Nevertheless, the majority of the members continued their independence movement abroad. They would later play a crucial role in the founding of the Korean Provisional Government. Out of the

[33] Shin and Robinson, *Colonial Modernity in Korea*. 442
[34] Lee, *Korea and East Asia: The Story of Phoenix* 162
[35] Shin and Robinson, *Colonial Modernity in Korea*.442
[36] Po-gi Son, I. s op Hong, and Ch' ol-chun Kim, *The History of Korea* (Seoul Korean National Commission for Unesco,1970).252
[37] Lee, *The Politics of Korean Nationalism*.93

twenty-nine participants at the first meeting of the provisional legislature in Shanghai on April 10th and 11th, eighteen had been affiliated with New People's Association.[38]

The United States was one of the major destinations for independence leaders. The Korean National Association, established in San Francisco in 1909 by Ahn Chang Ho, was one of the major independence movement organizations. Largely comprised of early Korean immigrants to the United States, the Korean National Association was led by former leaders of the Independence Club[39] and the New People's Association. The members of the Korean National Association would later assist the Korean Provisional Government, established in 1919, by sending donations and purchasing provisional government issued bonds.

The Korean National Association attempted to send a Korean representative to the Paris Peace Conference held in 1919. The Korean National Association appointed Rhee Syngman and Henry Chung to attend the Paris Peace Conference. Rhee, who had become acquainted with Wilson during his years in Princeton, quickly informed the State Department of the United States of his plan. He requested assistance for himself and his co-delegate from the Korean National Association, Henry Chung, to travel to Paris. However, Secretary Lansing in Paris responded that "since the United States had already recognized the Japanese annexation of Korea, it would be

[38] Hee Gon Kim, *Research on the Provisional Government of Korea (Daehanminguk Yimshijungbu Yeongu)* (Seoul: Jishik Sanupsa, 2004). 106

[39] Independence Club was organized at the end of Choson dynasty by a group of activist intellectuals who criticized social hierarchy of neo-Confucianism and challenged authority of the King. Most predominant leaders of the Independence such as Seo Jae Phil and Rhee Syngman were western educated, and would carry on independence movements in the United States.

unfortunate to have the Korean representatives in Paris demanding independence."[40] Therefore the Korean National Association never sent delegates to Paris.

Simultaneously, independence movements in Shanghai also became prevalent. Chang Toksu, who was educated in Japan, and Yo Un Hyong, who was then a principal of a Korean school in Shanghai, cofounded Shinhan Young Men's Association in 1918. By 1919, Shanghai had been the destination for many independence leaders, such as Jo So Ang, Kim Ku, Kim Kyu Shik, and Shin Chae Ho, a majority of whom would later become influential figures in the Korean Provisional Government. The French concession of the city provided a liberal environment for independence movements. The Shinhan Young Men's Association's early establishment in Shanghai would later help the establishment of the Korean Provisional Government which would ultimately be united in Shanghai.

The Shinhan Young Men's Association was founded as a response to Woodrow Wilson's 1918 declaration of self-determination, but it also mainly comprised of the members of Tongjaesa, an independence organization which had been established in Shanghai in 1912 by Shin Kyu Shik to educate young Koreans in China.[41] Tongjaesa dissolved soon after Shin Kyu Shik's death in 1922, but many of the members of Tongjaesa overlapped with the Shinhan Young Men's Association and later, with the Korean Provisional Government.

In contrast to the Korean National Association, the Shinhan Young Men's Association succeeded in sending Kim Kyu Shik to Paris in 1919 as a representative of Korea. In Paris, Kim Kyu Shik proposed "The Recognition of Korea as an

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[40] Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment : Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism*. 201

[41] Kim, *Research on the Provisional Government of Korea (Daehanminguk Yimshijungbu Yeongu)*.60

independent country." Although Kim Kyu Shik's attempt at persuading the international community to include Korea's independence question as the primary issue on the agenda at the conference was not successful, his initiation of diplomatic activities created a stepping stone for future activities in Paris under the Paris Commission of the Korean Provisional Government.

While the independence organizations based in the United States and Shanghai tended to focus on education and diplomacy, the early independence groups in Manchuria tended to be more militaristic. One such group was the Korean Liberation Committee (*Daehan Guangbok Jungbu*), led by Yi Tong Hwi and Lee Sang Seol, one of the three secret emissaries to Hague in 1911. This group had been active as early as 1914.[42] Other independence leaders active in this region included Park Eun Shik, Lee Tong Nyong, Jo Wan Gu, and Won Sae Hoon, all of whom would eventually come to Shanghai to collaborate in establishing the Korean Provisional Government upon the breakout of the March 1st movement.[43]

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[42] _____, *Korean Modern History (Hanguk Geunhyundaesa)*.168

[43] _____, *Research on the Provisional Government of Korea (Daehanminguk Yimshijungbu Yeongu)*.87

March 1st Movement

> *"A new era unfolds before our eyes. The old age of force is gone and an age of justice is here. A humane spirit, nurtured through all the centuries of human experience, has begun to cast the brilliant light of a new civilized morality upon human history."*
>
> *-Declaration of Independence of Korea, March 1919*

> *"Isn't there an emperor in our country today? The answer is yes. In the past there was only one emperor in our country, but now every one of the twenty million Koreans is an emperor."*
>
> *– An Ch'angho Hanguk tongnip undong sa 1920*

In 1918, amidst the aftermath of World War I, Woodrow Wilson proposed that a peace treaty be founded on his Fourteen Points. One of his fourteen points included the principle of self-determination, which claimed that individuals have the freedom to decide on what government they wish to be governed by. While the independence leaders in Shanghai and the United States were preparing to launch diplomatic efforts at the Paris Peace Conference, Korean students studying in Japan decided that they should also respond to Wilson's pronouncement.

In January, Lee Kwang Su, a prominent writer and an independence leader who had been educated in Japan, authored Korea's Declaration of Independence and planned to send the declaration as a petition to the Japanese government, members of the Diet, and foreign diplomats.[44] Lee sent one of the student leaders, Song Ke-baek, to Seoul to inform the independence leaders there of their plan. On February 6 of 1919, about two hundred Korean students gathered at the Y.M.C.A to declare Korea's call for independence and requests to carry out the relevant actions. The police ordered them to disperse and twenty-seven, including ten members of the planning

[44] Lee, *The Politics of Korean Nationalism*.104

committee, were arrested and nine of them were sentenced to nine months of imprisonment.[45]

Upon hearing the news, the nationalist and religious leaders in Korea decided to act as well. On March 1st of 1919, thirty-three independence leaders gathered in T'aewhaguan, a restaurant in Seoul, read the Declaration of the Independence and voluntarily turned themselves in to the Japanese police. Although it was initially intended to be a quieter resistance of a small group of leaders, Koreans, mostly students who had already heard about this news, gathered in Pagoda Park with Korean flags and shouted, "*Mansei.*" The protest quickly spread, becoming a nation-wide demonstration.

The March 1st Movement lasted for months all over Korea: more than two million Koreans participated in the first three months alone, and there were about 47,000 arrests, 7,509 deaths, and 15, 961 injured demonstrators.[46] Because what began as a peaceful demonstration was eventually met by violent responses, including a case where Christian independence leaders were locked in their church and burnt to death, [47] the March 1st Movement provided a catalyst for stronger unity among independence leaders and arms struggles. This would ultimately culminate in the establishment of the Korean Provisional Government, the first democratic republican government in Korean history that would last until Korea's liberation in 1945.

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[45] Ibid. 106
[46]Kang, *A History of Contemporary Korea*. ———, *A History of Contemporary Korea*.335.
[47] Lee, *Korea and East Asia: The Story of Phoenix* 160

A Tortuous Road to a Unified Provisional Government

> "This is the most breathtaking moment of my life. Now we are no longer fighting for independence to bring back monarchy. We have convened to establish Democratic Republic for Korea, a task that is now unavoidable in this changing world."
>
> - Lee Tong Nyung,
> During the first meeting of the legislature of the Provisional Government April 1919.

The dispersion of independence leaders outside of Korea was eminent by 1919. About 600,000 Koreans resided in southeastern Manchuria, 200,000 in Siberia, and six thousand in the United States.[48] The scattered independence movement led to the establishment of three separate provisional governments during the period between the March 1st movement and September of 1919. Independence movements in different geographical regions had different emphases: independence movements in Manchuria and Siberia emphasized the importance of military resistance and desired a complete and immediate independence of Korea whereas independence movements in Shanghai and the United States tended to emphasize education and diplomatic activities as ways to obtain independence.

Although independence leaders in different geographical regions tended to have different visions for the path to independence, the outbreak of the March 1st movement provided a catalyst for these leaders to agree that there was now a need for a provisional government to act as a representative governing body of the Koreans.

The first of the three provisional governments was Korea's People's Congress, which came to be established on March 17th in Vladivostok.[49] This provisional government was established by independence leaders who had been active in military resistance against Japan in the Manchuria-Korean borders. The leaders who

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[48] _____, *The Politics of Korean Nationalism*.129

[49] For detailed information about cabinet members of the three provisional governments, refer to the chart in the appendix

participated in Korea's People's Congress efforts revolved around training soldiers and financing military efforts against Japanese.

Meanwhile, on April 11th, after a two day long meeting of the provisional legislature comprised of 29 independence leaders in Shanghai, another provisional government was formed. Only a few days after, on April 28th, the independence leaders in Seoul representing the thirteen counties in Korea, elected officials to serve in a provisional government. While three different provisional governments emerged separately, their cabinet members overlapped greatly. For instance, Rhee Syngman was head of both the Seoul and Shanghai provisional governments, and Yi Tong Hwi and Ahn Chang Ho were appointed both in the Vladivostok and the Shanghai Provisional Governments.[50]

Despite the three different locations of the provisional governments, it was soon palpable that Shanghai had become the central place, as a majority of the elected leaders arrived in Shanghai to take up their positions claimed under the Shanghai Provisional Government. The leaders' choice of Shanghai as opposed to Seoul or Vladivostok is convincing for several reasons. First, Japanese rule in Korea by 1919 had become too repressive to carry out an overt independence movement such as establishing a provisional government. Many of the leaders who were working toward creating a provisional government had fled from Korea to find a safer place for independence activities; witnessing mass arrests of independence leaders did not prove Seoul to be the ideal place for a provisional government. Meanwhile, the Shinhan Young Men's Society had been active in prompting collaboration with leaders in Vladivostok for the creation of a provisional government, successfully

[50] Refer to the chart included in the appendix

persuading leaders such as Park Eun Shik and Lee Tong Nyong to come to Shanghai. [51] Moreover, independence activities in Vladivostok had concentrated heavily on the guerilla fights against the Japanese and although this group was one of the most fervent independence groups at the time, they were less systematic in forming a provisional government.

While a majority of the leaders began to arrive in Shanghai, the reorganization of the three individual provisional governments into one unified provisional government was an arduous process that lasted for about five months. At the heart of this effort was Ahn Chang Ho, who arrived in Shanghai on May 25th from the United States to take up his position as Minister of Domestic Affairs under the Shanghai Provisional Government. [52] In the absence of Rhee Syngman in Shanghai, who decided to pursue diplomatic activities in the United States for recognition of the provisional government and independence of Korea, Ahn played a crucial role in bringing the three different provisional governments together.[53]

Nevertheless, confusion and disagreement over the nature of the provisional government that was to unify three different claimed governments is evident in correspondences between Ahn and Rhee during the interim period. As soon as Rhee was informed of his appointment as the head of the both Seoul and Shanghai Provisional Governments in April, he launched his diplomatic efforts by approaching the leaders in the United States, introducing himself as the "President," of the

[51] Kim, *Research on the Provisional Government of Korea (Daehanminguk Yimshijungbu Yeongu)*. 87
[52] Han-Kyo Kim, "The Korean Independence Movement in the United States: Syngman Rhee, an Ch'ang-Ho, and Pak Yong-Man," *International journal of Korean Studies* 6 (2002). 14
[53]Lee, *The Politics of Korean Nationalism*. 132

provisional government of Korea.[54] When Ahn discovered this, he urged Rhee to stop using the title, as neither the Seoul Provisional Government nor the Shanghai Provisional Government had a presidential system. The Seoul government had a chief executive and the Shanghai government had a premier system. Ahn reminded Rhee that if he declared himself as president, he would be violating the provisional constitution which had been declared on April 11th by the provisional legislature in Shanghai. Nevertheless, Rhee objected to Ahn's request. He had believed that unity in carrying out diplomatic efforts to gain approval from the international community was far more important than abiding by the decisions made back home. This is well exemplified in his response to Ahn dated August 26th;

> "In order to obtain recognition of the provisional government, I used the title of president in order to communicate with other governments. I announced the conditions in Korea under the presidential designation. Therefore, I can not alter it now. If the news of conflict among ourselves is known to the world, it will create a great obstacle to the independence movement. If so, the responsibility will rest with you."[55]

Upon receiving Rhee's letter, Ahn suggested to the provisional legislature active in Shanghai on August 28th to accept a presidential system with Rhee Syngman as president. He further suggested to unite the three provisional governments by recognizing the Seoul Provisional Government as the only legitimate government but to relocate its legitimacy to Shanghai. His proposal reads:

1. I request to dissolve the provisional governments established in Shanghai and Siberia and instead to approve the Seoul Provisional Government that is founded by representatives from thirteen counties as the only rightful government for the Koreans,
2. I request that the Seoul Provisional Government be relocated to Shanghai due to its geographical convenience in promoting diplomatic efforts without oppressions

[54] Ibid. 133
[55] Ibid. 133

3. The name of the Provisional Government will be the Korean Provisional Government so and this body will function as a governing body for the Koreans until Korea gains independence and assist Korea in developing into an autonomous nation.[56]

On September 6th, Ahn's proposal for the reorganization was approved by the provisional legislature. The final decision included the following members in the cabinet:

Korean Provisional Government

President Rhee Syngman (U.S.)
Premier Yi Tong Hwi (Vladivostok)
Home Minister Lee Tong Nyong (Manchuria)
Foreign Minister Park Young Man (U.S.)
Defense Minister, No (Ro) Paek Rin (U.S)
Finance Minister, Lee, Shi Yong (Shanghai)
Minister of Justice: Shin Kyu Shik (Shanghai)
Minister of Education: Kim Kyu Shik (Shanghai)
Minister of Transportation: Mun Chang Bum (Vladivostok)
Director of Bureau of Labor: Ahn Chang Ho (U.S.)[57]

Almost six months after the March 1st movement, a unified Korean Provisional Government was finally established. Considering the dispersed nature of the independence movements at the time, it is quite remarkable how they came to agree on a unified provisional government that would incorporate leaders from diverse locations. A majority of them had to give up their positions in their original place and had to travel to Shanghai to participate in the Korean Provisional Government. Korean nationalism was at its peak in 1919: it prevailed over the ideological differences.

[56]Kim, *Korean Modern History (Hanguk Geunhyundaesa)*. 176
[57] Lee, *The Politics of Korean Nationalism*. 132

Chapter Two

Democratic Republic as a Means to Independence (1919-1932)

"The Korean Republic shall be a democratic republic."
-Provisional Constitution, April 1919

The Korean Provisional Government formed the democratic republic as a means to gain Korea's independence from Japan. Leaders of the Korean Provisional Government did this first by trying to obtain international recognition. However, lack of success led to internal conflicts, between the pro-western democrats and the pro-soviet socialist faction. This led to the impeachment of pro-American Rhee in 1925. In the end, after several years of internal division, the nationalists, who were in the middle of the conflict rose in power to consolidate itself as the predominant force in the Korean Provisional Government and united under the Korean Independence Party, which introduced the "Three Equality Theory " as a cohesive ideology for national economic and political development.

