Remaining Lectures

• Today: Korean War
• December 1, North Korea
• December 15, Modern South Korea
The Korean Civil War

NATIONAL DIVISION, CIVIL WAR, AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF TWO SEPARATE STATES
The Forgotten War?
OUR NATION HONORS
HER SONS AND DAUGHTERS
WHO ANSWERED THE CALL
TO DEFEND A COUNTRY
THEY NEVER KNEW
AND A PEOPLE
THEY NEVER MET

1950 • KOREA • 1953
“Wherever there is a split, people always claim that their own side is right. It was the same with us. They thought what they believed was right and we did the same. So we blamed each other and fought...In fact, they are exactly the same as us, brothers from the same ancestors. The simple truth is that they are our brother of the same blood. They just live separated from us in a communist-dominated part of the land, that's all.” Kim Wŏn-il
• “We Did Nothing but Slaughter People”.
Suggested Readings

• Bruce Cumings, “The Korean War”.
• Shelia Jager, “Brothers at War”.
• Kim Dong Choon, “The Unending War: A Social History”.
• Wada Haruki, “The Korean War: An International History”.
The Korean War

(1950-1953) or (???-???)
Why Did Korea Separate?
Thinking Historically about Korea’s Separation

• Legacies of Japanese Colonialism.
• East Asian Civil War (1931-1953).
• Emerging Cold War.
• State Creation.
“Liberation” of Korea, August 15 1945
Politics of Separation (1945-1948)

• 1. Korea divided on 38th parallel by two powers.
38th Parallel
Politics of Separation (1910-1945)

1. Korea divided on 38th parallel by two powers
2. People’s Committees already formed and People’s Republic of Korea declared.
People’s Committees
Yuh Woon hyong (1886-1947)
Cho Man Sik (1883-1950)
Internal Politics in Post-liberation Korea

• Committee for the Preparation of Korean Independence.
• Left and Right schisms emerge early.
• Korean Democratic Party forms.
• People’s Republic of Korea declared in early September.
• KEY POINTS: 1. Koreans acquire immediate self-rule. 2. Polarization is early. (political/factional).
Characteristics of the PRK

• Broad spectrum of left and right. Right dominate cabinet members, left dominate membership.

• Factions in left.

• Broad leftist program: land reform, punishment of collaborators, opposition to trusteeship, labour reform, rights for women, police reform, broad liberties.

• Sets the political agenda until 1948.

• Rejected by the US. Why?
Politics of Separation (1910-1945)

• 1. Korea divided on 38th parallel by two powers

• 2. People’s Committees already formed and Korean People’s Republic established. Land Reform, not communism main issue.

• 3. Trusteeship official policy of occupation, containment practical policy.
General John Hodge
Syngman Rhee
Kim Sung Su
Song Jin-Woo
Kim Il Sung
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• 4. Right leads anti-trusteeship movement in early 1946.

Kim Ku
Consequences of Anti-Trusteeship Movements

- Loss of face for South Korean communists.
- Loss of favour for Kim Koo.
- Purge of “rightists” in North Korea.
- US pushed towards policy of separate state.
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Autumn Harvest Uprisings

• Function of removal of PCs, resentment of the police, leftist organization and agitation.
People’s Committees
Autumn Harvest Peasant Uprisings (1946)

- Massive unrest and violence in the Chŏlla and Kyŏngsang provinces.
- Initial victories for left, but mass repression.
- Communist parties banned, US begins to favour extreme right.
- People’s Committees effectively destroyed, fragmenting and polarization of left.
- Political centre is evaporating.
The Southern System

• Political Alliance between Syngman Rhee and Korean Democratic Party.

• Ideologically unified by anticommunism and opposition to Trusteeship. Racial nationalism. Economic dominance of landlord class.

• Security Structure: American military forces and advisors, national police, paramilitary right-wing youth groups.

• Large, but marginalized left-wing opposition. Small opposition from right-wing nationalists.

