

## **A Cocktail of Vices: International Ethics and the Jeju Incident\***

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### **Abstract**

This paper presents an analysis of the Jeju 4.3 incident through a framework of virtue, vice and international ethics. By utilizing primary source documents such as the United States' Military Intelligence reports (the G-2 Weekly Summaries and Periodic Reports), the incident is described as arising from a "cocktail of vices" – including not only cognitive errors, but also affective vices of character such as factionalism and the inability to compromise. Seen in this way, the Jeju incident offers a lesson about international ethics of which we should be mindful as we move towards the peaceful unification of the two Koreas.

Key Words: Democracy, United Nations, Elections, Korea, United States, Jeju Island

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## 1. Background to the Jeju Incident

Sometimes referred to the “4.3 Incident” or the “Jeju Rebellion” (Merrill 1980), the extended period of violence on Jeju Island, South Korea has no official name. The “unnamed monument” at the Jeju 4.3 Peace Park indicates the variety of descriptions for the episode such as “demonstration, strike, revolt, incident, case,” and symbolizes the fact that the Jeju incident lacks “historical definition.”<sup>1)</sup> For the purposes of this paper I refer to the period of violence as the “Jeju incident” or simply “the incident.”

The official investigate report of the Jeju incident identifies the date of March 1, 1947 as its starting point (The Jeju 4.3 Incident Investigation Report 2013, 123-120 (hereinafter “Report”)), but the extended period of violence has become synonymous with the date of April 3, 1948, or simply “4.3.” Referring to the incident simply as “*sasam*” (사삼)<sup>2)</sup> the single day of April 3, 1948 is used as shorthand for the period of violence that officially ended on September 21, 1954 (Report 2013, 628). Those exposed to the incident will see the date of 4.3 on virtually everything associated with it. Its official investigative report is entitled “The Jeju 4.3 Incident Investigation Report” (제주4.3사건진상조사보고서), the Peace Park /Museum devoted to the incident is known as the Jeju 4.3 Peace Park (제주4.3평화공원). Further, the apology offered by former South Korean President Roh Moo-Hyun of October 31, 2003, refers to the “4.3 incident” repeatedly, though President Roh acknowledges the official beginning and end dates of March 1, 1947 and September 21, 1954, respectively (Report 2013, 659-660).

Notwithstanding the ubiquity of the date of April 3, 1948, it is poignant that the official start date of the incident is March 1, 1947. As will be discussed, both March 1, 1947 and April 3, 1948 are important dates of the incident, for violence broke out on both of these dates. The violence of March 1, 1947, however, was a different nature than that of April 3, 1948. The violence of March 1, 1947 was non-ideological, domestic and occurred during a commemorative celebration of the March 1, 1919 uprising. That earlier 1919 event, discussed below, occurred prior

1) For further discussion about the monument, see the conclusion and note 18, *infra*.

2) 사삼 means the third day (sam/삼 ) of the fourth month (sa/사), so 4.3.

to the establishment of both the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel and the establishment of the United Nations (UN) and, as such, is an important historical memory around which all Koreans can be united. The violence of April 3, 1948, on the other hand, was ideological, international and unlinked to the historical memory of Korea. The violence of April 3, 1948 was a tactical move to halt the permanent division of the two Koreas which the south-only, UN sponsored elections were seen to effectuate. This evolution and escalation of violence – from the non-ideological and domestic, to the ideological and international, was due to a number of vices, both cognitive (and hence pertaining to belief) and affective (and hence pertaining to desire, character and temperament). Let us begin our discussion at the official beginning of the Jeju incident, that of March 1, 1947.

### March 1, 1947: Expectation and Reality

March 1, 1947 was an important commemorative day to Koreans. It marked the 28<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the March 1, 1919 democratic, non-violent uprising for Korean independence and self-determination known as *Sam-il* day.<sup>3)</sup> Inspired by a demonstration of Korean students studying abroad in Tokyo on February 8, 1919, who were themselves inspired by U.S. President Woodrow Wilson’s notion of the right to self-determination (Wells 1989), *Sam-il* day was strategically organized in Korea while the world powers were re-organizing the world after World War I. The citizens of Korea – men, women and children – and with a strong student contingent – “spoke truth to power” by reading a forward-thinking “Declaration of Independence” and shouting cries of “Mansei!” (Independence!) (McKenzie 1920, 252-256). The demonstration was deliberately non-violent (McKenzie 1920, 5). Subsequent to the demonstration, a Korean Provisional Government (headquartered in Shanghai, China) arose as a result (Lee 1963, 129-155). A progressive constitution was drafted, granting universal suffrage and abolishing the death penalty (McKenzie 1920, 304-305). In Korea, Japan responded to this courageous and inspiring movement with great brutality, arresting and torturing thousands,

3) “Sam” (삼) refers to the third month (March). “il” (일) refers to the first day of that month. Hence Sam-il day (March 1<sup>st</sup>). The day is frequently referred to as the March 1<sup>st</sup> Movement (삼일운동) in Korea.

including women and children (McKenzie 1920, 260; Kang 2018).<sup>4)</sup>

The United States expected violence on the commemoration of the 28<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Sam-il* day – March 1<sup>st</sup>, 1947 (United States Army Forces in Korea (hereinafter USAFIK), G-2 Weekly Summary 1947, #75). This was the second commemoration after “Liberation,” and at the time, Koreans in the area south of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel were living under the Military Government established by the United States. The United States, in consultation with other powers, planned for the eventual independence of Korea (including both northern and southern zones) through the mechanism of *Trusteeship*. Adopted at the Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers in late December 1945, and hence prior to Japan’s formal surrender in August of that year, the plan consisted in a shared-power arrangement involving four countries: the United States, the United Kingdom, The Soviet Union and China, all of whom were to jointly govern Korea for at least five years (Report 2013, 108). The plan encountered wide opposition from the Korean population which had suffered greatly under Japan’s imperialism. Indeed, Koreans viewed “Trusteeship” as imperialism, albeit under a different name. As the United States observed:

Those close to the situation agree that the great majority of Koreans, regardless of political affiliation, are against trusteeship as they insist on defining it, i.e. another long period of domination by a foreign power or powers. (USAFIK G-2 Weekly Summary 1947, #73).

The United States urged that “Trusteeship” did not mean “domination,” but rather something more benign like “assistance,” but to no avail (USAFIK G-2 Weekly Summary 1947, #94).

It is easy to understand why Koreans were so opposed to Trusteeship. Foreign powers did not have a good track record in their fair dealings with Korea. Japan of course was the most obvious and recent in memory. But the trail of injustices

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4) For a recent account of arguably the most famous personality of the movement, Ryu Gwansun, a schoolgirl who was tortured and died in prison at a mere 17 years old, see Inyoung Kang, “Overlooked No More: Yu Gwan-sun, a Korean Independence Activist Who Defied Japanese Rule,” *New York Times*, March 28, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/28/obituaries/overlooked-yu-gwan-sun.html>.

was both long and wide, reaching back all the way back to the pre-World War I era, and involving numerous countries. Among them were the United States and the United Kingdom – both parties to the Trusteeship plan.