Diplomacy for International Recognition (1919-1921)

The Korean Provisional Government was hopeful in 1919. However, it soon became evident that the three major leaders, Rhee Syngman, Ahn Chang Ho and Yi Tong Hwi, had different views on what strategy should be adopted to bring independence to Korea.[58] Rhee, had personal ties with President Woodrow Wilson from Princeton University, believed that the new emerging international order under the League of Nations would advocate for Korea's liberation from Japan.[59] Rhee believed the diplomatic efforts to raise awareness of Korea's situation in Western

[58] Dae Won Yoon, *The Korean Provisional Government During the Shanghai Period (Shanghai Shigi Imshijungbu Yeongu)* (Seoul: Seoul National University, 2006).
[59] Robert Tarbell Oliver, *Syngman Rhee, the Man Behind the Myth* (New York,: Dodd, Mead, 1955).111

countries, most importantly in the United States, was the most effective way to liberate Korea. Therefore, he upheld propaganda activities and diplomacy, as opposed to armed struggles.

On the other hand, Li Tong Hwi, who had been active in Siberia prior to joining the Korean Provisional Government, advocated military struggles as the only way to guarantee full independence from Japan. For the most part, Li was skeptical of relying on foreign powers for obtaining independence for Korea, although he thought of the Bolsheviks as a benefactor of the Korean Provisional Government in terms of political and economic support.

The last of the three, Ahn, was in the middle. He primarily endorsed propaganda and diplomacy, but saw armed struggles as a possible means for independence. While Rhee and Li's policies leaned toward gaining immediate independence, Ahn was a supporter of a gradual independence of Korea. His efforts focused on preparing Korea for its independence through self-education and overcoming internal conflicts between different independence leaders.

Although the three major leaders had different visions for the Korean Provisional Government's policies for reclaiming national autonomy, diplomacy and adherence to the newly established League of Nations were undoubtedly the key strategies in the years between 1919 and 1921.[60] This is suggested in the seventh clause of the Provisional Constitution. It specifies that "the Korean Republic shall join the League of Nations in order to demonstrate to the world that its creation has been in accord

[60] Ki Seung Kim, "Korean Provisional Government's Independence Movement (Daehanminguk Imshijungbueui Doknipundong Bangreak)," in *80 Years of Provisional Government Anniversary Research Compilation*, ed. Korean Modern History Association (Hanguk Geunhyundae Sahakhui) (Seoul: Gukga Boeunche, 1999). 689

with the will of God and also to make a contribution to world civilization and peace."[61]

Similarly, the first speech on administrative policies of the Shanghai Provisional Government made on May 12th of 1919 during the fourth meeting of the provisional legislature reveals that the issue of sending more envoys to the Paris Peace Conference was the main focus of the meeting. During this meeting, the provisional legislature also proclaimed the establishment of a committee to conduct research and publish a report on Korea-Japan diplomatic relations *(Hanilguangaesa*).[62] The Korean Provisional Government hoped to submit the report to the League of Nations conference, which was to be held in the following September, in order to inform the international community of Korea's political situations.[63] This report, which was completed within five months by the provisional diplomatic archive committee made under the provisional legislature, would never make its way to the League of Nations, as Korean representative would not be admitted to the League of Nations. [64]

The early policies of the Korean Provisional Government illustrate its high hopes in the new international order promised by Wilson's fourteen points and the League of Nations. Considering these policies, the French concession in Shanghai was probably the best possible option. While France refused to provide active support for the Korean Provisional Government at the time, it was tolerant of various peaceful

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[61] Refer to the appendix for the Provisional Constitution

[62] Hee Gon Kim, *Primary Sources on the Korean Provisional Government: Publication of Korea-Japan History (Daehanminguk Imshijungbu Jaryojip: Hanilgwangaesa)*, ed. Hee Gon Kim, vol. 7 (Seoul: Council of Korean History (Guksa peunchan wiwonhui), 2006). iv

[63] Ibid.

[64]_____, *Primary Sources on the Korean Provisional Government: Korean Commission and Diplomatic Activities (Daehanminguk Imshijungbu Jaryojip: Gumiwiwonbu Weikyobit Sunjunhwaldong)* vol. 17 (Seoul: Council of Korean History (Guksa peunchan wiwonhui), 2006).

independence movements.[65] The Korean independence leaders also had more trust in the French, which is well evidenced in Ahn Chang Ho's chronicles. It reads;

> "The fate of Koreans in China is determined by the Chinese officials. Every one has been turned into the police. One thing I am sure of is that the French will not forcefully turn in oppressed Koreans in Japanese hands" [66]

Most of the diplomatic efforts were concentrated in the United States and the League of Nations. Rhee, president of the Korean Provisional Government, who was at the forefront of calling the United States' attention, would in fact not arrive in Shanghai until December of 1920, after the provisional legislative assembly passed a resolution urging his visit.[67] As early as June 5th 1919, Rhee had made his commitment with diplomacy in the United States when he wrote to Ahn, "our efforts must more or less for the time being be concentrated on the United States. Effectiveness will result from concentration."[68]

As soon as Rhee was appointed by as the heads of both the Seoul and Shanghai Provisional Government in April 1919, he established the Korean Commission in Washington D.C. in 1919, which he hoped would function as a Korean embassy in the United States. [69] Rhee believed that by moving the public, he would be able to affect the legislature and influence the United States' foreign policies. A number of documents related to the propaganda activities were published through the Korean Commission in conjunction with other independence

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[65] Sang Cheon Jung, "France's Foreign Policy toward Korea's Independence Movement During the Japanese Colonial Period 1910-1945 (Iljaegangjumgi 1919-1945 Dongaheui Hangukdongnip Undongae Daehan Francejungbueui Jungchaek)," *Korea's Foreign Diplomacy (Hanguk Jungchiwaekiosa Nonchong)* 26, no. 2 (2005). 230
[66] Ibid 228
[67] Lee, *The Politics of Korean Nationalism*.149
[68] Ibid. 135
[69] Oliver, *Syngman Rhee, the Man Behind the Myth*.158

organizations that had already been active in the United States, such as the Bureau of Information for the Republic of Korea in Philadelphia and League of Friends of Korea. The Korean Commission published a monthly magazine, "Korean Review," of which major articles included "The Korean Question (1919)" and "Japanese Stewardship of Korea (1920)."[70]

Diplomatic efforts were also concentrated in France as well. Kim Kyu Shik had been sent by the Shinhan Young Men's Association in Shanghai to bring Korea's situation to attention in the Paris Peace Conference 1919. Kim later stayed there to establish the Korean Mission in Paris (*La Mission Coreenne Paris*) on behalf of the Korean Provisional Government. The Korean Mission in Paris was to garner support from the European countries for Korea's independence and also to obtain a seat in the League of Nations. The Korean Mission in Paris was similar to the Korean Commission in Washington in that its efforts were also concentrated on propagandist activities to raise awareness of Korean issues abroad. The Korean Mission in Paris also published the monthly magazine "Independent Korea" *(la Coree Libre)* to introduce Korea's history to the general French population.[71]

Divergence

While the majority of leaders of the Korean Provisional Government implemented policies aimed at attaining diplomatic support from the United States and the League of Nations, Yi Tong Hwi's faction had more faith in the Bolsheviks.

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[70] Kim, *Primary Sources on the Korean Provisional Government: Korean Commission and Diplomatic Activities (Daehanminguk Imshijungbu Jaryojip: Gumiwiwonbu Weikyobit Sunjunhwaldong)* v-xv

[71] Yong Dae Jung, "The Korean Provisional Government's Diplomatic Efforts in Paris Peace Conference and Europe (Daehanminguk Imshijungbueui Pariganghwahuiyibit Eurup Weikiohwarldong)," in *80 Years Provisional Government Anniversary Research Compilation* ed. Korean Modern History Association (Hanguk Geunhyundae Sahakhui) (Seoul: Gukga Boeunche, 1999).240

Upon arriving in Shanghai to work under the Korean Provisional Government, Yi had established the Koryo Communist party in 1920.[72]

Although Yi Tong Hwi had been largely influenced by the Russian Revolution and Yi himself was one of the earliest Korean communists, he was not a strict Communist by the Bolsheviks' standard in 1919. There were two factions of early Korean Socialists from Siberia: the Itkrusk faction and the Shanghai faction. The Irkusk Communist faction which was established in 1918, was closer to Soviet Russia's model of a Communist party, in that it was more loyal to the traditional Communist teachings.[73] On the other hand, the Shanghai Communist faction, which Yi belonged to, was more of a nationalist leftist movement that advocated socialist ideals as a guide to liberate Korea from Japan. The two different communist factions in Soviet Russia also differed in their composition. The former was largely comprised of Korean Russians whereas the latter mostly included Korean nationals who had fled to Russia for independence movement after the Eulsa treaty.[74]

Despite the fact that Yi was not a radical Communist in 1919, his factions' existence within the Korean Provisional Government brought an opposition voice against reliance on the Western countries' conscience as a means to liberate Korea. Yi's Koryo Communist Party, which was established in competition with the Itrustk Communist Party in obtaining political and financial assistance from the Bolsheviks, had a cordial relationship with the Soviet Russia. Unlike the indifference toward the

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[72] Kang, *A History of Contemporary Korea*.24
[73]Hak Joon Kim, "Korean Provisional Government's Diplomacy with Soviet Russia (Daehanminguk Imshijungbueui Soviet Russiaae Daehan Weikio)," in *80 Years Provisional Government Anniversary Research Compilation* ed. Korean Modern History Association (Hanguk Geunhyundae Sahakhui) (Seoul: Gukga Boeunche, 1999). 298
[74] Ibid.298

Korean Provisional Government suggested by unrequited diplomatic efforts in the United States and France, Yi Tong Hwi succeeded in accumulating the Bolsheviks' support.

In October of 1919, leaders of the Korean Provisional Government, Ahn Chang Ho, Yi Tong Hwi, Lee Shi Young, Shin Kyu Shik, and Yo Un Hyong, decided to dispatch a three member mission to the Communist International (Comintern) conference held in Moscow, hoping to attain political and financial support.[75] While Yi Tong Hwi was the only person with Socialist background, other leaders agreed to seize every opportunity it could to obtain a support. However, Yi Tong Hwi took the initiative on this plan and sent only one delegate, Han Hyong Gwon, who represented the Socialist voice.[76]

Soviet Russia was apparently hospitable to the Koryo Communist delegate of the Korean Provisional Government, for Soviet Russia promised to finance two million rubles to the Provisional Government. [77] As Li's Socialist faction of the Korean Provisional Government continued to carry out its friendly relations and actually succeeded in gaining support, its disagreement with Rhee's policy for diplomacy with the United States and the League of Nations started to become problematic. This was exacerbated by Han's arrival in Shanghai from the Comintern Conference with a substantial amount of funds in December 1920, which coincided with Rhee's arrival from the United States, who came back with nothing.

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[75] Lee, *The Politics of Korean Nationalism*.148
[76] Ae-Sook Lee, "Politics in the Korean Provisional Government in Shanghai (Shanghai Imshijungbu Chamyuh Saereukui Daeso Kyosup)," *History and Reality (Yuksawa Hyunsil)* 33 (1999). 5
[77] Lee, *The Politics of Korean Nationalism*.148

Factional Disruption

In December of 1920, almost two years after the March 1st movement, Rhee arrived in Shanghai. Upon his arrival, the Korean Provisional Government started holding a number of cabinet meetings from January of 1921 to reassess past policies of the Korean Provisional Government and to discuss future policies.[78] The cabinet meetings disclosed the discontent over Rhee's long absence from Shanghai and frustration over the League of Nations and United States.

The factional disruption came open as the opposing leaders including Yi Tong Hwi, Ahn Chang Ho, and Kim Kyu Shik submitted a proposal to resign from the Korean Provisional Government, which read:

1. The Provisional Legislative Assembly invited the provisional president to the seat of government because of confusion in the political picture and the divided nature of public opinion. Under these circumstances, the position of the government was unsteady. Responsibility lay in President Rhee's confused policies. The cabinet members attempted to ameliorate the situation by cooperating with the President, and we regret that no favorable result was obtained.
2. In paying respect to the spirit of the Seoul government, which has been emphasized by Syngman Rhee, we have attempted to improve the administrative structure without changing the membership of the cabinet. By doing so, we hoped to correct the faults of the past and recapture the divided public opinion. Syngman Rhee, however, refused to admit the errors of the past, and he did not provide alternate policies. Disregarding public opinion, he merely insisted upon following his temporary decisions…Since the will of the majority was not followed and no policy for improvement was adopted, nothing but conflict has resulted.
3. We submitted our resignation because correcting the confused state of the government would only cause a great struggle…and if we were to maintain the status quo, this, in effect would be an act of assisting the dubious policies of Syngman Rhee, We decided, therefore, that it better satisfied our consciences to support the

[78] Ibid.149

> Provisional Government as common people than to retain our public offices.[79]

With the resignation of the major leaders, Korean Provisional Government was soon divided on whether to continue the Korean Provisional Government or to dissolve. It soon became apparent that opponents of the Korean Provisional Government wanted to eliminate Rhee. A group of fifty-four Korean nationalists and national Communist leaders in North China made a proclamation criticizing Rhee, Henry Chung, and Ahn Chang Ho on April 19. [80] These leaders viewed Rhee and Henry's plan to rely on the League of Nations for Korea's liberation as a betrayal.

The last hope for Rhee's position in the Korean Provisional Government came in 1921. In July of 1921, President Warren G. Harding suggested the opening of the Washington Disarmament Conference to discuss the changing international politics in the Asia-Pacific region. Invitation to the Washington Disarmament Conference was extended to eight countries: Japan, United Kingdom, France, Italy, China, Belgium, and Portugal. Although Korea was not invited to the conference, Rhee saw the Washington Disarmament Conference as an opportunity to voice the story of Korea's annexation and request the recognition of the Korean Provisional Government. [81]

Rhee organized the Korean Mission under the Korean Commission to dispatch to the Washington Disarmament Conference. On October 1st of 1921, the Korean Mission sent a letter to Charles H. Hughes, the American delegation at the Washington Conference, asking to present Korea's case before the Washington Disarmament Conference. However, Rhee was not admitted to be part of the meeting.

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[79] Ibid.150
[80] Ibid.150
[81] Oliver, *Syngman Rhee, the Man Behind the Myth*. 151

The failure to send a delegation to the 1922 Washington Disarmament Conference led to the 1923 Korean National Representatives Conference in Shanghai, with all the members of the provisional legislature of the Korean Provisional Government.[82] This meeting, the largest meeting ever held, failed to attain consensus on the future of the Korean Provisional Government, but provided a number of agreements that eventually led to the impeachment of Rhee in 1925.

A primary reason for the emergence of opposition to Rhee's policy of diplomacy, aside from his continuous failure, was the rising popularity of Communism in the anti-colonial movement in the early 1920s. During the early years of the Korea Provisional Government, although there was no strict distinction between the right and the left, the independence movements and activities carried out by the Korean Provisional Government was predominantly rightist in character, which endorsed the League of Nations and diplomacy. [83] Yet, as these policies turned out to be ineffective in garnering support for the Korean Provisional Government, they began to be challenged.

Communism became popular among the Korean independence leaders during the early 1920s. This popularity was not only caused by the increased interactions with the Bolsheviks initiated by Yi Tong Hwi but as Communism began to be introduced as a tool to fight in the anti-colonial struggles. In addition, the Bolsheviks expressed more interest in Korea's cause than other Western countries, promising both political and financial assistance. This appealed to a growing number of leaders

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[82] Kim, *Research on the Provisional Government of Korea (Daehanminguk Yimshijungbu Yeongu)*. 265
[83] Ibid.264

in the Korean Provisional Government who had become skeptical of the international order the West claimed to have created.