• Unification primary goal, but willing to establish separate state.
The Northern System

• Soviets utilize People’s Committees, but dominated by communists.
• Revolutionary policies, particularly 1946 land reform. Majority of party members peasants.
• Personality cult around Kim Il Sung begins. Racial nationalism.
• Surveillance regime: Ideological indoctrination primary, mass exodus of political rivals.
• Unification under communist/nationalist rule critical.
The Decimation of the “Moderates”
Yuh Woon hyong (1886-1947)
Kim Ku, assassinated in June 1949
Cho Man Sik (1883-1950)
Kim Kyu-Sik, 1950
Politics of Separation (1945-1948)

• 5. Hardening of cold war through 1945-47 (X Article, Greece, Marshall Plan, Chinese Civil War, “Reverse Course” in Japan).

Dean Acheson
Great Crescent
Politics of Separation (1945-1948)

• 5. Hardening of cold war through 1945-47 (X Article, Greece, Marshall Plan, Chinese Civil War, “Reverse Course” in Japan).


• 7. US refers Korean issue to UN in 1947 and calls for general unification election in 1948. Soviets object.

Consequences of Separate Election in the South

- Consolidates power of rightists.
- Left and nationalists boycott.
- Sets stage of civil war.
Why Did War Break Out?
The Jeju Incident (1947-1954).

• “Jeju is a Microscope through which to peer into the tensions of post-liberation Korea”.
Jeju Island
Jeju from Above
Jeju and the People’s Committees
Jeju Incident

• 1947 March 1 demonstrations lead to rightist repression.
• Cho Byeong Ok sent to island. Deems Jeju “Red Island”. Mainland rightists replace local government
• Village level conflict between left and right.
• Upcoming elections lead to guerrilla attacks on April 3 1948.
• Guerrillas enjoy popular support and string of victories.
The Winter Suppression Campaign

- November 1948-April 1949.
- Extreme rightists integrated into constabulary.
- Quarantined, massive free-fire zone, powers of summary execution given to soldiers and police.
- 500-8000 guerrillas. Typically armed with bamboo spears.
- 30,000-60,000 killed (10%-20% of population).
“A Program of Mass Slaughter”
Psychological Terror
Insurgency and the making of the National Security State

- Yeosu Incident leads to state of emergency.
- National security law.
- Jeju prototype exported to mainland.
- War and ideology saturate Korean society at the village level.
- Counter-revolution as form of state organization.
- Anti-communist state ideology forged in violence.
Jeju and Yeosu Rebellions, 1948-1949
Insurgency and the making of the National Security State

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• 1948, National security law.
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Civil War and Invasion (1948-1950)


Jeju and Yeosu Rebellions, 1948-1949
Reasons for Rightist Victory and Consequences

• American Power.
• Terror.
• Infrastructure.
• Spatial and Climatic Factors.
• Village support?
• Communist unification will have to come from North!
Suggested Novels

• “The Guest”, Hwang Sok-yong.
• “Sun-I Samch’on”. Hyun Gi-young.
• “War Trash”, Ha Jin.
• Southerners, Northerners, Lee Ho-cheol.
Suggested Films

• Taebaeksanmaek (The Tae Baek Mountains).  
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pAXBFlo3saY

• “Nam Bu Gun” (Southern Partisan).  
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qxiur5Y6JAg
Part Two
FROM CIVIL WAR TO GLOBAL WAR
Civil War and Invasion (1948-1950)

• 1. Spring 1948, Cheju Uprising breaks out. Yeosu Rebellion follows.


Border Skirmishes
The Korean War
Explaining June 25th

1. Role of Kim Il Sung critical.
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• 2. The China factor: Communist victory in Civil War, solidarity between Chinese Communists and Korean Communists, Mao’s revolutionary nationalism.
Chinese Civil War
Explaining June 25th

1. Role of Kim Il Sung critical.

2. The China factor: Communist victory in Civil War, solidarity between Chinese Communists and Korean Communists, Mao’s revolutionary nationalism.

3. Stalin’s role crucial but motives unclear: Acheson’s January speech, fear of rearmed Japan, relative weakness of American position in Asia, belief war would be quick and US commitment limited.
US Motives

- Clear view of communists as Stalin-led monolith.
- Korean policy tied to credibility and Europe. Domino theory?
- Soviet boycott of UN.
Harry Truman
Korean War (1950-1953)

• 1. Three phases: June 25 through Sept 15, rapid KPA advance and US “Pusan Perimeter”
KPA invasion
Civil War, Revolution, and Extermination

• North Koreans immediately begin to install revolutionary regime in occupied areas.