### A Trail of Injustices

To get a sense of these earlier injustices, we must note that Korea began to oppose Japan's imperialism much earlier than the famous uprising of March 1, 1919. The Japan-Korea Treaty of 1904 was negotiated just two weeks after the battle of Port Arthur, which commenced the Russo-Japanese war in February of that year, a war primarily fought over Korea (Dennett 1924, 18). The Japan-Korea Treaty of 1904 recognized the independence and territorial integrity of Korea, and it also allowed Japan to use Korea as a base of operations against Russia (Appeal 1922, 9). However, after defeating Russia, Japan – instead of recognizing the independence of Korea, established permanent military bases throughout the peninsula (Appeal 1922, 9). This paved the way for the formal annexation of Korea in 1910 (Lee 1963, 19).

Seeking assistance against Japan's aggressive posturing, in 1905 Emperor Gojong of Korea dispatched U.S. citizen Homer Hulbert to the United States to remind President Roosevelt of the United States' obligations to Korea pursuant to the 1882 Treaty of Peace, Amity, Commerce and Navigation between Korea and the United States (New York Times 1905). Article 1 of that Treaty obliged the United States to use its "good offices"<sup>5)</sup> in the event that another country should act "unjustly or oppressively" against it. The United States gave Hulbert a rather chilly reception, effectively ignoring Emperor Gojong's plea for assistance (New York Times 1916).

Korea's effort in reminding the United States of its obligation continued to be made all the way up to April 1945 – at the conference which established the UN, which, importantly, occurred prior to the establishment of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel.<sup>6)</sup> At

5) A party that exercises its "good offices" seeks to facilitate dialogue between the parties to a dispute, so as to arrive at an amicable and non-violent way of resolving it. United Nations Office of Legal Affairs, Codification Division, *Handbook on Peaceful Settlement of Disputes between States* (New York: United Nations, 1992), 33-45.

that conference in which the UN Charter was drafted, the Provisional Government of Korea submitted a Plea or “Memorial.” The Memorial begins by quoting Article I of the 1882 Korea-United States Treaty, and then shortly thereafter mentions the fateful year of 1905 (Korean Memorial, 1945).<sup>7)</sup>

The Memorial’s reference to 1905 reminds the powers assembled at the UN organizing conference that they have forgotten their solemn treaty obligations to Korea. And while the Memorial singled out the U.S., it was not just the U.S. which abrogated its duty to Korea. The United Kingdom, France, The Soviet Union, Denmark and Belgium – all of whom were present at the UN organizing conference – also had legally binding treaties with Korea which contained a provision similar to Article 1 of the United States Treaty (Appeal 1922, 13).<sup>8)</sup> As such, these countries were obliged to assist Korea in the event that another country, such as Japan, unjustly interfered with its interests (Appeal 1922, 17). In its Memorial, Korea is kindly reminding the powers organizing the UN of this morally (and legally) relevant history. The Memorial observes the failure of the United States (as well as others) to honor the sacred duty of good faith by noting that “[t]he Koreans feel that treaties and official declarations are and should be made to be kept, not to cover up national ambitions.”

A review of this earlier history, and of the record of how foreign powers treated Korea, helps us to appreciate the sentiment which was behind Koreans’ opposition towards Trusteeship. Poor was the powers’ track record of sincerity and good faith. Indeed, as early as 1919 Koreans were complaining about the failure of other countries to honor their obligations, and even made reference to “scraps of paper at the Hague” in 1919 (Lynh 1919, 95-96). There, they were referring to yet another moment of international perfidy, that of the 1907 Hague Peace Conference, which Korea attempted to attend in order to seek assistance as it had done in 1905 (Kang 1995, 21-23). At The Hague, Korea witnessed yet again the failure of

6) The division of the Korean peninsula along the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel was made by Dean Rusk and Charles Bonesteel shortly after the Japanese surrender on August 14, 1945. See Dean Rusk, *As I saw it* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 1990), 123-124.

7) The Memorial appears in its entirety in the Appendix of this paper. I am grateful to Central Michigan University librarian Anita M. Gordon for helping me to find this document.

8) Germany, Russia and Italy also had treaty obligations, but they were not among the allied countries invited to San Francisco in 1945.

numerous countries to honor their treaty obligations to Korea. Understandably, the majority of Koreans were skeptical of the Trusteeship arrangement.

In the beginning, opposition to Trusteeship was not ideological, and hence not an issue of Right vs. Left. Rather, the opposition to Trusteeship was rooted in the shared memories of Japan's imperial domination and, sadly, the international community's indifference thereto. Also uniting Koreans was the shared yearning for independence, for which Koreans had been struggling since 1905. Yet, this moment of solidarity in which Koreans were opposed to Trusteeship did not have the fortitude to withstand the wave of unleashed psycho-social forces, caused by years of hardships and injustices – among them, the insouciance of foreign powers – which eventually led to fracture and therewith to factions among the Korean people. Eventually, Koreans became divided over the Trusteeship issue. The Korean Communist Party had a change of heart and came out in favor of Trusteeship (Report 2013, 109). Then, an *anti*-Trusteeship resolution passed in the Korean Interim Legislative Assembly (KILA) on January 20, 1947 (USAFIK G-2 Weekly Summary 1947, #72).<sup>9)</sup> The Trusteeship issue became ideological.

In 1947, U.S. intelligence about the March 1 commemorative demonstrations indicated that there would be ideological violence in connection with the Trusteeship issue. So-called “Rightist groups,” demonstrating their anti-Trusteeship stance, were expected to foment violence on that day (USAFIK G-2 Weekly Summary 1947, #75). While there was violence in Seoul on that day, disturbances on the mainland were “minimal” on March 1, 1947 (USAFIK G-2 Weekly Summary 1947, #77). The U.S. acknowledges some casualties, but it was Rightists groups that were ultimately behind these disturbances. In fact, the USAFIK observes the misleading reporting on March 1, 1947 by “Rightists papers” such as the *Hyun Dai Ilbo* and the *Minju Daily Ilbo* (USAFIK G-2 Weekly Summary 1947, #78). According to the USAFIK, those papers falsely claimed that “Reds” caused the violence. In actuality, says the USAFIK, “the Left” was “exceptionally

9) The KILA was established in 1946 by the American Command to “provide the Koreans with a more representative voice in policy matters,” and was the “Korean element” of the American Military Government. The members of this ninety-man Assembly were appointed by General John R. Hodge. Originally, however, the Assembly was envisaged to include only 45 appointees, the remainder being elected. Irregularities in election procedures made this unworkable. See George McCune, “Post-War Government and Politics of Korea,” *The Journal of Politics* 9 no. 4 (November 1947): 613-617.

well behaved” and it was “Rightists” who were responsible for the disturbances:

Actually disturbances on 01 and 02 March were the direct result of rightists’ activities. The leftists were exceptionally well behaved and only their tacit cooperation with the police in SEOUL prevented the incipient riot at South Gate from getting out of hand. The majority of deaths were the result of police rifle fire. (USAFIK G-2 Weekly Summary 1947, #78).

