

The Korea War and its aftermath

October 30, 2014

Review

- What was Korea split in two in 1945?
- Who were Kim Ku, Yŏ Unhyŏng, and Syngman Rhee?
- What happened on Cheju in 1948 and 1949? Did it have any repercussions on the mainland?
- What role did Kim Il Sung play during the resistance against Japan? How did he return to Korea after 1945?

The Korean War

- Why did North Korea launch a full-scale war on June 25, 1950?
- failure of the partisans in the South
- Rhee has lost control of his parliament
- Rhee was threatening to attack the North, so the North decided to attack first. (There had been some small South Korean assaults across the border in 1949)
- With the end of the Chinese civil war, North Korea had a large number of trained, experienced troops.

Full-scale war

- June 25, 1950 North Korea attacks,
- South Korea and its UN (mostly the US) allies retreat to the Pusan perimeter by August.
- Sept. 15-General MacArthur lands forces in Inch'ŏn, and the North Koreans begin retreating all the way almost to the Yalu.
- Nov. 27--China attacks UN and South Korean forces. In two weeks all of North Korea is back in Communist hands. Seoul changes hands two more times. US President Truman fires MacArthur
- July, 1951--July, 1953 armistice talks. Issue of POW repatriation hinders agreement. The novel "War Trash" by Ha Jin is a powerful account of the POW issue
- July 27, 1953 armistice signed. Still no peace treaty.
- Why did the war end in a stalemate?

Atrocities on both sides

- South Korean killing of civilians
- The Nogun-ri incident resulted in the death of around 300-400 unarmed refugees trying to flee south.
- Kōjedo Uprising: POW camps came under the control of the inmates. Those controlled by Korean or Chinese Communists used violence against those who didn't want to return to China or North Korea. The reverse was the case in the camps controlled by anti-Communists. In May, 1952, Communist POWs captured the American general in charge of the camps.

The repatriation issue

- International law (the Geneva Convention) requires that prisoners be returned home when the war ends.
- Yet the US and South Korea believed many of their POWs did not want to return home--some were South Koreans drafted into the North Korean army.
- Did the POWS actually have the ability to decide freely whether to repatriate or not?
- Was this issue worth almost two years of fighting?

Discussion

- Was the Korean War a civil war or an international war?
- Was it a war of aggression or a war for unification?
- Why did the US enter the war?
- Why did China enter the war?

Different Paths

Landlords, merchants, and types of government
(Barrington Moore's hypothesis about the origins of
democracy and dictatorship in the modern world)

Strong landlords and weak urban merchants can lead
to Fascism

Weak landlords and weak urban merchants can lead
to Communism.

Weak landlords and strong urban merchants can lead
to democracy.

What role does civil society play? (Civil society refers
to voluntary non-kinship organizations operating
independently of the state)

The DPRK's first decade

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea

Rapid Recovery from the War

Land reform before the war

Collectivization after the war.

Why did the DPRK collectivize?

shortage of labour and capital. (economies of scale)

Industrial development

Emphasis on heavy industry, not consumer goods.

Both ideological and monetary incentives.

Both Red and Expert.

Kim Il Sung becomes Supreme Leader

Eliminated rivals

Southern faction of Pak Hŏnyŏng

Soviet-Koreans, led by Hŏ Kai-I

Yenan factions Mu Chŏng

The promotion of Juche, also spelled Chuch'e
(autonomy and self-reliance) Serves as the functional
equivalent of religion in the DPRK.

Chuch'e (Juche)

A combination of Neo-Confucianism (emphasis on the family, the group, and the power of a selfless mind) and Marxist-Leninism (emphasis on the state controlling and promoting heavy industry, and emphasis on a revolutionary vanguard).

Provided ideological justification for North Korea's standing apart from both the USSR and China.

Says that human beings should be more self-reliant instead of relying on God. However, human beings as individuals have to rely on their society and their government, since humans exist only as members of societies.