The 1922 First Congress of the Communist and Revolutionary Parties of the Far East, held in Moscow, was a critical turning point for a number of leaders to embrace Socialist ideas.[84] The Korean Provisional Government's increased interactions with the Communists introduced Lenin's theory of Communist Revolution which called for liberation of the oppressed people, including those who were under colonial rules. In March 1917, upon the Bolshevik's takeover of Russia, Lenin had publicly declared that his plan included "the liberation of all colonies; the liberation of all dependent, oppressed, and non-sovereign people."[85] To many leaders of the Korean Provisional Government, Lenin's idea of liberating the oppressed seemed superior to that of Wilson's 1919 self determination, whose idea seemed to have failed in creating any changes. Moreover, the idea of self-determination, which ignited the March 1st movement, seemed to have already been mentioned by Lenin two years before, in his writing, "The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination."[86]

The leftist movement began to be popular within the Korean Provisional Government as the leaders who attended the meeting returned to Shanghai. Yo Un Hyong published a Socialist writing in 1922.[87] Around the same time, Kim Kyu Shik, who was raised by an American missionary and educated in the United States, wrote

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[84] Ibid.264
[85] Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment : Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism*. 37
[86] Ibid. 37
[87]Kim, *Research on the Provisional Government of Korea (Daehanminguk Yimshijungbu Yeongu)*. 264

an article, which is now considered one of the earliest Korean Communist writings. It read;

> "We often speak of the necessity of a "united front" and "cooperative action" in connection with the revolutionary undertakings of the Far East. Recently we have come to realize this more than ever, since we have seen how the capitalistic powers of Western Europe and America have combined themselves to jointly exploit the whole of East Asia. Even the great republic of America, which has made so much ado about its "altruistic" pretences and its world-wide "democratic" principles, threw off its mask at the Washington Conference when it formed the hideous quadruple agreement with the three notorious bloodsucker nations-England, France, and Japan. The First Congress of the Communist and Revolutionary Parties of the Far East, recently held in Moscow, judging from its proceedings as well as the resolutions and ,manifesto passed, gave expression in clear-cut language to the need of a "get-together" on the part of the peoples of Eastern Asia against the combined imperialistic aggression and continually intensifying capitalist oppression and exploitation." [88]

It was also around this period that Shin Chae Ho wrote his famous "Declaration of Korean Revolution" in 1923, condemning the use of diplomacy to obtain national independence. He wrote:

> "*At present, because of the Japanese political and economic oppression, the economy experiences growing difficulties, all the production facilities have been taken away, and the means to feed and clothe the people have been exhausted. How, then, can industries be developed? With what sources? How can education be expanded? Where and how many soldiers can we train?* Even if such training should be possible, is it possible to train as many as one-hundrendth of the Japanese armed forces? *This argument is indeed illusory. For these reasons, we discard the illusions of "diplomacy" and "preparations."* We proclaim that we shall carry out a people's direct revolution." [89]

Eventually, the split between the right and left became so evident that the need to unite the rift was urged by Park Eun Shik, the second President of the Korean

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[88] Dae-Sook Suh, *Documents of Korean Communism, 1918-1948* (Princeton, N.J.,: Princeton University Press, 1970). 91

[89] Peter H. Lee et al., *Sources of Korean Tradition. Vol.2, from the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Centuries* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001).346

Provisional Government who replaced Rhee in 1925.[90] The period between Rhee's impeachment of the Korean Provisional Government in 1925 and 1930 is characterized by the efforts to restore its authority by mitigating differences between the two factions. One suggestion for this task was to create one unified party that could represent the whole government. During the 3rd Reform of the Constitution of the Provisional Government in 1927, the constitution was changed to be read, "should there be one, large, unified party comprised of independence leaders, the paramount authority of the Provisional Government should lay in that party."[91]

The most significant group in the efforts toward a coalition between the right and the left was a group of nationalists, who had played a crucial role in the creation of the Korean Provisional Government in 1919. In this movement of the nationalists, Lee Tong Nyong, Ahn Chang Ho, Kim Chul , and Kim Ku were able to unite under the creation of the Korean Independence Party, a nationalist party with rightist character that would continuously sought to create united front with the leftists. The Korean Independence Party consolidated its power in the Korean Provisional Government in the early 1930s.

Three Equality Theory

In the midst of the struggles to overcome the factionalism between the rightists and the leftists, the Korean Independence Party adopted Jo So Ang's Three Equality Theory in 1931. Jo So Ang developed his "Three Equality Theory" in 1930 as a philosophy to ameliorate the hostile ideological disputes between the two

[90]Kim, *Research on the Provisional Government of Korea (Daehanminguk Yimshijungbu Yeongu)*. 193
[91] Ibid.212

factions, while creating an innovative ideology which would consolidate Korea's democracy without challenges from the left.

Jo argued that all the disputes that existed in every civilization came from inequality.[92] He proposed the attainment of equalities in three different areas as a means to create a national and social democracy: equality between individuals, equalities between ethnicities, and equalities between nations.[93] He further proposed to attain equality between individuals through political equality which he suggested could be achieved by free and equal elections. He further argued for the equality between nations, which he argued could possibly be attained through equal economic developments. Also he emphasized equal opportunities in education.

What is distinctive in Jo's philosophy of Three Equality Theory is that unlike most of the independent leaders at the time who tended to equate democracy with capitalism and socialism with communism, he did not perceive democracy and socialism as mutually exclusive.[94] This was well indicated in his emphasis in both political and economic equality.

His philosophy was also an attempt to bring the two competing factions, the rightists and leftists, together by combining the two ideologies into one. Jo argued that we should build "a democratic republic system based on parliamentary democracy for the realization of the neo-democratic government in politics and

[92] Jin Soo Ahn, "The Historical Meaning of the National Liberation Movement Executed by So-Ang Cho" (Suwon University, 2001). 4
[93] Ibid.4
[94] Ibid.23

should execute the nationalization of lands and production facilities and a compulsory education at the expense of the government in social economic systems”[95]

Jo’s “Three Equality Theory” officially became the founding principles for the Korea Independence Party established in 193. Later, the Three Equality Theory would further be developed as it would be adopted by the Korean Provisional Government as a part of the “Fundamental Principles of Governing National Reconstruction” in 1941.

[95] Ibid.34

Chapter Three

The Moving Period (1932-1940)

The power of the Korean Provisional Government was now concentrated within the Korean Independence Party. The biggest change that resulted from this development was the adoption of the active use of violence as a means to obtain independence from Japan. This shift in policy culminated in the successful assassination of General Shiragawa in 1932, which restored the weakened morale of the Korean Provisional Government. However, this incident caused the Korean Provisional Government to enter another exile of eight years around China to escape the Japanese suppression. [96]These eight years were the darkest period for the Korean Provisional Government. Without the physical presence it had in Shanghai, the Korean Provisional Government could not fulfill its functions. Instead, this period is marked by continuous struggles to create a united front between the right and left.

Korean Independence Party

Understanding the Korean Provisional Government during this period requires a deeper comprehension of the Korean Independence Party. By the late 1920s, the Korean Provisional Government was exhausted from internal problems that had resulted from factional disruptions. The major dissatisfaction with the Korean Provisional Government came from its heavy reliance on diplomacy for Korea's independence. Due to the deepening disparity between the right and left resulting from this disagreement, the Korean Provisional Government had lost its initial enthusiasm. The Korean Independence Party attempted to compensate for the

[96] See the appendix for a map that describes the traveling route of the Korean Provisional Government during this period.

inadequacy of the earlier policies by taking military action against the Japanese as a matter of policy. However, lacking a proper army of its own, the Korean Independence Party initiated these military efforts by creating an underground organization, the Korean Patriotic Legion. The Korean Patriotic Legion was officially under the Korean Independence Party, and hence part of the Korean Provisional Government, as their members overlapped greatly. However, its activities were mainly conducted by Kim Ku in a secret manner. The Korean Patriotic Legion (*Hanin Aeguk Dan*), established in 1931, was comprised of young patriots who were trained to destroy important Japanese buildings with imperialist symbolism and assassinate important Japanese figures.

Hongqiao Park Incident (1932)

The accomplishments of the Korean Patriotic Legion became apparent by 1932. On January 8th 1932, Lee Bong Chang, ordered by Kim Ku to assassinate the Japanese emperor, threw a hand grenade during the state procession in the Sakurada Gate of the palace.[97] Although Lee's attack failed and he was executed, this incident made the Korean Provisional Government's independence activities known to the Chinese public. A prominent Chinese newspaper, *Shen Bao*, had two articles in January introducing Lee Bong Chang as a "courageous" patriot of Korea[98] as well as Korea's independence movements in Shanghai.[99] Moreover, a Chinese publication

[97]Lee, *The Politics of Korean Nationalism*.184
[98]Won Hwa Suk, *A Collection of Shenbao Newspaper Articles Relating to the Korean Provisional Government (Daehanminguk Imshijungbu Guangaegisa Sunjip)*, ed. Seung Il Kim (Seoul: Bumwoosa, 2001).214
[99] Ibid. 215

Minkuo Jihpao lamented Yi Pong Chang's failure to kill the emperor; the Japanese raided the newspaper and closed it down.[100]

Subsequently, on April 29th of the same year, Yoon Bong Gil, a twenty-five year old member of the Korean Patriotic Legion, succeeded in throwing a bomb during a celebration of the Japanese emperor in Hongqiao Park in Shanghai, killing General Shiragawa, chief of the Shanghai Expeditionary Army. During the attack, Admiral Shigemitsu, a noted Japanese militarist who later became Minister of Foreign Affairs, lost a leg, and Admiral Nomura, another high ranking member of the military, lost an eye.[101] Yoon was arrested on the spot and was sentenced to death. Meanwhile, the Japanese began to search for suspects related to the attack and pressured the Chinese and French to hand over Korean independence leaders to the Japanese police.

The French, who had previously been tolerant of the independence movement of the Korean Provisional Government, began to view the Korean independence leaders as violent and dangerous terrorists. The French got hold of Ahn Chang Ho, a member of the Korean Independence Party, and turned him in to Japanese police.[102] Within two days after the attack, twenty Koreans residing in the French Concession who had been alleged to have collaborated in the attack were handed over to the Japanese police.[103] Thus, the French Concession ceased to be a safe haven for the Korean Provisional Government.

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[100] Geoff Simons, *Korea: The Search for Sovereignty* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995).138
[101] Suk, *A Collection of Shenbao Newspaper Articles Relating to the Korean Provisional Government (Daehanminguk Imshijungbu Guangaegisa Sunjip)*.239
[102] Ibid.236
[103] Ibid.241

While the search continued, Kim Ku, who had managed to escape Japanese surveillance, declared himself to be the mastermind of the attack and introduced the Korean Patriotic Legion through an article in the Chinese newspaper *Shen Bao* on May 10th:

Introduction of HanYin Ae Guk Dan (Korean Patriotic Legion)

> Hanyin Ae Guk Dan is an organization created by me (Kim Ku) and other Korean patriotic independence comrades in order to save our nation through military efforts. Only those who do not fear and gladly take upon sacrifices for Korea can be a member. I receive recommendations but I am the only one who decides on the membership. Therefore, the members themselves do not know who other members are. The Hanyin Ae Guk Dan does not hold open meetings. Our plans are made secretly. We believe getting rid of the enemy's people of important offices and major administrative buildings as all the means to gain independence. We do not have money or military. We can only rely on the individuals to fight against Shiragawa. We have trained them to endure hostile treatments from enemies through courage and skills. [104]

Although this act of violence shifted the French's attitude toward the Korean Provisional Government from tolerant to hostile, it became apparent that unlike the French, the Chinese began to sympathize with the Koreans. This was partly because of the growing anti-Japanese sentiment in China as a result of the Manchurian Incident of 1931.[105] The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China even criticized the French embassy for turning in Ahn Chang Ho to the Japanese and argued that Ahn was politically displaced. [106]

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[104] Ibid.248

[105] 1931 Manchurian Incident is a conflict between China and Japan in which the Imperial Japanese Army accused the Chinese of the damage of the Japan's South Manchuria Rail Way and invaded Manchuria. This incident resulted in the establishment of Manchukuo the following year. Although a full scale conflict between China and Japan would not start until the 1937, this incident marked the beginning of the conflict between the two countries.

[106]Suk, *A Collection of Shenbao Newspaper Articles Relating to the Korean Provisional Government (Daehanminguk Imshijungbu Guangaegisa Sunjip)*. 250

The Hongqiao Incident caught the attention of Chiang Kai-shek, the leader of the Chinese Nationalist Party *(Kuomintan*g) and Kim Ku saw this as an opportunity to gather financial and military support from the Chinese Nationalists. During a meeting between Kim Ku and Chiang Kai-shek held between late 1932 and early 1933, Chiang had told Kim that "the people of the Far East should adopt democracy according to The Three People's Principles of Sun Yat-Sen."[107] Chiang then promised to establish a special class for training Korean men for the independence movement at the Loyang branch of the Chinese Military Academy.[108] The successful act of violence finally leveraged the Korean Provisional Government's status with strong backing from a competent ally.

Afterwards, the Chinese Nationalists helped the Korean Provisional Government flee from city to city within China from the Japanese between 1932-1940, traveling through Hang Zhou (1932), Jia Xing (1935), Zhuan Jiang (1937), Chang Sha (1937), Guang Zhou(1938), Liu Zhou (1938), Che Jiang (1939), and finally Chongqing (1940).[109] Throughout these seven years in eight cities, leaders of the Korean Provisional Government began to form a tight bond with the Chinese Nationalists, realizing that they both shared a common enemy, the Japanese.

Competition (1935-1937): Rightist Kim Ku vs. Leftist Kim Won Bong

Continuous competitions between the Korean Independence Party and a new emerging leftist group best characterize the seven years in which the Korean

[107] Lee, *The Politics of Korean Nationalism*.186
[108] Ibid 186.
[109] Refer to the appendix for the map of the traveling route

Provisional Government was in exile again.[110] The primary competition took place between the nationalist Kim Ku, who emerged as a new figure in the Korean Provisional Government after the successful Hongqiao Park incident, and a Communist inspired nationalist leader, Kim Won Bong, who attempted to unite the leftist faction and eventually have the Korean Independence Party, the rightist wing, under its control.

Kim Won Bong had been the leader of the Righteous Patriotic Corps (*Uiyoltan)*, a direct action group which Shin Chae ho had written the "Declaration of Korean Revolution" for in 1923. Since its establishment in 1921, the Righteous Patriotic Corps had pursued individual acts of violence both in and outside of Korea throughout the 1920s. [111] It was a separate independence movement group that did not have direct influence on or from the Korean Provisional Government. However, at the end of the 1920s, Kim Won Bong decided that individual acts of violence alone could not succeed in engendering much change and dissolved Righteous Patriotic Corps.

Kim Won Bong then established the Korean National Revolutionary Party in 1935, which he hoped would compete with the rightist nationalist Korean Independence Party in taking control of the Korean Provisional Government. Thus, the years after the Hongqiao Park incident were full of the disintegration and merging of different factions. During this time, both Kim Ku and Kim Won Bong attempted to expand their influence to represent the Korean Provisional Government.[112]

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[110] Sang Do Han, "Activities of the Different Parties of the Provisional Government During the Moving Period (Yidongshigi Yimshijungbu Doknipundong Jungdangeui Hwarldonggua Beuncheon)," in *80 Years Provisional Government Anniversary Research Compilation* ed. Korean Modern History Association (Hanguk Geunhyundae Sahakhui) (Seoul Gukga Boeunche, 1999).593

[111]Kang, *A History of Contemporary Korea*.70

[112] The merging and disintegration of different parties during this period is complex. Refer to a flow chart in the appendix for an easier understanding.