Albeit, this account borders on contradictory. On the one hand it implicates Rightists in the violence, on the other hand, it implicates the police. It is not clear whether the violence is ideological or not. This lack of clarity is the breeding ground for misjudgments, as well as other sorts of epistemological vices. This point will be elaborated on in due course.

So was the case on the mainland on March 1, 1947. The USAFIK expected ideologically based violence (coming from Rightists groups) who were opposed to the plan of Trusteeship. On Jeju Island, the situation was a bit different on the 28<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Sam-il* day. Violence erupted, and it certainly did *not* involve the Trusteeship issue, nor was it between the Right and the Left. However, as we shall see, the USAFIK did not see it in this way.

### March 1, 1947 on Jeju Island

As in Seoul, on March 1, 1947 there was a commemorative celebration of *Sam il* Day on Jeju Island. During the celebration, a mounted policeman failed to express concern after his horse kicked a child who suddenly jumped near the horse. Crowd members began to throw stones at the policeman, and followed him as he rode back to the police station (Report 2013, 132). The station responded with gunfire, leading to the death and injury of civilians, including the death of a 15-year-old elementary school student (Report 2013, 133). Instead of admitting the mistake and expressing remorse for the bystanders who had been injured and killed, the police insisted that the shooting was an act of self-defense that was necessary to maintain public order (Report 2013, 134). Additionally, it was discovered that

the shooters were members of the police reserves that had been brought to Jeju from the mainland. This further aroused the ire of citizens (Report 2013, 133).

The Jeju Island violence of March 1, 1947 was neither between Right and Left, nor was it directed against Trusteeship. Rather, the violence that erupted on March 1, 1947 was between the crowd celebrating March 1 and the police. Further, the fact that the police were *expecting* violence on that day led to violence. To see this, we must note an additional shooting on March 1, 1947 on Jeju Island – one involving a hospital. This “Hospital Shooting Incident” as we will call it, happened subsequent to the horse/child incident discussed above. Two policemen were stationed at a hospital as guards (one outside, one inside) “as a precaution against March 1 rioting” (USAFIK G-2 Weekly Summary 1947, #79). Primed for and hence expecting violence, the guard on the outside shot at two citizens who were simply bringing a wounded comrade into the hospital, thereby injuring one of the citizens. Hearing the gunshot, the guard stationed inside subsequently fired, injuring the other citizen (USAFIK G-2 Weekly Summary 1947, #79; Report 2013, 133-134). According to the USAFIK, the police in the Hospital Shooting Incident engaged in behavior “irreconcilable with rational thinking” (USAFIK G-2 Weekly Summary 1947, #79).

Neither the Hospital Shooting Incident nor the horse/child incident had anything to do with “Trusteeship.” Nor were these incidents ideological and involving the Right versus the Left. Yet, like a cancer, an ideological narrative, perpetrated by the United States, spread into the perception of the violence on Jeju Island.

The USAFIK analyzed the Hospital Shooting Incident more than a week after its occurrence on March 1, 1947. In fact, the Hospital Shooting Incident is mentioned in connection with the General Strike of March 10, 1947. The General Strike was organized against the police violence of March 1 and was “unprecedented in Korean history,” as it involved over 95% of Jeju businesses including public agencies and civic enterprises (Report 2013, 647). The General Strike was not ideological and was participated in by both the Left and the Right. As the USAFIK observed:

[T]he general strike is believed to be Communist inspired but participated in by both Left and Right as a protest against the killing of six persons and the wounding of six others during unauthorized demonstrations and rioting on 01 March in CHEJU City. (USAFIK, G-2 Weekly Summary 1947, #79).

The characterization of the strike as “communist inspired” but “participated in by both Left and Right” is instructive. It shows that there is something that is *uniting* Left and Right. What was this thing? One possible answer is growing animosity against the police. But there were political tensions than ran deeper than this animosity. Indeed, the decision to link the Trusteeship issue to the commemoration of *Sam-il* day capitalized on these shared memories of foreign domination and imperialism.

The police shootings of March 1 on Jeju Island triggered traumatic memories in the people, and true to the spirit of March 1, 1919, they reacted non-violently, with the General Strike. In fact, during the *Sam-il* movement in 1919, a similar General Strike was organized in response to the brutality of the Japanese. In Seoul, shopkeepers closed their businesses as a peaceful way to both show sympathy with those who were arrested by the police, and to demand their release. On March 8, 1919, a leaflet was distributed to the merchants in Seoul which read as follows:

Public Pledge of all Seoul Merchants

1. *On March 9 all stores will close.*
2. *We will participate in demonstration marches but will not commit any acts of violence.*
3. *Stores that violate this pledge will be severely dealt with.* (Baldwin 1969, 99)

Japanese soldiers and armed police compelled the shopkeepers to open their businesses, and crueler brutalities ensued (Korean Independence Movement 1919, 12-14). Some involved in the General Strike in Jeju on March 10, 1947 undoubtedly had memories of the 1919 General Strike. The “March 1, 1919 spirit”<sup>10)</sup> as well as the earlier moments during which the international community turned its back on Korea, helped to unify Koreans in Jeju in their peaceful

opposition to police brutality via the General Strike of March 10.

Unfortunately, the U.S. analyzes the Hospital Shooting Incident in connection with the General Strike of March 10, conjoining and conflating a violent episode (The Hospital Shooting Incident) with a non-violent one (the General Strike). This is a point of contamination, and it is not the only difficulty with the analysis. After discussing the strike and describing Jeju as a “Left-Wing stronghold,” the USAFIK describes and then explains the Hospital Shooting Incident:

The province of CHEJU DO is known as a Left Wing stronghold with a reported seventy percent of its population being sympathizers or affiliates with the Left Wing parties. Notable is the fact that this strike indicates what can happen in a Korean community when the majority of the populace, either Right or Left, obdurately support what they believe to be just demands. As to the police action: the shooting which occurred at the hospital seems irreconcilable with rational thinking. However, it must be borne in mind that those who reportedly did the firing in CHEJU City had been trained in TAEJON and will long remember the profane atrocities committed against fellow policemen by Leftist rioters in the fall of 1946. The supposed proximate cause of the unfortunate situation: Leftist demonstrations contrary to an express order prohibiting them – the same reason which resulted in other deaths in South KOREA on 01 March. (USAFIK G-2 Weekly Summary 1947, #79).