• Politicized massacres and public denunciation campaigns.
The National Guidance League

• June 1949, “conversion” league is set up.
• Coercion as recruitment and right-wing consolidation. 300,000 by June 1950
• Recruits: Communists? Apolitical peasants? Patriots?
Anatomy of a Politicide

• June 25 invasion. June 27 mass execution order.
• July-September 100,000 executed.
Geography of Mass Killings
Anatomy of a Politicide

• June 25 invasion. June 27 mass execution order.
• July-September 100,000 executed.
• Tacit US support.
• Elimination of potential “leftist” political class.
Taejŏn Prison Killings
Douglas MacArthur
The Korean War (1950-1953)

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• 2. UN offensive and “Rollback”. September through to late October. Communists go on mass killing spree. South Koreans implement state building in the North.


• 4. Stalled peace negotiations drag war for year and a half. POW issue main controversy.
Inch’on Landing
Communist Atrocities
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Reasons for Stalled Negotiations

• US “opportunity”. Psychological, tie down China.
• 1949 Geneva Conventions, “one for one policy”.
• Communists deceive with numbers.
• 1952 Indian Proposal and Stalin’s death.
• Nuclear war?
Refugees and Atrocities
Hangang Bridge Bombing
Refugee Policies

• UN mandate and liberal internationalism.
• Hungnam Evacuation. 100,000 civilians, 14,000 refugees.
• North Korean Army’s clandestine tactics.
• US strafing and scorched earth policies.
• Nongun-Ri Incident and 66 other cases.
Bridge at No-Gun Ri
UN Bombing of North Korea
UN Bombing of North Korea

• 1. Prior to Chinese intervention, “precision bombing” practiced.
George Stratemeyer
Curtis Lemay
UN Bombing of North Korea

2. Post Chinese intervention, cities and villages made targets.
Enemy Hideout
UN Bombing of North Korea

• 1. Prior to Chinese intervention, “precision bombing” practiced.
• 2. Post Chinese intervention, cities and villages made targets. Limited War?
• 3. Reservoirs become targets during armistice negotiations.
UN Bombing of North Korea

• 1. Prior to Chinese intervention, “precision bombing” practiced.
• 2. Post Chinese intervention, cities and villages made targets.
• 3. Reservoirs become targets during armistice negotiations.
• 4. As many as 1,000,000 killed.
• The Westerner can little conceive the awesome meaning which the loss of rice has for the Asian—starvation and slow death. US Air Force Report on Bombing Campaigns.
Why?

- Strategy to break will of North Koreans, fracture alliance.
- Existing staff, technology, and strategies from Pacific War.
- “People’s war” justifies collapse of citizen/soldier distinction.
- The Race Question...
Politics of POW Camps

• Harshness of communist POW camps.
• Chinese camps and “reeducation” tactics (New Life Magazine).
• “The Caves”. Shift once armistice talks begin.
Koje Island Incident
Keoje Island Incident

- Sept-Nov 130,000 POWs, designed for 5,000
- Political schisms within the camp.
- Lack of guards, Pro-Chinese and anti-communist Koreans put in charge.
- Compounds became divided.
- Gen Francis Dodd kidnapped, May 1952.
- “Propaganda statement” signed for Dodd’s release.
- Damage to UN credibility in negotiations.
Legacies
Legacies

• 1. US: Consolidation of National Security State, rearming of Europe, “Limited War” doctrine, anticommunism hegemonic, power of Executive branch increased. 30,000-40,000 troops stationed in Korea.
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• 2. USSR: Establish limits on expansion of American power East Asia, consolidate Chinese/Soviet partnership. Militarization of Europe.
Legacies

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• 2. USSR: Establish limits on expansion of American power East Asia, consolidate Chinese/Soviet partnership.

• 3. China: Massive material and human losses, consolidation of revolution, elevated stature in communist world, limit expansion of American power.
Legacies

• 4. Korea: 3 to 4 million killed, DPRK materially destroyed, 10 million families divided, 5 million refugees, divided for 6 decades. Armistice agreement, no peace treaty.
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• 6. North Korea: Kim’s power unrivalled, play China and Soviet power against each other, rapid economic growth until 1970s.
Douglas MacArthur

“This country has no future, this country will not be restored even after 100 years”.