Considering that Kim Won Bong did not participate in the Korean Provisional Government during its presence in Shanghai, it is quite remarkable how Kim Won Bong rose to compete against the Korean Independence Party given that his faction was often even more powerful than Kim Ku's faction during this period.[113] Kim Won Bong was frequently accused of being a Communist by his rightist compatriot, Kim Ku, who turned out to be a hardheaded nationalist who abhorred Communists. In fact, Kim Won Bong's early activities suggest he had been committed to Communism: Kim collaborated with An Kwangchon, one of the earliest Korean communists, in establishing the Lenin Politics School in Beijing in 1930.[114] He would also subsequently head to North Korea after independence, hold an unsafe position there and later be executed by Kim Il Sung.[115] While Kim Won Bong did collaborate with more radical Communists in his Korean National Revolutionary Party, his ideologies were less radical. He was closer to being a nationalist influenced by Communist ideologies rather than a pure Communist.[116]

In any case, Kim Won Bong outdid Kim Ku in garnering support from the Chinese Nationalists after 1932. While the success of the Korean Patriotic Legion in the Hongqiao Park got the attention of the Chinese Nationalists, the leftist faction, strengthened under Kim Won Bong's Korean National Revolutionary Party, grew more powerful and benefited more from the Chinese Nationalists' help.[117] In May of 1932, when anti-Japanese sentiment in China was growing, Kim Won Bong contacted

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[113] Lee, Chong-Sik. *The Politics of Korean Nationalism*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1963. 199
[114] Kang, Man-Gil. *A History of Contemporary Korea*. 71
[115]Dae Sook Suh, *The Korean Communist Movement 1918-1948* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1967). 216
[116] Ibid.219
[117] Lee, *The Politics of Korean Nationalism*.199

Chiang Kai-shek, and proposed a Sino-Korean alliance to oppose Japanese influence. He successfully obtained 3,000 yuan a month from Chiang Kai Sheik and was given permission to use training centers under the control of the Chinese Military Commission as a training compound for Koreans. He utilized this opportunity to train his men. Unlike Kim Ku, who relied on the Chinese academy for training, Kim Won Bong developed his own training program, thereby, effectively expanding its autonomous military power.[118]

By 1935, Kim Won Bong had consolidated his power and officially announced the establishment of his party under the following founding principles. The Seventeen points of the Korean National Revolutionary Party read:[119]

1. Destroy the exploiting forces of the enemy Japan and complete the independence of our people.
2. Purge all feudal and other antirevolutionary forces and establish a democratic regime
3. Eliminate the economic system under which the minority exploits the majority, and establish a system in which all citizens may maintain equal livelihood
4. Execute local autonomy based on prefectures
5. Arm the entire nation
6. Institute an equal suffrage for all and the right to be elected
7. Grant the people freedom of speech, assembly, publication, organization and faith
8. Grant equal rights to women
9. Institute nationalization of land and distribute the land to the farmers
10. Nationalize large-scale industries and monopoly enterprises
11. Institute economic national planning
12. Protect free movement of labor
13. Institute a progressive tax system
14. Operate national compulsory education and professional education
15. Establish old people's homes, nurseries, and relief organizations as public institutions

[118] Ibid.190
[119] Ibid.194

16. Confiscate all properties of the national traitors and public and private properties of the Japanese in Korea
17. Maintain close liaison with and support the liberation movement of the world's oppressed peoples according to the principles of freedom, equality and mutual assistance.

As soon as Kim Won Bong established his Korean National Revolutionary Party, he hoped to work with the Korean Independence Party. However, the Korean Independence Party was divided on this issue. Some viewed the Korean National Revolutionary Party to be too Communist-inspired, while some venerated Kim Won Bong's Korean Volunteer Corps, which was a military unit under Kim Won Bong. Moderate leftists such as Kim Kyu Shik had already joined Kim Won Bong. At first, Jo So Ang and Hong Jin agreed to work with Kim Won Bong, although they would disband shortly after. Yi Cheong Chon joined the Korean National Revolutionary Party as well.

Kim Won Bong hoped that his Korean National Revolutionary Party, with the support from leaders of the Korean Independence Party, would replace the Korean Provisional Government itself. This vision conflicted with the Korean Provisional Government defenders' faction, such as Kim Ku and Lee Tong Nyong, who had refused to join the Korean National Revolutionary Party and remained adamant in their allegiance to the Korean Independence Party. In response to the newly established Korean National Revolutionary Party, Kim Ku and Lee Tong Nyong established the Korean National Party in November of 1935.

Differences with Kim Won Bong and the nationalists of the Korean Independence Party became evident when those who had initially joined Kim's party decided to break away from it. Jo So Ang and Hong Jin's faction broke away only

briefly after it joined in 1935 and Yi Chong Chon and his Korean Revolutionary Party seceded in 1937 to rejoin the rightist nationalist movements. [120]The exact reason for the rightists' splits from the Korean National Revolutionary Party during this period is unclear, but this definitely weakened the power of the Korean National Revolutionary Party which lost the rightists' support.

Second Sino-Japanese War and attempted United Front

The 1937 outbreak of the second Sino-Japanese War prompted an opportunity for the rightists and leftists to form a united front and seize the opportunity to launch a joint military struggles against the Japanese on the side of Chinese Nationalists, who had become the biggest benefactor to both the right and the left. In December of 1937, Kim Won Bong's Korean National Revolutionary Party took the lead in integrating other leftists and some Communist independence movement organizations such as the Korean National Liberation Activist League led by Kim Kyung Wang, and the Korean Youth Vanguard League of Choi Chang Ik, and the anarchist Korean Revolutionist League of Yi Cham Yong. [121]

In the meantime, Kim Ku's Korean National Party led the united front of the right, having formed the Korean Restoration Movement in August 1937 in collaboration with Jo So Ang's restored Korean Independence Party and Yi Chong Chon's Korean Revolutionary Party, two rightist nationalist groups that had earlier participated in the Korean National Revolutionary Party.[122]

This was a hopeful moment: both the right and left had formed a coalition. It seemed that the only task to be done was to merge the two united fronts. However,

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[120] Refer to the flow chart in appendix for easier understanding.
[121] Kang, *A History of Contemporary Korea*. ———, *A History of Contemporary Korea*.72
[122] Kang, *A History of Contemporary Korea*.73

the discussion over the creation of a complete right-left united front was challenged by more radical Communist voices. Kim Won Bong's leftist united front, the National Front League, had begun to fall apart as Choi Chang Ik, the leader of the Korean Youth Vanguard, refused to collaborate with the right and insisted on following the Chinese Communist Party to Yan'an instead of to Chongqing.

This issue was discussed in the National Front League, on the third meeting held in May of 1938, and it became apparent that Choi Chang Ik and Kim Won Bong shared different visions for the future Korea. Choi dreamed of the restoration of the Korean National Revolutionary Party in hope that it would eventually establish Communist Korea. On the other hand, Kim Won Bong wanted to collaborate with the nationalists in creating a republic.[123] Eventually, Choi Chang Ik and his followers revolted against Kim Won Bong and a majority of the Korean Volunteer Corps left the National Front League in October 1938 to go to Yan'an to follow the Chinese Communist Party.

In hindsight, the split of the radical Communists from Kim Won Bong's faction was a crucial moment, as these Communists who chose to go to Yan'an in 1938 would later become important figures and collaborate with Kim Il-song in creating Communist North Korea. A majority of them would stay in power in North Korea for about a decade after the liberation.[124] However, these leaders, including Choi Chang Ik, Kim Tu bong, Han Pin, Mu jong, Pak Hyo Sam, and Ho Chong-suk would all be eliminated by Kim Il-song during North Korea's reform.[125] Had Kim

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[123]Kim, *Research on the Provisional Government of Korea (Daehanminguk Yimshijungbu Yeongu).* 241
[124] Suh, *The Korean Communist Movement 1918-1948*.221
[125] Ibid.221

Won Bong been successful in persuading these radical Communists to launch a joint united effort with the rightist faction, and detained them from going to Yan'an, the history of Korea after 1945 might have been different.

Regardless, the efforts to unite the two united fronts were reinstated by Chiang Kai-shek. In November of 1938, Chiang Kai-shek invited Kim Ku and in January of 1939, invited Kim Won Bong to Chongqing, recommending the two factions cooperate in creating a united front. Responding to Chiang Kai-shek's suggestion, Kim Ku and Kim Wong Bong proclaimed "Open Letter to Our Comrades and Compatriots" [126] which read that "feeling pain over the mistakes that have been made frequently in the past, these two persons promise to cooperate with one mind in order to accomplish the great task of the sacred liberation of the Korean nation."[127] The open letter further emphasized "purging feudal and anti-revolutionary elements and founding a democratic republic" and "confiscating both public and private property of the Japanese imperialists in Korea and all the property of betraying collaborationists"[128]

In order to carry out the obligation made under the open letter, Kim Ku and Kim Won Bong established the United National Battle Organization, the united front of the right and left, which hoped to combine the National Front League and the Restoration Movement Federation, the rightist united front. However, when the first Conference of Seven Organization for Unification of the Korean Revolutionary Movement was held in 1939, the right and left found themselves unable to find

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[126] Kim, *Research on the Provisional Government of Korea (Daehanminguk Yimshijungbu Yeongu)*.242
[127] Kang, *A History of Contemporary Korea*.73
[128] Ibid.73

consensus on the issues such as the future of the Korean Provisional Government and the command over the Korean Volunteer Corps.[129]

The efforts to create a complete right-left united had front failed. However, the meeting at least strengthened the coalition of the nationalists, who wanted to collaborate in restoring the Korean Provisional Government. These nationalists of the rightist group were once again united under the Korean Independence Party. As the war against Japan progressed, Kim Won Bong's leftist faction eventually chose to go to Chongqing and join the Korean Independence Party's efforts in restoring the Korean Provisional Government.[130] The arrival in Chongqing in 1940 marked a new chapter in the journey of the Korean Provisional Government

[129] Ibid. 73
[130] Suh, *The Korean Communist Movement 1918-1948*.220

Chapter Four

Preparation in Chongqing (1940-1945)

World War II became more visible by the time the Korean Provisional Government settled in Chongqing in 1940. Anticipating Korea's independence should Japan lose the war, leaders of the Korean Provisional Government realized there were two major tasks to be done before the war ended; first, to consolidate its authority by unifying different factions, second, to obtain recognition from Chinese Nationalists and the United States. During the five years in Chongqing, the Korean Provisional Government fought battles in three fronts- campaigns for recognition from the United States, collaborating with the Chinese Nationalists in military struggles against the Japanese in China, and struggles to reconcile ideological disparities within the government itself.

Consolidation: Fundamental Principles of Governing National Reconstruction

> *"So, what kind of political system should we adopt? …what we should seek is a new democracy that can reconstruct the nation by attaining equality in politics, economics, and education. When we say new democracy, we are not referring to capitalistic democracy that deceives the citizens, nor are we referring to dictatorial communist democracy. We are advocating a democracy that can only be attained by each Korean individuals as a nation.*
>
> *- Jo So Ang* [131]

Jo So Ang's Three Equality Theory was first introduced in 1930 as the founding ideology of the Korean Independence Party in order to overcome the differences between the leftists and the rightists. By emphasizing the importance of political, economic, and educational equality, the nationalists had hoped that the theory would merge the leftists into the Korean Provisional Government. Jo So Ang's idea was consolidated in on November 28th 1941 as the provisional legislature

[131] Kim, *Research on the Provisional Government of Korea (Daehanminguk Yimshijungbu Yeongu)*.274

proclaimed its declaration of the "Fundamental Principles of Governing Nations," which was heavily founded on his philosophy. The declaration had three major components: the first part entitled, "General Provisions," sought to legitimize Korea's sovereignty by articulating Korea's long history as an independent nation, the second part, called "Reclaiming the nation", asserted a number of strategies to reclaim Korea and the third part, "Reconstructing the nation", pronounced how democratic Korea should be reconstructed after restoring national sovereignty. [132]

While the significance of the declaration lies on the reiteration of democratic ideals[133], the declaration is also notable for a number of distinctions that characterizes the Korean Provisional Government's united front movement. First, nationalists united under the Independence Party frequently utilized nationalism to mitigate ideological differences with the left. For instance, the first part of the proclamation regarding the legitimization of Korea's sovereignty heavily emphasizes the right to Korea's sovereignty based on Korea's long history and national pride.[134] In addition, anti-Japanese sentiment was widely used in the section on "Reclaiming the nation", where it enunciated the eradication of Japanese administration in Korea as well as the reclamation and redistribution of the land the Japanese had confiscated as one of the

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[132] Dong Gul Jo, "The Korean Provisional Government's "Fundamental Principles of Governing National Reconstruction" (Daehanminguk Imshijungbueui Gungukgangryong)," in *80 Years Provisional Government Anniversary Research Compilation* ed. Korean Modern History Association (Hanguk Geunhyundae Sahakhui) (Seoul Gukga Boeunche, 1999). 716

[133] The Declaration of the Fundamental Principles of Governing National Reconstruction promulgates basic rights such as right to property, equal right to vote, right to education that will provide a blue print for future Constitution of South Korea. For details about how this declaration relates to the South Korea's constitution, read Jo Dong Gul's "The Korean Provisional Government's Fundamental Principles of Governing National Construction 726-727 also cited below.

[134] Jo, "The Korean Provisional Government's "Fundamental Principles of Governing National Reconstruction" (Daehanminguk Imshijungbueui Gungukgangryong)." 718

critical assignments for Korea.[135] Further, the Korean Provisional Government embraced Korea's land reform, which had originally been endorsed by the leftists. Meanwhile, the declaration neither attacked Communists nor Pro-Western leaders like Rhee.

Kim Ku, head of the Korean Independence Party and also the Korean Provisional Government in 1940, was at the heart of the united front movement. His commitment to create a united the front is manifested in an interview with the Hong Kong Independence Newspaper on June of 1940, where he was quoted, "In order that people who lost sovereignty over their country should recover their land, it is necessary to cultivate power. Where does this power come from? It comes from unity and consolidation."[136]

Furthermore, Kim's view on democracy, which played a crucial role in the Korean Provisional Government's united front movement during this period, is well illustrated in his autobiography, *Baekmumilji*. He wrote "among the countries that claim to support democracy, the Soviet Union model advocates dictatorship as a means to attain democracy whereas the American model champions the freedom of press," and that "although the American model is slow in persecuting actions, the results of actions taken through freedom of expression and ideology is the superior one." [137] However, Kim Ku was far from being an advocate of the Western model of democracy for Korea as he added, "I do not believe the American democracy is the

[135] Ibid. 718
[136] Lee, *The Politics of Korean Nationalism*.222
[137] Han Min Kwak, "Kim Ku's Search for the Greatest Culture (Kim Ku Eui Choe Go Mun Hwa Guan Jum)," in *Sino-Japanese War and Korea's Independence Movement*, ed. Seung Il Kim (Seoul: Sidae eui chang, 2005).222

consummate form of political system we should adopt."[138] Instead, Kim Ku attempted to find a way to create a democracy for Korea that would embrace all Koreans of different ideologies. In this respect, the declaration of the "Fundamental Principles of Governing National Reconstruction" was an attempt to consolidate the Korean Provisional Government by including the leftists into the group. The Three Equality Theory, which incorporated economic equality as well as political and educational equality, ascertained that the leftists would not be disbanded from reconstructing the nation after her independence.

Return to Diplomacy

Meanwhile, the United States' declaration of war on Japan after the Pearl Harbor attack in 1941 had fostered hopes for the Korean Provisional Government.[139] The Korean Provisional Government had sought United States' attention many times on the Japanese aggression in Korea but had not been successful. Now that the United States had declared war on Japan, Koreans believed they were in a better position. The high optimism was similarly shared by the Chinese Nationalists, who needed such enthusiasm and financial resources in fighting the Japanese.[140]

While the Korean Provisional Government sought to utilize this opportunity by joining the war against Japan with the Chinese Nationalists, it also began to seek formal international recognition as a provisional government. It should be noted, however, that the Korean Provisional Government's efforts to obtain international recognition were focused almost exclusively on the United States and the Chinese Nationalists. This strategy contrasts to De Gaulle's Provisional Government, which,

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[138] Ibid, 221
[139] Lee, *The Politics of Korean Nationalism*.230
[140] Diana Lary, *China's Republic* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).142

like the Korean Provisional Government was trying to gain recognition from other countries around the same period as the Korean Provisional Government. While De Gaulle's Provisional Government was also rejected by the United States at first, its scope for diplomacy was much broader than that of Korean Provisional Government, which included small neighboring countries. By 1944, De Gaulle would succeed in gaining wide recognition of its provisional government, whereas, the Korean Provisional Government would still be struggling.[141]

Diplomacy with the United States required more efforts than with the Chinese Nationalists. Relations with the United States had been strained since Rhee was impeached in 1925 and the United States had been both physically and politically aloof from the Japanese aggression in East Asia. Although the Korean American societies in the United States had been one of the most active independence groups abroad, the Korean Provisional Government ultimately lacked a leader who could mediate its interchanges with the United States.