Note how this explanation links a number of unfortunate attributes to “Leftists” – who, according to the U.S., comprise 70% of the Jeju population. The “profane atrocities of Leftist rioters” are mentioned, as well as blame for the violence being placed on “Leftist demonstrations.” Indeed, the mention of this “Leftist caused violence” in connection with the Hospital Shooting Incident further blackens the perception of Leftists as inclined towards violence. Moreover, the U.S. injects an irrelevant ideological element into the violence of March 1, completely inconsistent with its earlier analysis. Above, the U.S. identifies the proximate cause of the March 1, 1947 violence as “Leftist demonstrations contrary to an express order

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10) As John Merrill points out, the “March 1 spirit” was behind the response to the violence on March 1, 1947. John Merrill, “The Cheju-do Rebellion,” *Journal of Korean Studies* 2 (1980): 139-197.

prohibiting them” (USAFIK G-2 Weekly Summary 1947, #79). Yet, as we saw in the earlier G2 summary, the *original* expectation was for violence perpetrated by *Rightists*, confirmed by the USAFIK’s own report that notes that the disturbances “were the direct result of rightists activities” (USAFIK G-2 Weekly Summary 1947, #78). The above analysis positing “Leftists demonstrations” as the cause of violence flatly contradicts that analysis.

Of course, the contradiction can be avoided on the view that, in Seoul, Rightists caused the violence, whereas in Jeju, it was Leftists who did so. Indeed, in G-2 weekly summary #77, one finds the claim “a mob, assumed to be leftists, attacked the police building” as well as “[L]eftists seized the opportunity to perpetrate attacks against the police.” (USAFIK G-2 Weekly Summary 1947, #77). However, the “evidence” (50% of which consists in mere assumption) for the claim that Leftists caused the violence in Jeju is undermined with the more thorough analysis of the horse shooting incident described in a subsequent summary. (USAFIK G-2 Weekly Summary 1947, #79). That more thorough analysis notes that the violence was not ideological, but was against police brutality. At any rate, there is confusion in the USAFIK’s analysis about the nature of the violence on Jeju and whether it is ideological, or whether it is more “neutral” and against police brutality. The widespread nature of the March 10 General Strike – which the U.S. notes is participated in by both Right and Left and is against police brutality, lends further support to the view that the violence on Jeju on March 1, 1947 was *not* ideological. Rather, there was something around which the Right and the Left were united.

But for some reason, the General Strike of March 10 entrenched the USAFIK’s view that the violence on March 1 was Leftist inspired. Indeed, *before* the General Strike of March 10, the USAFIK wavers on the question of whether the March 1<sup>st</sup> violence on Jeju is ideological. Yet, after the General Strike, the events of March 1 are seen as “Leftist,” even though the strike is not ideological. What causes this move into an ideological interpretation of the violence? Surely part of the explanation is the United States’ resolve to fight communism and wage a Cold War against the Soviet Union. But there are other factors pertaining to international ethics that should be recognized in our attempt to understand this slip into ideology.

## 2. International Ethics and the Jeju Incident

International ethics is concerned not only with the proper behavior of states, but also with the “inner resources” – beliefs, desires, dispositions of character – operative in individuals and networks which contribute to the moral worth (or in some cases, moral turpitude) of actions on the international stage. To be sure, the Jeju incident deserves moral censure, and we should be clear on some of the injurious ingredients – the “cocktail of vices” – that contributed to this tragedy. We have already mentioned one of these ingredients – the failure of certain countries to honor their legal obligations to assist Korea. A core maxim of international law (usually attributed to Hugo Grotius (1583-1645), is *pacta sunt servanda* (respect your agreements) (Wehberg 1959, 779). *Pacta sunt servanda* was certainly not observed by other countries in their agreements with Korea. These breaches of “good faith” – or to use a more direct term coined by philosopher Jean Paul Sartre, these acts of *bad faith* (Sartre 2007, 47) are among the injurious ingredients that contributed to the Jeju incident. For they both enabled Japan to commit its injustices, *and* they sowed the seeds of Koreans’ distrust and skepticism of foreign powers. These acts of bad faith contributed to the toxicity of affect and emotion that was instrumental in deepening fractures among the Korean people.

In addition to bad faith, a host of other ills all contributed to engineering and sustaining an ideological interpretation of violence that became the Jeju incident. Let us continue our discussion of the vices involved in the incident by discussing a cognitive error (or to use another term, a “cognitive bias”) known as *biased assimilation*.

### Recognizing Biased Assimilation as a Check Against Political Bias

Biased assimilation or “confirmation bias” is the tendency to interpret data in a way that supports a preconception or a pre-established entrenched position (Lord and Ross 1979, 2099). People tend to interpret subsequent evidence in a way that supports their pre-existing beliefs, even when that evidence is inconsistent with

these beliefs. As the original authors of the famous 1979 study confirming this hypothesis state, “completely inconsistent or even random data—when ‘processed’ in a suitably biased fashion—can maintain or even reinforce one’s preconceptions.” (Lord and Ross 1979, 2099).

As we saw, the USAFIK explains the March 1, 1947 Hospital Shooting Incident as the result of the police being haunted by memories of “profane atrocities committed against fellow policemen by Leftist rioters in the fall of 1946” because the policemen had been “trained in Taejon” where such atrocities happened (USAFIK G-2 Weekly Summary 1947, #79). However, there is another explanation that we can provide, one which is ideologically neutral and less tendentious, that of *assimilation bias*.

The expectation of violence is a dangerous thing, especially given the reality of biased assimilation. Unsurprisingly, in explaining the Hospital Shooting Incident, the U.S. Military does *not* recognize it as an instance of assimilation bias (although as early as the 1600s, the phenomenon was recognized by philosopher Francis Bacon) (Lord and Ross 1979, 2098). Instead, the U.S. explains the shooting as an effect of “traumatic memories of leftist riots.” Now, perhaps *both* traumatic memories *and* assimilation bias caused the Hospital Shooting Incident. We just do not know. But strong support for the “assimilation bias” interpretation comes from the fact that it allows us to move away an emotionally charged narrative – one which recalls “profane atrocities caused by Leftists,” which effectively blackens the perception of this group. Such a tendentious narrative perpetuates the view that Leftists are barbaric as they cause profane acts of violence.

In addition to avoiding a tendentious narrative that blackens the perception of “Leftists,” interpreting the Hospital Shooting Incident as arising from assimilation bias has a further virtue. It eschews the deeply problematic framework Right and the Left (further explained below). Instead of recycling the narrative about “profane atrocities caused by Leftists,” we should simply say that the police fired because they were expecting violence based on the intelligence provided by the U.S. This account acknowledges the cognitive error of assimilation bias, and in so doing takes the “middle ground,” thereby avoiding interpreting the violence through an ideological lens. Put another way, recognizing biased assimilation is a check

against political bias and therefore assists in avoiding partisan interpretations that demonize a particular political ideology.

At any rate, by the time of April 3, 1948, the ideological lens becomes entrenched indeed. The fractures that began in the KILA over the Trusteeship issue had deepened significantly, thus eroding the March 1, 1919 spirit of solidarity. Aiding and abetting this erosion was the “divide and conquer” framework of “Right vs. Left,” itself an unhealthy ingredient for the purposes of a more wholesome international ethics. Focusing on the date most associated with the Jeju incident, that of April 3, 1948, illuminates this point.

### **Ideology, Violence and April 3, 1948**

As mentioned earlier, the date of April 3, 1948 is the shorthand for the Jeju incident. It was on this day that the Jeju Chapter of the South Korean Labor Party (JCSKLP) adopted the conscious decision to use violence as a political tactic. The flashpoint was the May 1948 elections – the first after liberation to establish a government in the area south of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel alone (the zone of U.S. occupation). The JCSKLP aimed to stop the south-only elections by attacking both the police stations and Right wing organizations (Report 2013, 648). This use of violence against the “Right wing” is of special interest for our discussion.

The JCSKLP chose to attack the leaders of the Right wing party because of the belief that Rightists supported the south-only elections. This was partly true. Supported by the U.S. and sponsored by the UN, the elections divided Koreans throughout the southern zone. Just as they (eventually) became divided over the issue of Trusteeship on January 20 1947, politicians in the KILA in Seoul were deeply divided over the issue of south-only elections. The issue came to a head when a contentious resolution supporting the south-only elections passed in the KILA on February 23, 1948. (USAFIK G-2 Periodic Report 1948, #768). As the USAFIK describes this episode:

Rightists pushed through their resolution for a separate election in South KOREA during the 206th 23 February session. In an afternoon marked with bitter arguments,

a walkout by Speaker KIM Kyu Sik<sup>11)</sup> with 27 leftists and moderate assemblymen following him in protest against the resolution and the election of a temporary chairman who presided while the following resolution was passed by a majority in the name of the South Korean Interim Legislative Assembly:

*The UNITED NATIONS Commission on KOREA is requested to supervise a general election within the possible area (South Korea) for present time and to assist in a recognition of a Korean national government for the purpose of effecting complete unification with international cooperation.*

(USAFIK G-2 Periodic Report 1948, #768).

Note that the USAFIK sees the south-only election issue as driving a wedge between the Right and everyone else (Left/Moderates). It is not clear whether the “Moderates” in the KILA who walked out in protest included members of the “Right” and “Left.” The United States indeed recognized both “Right” and “Left” moderates (USAFIK G-2 Weekly Summary 1947, #96). At any rate, the official investigative report of the Jeju incident interprets the split differently, describing the south-only election issue as one which drove a wedge amongst Rightists:

Over the issue of holding the election in South Korea only, the right-wing camp split in two. Kim Gu<sup>12)</sup> and Kim Gyu-sik and their followers suggested negotiations with North Korea in order to unify the two Koreas, while opposing the establishment of a government only in South Korea. The other line came from Rhee Syng-man and the Korean Democratic Party. They were promoting the establishment of a government only in South Korea, keeping step with the US Military Government. (Report 2013, 183).

Whereas the USAFIK sees the dynamics in the KILA as Rightists vs. Leftists/Moderates, the official report of the Jeju incident observes the issue as Rightists vs. Rightists.

11) Kim Kyu Sik (김규식) is identified as “Kim Gyu-sik” in the Official Investigative Report of the Jeju Incident.

12) Kim Gu (김구) is identified as “Kim Koo” in the intelligence reports of the U.S. military.

## Divide and Conquer: Right vs. Left

While the Right/Left/Moderate framework may seem to provide some understanding of political realities, it is deeply problematic. First, it is not only a crude categorization of a people, it also ignores the deeper story of divisive political emotions – of perceptions of injustice – caused in part by instances of bad faith by outside powers that were mentioned earlier. Second, the framework of Right/Left leads to errors in judgment. For instance, those on the “Right” will view a “Moderate” as one from the “Left.” Similarly, those on the “Left” will view a “Moderate” as one from the “Right.” This “relativity of perception” is recognized by Aristotle, who, in discussing the virtues and vices of character, notes that a coward will perceive bravery as a kind of foolishness, the foolish man will perceive the brave man as a coward, and that “people at the extremes push the intermediate man over to the other:”

For the brave man appears rash relatively to the coward, and cowardly relatively to the rash man; and similarly the temperate man appears self-indulgent relatively to the insensible man, insensible relatively to the self-indulgent, and the liberal man prodigal relatively to the mean man, mean relatively to the prodigal. Hence also the people at the extremes push the intermediate man each over to the other, and the brave man is called rash by the coward, cowardly by the rash man, and correspondingly in the other cases. (Aristotle 1998, 44)

The point here is that who is “Left” and who is “Right” is relative to the perceiver. On Aristotle’s view, on the “middle way” – the position of the mean, moderation and virtue – provides the correct vantage point. Any position other than this leads to misidentification as “the extremes push the intermediate man over to the other.”

Recalling the fracturing over the Trusteeship issue discussed earlier: the United States observed that earlier episode as one in which “political factions were divided with extremists on both sides diametrically opposed, moderates remaining in the “uncomfortable middle.” (USAFIK G-2 Weekly Summary 1947, #72). The

recognition of the “uncomfortable middle” is worth noting. *For it is this position of discomfort that is the most wholesome.* This is recognized not only by Western philosophers such as Aristotle, but also by Eastern philosophers such as Ham Sok Hon (함석헌) (1901-1989) who observes that the “middle course” is the “highroad” which “all countries, all people, all gods should travel.” (Ham 1985, 97).<sup>13)</sup> Yet, when discussing the General Strike of March 10, in which Jeju was referred to as a “Leftist stronghold” (USAFIK G-2 Weekly Summary 1947 #79), the USAFIK did not travel this highroad. The analysis there not only recycled the memory of the “profane atrocities committed by Leftists,” it also pushed moderates into the extreme. Such misjudgments are of course dangerous within the context of waging wars, whether hot or cold.

Both the failure to acknowledge the role of assimilation bias and usage of the problematic Right/Left framework are epistemological ills that contributed to the Jeju incident. Together, these cognitive errors provided the “rational basis” (ungrounded as it was) that entrenched the violence as ideological. There is yet another vice to be discussed – albeit one of character and temperament – that of *factionalism* that helped to sustain the violence.

## Factionalism

Korean philosopher Ham Sok Hon observes that factional feuding is a “property of Korean history” arising from “abnormal psychology:”

Factional feuding was the disease that was for the next three centuries to eat away at the vitals of the nation, paralyze its vitality and spirit, smother its conscience, poison its very life.

This is one subject in Korean history which a foreign reader will be at a loss to appreciate. Only Koreans may be able to do justice to the psychology behind such feuding because it is a property of Korean history and because this feuding arises from abnormal psychology. (Ham 1985, 97).

13) I am indebted to Kwang-ik Park (박광익) of the Graduate Institute of Peace Studies, Kyung Hee University for both exposing me to the philosophy of Ham Sok Hon, and assisting me in my research about this important philosopher.