Finally, the Korean Provisional Government decided to bring Rhee back. Since his impeachment in 1925, Rhee had gone on quite a different path from the Korean Provisional Government: unlike leaders of the Korean Provisional

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[141] So Zhi Liang argues that the reason for Korean Provisional Government's failure in procuring recognized status as a provisional government was because the KPG had confined its target countries to China and the United States whereas the De Gaulle's Provisional Government had a wider scope in carrying out diplomatic efforts. He argues that there are many similarities in between the two provisional governments. The two provisional governments share some similarities in that they both were not the continuing body of their governments prior to annexation and they were both not supported by the United States at first. However, in case of De Gaulle's Provisional Government, its attempts to strengthen its power extended to neighboring countries and the successfully attained recognition in 1944 including the United states. On the other hand, Korean Provisional Government's activities were limited to the United States and China and it failed to obtain any recognition. For more information, read So Zhi Liang's essay "Comparison between the Korean Provisional Government and De Gaulle's Provisional Government during World War II" (jae yichasegaedaejun gigan, daehanminguk imshi jungbuwa purangsi imshijungbueui weikuo hwaldong bikyo) in *In Sino-Japanese War and Korea's Independence Movement (junggukhangiljunjenggwa hanguk dongnipeundong), edited by Seung Il Kim. Seoul: Sidae eui chang, 2005.*

Government, who had been most active in China, Rhee's independence activities had been confined to diplomacy with the United States and for some time, in Europe.

Nevertheless, acknowledging the importance of relationship between the Korean Provisional Government and the United States led to Rhee's return. Kim endowed Rhee with all the authority to conduct diplomatic exchanges with the United States in June 1941. Rhee accepted Kim's proposal and returned to act as an ambassador between the United States and the Korean Provisional Government.

Rhee approached government officials who could influence American policy toward Korea. He approached President Roosevelt, Secretary of State Cordell Hull, Chinese Under-secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Victor Hoo, Secretary of War Henry Stimson, and Colonel Goodfellow, suggesting them to consider Koreans as an ally against Japan and to recognize the Korean Provisional Government.[142]

Despite the fact that the U.S.-Japan relations had changed dramatically from 1919, it was still difficult to convince the United States. When Rhee presented a statement from the Korean Provisional Government to Dr.Stanley Hornbeck, the chief of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs in the State Department, he responded that he was "not accepting Rhee in any degree as the representative of either a nation or a people."[143] Although, Rhee presented the Korean Provisional Government as a body whose merits lie in its readiness to "actively assist in the United Nations in the War against Japan," [144]and some recognized the benefits to utilizing Koreans in fighting Japan, a majority were skeptical of the Korean Provisional Government as a governing body and refused to take any significant actions to approve it.

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[142] Oliver, *Syngman Rhee, the Man Behind the Myth*.188
[143] Ibid 175
[144] Ibid 186

Careful examination of Rhee's letters demonstrate that during this period he also attempted to convince the United States that the Korean Provisional Government was the only way to block Communist influence in the future Korea. For instance, in Rhee's letter to the Secretary of State Cordell Hull on December 7th of 1942, he argued that the failure to recognize the Provisional Republic of Korea would inevitably "result in the creation of a communist state" on the Korean peninsula.[145] Ultimately, in 1945 United Nations San Francisco Conference included the following in a memorandum to his friends:

> "My argument during the closing years of the war was that recognition of the Republic of Korea-in-exile was an effective means (and the only effective means) of blocking Soviet seizure of Korea. To the retort that the provisional government had been so long and so far removed from Korea that it no longer represented the people, and that it would be better to await the end of the war, at which time an election could be held in Korea to establish a new government, I replied that the Republic might be granted merely provisional recognition, with the understanding that an election under Allied supervision might be held as soon as Korea should be liberated. This point of view was presented over and over again by myself and my friends, in talks, and in magazine articles written by some of our associates. However, I never received any indication that it was even considered by the higher levels of government. Reluctantly I came to the conclusion that President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill had decided that Korea should have a government which would be independent only in form, but that actually it would be under the control of the Soviet Union." [146]

Rhee's tendency to present the question of recognizing the Korean Provisional Government as a way to prevent the expansion of Communism is a notable characteristic because this is where he differed from leaders in the Korean Provisional Government who were trying to work with a significant number of leftists who were influenced by Communist ideas by 1942.

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[145] Ibid188
[146] Ibid 198

Indeed, the co-existence of rightist nationalist, pro-democratic, and communist forces was a key source of tension for the entire duration of the Korean Provisional Government. Both Kim Ku and Rhee Syngman abhorred Communism. Nevertheless, Kim Ku's faction collaborated with some leftists, who could well be called Communists by Rhee's standard. This difference between Rhee and Kim Ku would later become more explicit in 1946 as Rhee would begin to advocate for South Korea's separate election in the United States while Kim would travel to North Korea to negotiate with the Communists.

Back in Chongqing: Relations with the Chinese Nationalists

While Rhee was pushing for recognition of the Korean Provisional Government in the United States, Kim Ku was gathering support from the Chinese Nationalist Party to seek official recognition of the Korean Provisional Government and participate in World War II with the Allied Forces. Kim Ku had already declared the establishment of Korean Restoration Army on September 17th of 1940. The proclamation, which reads that "The Restoration Army of Korea shall continue the war of resistance in cooperation with the people of the Republic of China and as part of the Allied Forces in order to defeat the Japanese imperialist, the common enemy, for the purpose of restoring the independence of our two nations",[147] implicates Kim Ku's ambition to seize the World War II as an opportunity to liberate Korea and very plausibly to leverage the position of the not-yet-recognized Korean Provisional Government.

[147] Ku Kim, "Kim Ku: Declaration of the Korean Restoration Army," in *Sources of Korean Tradition*, ed. Yong Cho'e Choe (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000). 349

Kim's plan became promising with the United States' entrance into the war in 1941. About two days after the Pearl Harbor attack, Kim Ku announced the Korean Provisional Government's declaration of war against Japan, which read:[148]

> 1941. 12 .9: Declaration of War against Japan
>
> In the name of thirty million Koreans and their government, we sincerely endorse the declaration of war on Japan by China, the United Kingdom, the United States, the Soviet Union, Canada, Australia, and other nations, because it is the most effective means of defeating Japan and recognizing East Asia. We hereby declare as follow:
>
> The people of Korea, having already joined the antiaggression front as a fighting until, declare war on the Axis Powers. We reiterate that the 1910 treaty of annexation and all other unequal treaties are null and void and that lawful concessions granted to antiaggression powers in Korea shall be honored. We shall fight to the day of final victory in order to expel completely the Japanese aggressors from Korea, China, and the Pacific region.The regimes at Chang-ch'un and Nanking created under Japanese sponsorship will never be recognized. We firmly uphold the items in the joint Roosevelt-Churchill declaration that must be implemented to bring about the independence of Korea and happily predict the ultimate victory for the democratic alliance.

During this time, Kim Ku's main efforts were to strengthen the newly established Korean Restoration Army. The Korean Restoration Army was led by the commander Yi Chong Chon, who was supported by Chiang Kai-shek of the Chinese Nationalist Party. The Korean Restoration Army was officially recognized on November 15th of 1941, when the Chinese Nationalist Party promised recognition and support of the Korean Restoration Army on the condition that the Restoration Army would abide by "The nine-clause Fixed Rules of Conduct", which brought much of

[148] _____, "Provisional Government of the Korean Republic: Declaration of War on Japan," in *Sources of Korean Tradition*, ed. Yong Cho'e Choe (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).350

the Korean Restoration Army under Chinese control until it finally ceased in August 23rd of 1944.[149]

Despite the long time restrictions imposed on the Korean Restoration Army, coalition with the leftists, who had more military power, assisted its growth. In May of 1942, roughly twenty percent of Kim Won Bong's Korean Volunteer Corps who had refused to join the Chinese Communist Party in Yan'an joined the Korean Provisional Government's Restoration Army in Chongqing. [150] Around this time, a number of leaders of the Korean National Revolutionary Party successfully joined the Korean Provisional Government: Kim Won Bong, Yu Cham Young, and Kim Sang Dok joined the provisional assembly in October 1942.[151] The Korean Provisional Government elected a number of leftists into the provisional assembly, two of whom were prominent leaders of the Korean National Revolutionary Party. Despite the bitter competition of the past, the assimilation of the leftists was rather smooth. Kim Kyu Shik and Chang Kon Sang, the leftists, were elected to the National Council, the decision-making body of the Korean Provisional Government.[152] Kim Won Bong, head of the Korean Revolutionary Party and the Korean Voluntary Corps, was later also elected as Minister of Military Affairs, and Kim Kyu Shik as the vice-president.

In addition to strengthening the Korean Restoration Army, the Korean Provisional Government had actively requested the Chinese Nationalist Party to give official recognition to the Korean Provisional Government. Although the Chinese Nationalist Party maintained close relations with leaders of the Korean Provisional

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[149] Kang, *A History of Contemporary Korea*.75
[150] Ibid. 74
[151] Ibid. 74
[152]Lee, *The Politics of Korean Nationalism*..225

Government and had treated them as the representatives of Koreans, it had not made any official proclamation recognizing the Korean Provisional Government.

Upon requesting the official recognition, the Chinese Nationalist Party did not make an immediate proclamation of recognition but promised that "it will be the first country to ever officially recognize the Korean Provisional Government."[153] However, the Chinese Nationalists were reluctant to take open actions on the Korean Provisional Government regarding this matter before the United States had any official position.

The Chinese Nationalists rose in global status in years between 1941 and 1943. This change in international politics was largely due to Roosevelt who began to see the Chinese Nationalists as a possible leader who could bring stability in Asia after the anticipated conclusion of World War II.[154] Roosevelt's hope for the Chinese Nationalists is manifested in his inviting Chiang Kai- shek to the Cairo Conference in 1943 to discuss post World War II politics along with the United Kingdom's representative, Winston Churchill. Soviet Union, which had been supporting the Chinese Communist Party, had refused to attend the conference when informed that Chiang Kai shek was attending. Roosevelt had hoped that a unified China under the Chinese Nationalists in the future would exert a great influence on Korea after the war.

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[153] Sae Yoon Jang, "The Relation between Korean Provisional Government and China," in *80 Years Provisional Government Anniversary Research Compilation* ed. Korean Modern History Association (Hanguk Geunhyundae Sahakhui) (Seoul: Gukga Boeunche, 1999).258

[154] Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of Korean War: Liberation and the Emergence of Separate Regimes, 1945-1947*, Studies of the East Asian Institute (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton U.P., 1981), Lary, *China's Republic*.106

The close relationship the Korean Provisional Government had maintained with the Chinese Nationalists since 1932 played a crucial role in the inclusion of the guarantee of Korea's eventual independence in the Cairo Declaration. The document became the first international recognition of Korea as the victim of invasion. Part of the Cairo Declaration read;

> "The aforesaid three great powers (United States, Great Britain, and China), mindful of the enslavement of the people of Korea, are determined that *in due course* Korea shall become free and independent."[155]

While the Cairo Declaration provided Koreans with a renewed hope for independence, the word "in due course" left the leaders of the Provisional Government suspicious of the immediate independence of Korea after the war. This suspicion was well founded. Indeed, as the letter addressed to Rhee dated June 5, 1945, Frank Lockhart, the director of office of the United States' office of Far Easter Affairs reaffirmed the vagueness of the declaration by writing, "the Koreans will get their independence in due course presumably meant that as soon as they are in a position to govern themselves."[156]

This uncertainty about the future made it even more urgent for the Korean Provisional Government to acquire at least minimal acknowledgement of the existence of the provisional government as an entity. However, it seemed improbable that the United States was going to take immediate positive actions to recognize the Korean Provisional Government. On the other hand, Chinese Nationalists, whose

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[155] Soon Sung Cho, *Korea in World Politics, 1940-1950; an Evaluation of American Responsibility* (Berkeley,: University of California Press, 1967).19

[156] United States Department of State and United States Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1945,6,[a] the British Commonwealth, the Far East* (Washington: US Gov. Print. Off., 1969).1029

power was largely reliant on the United States, turned out to be pusillanimous when it came down to taking definitive actions. It refused to initiate taking official action regarding the issue that may upset the United State. The Memorandum of Conversation, by the Director of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs dated February 5 1945, discloses this dynamics as it reads:

> " Mr.Shao (the Senior Secretary of Chiang Kai-shek), said that it was his understanding that the attitude of the American Government toward the Korean Provisional Government was the same as that of the Chinese Government, namely of withholding recognition for the present. Mr Ballantine confirmed this understanding. Mr.Shao inquired whether, in Mr. Ballantine's opinion, it would be possible to obtain military equipment on a lease-lend basis for the arming of Korean troops for use against Japan. Mr.Ballantine replied that this was of course a matter to be decided by the military authorities but that it seemed likely that arms and equipment could be found to supply anyone who could undertake to fight the Japanese."[157]

[157] Ibid. 1019

Liberation

> *"I have received news that the Japanese surrendered. This news is by no means a good one. I feel like our last hope is gone. All the preparations that we put in so much effort for many years have become obsolete. Our well-trained soldiers who were supposed to be provided with secret weapons, and be sent to Korea in American marine ships so that they can attack major Japanese military headquarters…now all the fights have ended, and we did not even have one chance to carry out our plan…"*
>
> *- Kim Ku, Baekbumilj*

Rhee's efforts in diplomacy with the United States to have the Korean Provisional Government recognized failed once again. Meanwhile, The Korean Provisional Government hoped that having the Korean Restoration Army participate in World War II on the side of the Allied Power's war against Japan would assist their obtaining recognition.

In contrast to the United States' uncertainty about the Korean Provisional Government, it is evident from the February 5 1945 memorandum that utilizing Koreans in the military action against the Japanese had been well taken. In fact, the usefulness of Koreans in the war against Japan was recognized as early as 1942. In a memorandum for the President written by General Donovan, the head of the Office of Strategic Services in January 24 1942, he wrote:

> "The distribution of the Koreans in important centers opens the way for their employment in intelligence and sabotage work against the Japanese. This is not the case with other nationals, particularly whites and Chinese, who are readily identified in the Japanese Domain."

In early August 1945, a plan was set up to utilize Korean Provisional Government's Korean Restoration Army in one of the first Office of Strategic Service's major projects based in Xi'an was the penetration in Korea, called the Eagle

project.[158] In this project, one hundred Korean men under the Korean Restoration Army were recruited to carry out this secret mission.[159] These one hundred Korean soldiers of the Korean Restoration Army were shipped to Tuchao for training under the commander of the Eagle project, Captain Clyde B. Sargent.[160] The intense training for the penetration, however, soon shattered. The bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 7 1945 called for a sudden end of World War II as Japan surrendered on August 15, before the plan was put into action. The Japanese surrendered and Korea finally got her independence. However, the Korean Provisional Government was not ready for independence; neither its status as a provisional government nor its contribution to the World War II was recognized.