Other Korean scholars echo this sentiment. In his *Politics of Korean Nationalism*, Chong sik Lee discusses the role of factionalism in both dynastic and modern Korean history, noting that by the 1940s, factionalism had become “embittered men’s habit, acquired through decades of harsh experience, a pattern of behavior, a means for survival, a way of life” (Lee 1963, 227). As Professor Lee notes, Communist China exploited this “way of life” and “to the maximum,” in order to increase the power of the extreme left faction (Lee 1963, 214). The speaker and chair of the KILA, Kim Kyu Sik, also noted the phenomenon of factionalism, as reported by the USAFIK:

KIM, Kyu Sik recently remarked that one of the things most needed in KOREA today was “cooperation” between opposing factions. Koreans have shown a marked inability to recognize anything of value coming from one on the opposite side of the political fence, and their feelings mount to such a pitch that anyone opposing them is a traitor, who should be eliminated in one way or another. It is for this reason that Kim, Kyu Sik, and others who do not hew closely to party lines, says that KOREA is not ready for complete independence.  
(USAFIK G-2 Weekly Summary 1947, #96).

To be sure, family and kinship play a role in factionalism, but the inability to compromise is also an essential element. As did China, the United States also noted the trait and, in particular, Syngman Rhee’s inability to compromise (USAFIK G-2 Weekly Summary 1947, #106). One cannot but help conclude that the United States exploited this character flaw. The United States was mindful indeed of how power could be obtained by capitalizing on psychological tendencies, noting how the “Japs” weaponized Koreans’ “love of an official title.” (USAFIK G-2 Weekly Summary 1947, #106). The U.S. bore witness to factionalism and the inability to compromise in the KILA, and as we shall see, rather than ameliorating this dysfunction, it was exploited.

Having thus far reviewed an assortment of moral failures and psychological ills: bad faith, the failure to recognize assimilation bias, the Right/Left framework, factionalism and its ever faithful companion, the inability to compromise; and

being mindful also, of the pernicious use to exploit rather than to ameliorate these ills and vices, we are now in a position to have a deeper understanding of the violence of April 3, 1948.

### 3. April 3, 1948 and The U.N. sponsored South-only Elections

On September 17, 1947, the U.S. proposed to the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) a draft resolution calling for the establishment of an “Interim Committee on Peace and Security” (IC) (Coster 1949, 445).<sup>14</sup> A vehicle more flexible and nimble than the UN Security Council (UNSC) was needed since “the requirement of unanimity among the Great Powers” resulted in “the impotence” of the UNSC (Liang 1948, 438). The United States’ proposal for creating the IC was adopted in November 13, 1947.

On November 14, 1947, one day after creating the IC, the UNGA created the “United Nations Temporary Commission of Korea” (UNTCOK) for the purpose of “facilitating and expediting” participation of the “representatives of the indigenous population” of Korea in the question of Korea’s “freedom and independence.”<sup>15</sup> This required the UNTCOK to work in both the northern and southern zones of occupation. When the Soviet Union refused to allow UNTCOK to work north of the 38th parallel, a maneuver was needed to secure healthy UN support. The KILA assisted in that maneuver.

As discussed earlier, an anti-Trusteeship resolution that passed in the KILA on January 20, 1947 transformed an issue that had hitherto united the Korean people into one of ideological division. The passage of the anti-Trusteeship resolution caused “a handful of moderates” to walk out of the KILA in protest (USAFIK G-2 Weekly Summary 1947, #72). A subsequent similar event occurred upon the passage of a resolution supporting south-only elections. When this KILA resolution

14) For the text of the Resolution see, *Establishment of an Interim Committee of the General Assembly*, Resolution 111(II) of November 13, 1947. <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/2/ares2.htm>.

15) For the text of the Resolution see *The Problem of the Independence of Korea*, Resolution 113 (II) of November 14, 1947. <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/2/ares2.htm>. The UNTCOK was also authorized to supervise the establishment of a Korean Government, via elections to a national assembly.

was “pushed through” by “Rightists” on February 23, 1948, Kim Kyu Sik walked out with 27 leftists and moderate assemblymen (USAFIK G-2 Periodic Report 1948, #768).

The day after the passage of the KILA south-only election resolution, hereinafter referred to as the “KILA election resolution,” the United States formally secured UN involvement in the south-only elections. On Feb. 24, 1948, the United States submitted a resolution to the IC with a request to empower the UNTCOK to oversee elections “in such parts of Korea as are accessible” (USAFIK G-2 Weekly Summary 1948, #128). The broad language of the original UN resolution establishing the UNTCOK did not envisage south-only elections, it merely recommended that the UNTCOK be established for the “facilitating and expediting” the participation of the “representatives of the indigenous population” of Korea. The Feb. 24 resolution narrowed that to the participation of the people “in such parts of Korea as are accessible,” and hence to the south only. On February 28, the Chairman of UNTCOK, K.P.S. Menon announced to the Korean people that the IC “... has resolved that it is open to the Korean Commission to carry out its functions in that part of Korea in which it is practicable to do so, even if the remaining part continues to stand aloof” (USAFIK G-2 Weekly Summary 1948, #129).

Throughout the southern zone – and not just in Jeju – there was concern that the absence of elections in the zone north of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel (controlled by The Soviet Union) would permanently divide the country, thereby crushing Korea’s dream of meaningful independence. Alarmed at this prospect, Korean leaders in Seoul spoke out. Some weeks prior to the adoption of the KILA election resolution, Kim Kyu Sik publicly proclaimed “I do not favor the present creation of a sovereign state in South Korea” (USAFIK G-2 Periodic Report 1948, #763). Without a unified Korea, according to Kim, Korean independence is an “economic impossibility and a political fiction” (USAFIK G-2 Periodic Report 1948, #763). Kim Koo (김구), another leading politician in the South also opposed a south-only election. Syngman Rhee was on the opposite side. He called for elections and a separate government in the South, and well before the involvement of the UN and the passage of the KILA election resolution on February 23, 1948 (USAFIK G-2

Weekly Summaries 1947, #112 and #116).

Korean leaders who opposed the south-only elections had good reason to do so. Even the United States admitted that a south-only election would transform the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel into more of an international boundary between two different states:

It is believed that the U.N. will make every effort to hold some sort of an election in KOREA without accepting the responsibility of dividing the country. Just how this maneuver will be accomplished is completely unknown since an election without North KOREA participation would most certainly establish the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel as more of an international boundary. (USAFIK G-2 Weekly Summary 1948, #125).

Confirming this prediction, The Democratic People's Republic of Korea was established in the northern zone of occupation on September 9, 1948 – some 4 months after the election of Syngman Rhee in the south only elections of May 10, 1948 (USAFIK G-2 Weekly Summary 1948, #125). Perhaps the use of the term “prediction” here is incorrect. As Jongsoo James Lee has argued, by early 1948, the creation of a Southern state was the *de facto* U.S. policy (Lee 2006, 108).

### The Elections on Jeju Island

The KILA, based in Seoul, was clearly divided over south-only elections. And in Jeju, too, there was division. The JCSKLP's decision to use violence as a means of stopping the south-only elections was the apparent brainchild of 23-year-old of Kim Dal-sam (김달삼), a middle school teacher, who in 1948 had risen to the head of the Organizing Department of the JCSKLP (Report 2013, 198). Believing that violence would trigger a nationwide revolt against the south-only elections, the young and impetuous Kim Dal-sam set about using his organizational skills and power towards that end. In addition to being young and impetuous, Kim Dal-sam was plagued by a false optimism. As one witness describes it, “[t]he newly emerging young leadership drove the chapter to an armed uprising, being too

optimistic about the circumstances at home and abroad.” (Report 2013, 197-202). This optimism rested on the false belief about the response to the violence, specifically that:

“the Korea Constabulary would maintain neutrality and, if so, the police could not suppress the revolt by themselves and the US would not intervene in the suppression of the uprising because their involvement might make the uprising into an international issue.”(Report 2013, 202).

As students of the incident know, neither the Korean Constabulary maintained neutrality, nor did the U.S. refrain from intervening. Amongst other things, the United States Military Governor ordered the Korea Constabulary to engage in a repression operation on April 17<sup>th</sup>, 1948 (Report 2013, 242-244). This escalated the violence on April 3, 1948 into a prolonged period of violence that was completely unexpected (Report 2013, 199-200).

### The Crowning Vice: *Pleonexia*

In connection with the way in which the south-elections were engineered, let us describe perhaps the crowning vice of the Jeju incident, that of *pleonexia* (πλεονεξία). Discussed by the Greek philosophers of Classical Antiquity, *pleonexia* is described as “the desire to outdo others and get more and more.” (Plato 2011, 400). This is typically understood to mean *greed*. Aristotle builds on this idea and identifies *pleonexia* as a specific kind of injustice in which one profits at the expense of another (Kraut 2002, 136-141). Aristotle seems to say that *pleonexia* involves the specific motive of *gain*, and he distinguishes this motive from other problematic motives such as fear, lust or stinginess (Aristotle 1998, 44). A person who rigs an election because he is greedy for power exhibits *pleonexia*. On the other hand, a person who rigs an election because he is afraid that an honest election would damage the bonds of community does not exhibit *pleonexia*, but some other deficiency.

Greed at the expense of others can be exhibited in a number of ways. First, there are a number of goods which we can seek at the expense of others (pleasure, honor/reputation, wealth, power). But greed at the expense of others is not limited to *taking* some tangible thing that is *undeserved*. It can also include *failing to give* something that is *deserved*. Stealing the gold coin from my neighbor is taking some tangible thing that is underserved. Failing to pay my debt of a gold coin to my neighbor is failing to give something that is deserved. I exhibit *pleonexia* regardless of whether I, due to greed, take something undeserved or fail to give something owed.

When I fail to pay my debt of a gold coin to my neighbor, how ought my neighbor respond? At first she should *remind* me of my debt. And perhaps she should exhibit *patience* – especially if she does not *need* the gold right away. But what if she desperately needs the gold? Perhaps she should go to court. But what if there is no court to hear her plea?

These questions are asked not only because they are philosophically interesting, but also because they are relevant to the situation between Korea and the United States. Both owed something to each other. At least one failed to give the other something that was owed. In fact, the debt existed prior to World War I, as we have seen. Even in April 1945, a kind reminder was sent about that old debt as we saw in the April 1945 Memorial to the UN Conference on International Organization. Considering the remark above that confirms the view that a south-only election would “most certainly establish the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel as more of an international boundary” (USAFIK G-2 Weekly Summary 1948, #125), it is difficult to avoid seeing the decision to proceed with a south-only election as *both* as a failing to give something that is deserved *and* as a taking of something underserved.

What did the U.S. fail to give? Meaningful independence, and a concerted effort to assuage the toxicity of affect and emotion that was instrumental in deepening fractures among the Korean people. Indeed, there was a duty to give this effort because one of the contributing factors to this toxicity of affect and emotion was the indifference of foreign powers to honor their sacred obligations to assist Korea. Again, these injustices are mentioned at the outset of the 1945 Korean Memorial

to the powers organizing the UN. But instead of acknowledging those injustices, and instead of attempting to ameliorate the toxicity of affect that the foreign powers helped to create, there was an exploitation of them. This is indeed perhaps a most pernicious form of *pleonexia*, the exploitation of another's defects for gain. This is both a failure to give what is deserved and a taking of something undeserved. Failing to give this opportunity to make amends resulted in an undeserved taking of the mental and physical resources that should have been used to promote national prosperity, and the happiness and creative development of the people.<sup>16)</sup>

The use of violence on April 3, 1948 to prohibit the south-only elections must be seen in this deeper context – and as a failure of international ethics. There was a failure to check and “put the brakes on” as the interpretation of violence on March 1, 1947 slipped into an ideological one. A framework was adopted (Right vs. Left) that entrenched this ideological interpretation, and factionalism and the inability to compromise were exploited rather than properly administered. To be sure, the response to the violence of April 3, 1948 that followed was also a failure. It ignored the deeper causes of the unrest and the role played by international indifference to the just grievances of Korea.

#### 4. Conclusion

The Jeju incident was a failure of international ethics. Bad faith, the adoption of tendentious narratives that painted black those categorized as “Leftists,” the dehumanizing and error prone framework of Right vs. Left, factionalism, the inability to compromise and *pleonexia* are distinct injurious ingredients that were mixed together in a most dangerous cocktail of vices. We should be mindful of these vices not only as we consider the Jeju incident, but also as we move forward towards reconciliation and peaceful unification. The “unnamed monument”

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16) The March 1, 1976 Declaration of Democracy and National Salvation makes this point. See [http://www.forwardintomemory.com/original\\_3\\_1\\_1976\\_declaration.pdf](http://www.forwardintomemory.com/original_3_1_1976_declaration.pdf). I am grateful to Ms. Maria Ahn (마리아 안) of the Graduate Institute of Peace Studies, Kyung Hee University, for providing me with an English translation of this document.

mentioned at the beginning of this paper poignantly recognizes the connection between the Jeju incident and unification, noting that only when two Koreas are unified, will we be able to properly name the Jeju incident.<sup>17)</sup> It is hoped that describing the incident as a failure of international ethics and identifying some of the specific cognitive errors and vices involved therein, we are better equipped to guard against them in this forward march. To be sure, we should also guard against *excessive blame*, as there are many blameworthy parties here, and blame, if not checked, can beget toxic affect. Best if each responsible party involved in the Jeju incident engages in an act of critical self-reflection, and returns what is long overdue. In so doing, honor would be paid to the conciliatory and cooperative spirit of March 1<sup>st</sup>, and we would recall the wisdom of that earlier moment when Koreans were united in exhorting each other to abandon past resentments, and to open up a friendly new phase based on genuine understanding and sympathy.<sup>18)</sup>

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17) The English translation of the monument does not, unfortunately, mention the link between the Jeju incident and unification, and simply says “As the Jeju incident still does not have historical definition, its monument has no inscription.” However, the full Korean text on the monument states that on the day of unification, transcending the division of the two Koreas, we will know the proper name of the incident and can inscribe it thereon (분단의 시대를 넘어 남과 북이 하나가 되는 통일의 그날. 진정한 4.3의 이름을 새길 수 있으리라). I am grateful to Jimmy Shin for pointing this out to me.