[158] Maochun Yu, *Oss in China: Prelude to Cold War* (New Haven Yale University Press, 1996). 226
[159] Ibid.226
[160] Ibid.227

Chapter Five

Road to Separation (1945-1948)

"The political and ideological divisions that we associate with the Cold War were the reasons for Korea's division; they came early to Korea, before the onset of the global Cold War, and today they outlast the Cold War everywhere else."- Bruce Cumings [161]

Korean independence arrived while the leaders were still propounding the United States' and the Chinese Nationalists' recognition of the Korean Provisional Government. The sudden independence of Korea left the leaders of Korean the Provisional Government with another contention: whether to continue pursuing the status of the Korean Provisional Government as the legitimate governing body of the Koreans or to return to Korea as individual politicians.

On the other hand, the Soviet Union had declared war on Japan on the side of the Allied Powers only a few weeks before the Japanese surrender. This last minute participation of the Soviet Union on the Allied Power's side served as a justification for the Soviet Union to intervene the construction of the new Korean state. As the Soviet Union had previously ceded the opportunity to control Korea upon losing the 1905 Russo-Japanese War, Japanese loss in the World War II naturally proffered Soviet Union to compensate for its humiliation by retaining control over the country. In fact, Soviet troops had arrived in Korea nine days before the Japanese surrender on August 15th 1945.[162]

The United States, which had expressed its predilection that China under the leadership of the Chinese Nationalists become the leader in the post World War II

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[161] Bruce Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun : A Modern History*, Updated ed. (New York: W.W. Norton, 2005). 186

[162] Chong-won Kim, *Divided Korea : The Politics of Development, 1945-1972*, Harvard East Asian Monographs ; (Cambridge, Mass.: East Asian Research Center Distributed by Harvard University Press, 1975). 47

politics in Northeast Asia as early as 1943 Cairo Conference, became wary of the Soviet's explicit maneuvering in Korea. Chiang Kai-shek's Chinese Nationalists, contrary to the United States' hope, was preoccupied with its domestic competition with the Chinese Communist Party and was unable to arbitrate post World War II Korean affairs. In addition, the United Kingdom did not take much interest to intervene in independent Korea: it was swamped with its own problems of decolonization.

Without any other major power to counter the Soviet influence in Korea, the United States perceived itself as the only nation to balance the Soviet Union's encroachment. In mid-August, the United States suggested the 38th parallel as the demarcation for the Soviet and American occupation zones. There was some precedent for this location as a divider of spheres of influence on the peninsulas as it had been the dividing line on the eve of Russo-Japanese War in 1905 between the Russians and the Japanese. All of Korea eventually came under Japan with Japan's victory in the war, and the Russians took the Japanese loss in World War II as an opportunity to reclaim what they perceived to be their lost influence.

The American zone demarcated by the 38th parallel included Seoul, the capital of Korea as well as 2/3 of the population. The Soviet Union agreed to take no more than the northern part of the 38th parallel under its influence, as the United States' monopoly in nuclear weapons rendered Soviet Union subordinate to the United States.[163] Unlike the Soviet Union, whose presence in Korea preceded the Japanese surrender, the American troops arrived in Seoul in early September, about a

[163] William Whitney Stueck, "The United States, the Soviet Union, and the Division of Korea: A Comparative Approach," *The Journal of American-East Asian relations* 4, no. 1 (1995).5

month after Korea's independence. Thus, within two months of "independence" Korea was once again occupied by foreign troop and this time, the two occupying powers had very different ideologies. These ideological differences would be felt all over the world by the end of the decades as the so-called Cold War reached its apex, and the legacies of these differences are still felt in Korea today, two decades after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War.

Preparation for Korea: Committee for Preparation of Korean Independence and Korean People's Republic

"Imminent American arrival in South Korea had occasioned the emergency condition."[164]
- Yo Un Hyong

While the post World War II order in international politics was establishing the Soviet and American influence in the Korean peninsula, Koreans residing in Korea were also organizing their own group to prepare for the future. The most significant was the Committee for Preparation of Korean Independence (CPKI), which eventually led to the establishment of the Korean People's Republic.

The CPKI was created in Seoul, located in the southern part of 38th parallel which was free from the influence of Soviet's Communism. The top leader of the CPKI was Yo Un Hyong. Yo was a longtime fighter for Koran independence. He participated in the movement as a member of the Shin Han Young Men's Society in Shanghai and was one of the founding members of the Korean Provisional Government. Yo had served three years in Taejon prison in Korea (1929-1932), after Japanese agents caught him in Shanghai and after his release, he worked as an editor for Chungang newspaper.[165] Heavily influenced by Christianity, Wilsonian

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[164] Cumings, *The Origins of Korean War: Liberation and the Emergence of Separate Regimes, 1945-1947*.89
[165] ———, *Korea's Place in the Sun : A Modern History*.191

democracy, and socialism, Yo was never a member of a Communist party but was a moderate leftist who sought to unite the leftists and the rightists of Korean politics.[166] In 1944, foreseeing the downfall of Japan, he organized a secret organization to prepare for Korean independence, which he declared as CPKI in August 1945.[167] The CPKI functioned all over Korea through its subsidiary organ, People's Committee, which functioned at the local level.[168]

The CPKI was extremely successful in obtaining majority support from the Korean population. As the CPKI was active in confiscating land from the landlords and distributing it to the farmers, it had popular support of the Korean people.[169]As a result, in a short period of time, the CPKI was able to transfer the administrative authority from the Japanese and assisted in the maintenance of peacekeeping, transportation system and communication networks.

How Yo and his CPKI came to power contrasts to with the political figure of the CPKI's opposing group, Song Chin-u. Three days before the Japanese publicly announced their surrender, they approached Song Chin-u, a major right-wing nationalist and a future leader of the Korean Democratic Party, for collaboration in order to transfer Japanese officials safely back to Japan. Song, like Yo, had been an avid leader in the independence movement. Song, who graduated with a degree in law from Meiji University in Japan, participated in the March 1st movement, during which he was arrested and spent two years in prison. After his release, Song worked for

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[166] Ibid.191
[167] Cho, *Korea in World Politics, 1940-1950; an Evaluation of American Responsibility*.66
[168] For detailed information about the CPKI and the People's Committee, Bruce Cumings's *The Origin of the Korean War: Liberation and the Emergence of Separate Regimes 1945-1947* is an excellent source. 68-99 of the book specifically deals with the activities of CPKI.
[169] Cumings, *The Origins of Korean War: Liberation and the Emergence of Separate Regimes, 1945-1947*. 72

Tonga Newspaper. While both Yo and Song both had been independence leaders, their views of independent Korea were quite different. When the Japanese proposed Song for collaboration, Song turned the proposal down, insisting that he was only to collaborate with the Allied Forces and the Korean Provisional Government.[170] In desperation, Japanese turned to the leftist leader, Yo, who offered to consider the proposal under five conditions:[171]

(1) Immediate release of all political prisoners;
(2) Noninterference in his activities for national reconstruction;
(3) Freedom to organize the student and youth corps;
(4) Free organization of labor unions by the working classes;
(5) And a guarantee of three months supply of food and grains.

The Japanese complied with these demands and worked with Yo to ease the political transition of Korea and the repatriation of Japanese. The different reactions of Song and Yo toward the Japanese proposal illustrate their different political attitudes. Song, a conservative was a strong supporter of the United States and was resistant to radical social changes in post colonial Korea. On the other hand, Yo was more proactive in implementing social programs and social groups and was resistant to the possibility of another foreign rule that seemed very possible with Korea's independence, which largely owed to the Allied Powers' victory. Although Yo had been a member of the Korean Provisional Government and sought to work with leaders of the Korean Provisional Government in creating a nation state, he did not rely on the Korean Provisional Government as the only means to build up a nation. Instead of waiting for its arrival, Yo acted.

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[170] Kim, *Divided Korea : The Politics of Development, 1945-1972*. 49
[171] Cho, *Korea in World Politics, 1940-1950; an Evaluation of American Responsibility*. 67

On September 6th 1945, a few days before the Americans arrived on the southern part of Korea, Yo and his CPKI announced a rushed establishment of the Korean People's Republic. The reason for his call for the Korean People's Republic was due to his belief that the arrival of a foreign power before an organization of Korea's government "occasioned an emergency condition."[172]

The supporters of the Korean People's Republic tried to incorporate the rightist, nationalist, and leftist leaders in the cabinet. The result was a leadership with a very wide range of ideological positions. The following is a list of cabinet members for the Korean People's Republic announced on September 8th 1945:[173]

Chairman: Rhee Syung Man (Pro-Western Democrat/ Nationalist)*
Prime Minister: Ho Hon (Communist)
Education: Kim Song-su (Conservative)
Interior: Kim Ku (Nationalist)*
Justice: Kim Pyong-no
Vice-chairman: Yo Un Hyong (Leftist)
Foreign Minister: Kim Kyu Shik (Leftist)*
Economics: Ha P'il won (Communist)
Finance: Cho Man Sik (Leftist)
Communications: Shin Ik Hui(Nationalist)* [174]

Despite the diverse composition of the Korean People's Republic, politics within the People's Republic was largely dictated by the leftists and some communists. In fact, Kim Song-su was the only conservative group from the Korean conservative faction and none of the leaders of the Korean Provisional Government appointed in the cabinet were in Korea yet: the leaders of the Korean Provisional

[172] Cumings, *The Origins of Korean War: Liberation and the Emergence of Separate Regimes, 1945-1947*.189
[173] Ibid.87
[174] * indicates leaders who were under the Korean Provisional Government at the time of the announcement. I have indicated the ideological disposition of the leaders in parenthesis. I have marked rightist nationalist group of the Korean Provisional Government as simply nationalists and those who were moderately leftist but not necessarily communist as moderate leftists. I have classified the Song Jin-U's conservative faction in Korea as the conservative. Kim Song-u who is marked as the only conservative in the cabinet was a long time friend of Song Jin-u.

Government, except Rhee, who was in the United States, were still in Chongqing. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that the CPKI and the Korean People's Republic were the outcomes of an indigenous political group that did not evolve from the Soviet Union's pressure or assistance.[175] In fact, the news of People's Republic never appeared in Soviet press until May of 1946. [176]

America's Choice: The Korean Democratic Party

However, when the United States Army Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK) led by General Hodge arrived in the southern part of the 38th parallel on September 8th 1945, the activities of the CPKI and the Korean People's Republic were perceived as considerably inspired by radical Communism.[177] This perception is understandable considering that USAMGIK had been largely ignorant of the internal politics of Korea. In fact, the existence of CPKI and the Korean People's Republic was unknown to General Hodge when he arrived in Korea. He was startled by a welcoming reception prepared by the Korean People's Republic as his instructions had clearly ordered him to "take the Japanese surrender, disarm the Japanese armed forces, enforce the terms of the surrender, and remove Japanese imperialism from Korea." [178] In this respect, the CPKI, which had now declared them as Korea's Republic seemed to be doing Hodge's job in Korea. Moreover, the fact that the Soviet Union was tolerant of the Korean People's Republic made the United States even more suspicious of the Communist influence in the Korean People's Republic. On October 10th, Hodge made the Korean People's Republic in the south of

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[175] Stueck, "The United States, the Soviet Union, and the Division of Korea: A Comparative Approach."7
[176] Ibid.
[177] Cho, *Korea in World Politics, 1940-1950; an Evaluation of American Responsibility*.63
[178] Ibid.64

38th parallel illegal by claiming that the military government was the "only government in Korea south of the 38th parallel."[179] In order to rule the country, the USMGK reinstated the authority of the Japanese-trained police that the CPKI had removed from offices. [180]

The Americans were skeptical of the ability of Koreans to form their own government. A letter from Benninghoeff, the political advisor in Korea to the Secretary of the State sent on September 15 1945 reveals that Americans perceived Koreans as being indifferent to the future of their country: it reads "almost all Koreans have been on a prolonged holiday since August 15. To them, independence apparently means freedom from work; no thought is given to the future." [181] Nevertheless, the Americans found hope in a specific group as the next few lines read, "The most encouraging single factor in the political situation is the presence in Seoul of several hundred conservatives among the older and better educated Koreans. Although many of them have served with the Japanese, that stigma ought eventually to disappear. [182]

To undermine the Korean People's Republic, the USAMGIK decided to support the creation of new political parties. Hodge particularly supported the Korean Democratic Party (KDP), established on September 16th 1945, comprised mainly of conservatives who largely saw themselves as the opposition to the Korean People's Republic group. The majority of them were independence leaders who had resisted the Japanese rule. However, these conservatives, a majority of whom had personal

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[179] Ibid.72
[180] Kim, *Divided Korea : The Politics of Development, 1945-1972*.66
[181]United States Department of State and United States Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1945,6,[a] the British Commonwealth, the Far East*. 1050
[182] Ibid. 1050

ties to Song Jin-u, the leader of the party, was an elitist group who often found their ties to the old *yangban* class of the Choson dynasty, resisted any radical change in the social order. [183]

Unlike the Korean People's Republic faction, whose support came from the peasants and farmers who were eager to repel remnants of the Japanese rule and reclaim their land, the largest support for the KDP came from the landlords and the Japanese collaborators.[184] These pro-Japanese landlords had benefited from Japanese colonial rule and were unyielding to the social reforms and land distributions that People's Republic had implemented throughout Korea through the People's Committee during the transition period between the Japanese rule and the arrival of American troops. Instinctively, the wealthy landlords and the business owners bolstered the Korean Democratic Party over the Korean People's Republic faction whose policies included progressive social reforms. For many years, the pro-Japanese image due to their elite status plagued the Korean Democratic Party.[185]

In order to obtain its populist support, the KDP leaders decided to support the Korean Provisional Government, whose independence movement abroad for the previous twenty seven years had earned respect in Korea. When the CPKI declared the creation of Korean People's Republic, with Kim Song-su as the only cabinet member from this faction, these conservatives retorted that creating a governing body flagged the legitimacy of the Korean Provisional Government and attacked Yo and his CPKI as opportunists.

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[183] Sung Joo Han, *The Failure of Democracy in South Korea* (Berkeley, Los Angelos, London: University of California Press, 1974).35
[184] Ibid.35
[185] Ibid.35

Return to Korea

While the United States had refused to officially recognize the Korean Provisional Government, it saw the leaders of the Provisional Government useful in consolidating its authority in Korea by containing the influence of the CPKI faction.

On September 15th 1945, Hodge had suggested that Rhee Syngman, Kim Ku, and Kim Kyu Shik of the Korean Provisional Government, be brought to South Korea. While admitting that such action was "contrary to past American thinking" whose policy had been to maintain a neutral position regarding development of political groups in Korea, Hodge justified the return of these individuals as necessary, claiming that otherwise the "Communist groups set up and encouraged by the Soviets in northern Korea will manage to extend its influence into southern Korea," otherwise.[186] General Hodge further added that leaders such as Rhee and Kim Ku, who were acclaimed by Koreans as renowned nationalistic figures, might help the USAMGIK to mitigate its "pro-Japanese image." [187]

The Korean Provisional Government had sought the United States' help in returning to Korea as early as August 14 1945.[188] The American military authorities in China decided to assist with the transportation of the leaders of the Korean Provisional Government only if (1) Koreans go as private individuals and not as officials of any "provisional government", (2) equal privileges and facilities are accorded all Korean groups, and (3) Army authorities can supply transportation

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[186] Cumings, *The Origins of Korean War: Liberation and the Emergence of Separate Regimes, 1945-1947*. 180

[187] William Whitney Stueck, *The Korean War in World History* (Lexington, Ky.: University Press of Kentucky, 2004).28

[188] United States Department of State and United States Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1945,6,[a] the British Commonwealth, the Far East*. 1036

without interfering with important operations.[189] By agreeing to the United States' conditions, the leaders of the Provisional Government chose to relinquish their positions in the Korean Provisional Government and return to Korea.

Rhee, who was then residing in the United States, was the first among the Korean Provisional Government leaders to return. He arrived in Seoul on October 16 1945, welcomed by both the People's Republic faction and the Korean Democratic Party. On the other hand, the leaders in Chongqing arrived a few weeks later in separate groups. Hodge had requested that the rightist faction of the Provisional Government, led by Kim Ku, arrive in Seoul before the leftist faction led by Kim Kyu Shik and Kim Wong Bong.[190] Kim Ku and fifteen of his supporters in the Korean Provisional Government returned in Seoul on November 23rd and Kim Kyu Shik's faction arrived on December 3rd 1945.[191]

Contrary to General Hodge's anticipation that leaders of the Korean Provisional Government and the Korean Democratic Party would collaborate to undermine the Korean People's Republic's faction, it immediately became clear that the leaders of the Korean Provisional Government were not likely to ally with the Korean Democratic Party (KDP). While the KDP had been the most enthusiastic supporter of the Korean Provisional Government, the nationalist leaders of the Provisional Government who had utilized anti-Japanese sentiment to encourage a coalition between the rightists and the leftists, displayed contempt towards the KDP's

[189] Ibid.1053
[190] Cumings, *The Origins of Korean War: Liberation and the Emergence of Separate Regimes, 1945-1947*.192
[191] Ibid. 192

association with the elites and the landowners who had benefited under Japanese colonial policies.

Dispute on Trusteeship

On December 16th 1945, the foreign ministers of the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union met in Moscow to discuss post-World War II political developments in Korea. [192] The Moscow Conference resulted in a declaration which included a number of provisions crucial to the determination of the future of Korea. It read:

1. With a view to the re-establishment of Korea as an independent state, the creation of conditions for developing the country on democratic principles and the earliest possible liquidation of the disastrous results of the protracted Japanese domination in Korea, there shall be set up a provisional Korean democratic government which shall take all the necessary steps for developing the industry, transportation, and agriculture of Korea and the national culture of the Korean people.
2. In order to assist the formation of a provisional Korean government and with a view to the preliminary elaboration of the appropriate measures, there shall be established a Joint Commission consisting of representatives of the United States command in Southern Korea and the Soviet command in Northern Korea. In preparing their proposals the Commission shall consult with the Korean democratic parties and social organizations. The recommendations worked out by the Commission shall be presented for the consideration of the governments of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, China, the United Kingdom and the United States prior to final decisions by the two governments represented on the Joint Commission.
3. It shall be the task of the Joint Commission, with the participation of the Provisional Korean Democratic Government and of the Korean democratic organizations to work out measures also for helping and assisting the political, economic, and social progress of the Korean people, the development of democratic self-government and the establishment of the national independence of Korea.
   The proposals of the Joint Commission shall be submitted, following consultation with the Provisional Korean Government for the joint consideration of the Government of the United States, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom, and China for the working out of an agreement concerning a four-power trusteeship of Korea for a period of up to five years.

[192] Ibid. 214

4. For the consideration of urgent problems affecting both Southern and Northern Korea, and for the elaboration of measures establishing permanent coordination in administrative-economic matters between the United States command in Southern Korea and the Soviet command in Northern Korea, a conference of the representatives of the United States and Soviet commands in Korea shall be convened within a period of two weeks.[193]

The Moscow Declaration was met by angry opposition from many political groups in Korea. The most contentious provisions of the Moscow Declaration were on the issue of four-power trusteeship of Korea and the creation of a provisional government. However, it is believed that leaders of the Korean Democratic Party, whom Hodge had thought the most reliable source of support, were supportive of the Moscow Declaration at first. Immediately following the publication of the Moscow decision in Seoul, on December 29th 1945, Hodge had a meeting with Song Chin-u, the head of the KDP. Hodge later said that Song "went out and told his friends that he was ready to act sensibly and the next morning he was dead." [194] It is speculated that Song met Kim Ku on the same night, during which Kim Ku had apparently failed to persuade Song to launch anti-trusteeship movement. Song was assassinated in the morning of December 30th by followers of Kim Ku. [195]

On December 31 1945, the anti-trusteeship movement ruled the country. Kim Ku, who had frequently utilized anti-Japanese sentiment to reconcile the rightist and leftist movement, was once again at the forefront of efforts to resolve the right-left conflict by resorting to nationalism. Kim Ku's first speech against trusteeship did not

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[193] James Francis Byrnes, *Moscow Meeting of Foreign Ministers, December 16-26, 1945. Report...And Soviet-Anglo-American Communiqué*, Department of State. Publ. 2448.Conference Ser. 79. (Washington,1946). 14-16

[194] Cumings, *The Origins of Korean War: Liberation and the Emergence of Separate Regimes, 1945-1947*. 219

[195] Ibid.219

condemn the Soviets or the communists, but the pro-Japanese in Korea who had benefited from Japanese colonial rule.[196] Between December 28th and January 1st 1946, Kim Ku and several supporters met the leaders of the Korean People's Republic in order to launch a joint effort against the Moscow Agreement. [197] Initially, all the factions, the leftists, the rightists in South Korea and the communists in North Korea all joined the anti-trusteeship efforts. For Koreans, who had been under foreign rule for 35 years, trusteeship only meant elongation of foreign rule, only under different countries. In the anti-trusteeship movement led by Kim Ku, the anti-foreign sentiment that had been repeatedly used to create a united front between the right and left during the years of exile in China, was adopted to overcome ideological differences, with the distinction that the foreign enemy was no longer Japan, but the United States and the Soviet Union.

However, the Communists soon changed their position. In January 1946, the Communists decided to reverse their earlier opposition to support the Moscow Agreement. [198] Kim Ku called for an Emergency Political Conference, inviting both the left and the right. However, the Communists, when they were not promised a fifty percent representation in the political conference, refused to attend the conference.[199] This sudden reversal of the position of the Communists in both North and South Korea led to the opposite of what was intended from Kim Ku and Rhee: the anti-trusteeship movement only exacerbated the splits. Now, those who supported the trusteeship were automatically seen as Communists, those who opposed were

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[196] Ibid.221
[197] Ibid.221
[198] Allan Reed Millett, *The War for Korea, 1945-1950 : A House Burning*, Modern War Studies (Lawrence, Kan.: University Press of Kansas, 2005). 70
[199] Kim, *Divided Korea : The Politics of Development, 1945-1972*.62

considered conservatives, and those in the middle, the leftists were condemned as opportunists.[200]

Moreover, the KDP saw opposition to the trusteeship as a means to garner populist support and condemned the Communists and other leftists for betraying the country. The KDP joined Kim Ku and Rhee's anti-trusteeship movement and fervently attacked Communists as traitors and in the process, leftists who were not necessarily Communists became linked with the Communists. [201] In the end, the anti-trusteeship movement became indistinguishable from the anti-Communist and anti-leftist movement.

Meanwhile, in North of the 38th parallel, Cho Man Shik, who was one of most prominent non-Communist figures, was arrested for protesting against the Moscow Accords. This arrest put an end to the united front policy in the Northern part of Korea. In February 1946, People's Committee, headed by Kim Il-Song and the Communists who had been influential in Manchuria and Yan'an emerged to represent the political organization of the Northern Korea.

The Joint Commission meeting held on March 20 1946 between the Soviet Union and the United States revealed the growing chasm between the two on policies regarding Korea's future. The Soviet Union delegation referred to rightist political groups who opposed the Moscow Agreement as "certain reactionary anti-democratic groups that undermined the work of creating and firmly establishing a democratic system" and suggested that these groups that had rejected the Moscow Accords be

[200] Cho, *Korea in World Politics, 1940-1950; an Evaluation of American Responsibility*.124
[201] Ibid.124

excluded from establishing the provisional government for a unified Korea.[202] The American delegation retorted that excluding those who had opposed the Moscow Conference in establishing the united Korean provisional government would deprive Koreans the opportunity to choose their own government.[203]

Despite stalemate in the Joint Commission, the United States Military Government in Korea sought ways to conjoin the left-right division. Hodge was convinced that neither Kim Ku nor Rhee, both outrageously demanding immediate independence of Korea, was going to collaborate in the United States in making the Joint Commission work.[204] Instead, Hodge turned to the moderate leftists for a new leadership. Ironically, one of the two leaders that Hodge came to favor was the leader of the CPKI, Yo Un Hyong, whom the political advisor in Korea, Benninghoff, had earlier described as a Communist.[205] The other leader, Kim Kyu Shik, was the leader of the leftist faction in Korea whom Hodge had demanded to arrive in Korea after the rightist Kim Ku's faction. Hodge believed these two leaders' moderate political ideologies would allow them to embrace both the leftists and the rightists and thus create a united provisional government.

On October 13 1946, the United States Military Government in Korea created a Korean Interim Legislature and transferred authority in the administration to top-level Korean bureaucrats. [206] There were ninety seats in this new legislature, forty five of which were to be elected and the other half to be appointed by the

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[202] Ibid.119
[203] Ibid.119
[204] Ibid.143
[205] United States Department of State and United States Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1945,6,[a] the British Commonwealth, the Far East*.1063
[206] Kim, *Divided Korea : The Politics of Development, 1945-1972*.70

USAMGIK.[207] Hodge encouraged the development of moderate political parties that would moderate tensions in the right-left rift and create a unified government of Korea. However, the election in October and November of 1946 resulted in a huge victory for the Korean Democratic Party, which was now cooperating with Kim Ku and Rhee's faction.

Nevertheless, those in the Coalition Committee were often condemned by the conservatives of the Korean Democratic Party, Kim Ku's nationalist faction, and the Communists. Kim Kyu Shik and Yo Un Hyong, were often targets of violent attacks. When the Interim Legislative Assembly opened with Kim Kyu Shik as Chairman, 38 members of the right wing refused to attend it. [208] Yo, who had been often threatened for trying to persuade the Communists to join the coalition movement, was assassinated in December 1947.

Toward Separation

> *"You can't co-operative with cholera. If I agreed to a coalition with Communism in Korea, it would be all the same as handing the country over to Russia."*
> *-Rhee Syngman, 1945*[209]

While Rhee and Kim Ku had been collaborating in the anti-trusteeship movement, differences between these two leaders became apparent by the end of 1946. Rhee, who remained reserved in his relations to the leftists within the Korean Provisional Government and abhorred Communists, was convinced by the end of 1946 that coalition with the Communists was not going to be possible. Rhee began insisting on holding an election for the southern part of the 38th parallel at least as

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[207] Ibid.70
[208] Cho, *Korea in World Politics, 1940-1950; an Evaluation of American Responsibility*.135
[209] Robert T. Oliver, "Syngman Rhee of Korea," *The Catholic World* 172 (1951). 278

early as mid 1946. [210] The Korean Democratic Party also supported Rhee's position. Rhee left for Washington D.C. and stayed there until April, carrying out diplomatic efforts once again for Korea's independence. In a paper called "A Solution to the Korean Problem" which he proposed to the State Department in January, Rhee suggested an independent interim government be established in South Korea until the Korean peninsula becomes reunited. He requested that this autonomous government in South Korea have the authority "to negotiate directly with Russia and the United States concerning the occupation of Korea," and that the Soviet and American troops withdraw.[211] Rhee's visit to the United States was incidental because it was during this period that the Truman Doctrine was introduced to American foreign policy. The policy of the United States had now become to "support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures." [212]

However, Rhee's proposal was strongly opposed by Kim Ku and Kim Kyu Shik's faction, which argued that a separate election for the southern half of Korea would result in a permanent division of the country. Due to his disagreement on this issue of holding an election to establish a separate independent government, Kim Ku split from Rhee's anti-trusteeship movement and joined Kim Kyu Shik's to create a joint coalition.

On March 12, 1948, Kim Kyu Shik, Kim Ku, and Jo So Ang, the leading members of the former Korean Provisional Government issued a joint statement pledging to collaborate in creating a unified Korean independence and promising to

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[210] Kim, *Divided Korea : The Politics of Development, 1945-1972*.71
[211] William Whitney Stueck, *Rethinking the Korean War : A New Diplomatic and Strategic History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002). 41
[212]Ibid.41

boycott South Korean election. They then contacted Kim Il Song and Kim Tu Bong, leaders of the North Korean Communist faction, suggesting that "measures for the establishment of a unified and democratic government should be discussed through a conference of political leaders of North and South." [213] Kim Il-song then invited the fifteen rightist members of South Korea's leaders to have a meeting with leaders of the North on April 14th, "emphasizing the urgency of the joint withdrawal of occupation forces so that Koreans can solve their own problems."[214]

The rightist leaders, including Kim Ku and Kim Kyu Shik, went to Pyongyang on April 19th to meet the leaders of North Korea. Upon returning from the meeting, Kim Kyu Shik and Kim Ku issued a statement which said that the "North Korean government authorities had promised never to establish a separate government, agreed to continue to supply electricity to South Korea, and to release Cho Man-sik, a famous Christian leader who had been imprison for anti-trusteeship movement."[215] However, these promises that Kim Ku and Kim Kyu Shik had obtained from the negotiation did not hold; two weeks later the North cut electricity to the South in protest of the planned South Korean election.[216]

In the meantime, the creation of an independent government had been passed to the United Nations by the United States. At first, the proposal was to have the United Nations supervise the election for the whole Korea, but it was soon modified to hold a separate election for South Korea as the Soviet Union disapproved of the

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[213] Cho, *Korea in World Politics, 1940-1950; an Evaluation of American Responsibility*.197
[214] Ibid.197
[215] Ibid.201
[216] Ibid.201

plan. The United Nations Temporary Commission in Korea had arrived in Seoul on January 1948 to administer a general election for a Korean government.

The decision to carry out a separate election in South Korea was met by a number of demonstrations in South Korea, which were repressed by extreme violence, labeling anyone who opposed the election as Communists. One such demonstration was the Jeju April 3rd incident which started on March 1947 when police shot to death six civilian demonstrators who resisted the separate election for South Korea. The incident met an angry response when the South Korean Worker's Party, a leftist political organization, attacked twelve police stations on April 3rd 1948.

Despite the protests in South Korea against the separate election, the U.N-administered election took place in May. The participants of the election included Rhee and the Korean Democratic Party. The nationalists of the former Korean Provisional Government, including Kim Ku and Kim Kyu Shik, boycotted the election. The fate of these two leaders would be tragic; Kim Ku would be assassinated in 1949 and Kim Kyu Shik would be abducted to North Korea during the Korean War in 1950. On the other hand, the election was a landslide victory for Rhee and the Korean Democratic Party. Rhee became the first president of Republic of Korea with his inauguration in August 1948.

After the creation of South Korea, places like Jeju where citizens had opposed to the separate election continued to be suppressed. Jeju Island was considered a haven for dangerous Communists and was treated harshly by the South Korean government, whose policies were extremely hostile to any leftist which seemed "too Communist". On October 17th 1948, a decree was promulgated in Jeju Island that

"All of the people who pass around the inner-mountain areas of Jeju farther than 5km from the seashore after October 20, 1948 will be regarded as rebels and shall be shot to death." [217] Martial law was proclaimed in November 1948, providing a death warrant for residents of Jeju who were suspicious of Communist activities. The A report in 2003 revealed that the total number of victims related to the April 3rd incident were 25,000-30,000. [218] Acknowledgement of the violence done to innocent civilians was only made half a century later, when the former president Roh of South Korea acknowledged this incident and made a public apology in 2003.

[217] Tae-Ung Baik, "The Remedies for the Victims of the Jeju April Third Incidents," in *Rethinking Historical Injustice and Reconciliation in Northeast Asia: The Korean Experience*, ed. Gi-Wook Shin (New York: Routledge, 2007).97
[218] Ibid.97

Conclusion

The establishment of a fervently anti-Communist South Korean government in 1945 could not immediately succeed in creating a democratic state. The competition with the Communist North Korea and the need to tighten national security were often used to centralize government power at the expense of civil liberties. The subsequent history of South Korea is filled with stories of military dictators who justified their authoritarian rule by directing attention to the threat of Communists, both in South and North Korea. In the process, violent acts on civilians, such as the Jeju April 3rd incident, took place. This turbulent journey of South Korea's democratization compels us to ask again: was there any moment in Korean history before 1948 which could have led us to an alternative?