18) These sentiments are clearly expressed in the Korean Declaration of Independence of March 1, 1919. An English translation of this Declaration can be found in (McKenzie 1920, 247-250).

## Appendix

Korean Memorial to United Nations Conference on International Organization  
at San Francisco, California. April 25, 1945

April 25, 1945

To the United Nations Conference on International Organization:

“There shall be perpetual peace and friendship between the President of the United States and the King of Chosen (Korea) and the citizens and subjects of their respective governments.”

“If other Powers deal unjustly or oppressively with either government, the other will exert their good offices, on being informed of the case, to bring about an amicable arrangement, thus showing their friendly feelings.”

The above extract is from the Korean-American treaty of 1882. In proclaiming this treaty on June 4, 1883, President Chester A. Arthur said that he has “caused the said convention to be made public, to the end that the same and every clause and article thereof may be observed and fulfilled with good faith by the United States and the citizens thereof.”

The Korean people have never doubted the sincerity of President Arthur or the good faith of the people of the United States. The same may be said concerning the people of other nations with whom Korea has had treaty relations.

Every member of the Council and many members of the Assembly in the proposed International Organization of the United Nations, have treaty relations with Korea. When Japan took over Korea in 1905 by force and fraud, these treaties were forgotten but were never abrogated.

The Cairo Declaration of the United States, Great Britain and China that “Korea shall become free and independent” is, in fact, a recognition of treaty obligations with Korea by these great Powers. Had these obligations been kept forty years ago when Japan started on her path of bloody conquest, there would be no Pacific War today, and millions of innocent lives could have been saved.

The Korean people now ask the United Nations assembled at the San Francisco Conference to implement the pledges made to them by these nations. The Koreans feel that treaties and official declarations are and should be made to be kept, not to cover up national ambitions.

Korea asks admission into the ranks of the United Nations now, and requests the Allied Powers to consider her case without further delay. Furthermore, she is willing, able and prepared to assume the full responsibility that goes with a sovereign state's membership in the United Nations.

Keeping the Korean question dangling in idealistic mid-air increases the anxiety of the thirty million Korean people and the feeling of uncertainty on the part of all other small nations. Recognizing Korea now as an ally will strengthen the faith of the underground resistance in the occupied areas of Asia and will enhance the hope of humanity everywhere in the ultimate triumph of democracy.

The nations at war with Japan have everything to gain and nothing to lose by taking Korea in now as an active ally. She should be given moral and material support in her prolonged fight against the common enemy, Japan. It will contribute toward the postwar political stability in Asia and promote the interest of democracy. The time to recognize Korea is now, not after Japan has been defeated.

Korea is a small nation by the standards of the Big Four. But if you compare her with the other nations invited to the San Francisco Conference, you will find that she has a greater population and a longer independent national existence than all of the "Middle Powers," and possesses a larger area and more strategic position than most of the small nations.

The history of the Far East for the last fifty years proves that no lasting peace is possible in that part of the world so long as Korea is used as a pawn by rival powers in international power politics. It is obvious that no security organization can be permanent unless strategic Korea is included as a member. There is no reasonable doubt that Korea, when free, can make ends meet economically, maintain a stable government and contribute her share to the international security organization for the lasting peace and welfare of the world.

But outweighing all these considerations in the scale that determines the qualifications of a country for membership in the United Nations is the amount

of sacrifices Korea has made in the cause of human freedom. All the fury of the oppressor's brutality during the past forty years did not stamp out the spirit of liberty in the Korean heart. Korea could count more than one Lidice of its own, towns whose whole populations were massacred and whose dwellings, schools and churches were put to the torch. Yet Korean determination for independence has never wavered.

All during the dark years, the people of the Hermit Kingdom have never lost faith in the righteousness of their cause; they carried on their fight with whatever means at their disposal — sabotage and guerilla warfare. And at that they have become experts. They have wiped out many a Japanese division, and killed many a top-flight Japanese official all the way from Prince Ito to General Shiragawa. In 1937, Japanese authorities listed 3,600 authenticated instances of sabotage and guerrilla activities by Koreans against Japan. That is ten attacks by Koreans on their enemy every day. And that has been going on for years. Indeed, Koreans have actually demonstrated the qualification of a people truly worthy of liberty as described by the former Secretary of State, Cordell Hull:

“There is no surer way for men and nations to show themselves worthy of liberty than to fight for its preservation, in any way that is open to them, against those who would destroy it all.”

Now the people of Korea see the dawn of their hope, and want their country to be taken in as one of the United Nations, so that they may contribute a greater share to the final victory over Japan, thereby shortening the duration of the war in the Pacific and hastening the day of their liberation.

Their claim is not based on delusions. Korea looms large in strategic importance as the Allied aerial and naval power is gradually forging the iron ring around Japan. Korea is the bridge to the Asiatic mainland, and the control of this bridge is essential to the final encirclement of the enemy. When the Allies land on the Korean soil they will find the people waiting for them, ready to aid. Their aid will be invaluable because of their intimate knowledge of the terrain and of the ways of the enemy. Their experience in sabotage and guerilla warfare will be at the disposal of the Allies.

In order to have the eager cooperation of the Korean people and to avoid all

confusion during and immediately following the military campaign in the peninsula, it is the part of wisdom, indeed, of necessity, to utilize the machinery that has long been set up, and has been functioning — the Korean Provisional Government, which is the oldest government-in-exile.

When this Provisional Government was democratically organized in 1919, by representatives of all the people in Korea, it was given a clear mandate to carry on until Korea becomes free at which time it will be replaced by a permanent government by the people. For the past twenty-six years, the Korean Provisional Government-in-exile has performed its work according to the original mandate of the people, and the Koreans everywhere have recognized it as their own. It has proved its stability. It has been their only government.

Let those who fear that expatriates, through the Provisional Government, might impose the will or a minority upon the people within Korea, remember that as soon as Korea becomes free, a new constitution will be adopted. The form of government and the type of officials the people want will be decided by the people themselves. Until then, the Provisional Government is the symbol of Korean freedom and the rallying point of all Korean military and political activities. It speaks for the Korean people, and it should be the agency through which the Allies deal with the Koreans.

Aside from the principles of the Atlantic Charter that every nation has a natural right to live under a government of its own choosing, the practical world policy demands that this Provisional Government of the Korean Republic be given immediate recognition and that Korea be allowed to become a member of the United Nations, so that the Korean people may be encouraged to move in the direction of parliamentary democracy and to lend greater active support to the war effort of the Allies.

BY DIRECTION OF THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF KOREA:

TJO SOWANG,  
*Minister of Foreign Affairs*  
Chunking, China.

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