One of the biggest problems faced by Korea at the dawn of its independence in 1945 was the lack of indigenous political leadership strong enough to implement a united, self-government. [219] Although the Committee for Preparation of Korean Independence (CPKI) had been highly successful in assisting a smooth transition of authority from the Japanese, it ultimately lacked the ability to mitigate hostilities with the conservatives, that was at a grassroots level exacerbated by the arrival of the World Powers. The lack of leadership was even more serious for the Korean Democratic Party (KDP), which had largely been portrayed as pro-Japanese traitors. To fill their leadership voids, both the CPKI and KDP turned to the Korean Provisional Government.

[219] Stueck, *Rethinking the Korean War : A New Diplomatic and Strategic History*.4

In this respect, the arrival of the leaders of the Korean Provisional Government in Seoul in 1945 marked a crucial moment. Had Rhee Syngman, Kim Ku, and Kim Kyu Shik been united and exerted concerted efforts to mitigate the right-left division when they arrived in Korea in 1945, Korea might have been able to overcome its political disintegration. In the best case scenario, this could have eased the right-left rift between the KDP and CPKI and eventually integrate the Communists in creating a Korea that Jo So Ang's Three Equality Theory had envisioned, where Koreans could have equality in politics, economy, and education.

But, what caught the attention of the leaders of the Korean Provisional Government was not so much the disintegration between the political groups in Korea but the debate on placing Korea under trusteeship that took place in the December 1945 Moscow Conference. Kim Ku and Rhee were the most impassioned opponents to the decision of the Moscow Conference and launched a fervent anti-trusteeship movement. For the nationalists, the anti-trusteeship movement represented the "second March First Movement" [220]which could embrace all Koreans. Nevertheless, in hindsight, it becomes clear that their attempt to overcome political differences by adhering to nationalism in the anti-trusteeship movement was the first mistake in a series that resulted in a divided Korea.

The anti-trusteeship movement was seen by the KDP and the former pro-Japanese collaborators as an opportunity to compensate for their past. At that moment, those who repressed Koreans under the former colonial rule joined the nationalist movement. The meaning of nationalism embraced by the anti-trusteeship movement

[220] Myung-lim Park, "The Internalization of the Cold War in Korea: Entangling the Domestic Politics with the Global Cold War in 1946," *International Journal of Korean History* 2 (2001).316

was obscured even more when the Communists, who were then the most avid advocates for eradicating the pro-Japanese collaborators, changed their position from opposing to supporting the Moscow Conference. Hence, the launching of a fervent anti-trusteeship movement, meant to overcome ideological differences and unite Koreans through a common nationalism instead deepened the splits between the right and left.

Another critical moment when the division between the two could have been resolved was when Hodge attempted to create the Joint Commission in October 1946. At that time, Hodge had changed his position from advocating the Korean Democratic Party to supporting the Joint Commission and pushed for the development of moderate political parties. Yo Un Hyong and Kim Kyu Shik were at the center of this movement and attempted to bring in different factions from both radical communists and the conservative rightists into the joint efforts. However, as is often the fate of moderate leaders, more extremist elements of both sides condemned their efforts, including Rhee and Kim Ku on the right and the Communists on the left.

It was only at the end of 1946 that Kim Ku started disagreeing with Rhee. Rhee was preparing to set up a South Korean government to gain complete independence that was separate from the Communists. When Kim Ku split from Rhee and made a joint statement with Kim Kyu Shik and Jo Son Ang in March of 1947 to collaborate in establishing a unified Korea, it was already too late to overcome the left-right divide; the preparation to set up a separate government in South Korea was well underway and consolidation of Communist power in the northern half of Korea had already taken place.

However, an examination of the twenty six years of the Korean Provisional Government tells us that these leaders' choice to turn to nationalism as a way to form a coalition was a direct result of their experience in the Korean Provisional Government. As an unrecognized body that was extremely vulnerable to the ideological splits, nationalism and anti-Japanese sentiment had been repeatedly used, and in a number of situations was successful in bridging ideological differences. We see this in the movement toward a united front with the outbreak of the1937 Sino-Japanese War and successful integration of the leftists and Rhee into the Korean Provisional Government during World War II. While nationalism ceased to be the complete solution to ideological splits, it was the best answer leaders of the Korean Provisional Government had.

The story of the Korean Provisional Government after the 1945 independence also reveals the controversial nature of the establishment of the South Korean government. The decision to establish a separate South Korea arose from the disagreement over the kind of government in unified Korea and ultimately on the Americans and the right-leaning nationalists to prevent Communist influence from entering the half of Korea, south of 38th parallel.

In this respect, the Korean Provisional Government contrasts with the present South Korean government in that it came before the North-South ideological splits. When the Korean Provisional Government was formed first in 1919, it was only two years after the Russian revolution and at that time, nationalism prevailed over ideological differences. This difference between the two governments partly explains why they are sometimes seen as incompatible with each other.

This tension bring us back to the present where South Koreans still fervently debate about how to place the Korean Provisional Government in South Korea's history of democracy. In the recent dispute that took place over celebrating South Korea's 60th anniversary, the conservatives, who dominate the present South Korean government, angered the liberals by distributing pamphlets that downplay the role of the Korean Provisional Government in Korea's democracy.

The liberals fervently protested against it until it was finally decided that that the pamphlet would be revised before reprinting. The heated nature of the controversy illustrates the significance of the Korean Provisional Government in Korea's contemporary politics: although the Korean Provisional Government was ultimately not recognized as a legitimate government of Korea, the political ideologies and the political rivalries formed during the period of continues to exist in modern Korean politics.

Appendix

Constitution of the Provisional Government of Korea (April 11th 1919)

By the will of God, the people of Korea, both from Seoul and the provinces, have united in a peaceful declaration of their independence in the Korean capital, and for over a month have carried on their demonstrations in over three hundred districts. A provisional government, organized in complete accord with popular faith, proclaims a provisional constitution that the provisional council of state has adopted in order to pass on to our posterity the blessings of sovereign independence.

1. The Korean Republic shall be a democratic Republic.
2. A provisional government shall govern the Korean Republic in accordance with the decision of a provisional legislative council.
3. There shall be no class distinctions among the citizens of the Korea Republic, and men and women, noble and common, rich and poor, shall have complete equality.
4. The citizens of the Korean Republic shall have personal and property rights including the freedoms of faith, speech, writing, publishing, association, assembly, and dwelling.
5. A citizen of the Korean Republic, unless disfranchised, shall have the right to vote or to be elected.
6. The citizens of the Korean Republic shall be subject to compulsory education, taxation, and military conscription.
7. The Korean Republic shall join the League of Nations in order to demonstrate to the world that its creation has been accord with the will of God and also to make a contribution to world civilization and peace.
8. The Korean Republic shall extend favorable treatment to the former imperial family.
9. The death penalty, corporal punishment, and open prostitution shall be abolished.
10. Within one year following the recovery of the national land, the provisional government shall convene a national assembly.

Traveling Route of Korean Provisional Government (1919-1945)

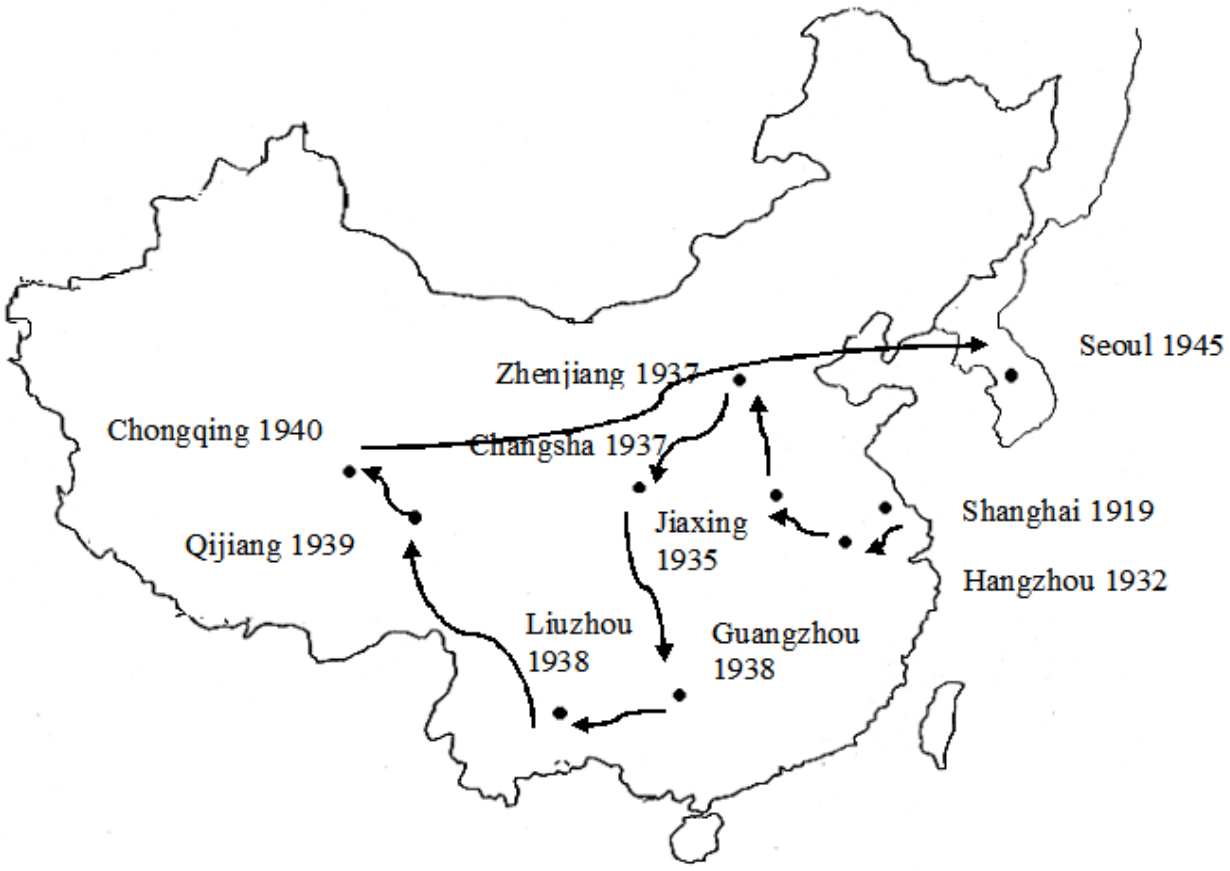


Chart I. (1919.3-1919.9)

Creating a united Korean Provisional Government

Provisional Government in Vladivostok

Chairman Moon Chang Bum
Vice Chairman Kim Cheol Hoon
President Son Byung Hee
Vice President Park Young Hoo
Prime Minister Lee Seung
Minister of Land Yoon Hyun Jin
Minister of Military Lee Tong Hwi
Minister f Domestic Affairs Ahn Chang Ho
Minister of Industry Nam Hyung Woo
Chief of Staff Yoo Dong

Provisional Government in Shanghai

Premier Rhee Syngman
Minister of Domestic Affairs An Chang Ho
Minister of Foreign Affairs Kim Kyu Shik
Minister of Justice Yi Shi Young
Minister of Finance Choe Chae Hyong
Minister of Military Affairs Yi Tong Hwi
Minister of Transportation Mun Chang Bum

Provisional Government in Seoul

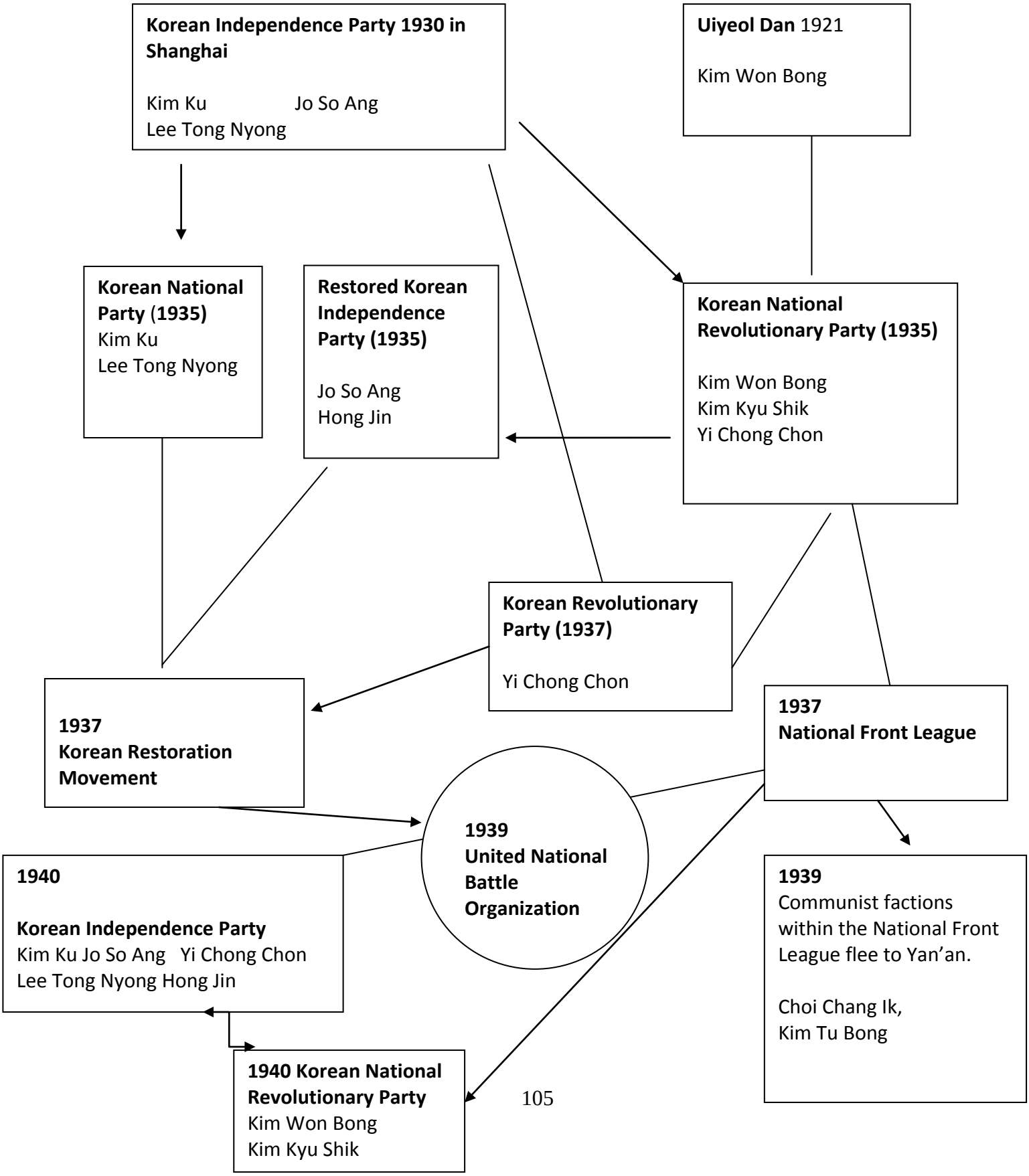
Executive in Chief : Rhee Syngman
Minister of Foreign Affairs: Park Young Man
Chief Executive of Domestic Affairs: Lee Tong Nyong
Minister of Military: Roh Baik Lyn
Minister of Finance: Li Shi Young
Minister of Justice: Shin Kyu Shik
Minister of Education: Kim Kyu Shik
Minister of Transportation: Moon Chang Bum

Korean Provisional Government

President: Rhee Syngman
Premier: Yi Tong Hwi
Home Minister: Lee Tong Nyong
Foreign Minister: Park Young Man
Defense Minister: No (Ro) Paek Rin
Finance Minister: Lee, Shi Yong
Minister of Justice: Shin Kyu Shik
Minister of Education: Kim Kyu Shik
Minister of Transportation: Mun Chang Bum
Director of Bureau of Labor: Ahn Chang Ho

Chart II (1932-1940)

Right-Left Competition during the Moving Period



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